



Skills & Employment Committee – Draft Minutes

Monday 3 July 2023

Venue:	Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, Huntingdon PE29 3TN	
Time:	11.00 to 13.00	
Present:	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha Mayor Dr Nik Johnson Councillor James Lay Councillor Jackie Allen Councillor Eileen Wilson Councillor Sam Wakeford Mr Vic Annells	Chair and Member for Cambridgeshire County Council CPCA Mayor East Cambridgeshire District Council Peterborough City Council (substitute member) South Cambridgeshire District Council Huntingdonshire District Council Business Board Representative
Apologies	Councillor Ian Benney Councillor Lynn Ayres Councillor Sam Carling Councillor Rachel Wade Mr Nitin Patel	Fenland District Council Peterborough City Council Cambridge City County Council Cambridge City County Council (substitute member) Business Board Representative

Minutes:

1	Announcements, Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest
1.1	Apologies were received from Mr Patel, Cllr Benney, Cllr Carling, Cllr Wade, and Cllr Ayres who was substituted by Cllr Allen.
1.2	No declarations of interest were made.
2	Minutes of the Skills Committee meeting on 5 June 2023 and Action Log
2.1	The minutes of the meeting on 5 June 2023 were approved as an accurate record.
2.2	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.
3	Public Questions
3.1	No public questions had been received.

<p>4</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p>Employment and Skills Strategy Implementation Update</p> <p>Fliss Miller, Assistant Director - Skills, introduced the report which informed the Skills and Employment Committee of the progress that has been made in taking forward the implementation of the Employment and Skills Strategy.</p> <p>The following points were raised in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The majority of actions were being taken forward and were on time. A few of the actions were no longer relevant because the impact of the pandemic had not been as great as had been expected at the time the Employment and Skills Strategy was developed. b) The metrics had not been updated as there had not been a full second year of data. When the data was released, probably in January of next year, the information would be brought back to the Committee. c) Councillors observed that a lot of the information contained within the report would be picked up under other agenda items d) The report, in the main, was a good news story and it was pleasing to see the information captured in one place. e) The report showed how much the situation had changed since the Strategy was first developed and how it had been continually flexed in response to the changes in the economy and the overall skills and employment picture. <p><u>RESOLVED</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Skills & Employment Committee unanimously resolved to note the progress of the Implementation of the Employment and Skills Strategy
<p>5</p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p>District and Unitary Council Employment and Skills Profiles</p> <p>Parminder Singh-Garcha, Senior Responsible Officer, introduced the report which aimed to support members' understanding of the high-level data available to inform the Employment and Skills Strategy in the sub-region. Tom King from Cambridgeshire Insights had overseen the production of the profiles and was in attendance to answer any technical questions from members.</p> <p>The following points were raised in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) People Plus, a Peterborough provider, had taken a commercial decision to withdraw from delivering adult education across the country. Officers felt that the offer would easily be absorbed by other providers the CPCA had in the Peterborough area. b) The figures included in the profiles, which would be fundamental to driving investment by businesses, showed that the need to upskill staff was greatest in Fenland and Peterborough. c) The profiles helped to identify where support should be focussed, at postcode level rather than by region, so that pockets of need, that fell in the top 30% of relatively deprived areas, were picked up. This included large areas of Fenland and Peterborough but also pockets such as north-east Cambridge, the south-west of South Cambridgeshire and north of Huntingdonshire. d) It was important to flag that unitary and district level averages were masking a more complex picture down to ward or parish level. For example, if you looked at the number of residents post 16 without qualifications but within a working age bracket, rather than everyone post 16, then it may throw into sharper focus some of the challenges faced by particular districts. e) Areas such as the Science Park in Cambridge should be recruiting local talent and it was important to create local aspiration in the neighbouring, more deprived, areas. f) In East Cambridgeshire employers reported that there were not enough people who had the requisite skills required for the jobs that were available. g) There were a number of barriers to learning but the one that got cited most often was transport. h) The Assistant Director – Skills was working with Transport colleagues, College principals and DWP to look at working better together and ensuring residents could take up learning opportunities and have access to the provision.

- i) The pie-chart shown in 2.8 of the report showed that Peterborough had the highest number of Skills Bootcamp enrolments. Officers considered that this was probably due to population density but would come back with an informed answer.

RESOLVED:

The Skills and Employment Committee unanimously resolved to:

1. Note the District and Unitary Council Employment and Skills Profiles that have been compiled to inform strategy, policy, and strategic commissioning.
2. Note a summary of CA commissioning and its alignment to addressing local need.
3. Consider how well district and unitary council initiatives contribute to the wider Employment and Skills Strategy that all constituent councils have approved.

ACTIONS:

1. Officers to report back to the Committee on the reasons the participation in Skills Bootcamps was higher in Peterborough than in other areas.

6 AEB Local Fund Allocations 2022-23

6.1 Parminder Singh-Garcha, Senior Responsible Officer, introduced the report which requested that the Committee recommend to the Combined Authority Board that they approve delegations for funding allocations from the Local Innovation Fund, and delegations to the Assistant Director of Skills to enter into grant funding agreements.

6.2 During discussion the following comments were made:

- a) Those wanting to access ESOL provision would still have a choice of provider and continue to enrol with a college. Where the newly proposed Single Point Of Contact (SPOC) for the region would add value was by co-ordinating the offer and providing a single assessment process which was not in place at the moment. The SPOC would also provide an outreach function for those learners who did not know about the provision, including employment support and wider community integration.

