



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Skills Committee

Meeting: Monday 7 November 2022

Venue: Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon

Time: 10.00 am - 12.20pm

Present:

Cllr Lucy Nethsingha - Chair and Member for Cambridgeshire County Council

Cllr Lis Every - East Cambridgeshire District Council

Cllr Lynne Ayres - Peterborough City Council

Cllr Sam Carling - Cambridge City Council

Cllr Tom Sanderson - Huntingdonshire District Council

Apologies:

Cllr Peter McDonald - South Cambridgeshire District Council

Cllr Chris Seaton - Fenland District Council

Cllr Sam Wakeford - Huntingdonshire District Council

Part 1 - Governance Items

88. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest and Announcements

Apologies received from Councillor Peter McDonald and Councillor Chris Seaton and Councillor Sam Wakeford substituted by Councillor Tom Sanderson. No declarations of interest were made.

89. Minutes of the Skills Committee meeting on 5 September 2022 and Actions

The minutes of the meeting on 5 September 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

In reference to the minutes a member queried what progress had been made in relation to the establishment of an Education Committee. The Interim Associate Skills Director stated that the development of the committee formed part of a wider governance review, and was work in progress. She explained that the terms of reference had been drafted and officers had started to look at how the committee would link into the new proposals.

The action log was noted.

90. Public Questions

Questions from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were taken at the relevant items on the agenda.

Part 2 – Delivery

91. Careers Hub Operational Plan

The Committee received a report that gave an update on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Careers Hub and outlined the wider ambition of the Combined Authority in relation to Careers support within the region. Following the expansion of the Careers Hub in September 2022, the paper provided the committee with an update on performance and future planned activities.

The Committee received a question from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this report. The written responses were read out and can be found at appendix 1 of the minutes.

In particular, the presenting officers highlighted:

- There was strong performance in 2021/22 and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Careers Hub was one of the top performing hubs in the country.
- A new operations manager had joined the combined authority in October 2022 and had over 20 years' experience working within careers education. His expertise would be used to drive the delivery of the Careers Hub plan.
- A Steering Group had been set up and would meet quarterly.
- Further funding of £19,600 had been secured via a competitive tender process with the Careers and Enterprise Company, which would fund CPD for subject teachers to understand career pathways and technical education options related to their subject areas.
- The Operating Plan for 2022-22 was included as an appendix to the report.

Discussing the report Members:

- Congratulated the skills team on the high performance of the careers hub.
- Questioned why the operational plan did not have a timeline and asked what measure would be taken to evaluate the outcomes. Officers explained that the plan covered more than one academic year and the impact would be dependent on the actions identified. Officers explained that there would be core impact measures for the areas with funding streams.
- Queried how the careers service would be integral to the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP). The Associate Skills Director stated that it was crucial that the careers hub had a voice in the LSIP and that the Strategic Careers Hub Lead had been seconded to work one day a week with the Chamber of Commerce on the LSIP to ensure that there was a joined-up approach as initial conversations had indicated that careers might not be within the LSIP.
- Sought clarity on who would be on the steering group and when it would meet and if there would be cross county representation, and inclusion of a SEND representative. Officers explained that the group had not met yet and that they could circulate further details on the steering group representation.

Action Required

- Questioned how schools had been involved in conversations regarding technical education. Officers clarified that there had been discussions with schools to ensure that the right T Levels were in place and that support was given to schools in order that were able to move in to this space.

The chair stated that at a recent Centre for Cities Conference in Cambridge the need for careers advice and training had been raised many times and there was a need for better join-up between different organisations working on careers, such as Cambridge Region of Learning, Form the Future the Sanger Institute, and Cambridge Ahead. Officers stated that one of the pieces of work that was being undertaken by the Combined Authority was the Careers Upskilling Point ensuring that all schools were able to engage with business which was key. Officers explained that in terms of the wider organisations, the Combined Authority work with all of these organisations closely. Two enterprise co-ordinators were employed by Form the Future for example.

The Interim Associate Skills Director stated that she had recently spoken to the Department for Education (DfE) and the outcome of the John Holman review of careers education was still awaited and that when this had been released but that the DfE had indicated that it would be the right time to start the conversations again with central government. She explained that there were a number of Combined Authorities including Manchester who were looking to have careers funding and responsibility devolved to them

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the performance and future plans of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Careers Hub and to provide feedback to shape the provision of the Careers Hub.

92. Working Together with the Third Sector

The Committee considered a report that sought to strengthen partnership and co-production with local third sector organisations to deliver adult education and skills courses and requested approval for an allocation of £300,000 from the Adult Education Budget Innovation Fund and £100,000 from Multiply for the 2022/23 academic year to pilot a different approach to commissioning of local third sector organisations who had a base within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority area.

