



## Skills & Employment Committee

**Monday 5 June 2023**

Venue:	Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, Huntingdon PE29 3TN	
Time:	10.00 to 12.00	
Present:	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha Councillor James Lay Councillor Jackie Allen Councillor Sam Carling Councillor Eileen Wilson Councillor Sam Wakeford Mr Nitin Patel	Chair and Member for Cambridgeshire County Council East Cambridgeshire District Council Peterborough City Council (substitute) Cambridge City Council South Cambridgeshire District Council Huntingdonshire District Council Business Board Representative
Apologies	Councillor Ian Benney Councillor Lynn Ayres Mr Vic Annells	Fenland District Council Peterborough City Council Business Board Representative

### Minutes:

<b>1</b>	<b>Announcements, Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest</b>
1.1	Apologies were received from Cllr Benney, Vic Annells, and Cllr Ayres who was substituted by Cllr Allen.
1.2	No declarations of interest were made.
<b>2</b>	<b>Election of Vice-Chair</b>
2.1	Cllr Nethsingha proposed Cllr Wakeford for the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee and this was seconded by Cllr Carling. There being no further nominations the matter was put to the vote and unanimously approved.  <u>RESOLVED:</u> That Cllr Sam Wakeford be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Skills and Employment Committee.
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of the Skills Committee meeting on 9 January 2023 and Action Log</b>
3.1	The minutes of the meeting on 23 March 2023 were approved as an accurate record.
3.2	Updates to the outstanding actions on the action log were given and noted by the Committee. The log would be amended to reflect the updates.

<p><b>4</b></p> <p>4.1</p>	<p><b>Public Questions</b></p> <p>A question had been received from Cllr Simone Taylor from Huntingdonshire District Council. As Cllr Taylor was not present at the meeting the Governance Officer read out the question and a verbal response was given. Both question and response were published on the CPCA website here: <a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a> under additional meeting documents.</p>
<p><b>5</b></p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p><b>Contract Awards to Independent Training Providers for 2023-24</b></p> <p>Parminder Singh Garcha, Senior Responsible Officer, introduced the report which asked the Committee to recommend to the CA Board approval and delegations for funding allocations to Independent Training Providers (ITPs). The report also updated members on contract awards to ITPs for Wave 4 of Skills Bootcamps for the 2023-24 financial year as set out in Table B of the report.</p> <p>The following points were raised in discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) ITPs were only paid on results. If ITPs did not perform, they were not paid which was why allocations were not always spent.</li> <li>b) At the end of every year, performance was assessed, and allocations altered for the next year. There was very tight contract management in place.</li> <li>c) The management of ITPs was a challenging environment, but a great deal of support was given to providers to enable them to deliver. Having more providers overall rather than just 12 learning organisations, as previously helped to spread and mitigate risk and ensure delivery.</li> <li>d) Unemployment benefits were not affected for these learners on courses specifically provided for the unemployed and those economically inactive who were looking to reskill.</li> <li>e) Future reports within the Committee's agenda plan for the year would report on levels of performance to elucidate the wider outcomes of learning, looking at the more qualitative aspects that were being delivered. Each year, an official report was submitted as a return to the Department for Education (DfE) This report considered the annual performance, both qualitative and quantitative, and was included on the Agenda Plan for the January meeting each year.</li> <li>f) A market engagement event for the procurement of Skills Bootcamp providers had been well attended and the procurement exercise had also been shared through linked-in and provider networks to advertise the opportunity more widely.</li> <li>g) A new privacy notice had been introduced so that learners on the Skills Bootcamps could be contacted by the CPCA meaning that feedback could be obtained directly from the learners rather than only through the DfE.</li> <li>h) All constituent Councils' Economic Development officers (EDOs) were contacted directly about the Skills Bootcamp procurement but only one response had been received. However, there was ongoing regular contact between the different ED teams, with the CPCA meeting with the majority of teams on a six-weekly basis.</li> </ol> <p><u>RESOLVED</u></p> <p>The Skills &amp; Employment Committee unanimously resolved to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recommend the Combined Authority Board approve contract awards for the Adult Education Budget, Free Courses for Jobs and Multiply to Independent Training Providers for the 2023/24 academic year</li> <li>2. Recommend that the Combined Authority Board delegates authority to the Assistant Director - Skills in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer, to enter and sign contracts for services with the Independent Training Providers set out in this report and make in-year adjustments to contract values based on performance.</li> <li>3. Note the contract awards for Skills Bootcamps for the 2023/24 financial year</li> </ol>