RESOLVED:

The Skills and Employment Committee unanimously resolved to:

1. Recommend the Combined Authority Board approve allocations from the Local Innovation Fund 2023- 24 to the organisations listed in this report.
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 grant funding agreements with the organisations set out in this report.
3. Recommend that the Combined Authority Board delegates authority to the Assistant Director - Skills in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer, to procure, tender and award and sign a three-year contract for services for the ESOL Single Point of Contact (SPOC) following conclusion of procurement.

7 UK SPF – Skills Projects and Succession Planning for Skills Brokerage Service

7.1 Alexis McLeod, Senior Programme Manager, introduced the report which provided Members with information in relation to the three Combined Authority wide skills projects as identified within the Combined Authority's UKSPF Investment and Implementation plans; Holistic Online skills, All Age

Careers Service across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, and Supported Internships across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough.

7.2 The following points were raised in discussion:

- a) The intent with the Community Renewal Fund and the Turning Point Internships was to build on the existing programme. This had been predominantly focussed on the Fenland and Peterborough area as officers were acutely aware of the challenges there and because funding had been specific to these areas. Work would continue with Economic Development Leads in all the constituent areas over the next six months to ensure that programmes were distributed in a way that would have the greatest impact and to make sure that all interventions were needs led.
- b) The Combined Authority was already linked in to all the secondary schools who were the majority of providers in the area.
- c) The funding would support better integration and allow for easier access with clearer navigation, making the system much less complex.
- d) Officers had a collaborative approach with constituent authorities and were in a good position to explore opportunities for jobs within the culture sector.
- e) A more detailed report with recommendations would come back before the Committee at their meeting in September

RESOLVED:

The Skills and Employment Committee unanimously resolved to:

1. Receive further detail in relation to three Combined Authority wide UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) projects as identified within the published UKSPF Investment and Implementation plans.
2. Endorse the outlined approach to developing a suitable vehicle for the collective delivery of the three projects.
3. Note that the Assistant Director - Skills in consultation with the Lead Member for Skills will identify and implement a best value delivery model in respect to the projects outlined within the proposal. This will include identification of the preferred delivery mechanism and development of strategic commissioning if appropriate.

ACTIONS:

1. The Mayor, the Chair of the Skills and Employment Committee, and the Chief Executive of the CPCA to meet to discuss the development of a strategy to create jobs within the culture sector and where that might sit within the CPCA's different workstreams.

8 Budget and Performance Report – July 2023

8.1 Bruna Menegatti, Finance Manager, introduced the report which provided details of the full year budget available for 2023/24

8.2 During discussion, the following points were noted:

- a) Each year there were two papers brought to the Committee which looked at how the budget was spent and the performance and output/impact of that money. For example, officers would look at not just the number of learners and enrolments but also whether they finished and what employment opportunities had been found. The next paper was due in the Autumn.
- b) The Chair requested a further update on Further Education cold spots as its RAG status was not yet reported on in the report. Officers were due to report on the commissioning of a feasibility study to look into these cold spots at the September meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Skills & Employment Committee:

1. Note the full year budget for 2023/24.

ACTIONS:

1. That a written update on Further Education cold spots be circulated to the Committee before the September meeting of the Committee.

9. Skills and Employment Committee Agenda Plan

9.1 There were no comments from the Committee

RESOLVED:

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

10. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED:

1. That the Skills and Employment Committee remain in public session.

11. Growth Works Management Update to Year 3, Q9 (to April 2023)

11.1 Steve Clarke, Interim Associate Director Business, introduced the report which updated the Skills and Employment Committee on performance data for the Growth Works Programme for the reporting period to 31st April 2023 (Year 3, Quarter 9).

11.2 During discussion the following points were noted:

- a) Nigel Parkinson, Independent Chair of the Growth companies sent his apologies as he would normally be involved in presenting the updates.
- b) The macro-economic impact on the programme was highlighted to Members. Companies had to contend with the effects of the Pandemic and Brexit, and the war in Ukraine which had led to runaway supply costs, a recruitment crisis and inflation. In light of these factors it was surprising that the programme, although underperforming against target, did as well as it did.
- c) Officers had been acutely aware of the regional breakdown of performance throughout the programme. When it had originally been established, the contract was set up to deliver across the whole of the area as a universal service and expected that there would be some economies of scale. Contractors were not given very hard targets for each area but in fact were allowed a level of flexibility. Additional weighting was given to Fenland and Peterborough for the grant criteria, but it was acknowledged that there had been challenges with how some had been delivered with contractors marketing into the different areas but having a response rate that had not been consistent. There had also been pre-existing interest in some of the services as the Peterborough skills team had been transferred in at the beginning and had brought with them relationships and connections. Officers would be seeking to address the disparities by the end of the programme but advised that they were not going to reach a place where there would be an exact statistical match against percentages of the population or businesses. If the contract were set up again officers would look to have much smaller local geographies with harder targets.
- d) Apprenticeships were below target and while there were things that the contractor could have done better, the Committee needed to be aware of the challenges that providers were facing in delivering apprenticeships. City College Peterborough and the Skills Network, a large national training provider, had pulled out and other colleges were struggling. Whilst the CPCA did not have the funding to take things forward it was felt that the provision of apprenticeships was critical to support the area's businesses and residents, and that the Committee should be cognisant of the issues.
- e) An invitation had been issued to the Mayor to speak with the Chief Executive of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education and this would be taken forward.

	<p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <p>1. That the Skills and Employment Committee note the Growth Works Programme Performance Update to Year 3, Quarter 9 (to April 2023)</p> <p><u>ACTIONS:</u></p> <p>1. That a report on the national and local challenges of delivering apprenticeships be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.</p>
<p>12</p> <p>12.1</p>	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 3 July 2023</p>

Meeting Ended: 11.15am