The Committee received a question from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this report. The written responses were read out and can be found at appendix 1 of the minutes.

In particular, the presenting officers highlighted:

- The report highlighted four potential models for piloting a different approach to Third Sector commissioning for learning and skills provision and that the proposal was to pursue models two and four outlined in the report.

Discussing the report Members:

- Questioned the information provided in table two of the report and why there was no overt connection with Fenland or East Cambridgeshire as they did not have any providers in their area.
- Expressed concern regarding past underspends in the area and the top-slicing of funding. Officers explained that they noted the concerns and would ensure that these concerns were addressed with the provider that they appointed.
- Agree with the conversation with Councils for Voluntary Services (CVS). Officers highlighted that they would work with CVSs in order to come up with the best options.
- Queried whether it would be just the lead provider that would be subject to OFSTED inspections. Officers confirmed that this would be the case.
- Highlighted that model two only had one lead organisation and queried whether there could be two as Peterborough had many charities and third sector organisations and the City College, for example, could be the lead organisation. Officers explained that they would take this comment back to

the CVS representatives as an option. The purpose of this exercise was co-design and co-production with the Third Sector – this was a different approach to current arrangements with existing providers such as City College Peterborough.

- Queried why CVSs preferred model two over model four. Officers explained that the reason was in relation to historical ways of working and how providers sub contract. They pass-on Combined Authority and EFSA funding rules to the sub-contractors. Officers stated as the new approach was a partnership approach, a bottom-up approach. The figure of up to 15% for a management fee was in line-with the Combined Authority's funding rules and was less than the national.

In bringing the debate to a close the chair thanked officers for the report and was a good example of how the AEB budget was being managed more flexibly under devolution. She explained that she was supportive of the idea that officers moved forward with model two and model four as they did not conflict, in order to bring in as many voluntary sector organisations as possible and asked that the recommendation be changed to reflect this. The Interim Associate Skills Director explained that it would be possible to consider both options.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Approve the allocation of £300,000 from the devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) Local Innovation Fund and £100,000 from the Multiply budget for the 2022/23 academic year, to pilot a new approach to commissioning local third sector organisations to deliver learning in the community.
- b) Delegate authority to the Interim Associate Director of Skills in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer, to enter into and sign grant funding agreements for AEB Local Innovation Fund and Multiply with the nominated providers, once selected.
- c) To note the different models for commissioning the Third Sector and proposal to consider Model two and Model four subject to further scoping with providers and the sector.

93. Review of Innovation Fund and Proposals for 2022-23

The Committee received a report that outlined early findings from a rapid desk-top review of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) Innovation Fund projects which were approved in 2020/21 and the recommendations arising from the review.

The Committee received a question from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this report. The written responses were read out and can be found at appendix 1 of the minutes.

In particular, the presenting officers highlighted:

- The list of projects approved which included capital matched with the Local Growth Fund..
- In 2021-22 the fund was expanded to include two additional streams in relation to partnership development and capacity building.
- The main finding had been that the Combined Authority had been able to, for a modest funding allocation, support 18 projects to support partnership working and capacity building and they were projects that would not have been supported through another route. Positive feedback had been received from stakeholders and providers and, nationally, the Department for education were consulting on creating an innovation funding strand as part of funding reforms, which the Combined Authority had already implemented.
- The report sets out the estimated budget for 2022/23 and there was work underway to finalise the budget with finance. Proposed themes for the budget were set out in the report.
- In the process of commissioning a three-year impact evaluation of AEB over the last three years since devolution and this would include innovation projects that the CA had supported.

Discussing the report Members:

- Commented as there were no FE providers and Infrastructure in East Cambridgeshire they were not in a good position to put forward any bids for the innovation projects. A Member requested information on the numbers of people in East Cambridgeshire that had benefitted from the funding and how this could be offset in the future. Officers noted the issues around FE cold-spots and provision in East Cambridgeshire and commented that as the authority moved towards the delivery of the Employment and Skills Strategy, there would be an opportunity to articulate a local focus. There would be a rebranding of the innovation fund to more of a local focus. Looking at specific interventions is one of the things that will be taken into consideration to address systemic issues. Officers explained that they would be looking at local impact as part of the specification to look at the local impact of all funding and the totality of investment through devolution.
- Highlighted that it would be useful to have a directory of ESOL providers across the whole county and sought clarification on what was meant by a single point of contact. Officers explained that the single point of contact was in order that the CA could capture the totality of the offer for ESOL given the concerns that DWP colleagues and local areas had highlighted around capacity. The idea was to build on the national best practice model and was something that other authorities had in place including Manchester, Greater London and Bedford. Officers explained that this would also include the wider

wrap around support for learners to access opportunities to look at where there were gaps and look at other wider funded programmes, using an umbrella based approach.