4. Recommend the Combined Authority Board allocates £1m of recycled funds from the AEB Reserve Fund to be released for the additional commissioning of Free Courses for Jobs (Level 3)

## **6 Health and Care Sector Work Academy – End of Contract Performance Review**

6.1 Fliss Miller, Assistant Director for Skills introduced the report which asked the Committee to note the progress and performance of the Health and Care Sector Work Academy during the delivery stage of the pilot.

6.2 The following points were raised in discussion:

- a) Due to several sub-contractors being used, the final figures for the project were not expected until June *but* if all the numbers that had been pledged by the subcontractors came in then the target would be exceeded.
- b) There would be an underspend on the project even if final participant numbers were achieved as bursaries, for eg. childcare or travel, had not been claimed.
- c) Councillors were reassured that the evaluation of the project would look at why there had been a lack of uptake of bursaries and whether, for example, it was because they were difficult to access or because they had not been advertised widely enough.
- d) Officers would be looking to see if they could use some of the Adult Education Budget pot, to continue with the project, albeit in a slightly different guise.

### RESOLVED:

The Skills and Employment Committee unanimously resolved to:

1. Note and scrutinise the contents of the report which gives progress on the delivery phase of the pilot.
2. Note the forecast for the final validation and evaluation stage of the pilot

## **7 Combined Authority Governance Arrangements**

7.1 Jodie Townsend, Improvement Lead introduced the report which provided an overview of the changes to governance at the Combined Authority and the elements specific to the Skills and Employment Committee

The following comments were made:

- a) The Committee would look forward to working with the new Education Advisory Group
- b) It would be useful at some point in the future to review the new ways of working.

### RESOLVED:

The Skills and Employment Committee unanimously resolved to:

1. Note the changes made to CPCA Governance arrangements
2. Note the Terms of Reference for the Skills & Employment Committee
3. Note the progress in developing an Education Advisory Group as set out from 2.12
4. Provide comment on the draft Education Advisory Group Terms of Reference set out in Appendix B

<p><b>8</b></p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p>	<p><b>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Skills Improvement Plan Update</b></p> <p>Laura Guymer, Strategic Careers Hub Lead, introduced the report which updated members of the progress of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).</p> <p>The following points were raised in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The CA Board had received an update to the LSIP at their meeting on 31 May and had unanimously approved the statement that the CA had submitted.</li> <li>b) All Mayoral Combined Authorities were invited by the Secretary of State to provide a statement to go alongside the LSIP. The statement was not an approval of the LSIP but to allow the CA to share their views on the Plan.</li> <li>c) The statement produced, provided support for the LSIP and also highlighted that the Combined Authority was recognised as a consistent and authoritative voice, and a systems leader in Skills. It also recognised that the LSIP was one part of what was already quite a fragmented Skills system.</li> <li>d) The LSIP was the basis on which local colleges and providers could bid for the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF). This funding programme was currently open, so officers were working with colleges across the area to pull together a strong application to access the £2m funding pot. The college leading on the bid was Cambridge Regional College.</li> <li>e) It was disappointing that the formula used had arrived at a figure of £2m for the funding pot as this was the lowest amount that any area could get.</li> <li>f) The funding ceiling was based on productivity, the working age population and weighted by attainment. One of the issues for the Combined Authority was that within it there were very high and very low levels of both educational attainment and productivity.</li> <li>g) The LSIP document was owned by the Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce who had engaged with the constituent councils' EDOs to capture the wider region's view.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b></p> <p>The Skills and Employment Committee unanimously resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Receive an update regarding the publication of the Local Skills Improvement Plan</li> <li>2. Note the publication of the LSIP</li> <li>3. Note the statement and position of the Combined Authority in relation to the LSIP</li> <li>4. Note further devolved powers over LSIPs in the Trailblazer Devolution Deals secured by Greater Manchester and West Midlands Combined Authorities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9</b></p> <p>9.1</p> <p>9.2</p>	<p><b>Proposals for External Funding</b></p> <p>Parminder Singh Garcha, Senior Responsible Officer, introduced the report which asked the Committee to note and support the proposal outlined in the report to make applications for external funding to the National Lottery Connecting Communities Fund, the DWP Flexible Support Fund and the Youth Futures Foundation.</p> <p>The following points were raised in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) In response to a query on why the economic inactivity rate was so high in Fenland, officers proposed that they would engage with Cambridge Insights who provided the Combined Authority with economy and skills data analysis, to provide a deeper dive into Fenland's local data.</li> <li>b) The quality of health in Fenland was significantly below the quality of health in the rest of the County which may have contributed to a higher inactivity rate.</li> <li>c) The CA had co-commissioned some work with Cambridge Ahead that investigated economic inactivity in the area's over 50 population and officers would share this with the Committee to provide more insight into this issue.</li> </ul>

