

Employment and Skills Board 16 May 2023

Attendees:

Board Members

- Al Kingsley (Chairman) - Group Managing Director - NetSupport
- Prof Ross Renton – Principal – ARU Peterborough
- Vic Annells – Chief Executive – Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce
- Martin Lawrence – Commercial Director, Metalcraft
- Dan Thorp – Director of Policy and Programmes at Cambridge Ahead

CPCA Officers

- Felicity Miller - SRO Workforce Skills
- Parminder Singh Garcha - SRO AEB
- Laura Guymer - Interim Programme Manager
- Janet Warren - Commissioner – Adult Education
- Melissa Gresswell – Project Manager: Skills Bootcamps and Special Projects
- Alexis McLeod – Senior Programme Manager
- Amos Akinwale – AEB Project Manager
- Jo Morley – Governance Manager

Part 1 – Governance Items

1.1 -Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

Apologies were received from:

Pat Carrington, Executive Principal Assistant Director Skills and Employment, City College Peterborough, Cambridgeshire County Council Peterborough City Council

Mark Robertson - Principal and CEO - Cambridge Regional College

Julia Nix - District Manager - Department for Work & Pensions (DWP/ JCP)

1.2 - Minutes and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2023 were agreed for accuracy.

It was agreed that CPCA lead officers would update the Action Log to close off actions where appropriate and bring an amended Log, with responses where needed, to the next meeting of the Board.

1.3 - Work Programme (Forward Agenda Plan)

New governance arrangements had been agreed by the CA Board at their meeting in March which resulted in an expanded remit for the former Skills Committee. As an advisory group for the new Skills and Employment Committee the Board's Forward Plan would be informed by the agenda plan for this new Committee. However, Board members would still have an opportunity to flag any important issues and include them on the work programme.

Part 2 – Delivery

2.1- Governance and Membership Review

As a number of employer representatives had moved on, CPCA officers were in the process of recruiting new members and updating the terms of reference for the Board.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- Officers had made some initial approaches to new employers but any other suggestions would be greatly received.
- Board members put forward a number of contacts which officers would follow up on after the meeting.
- The Chair announced that he would be stepping down but would continue for a transition period until a new Chair could be appointed.
- 20 Board members would be an ideal number as while recognising that not everyone could always attend this would still allow for a good representation of the different sectors at each meeting.
- It was suggested that all Members nominate substitute members that could attend in their absence.

The Board NOTED the update.

Actions:

Officers to contact the employers suggested by members as possible new members of the Board.

2.2 – Local Skills Improvement Plan – Update

Board members received a presentation on the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) which gave an overview of the LSIP priorities and how these would be taken forward and delivered.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- A key action of developing the Plan would be to get more of the Employers' views taken into consideration.

- It was important that companies engaged with the different skills partners and recognised their own responsibilities in the process, rather than feeling that they should just be able to access skills ready employees.
- Cambridge Ahead represented 50 employers and had fed back co-ordinated views on what employers should be doing; for example more involvement with work experience schemes and better strategic engagement with FE Colleges.
- Employers would be reluctant to engage in the process if they did not perceive there was any benefit for them. As such a '*What, Why and How*' message would be much stronger than just the '*What*'.
- Members felt that the Cambridge Ahead co-ordinated view of employers had not been sufficiently captured in the LSIP report. Officers would seek confirmation from PWC as to how the view had been woven into the report.
- The LSIP was to be submitted to the Department for Education on 31 May 2023.

The Board NOTED the update.

Actions:

1. Dan Thorp to share with Board members the Cambridge Ahead report submitted to PWC.
2. Officers to seek confirmation from PWC as to how the Cambridge Ahead submission had been woven into the LSIP report.

2.3 – Apprenticeship and Technical Education Insights and Discussion

Board members received a presentation on removing the friction between young people and Apprenticeships and Technical Education (ATE) and were asked to vote, on a series of questions on a 1-5 scoring criteria, with 1 being a significant barrier and 5 being a significant support. Data supplied gave both a regional and a national response for comparison purposes. Members' views were sought to give a more local point of view and to give direction as to where works should be focussed.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- In response to a question on access to relevant training options, members felt that within the CPCA area there would be several different responses as it was known to be a significant issue in the north of the region.
- Within schools there was definitely improved awareness of apprenticeships, but they were not given the same emphasis as other available options. Once an individual had left school it was not always obvious where to go to get more information on apprenticeships.
- Funding streams that had dried up meant there was less access to Independent Training Providers than there had been previously.

- There was a disconnect between the subjects that learners were most interested in – Creative & Media, Law and Legal and Science and research and those careers which had the highest vacancies such as Healthcare, ICT and engineering.
- Feedback from the Board would help officers to formulate a response to the Careers and Enterprise Company, highlighting that there were so many diverging needs across the different parts of the region.

The Board NOTED the presentation.

2.7 - Any Other Business

The Board requested the following item for the July agenda:

- The over 50's workforce: to include the results of the work jointly commissioned by the CPCA and Cambridge Ahead investigating why the over 50s were leaving the workforce, and what employers could do to retain the skills and experience they provided.

The next meeting of the Employment and Skills Board was confirmed as 11 July 2023.