- Questioned whether there would be a maximum amount that could be bid for tenders. Officers explained that they needed to look at this in more detail when they knew the totality of the funding.
- Queried the logic around not seeking an open call on projects this time around. Officers stated that there had been open calls for projects over the last two years and that a different approach was being taken using opportunities to work better in partnership with organisations and taking a co-productive approach.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the rapid review of the Adult Education Budget Innovation Fund programme for 2020/21, the current position with the 2021/22 and the next steps
- b) Note the Innovation Fund(s) budgets and approve the allocations to the Local Innovation Fund project themes proposed in this report for 2022/23 academic year.

94. Health and Care Sector Work Academy

The Committee considered a report that detailed the progress and performance of the Health and Care Sector Work Academy to date. The report also gave a performance prediction for the remainder of the project including any mitigation that is being undertaken.

The Committee received a question from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this report. The written responses were read out and can be found at appendix 1 of the minutes.

In particular, the presenting officers highlighted:

- The project was designed to be delivered by City College Peterborough (CCP) as the lead partner with other providers also delivering. Pre-Covid subcontracts were given to other FE providers delivering within the CPCA area. Unfortunately during this time none of the subcontractors were able to deliver against this project. Post Covid CCP continued to kickstart the delivery and sought other providers to partner with..
- Post-Covid five subcontractors were successful in completing the procurement process and contracts for their delivery were issued in July 2022. Due to the contracts starting during the summer recess the providers had only now been able to recruit learners to undertake this programme. This was a slower start than anticipated however there was a pipeline starting to

materialise. Two of the larger providers stepped out of the space and they were now working with more niche providers. There were risks in terms of the finances not being able to deliver to the full amount of £5.2m and c£2m underspend

- A workshop was due to take place with the providers and DWP and the CA to work on engaging and recruiting individuals to the programme.
- Feedback they had received was in relation to the challenge of pay in the sector and individuals could earn more in other sectors.

Discussing the report Members:

- Highlighted the changes of approach to engagement to engage hard to reach groups and asked officers to outline the changes that they had made that could be learnt from going forwards. Officers explained that it was crucial to continually evolve and change and to go out to the individuals you wanted to attract, including taking the model to employers premises. Officers explained that individuals valued the in-person training and want to get on and move very quickly. It was crucial to remove as many barriers to learning as possible and to accept that life can sometimes get in the way of learning. A member stated that the funding was initially set up as an infrastructure that supported the individual and not everyone needed that support so the funding was not used. Officers explained that initially the funding was set up to support for pay for childcare and transport and this was not accessed as much as had been expected as the training was being taken out to individuals at a time that suited them. Officers stated that however it was invaluable to have access to childcare and transport funding for rural areas.
- Sought clarity on the relationship with the DWP throughout the pilot. Officers stated that they were a key partner as the funding came from them. There had been varying levels of engagement throughout the pilot, during the roll out of universal credit engagement had been lower. Officers explained that they had recently had a meeting with the Regional Director to review the pilot. It was also how the providers interacted with the DWP. Take up was less in terms of referrals however currently social media was the key to driving recruitment to the programme. The Interim Associate Skills Director explained that at the meeting with the Regional Director there was a conversation around what the perception would be if the project did not spend the funds allocated and meet the targets set. She explained that there were no concerns in relation to this, as the project was a pilot received through a Section 31 Grant Determination which may not be recovered. Officers were reviewing options for how the funding could be utilised in other sectors.
- Queried the further marketing that had been carried out and what the impact of this had been. Officers explained that social media had been a very successful tool for marketing throughout the pilot. Officers stated that it had been apparent that sub-contractors had been marketing at different times and

in different ways. Officers were in the process of developing a co-ordinated marketing campaign across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and looking to ensure that links through to key websites were more impactful.

In bringing the debate to a close the Chair highlighted the importance of the pilot regardless of the outcome, as it was a sector where individuals with the right skills were desperately needed. She highlighted the importance of continuing in the Health and Social Care field and look at how people were attracted into the sector and trained and she was keen to retain the funding in this area. The Interim Associate Skills Director stated that they had just started to look at the options for how the funding could be utilised and this would be part of the review. Officers highlighted that there were a number of success stories with individuals who had progressed to management positions and that this needed to be captured as part of the lessons learnt.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) note and scrutinise the contents of the report which gives progress to date of the Health and Care Sector Work Academy.
- b) note the predicted performance for the remainder of the project.

95. Growth Works Performance Review

The Committee received a report that highlighted the programme performance data for Quarter 7 (Year two) covering the period July to September 2022.