- d) The Cambridge Ahead work had considered both the pre and post pandemic situation.
- e) A report would be added to the July meeting agenda which would detail the proposed organisations to receive match funding and ask for a recommendation to the Board to approve the appropriate delegations to authorise them. The Chair asked whether an informal briefing note on this issue could be circulated prior to the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

The Skills & Employment Committee unanimously resolved to:

- 1. Endorse the policy intent to widen the participation of adults in learning and skills and deepen our reach into communities.
- 2. Support applications for external funding that target disadvantaged communities and individuals, particularly activities to engage economically inactive residents.
- 3. Recommend to the Combined Authority to allocate £300,000 from the Local Innovation Fund from the 2023/24 Medium Term Financial Plan to be used as potential 'match-funding' for proposals.

**ACTIONS:**

Officers to liaise with Cambridge Insights to provide the Committee with further data on the reasons behind the high level of economic inactivity in Fenland.

- 3. The co-commissioned work with Cambridge Ahead on economic inactivity in the area's over 50 population to be circulated to the Committee.
- 4. A short briefing note on the proposed organisations to receive match funding to be circulated to the Committee prior to the July meeting.

**10 Employment and Skills Board Update**

10.1 Fliss Miller, Assistant Director for Skills introduced the report which provided the Committee with a summary of the recent meeting of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Employment and Skills Board (ESB)

10.2 During discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) Officers were looking to extend the membership of the Employment and Skills Board and had therefore contacted several employers in the region to broaden the reach of the Board. Any additional recommendations by Committee members would be welcomed.

**RESOLVED:**

The Skills & Employment Committee resolved to:

- 1. Note the paper which provided an overview of the recent Employment and Skills Board held on 16 May 2023

**11 Budget and Performance Report**

11.1 Rob Emery, Assistant Director Finance, introduced the report which provided an update of the financial position for 2022/23 and an analysis against the 2022/23 budgets, up to the period ending March 2023

During discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) Overall, there would be an approximately 33% underspend on the programme for the year which was not ideal. The main drivers for this had been the Health Care Academy and the Skills

Bootcamps, both of which had had significant historic issues achieving the levels of learners that had been submitted in funding bids. This had been taken on as a lesson learnt when bidding for future waves of funding, so the same level of underspend was not anticipated for 2023-24

RESOLVED:

That the Skills & Employment Committee:

1. Note the year financial position against budget

**12 Skills and Employment Committee Agenda Plan**

12.1 There were no comments from the Committee

RESOLVED:

1. That the Skills and Employment Committee Agenda Plan be noted.

**13 Date of Next Meeting**

13.1 The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 3 July 2023

Meeting Ended: 11.15am