

LSIP statement

As outlined in the Statutory Guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE) in October 2022, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) issue this statement in relation to the LSIP developed by the Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce who are the designated Employer representative Body (ERB) assigned to lead the LSIP for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The Chamber has engaged with the Combined Authority throughout the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan. The Combined Authority has been supportive of the Chamber in their new role which has included:

- The secondment a member of the skills team on a 0.2FTE basis for the duration of the first phase of the LSIP programme to inform and shape the process,
- The Assistant Director of Skills is a member of the LSIP Advisory Group,
- Brokering of relationships and convening sessions between FE providers and the Chamber,
- Sharing of communications with the wider skills and business communities,
- Ensuring regular updates were given at the Employment and Skills Board and Skills Committee to secure engagement with elected members and stakeholders.

The Combined Authority is a system leader and recognised as the consistent and authoritative voice within the skills space. We are committed to the success of the LSIP, recognising that it is one part of an already fragmented system.

The Combined Authority welcomes that the LSIP has adopted our new Employment and Skills Strategy, published in January 2022, and has built on the existing evidence and analysis that we commissioned.

The Combined Authority as lead commissioner, with devolved responsibility for adult skills provision, still has reservations about the role proposed by Government, for ERBs to lead the LSIP. We question whether this mechanism alone will achieve the outcomes proposed. We welcome the recognition that employers need to have a more considered and structured mechanism to inform skills, both now and in the future.

Therefore, the Combined Authority requests the DfE reviews the wider governance of the LSIP. We propose that the Trailblazer deals for Greater Manchester and West Midlands are also implemented for all Combined Authorities forthwith: with our new 'strong governance board' having strategic oversight, facilitating alignment and addressing issues for relevant post-16 technical education or training, that delivers the local skills improvement plan.

Furthermore, this must include a role in signing-off the local skills improvement fund application from the lead college. This will ensure alignment of local skills improvement fund-funded projects and wider labour market strategies, ensuring that good value-for-money investments are made, that will deliver the most effective outcomes for residents and businesses.

The Combined Authority is fully committed to the strategic intent of the LSIP, to provide a representative and coherent employer view of the skills most needed to support local economic growth; the mission to boost productivity, improve employability and progression for learners. The ERB has faced difficulty in bringing additional and diverse employer voices into this process. The ERB's lack of experience of the current skills system has hindered the value achieved by the final report.

The Combined Authority expects that the LSIP process should embed a stronger and more dynamic relationship between employers and providers within local skills systems. However delayed engagement with the core FE provider base requires the ERB to invest in further relationship development through the next phase of the LSIP.

The Combined Authority recognises that this is the start of a process and are committed to the continued development and integration of the LSIP, recognising the scope and limitations of the report.