The Committee received a question from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this report. The written responses were read out and can be found at appendix 1 of the minutes.

In particular, the presenting officers highlighted:

- The overall jobs forecast performance outturn showed as being ahead of the curve but this masked a number of underlying challenges.
- The Customer Satisfaction Survey that was undertaken quarterly showed that 62% classed as excellent.
- Growth Work with Skills service was behind on all of its leading indicators this quarter and a new approach to the service was being attempted and the team had started to build a different approach on the ground and different relationships, however engagement had been slow and performance of skills was juxtaposed with what the market was telling us, which there was a need to invigorate skills.
- Growth coaching had achieved 1,000 jobs however the trend line was going downwards. If it continued on the current trend line it would only deliver 59% of its original target to deliver.

- Inward investment service line was currently to 627 over achieving on all of its targets with a pipeline of 200 companies that needed servicing.
- Grants and equity service line was predicted to deliver 69% of it total, the challenge was that there was a dwindling pot and it was late starting.
- The report covered the findings of the programme review on overall performance to date, as undertaken by Gateley Economic Growth Service (GEG) and suggested recommendations proposed from the Programme review and consensus was sought from members on their implementation to address performance concerns and to sustain successful delivery of the Growth Works Programme.

Discussing the report Members:

- Requested a breakdown of the £500,000 and how it would be spent and where the jobs would be created and why it was being taken from the growth coaching and moved to inward investment and how this might impact. Officers explained that confidence was not high in terms of growth coaching with how it was currently set up and businesses were looking for other forms of support. Inward Investment had achieved far more jobs than had been predicted. By supporting this line and bringing businesses into the region would grow high value jobs.
- Queried whether the constituent authorities and leaders were given the opportunity to feed in to the review and shape the required outcomes. Officer explained that they would feed in when the review was taken to the board and the CA worked with the economic development teams in the districts and they were all aware of the performance levels.
- Highlighted the fifth recommendation in relation to the performance of Growth Works with Skills and sought clarity on what the plan was to improve performance going forwards. The Interim Associate Skills Director stated that she was very disappointed with the performance of Growth Works with Skills. She explained that there had been numerous workshops with the team and the CA over the summer with little feedback being taken on board. She explained that there were a number of options going forward including bringing the service in house, seeking another delivery partner and requiring them to change their senior leadership structure.
- Questioned the response rates on the customer satisfaction surveys. Officers explained that the independent surveyor was looking at ways to increase the response rates.
- Welcomed the good performance of the inward investment service and queried what the other factors were in creating the jobs other than the monetary investment alone. Officers explained that the inward investment service was about attracting companies to the area, many of which were overseas companies and companies located in other parts of the country.

The work behind getting companies to establish in the CA area could take up to 18 months of focussed hard work. Members requested further information on where the jobs have been created. **Action Required** Officers stated that they were working with the contractor to create a data pack by district that included this information.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the Growth Works Programme performance data for Q7 (01 July to 30 September 2022).
- b) Note the outcomes and findings of the recent Programme review.
- c) Recommend the Combined Authority approves the implementation of proposed six recommendations from the Programme review as outlined in section 8 of this report.

96. Employment and Skills Board Update

The Committee received a report that provided an overview of the recent Employment and Skills Board held on 18 October 2022.

Discussing the report:

- The Chair commented that it would be beneficial for a member of the Committee to attend the Board meeting from time to time. **Action required**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the paper which provides an overview of the recent Employment and Skills Board held on 18 October 2022.

97. Budget and Performance Report – November 2022

The Committee considered a report that provided an update of the outturn position for 2022/23 and an analysis against the 2022/23 budgets, up to the period ending August 2022.

In particular, the presenting officers highlighted:

- The finance team would be reviewing the format of the finance and performance report with the skills team and a break down of the budget would be provided in future months.
- The variances in budget detailed in section 3.3 of the report

Discussing the report Members:

- Noted that the variances were in relation to the timings of payments and that the majority would be paid ahead of the next reporting cycle. The Interim Associate Skills Director stated that they had finance support in the team for a number of months and that now there was support in place they would be reviewing how finance and performance was reported

It was resolved unanimously to:

note the year-to-date outturn position against budget.

98. University of Peterborough, Delivery Update and Future CPCA Role

The Committee received a report that gave an update on the delivery of the University of Peterborough and a review of the continued role of the combined authority in shaping the delivery of the university as part of a programme business case review process during 2023.

In particular, the presenting officers highlighted:

- A review of the original business case and associated KPI's was required. The report outlined a strategy for reviewing the initial outputs of the University in line with the approval of the phase 3 full business case, which was due to be considered by the Combined Authority Skills Committee, Business Board and Combined Authority Board in January 2023.
- The review would also consider what the Combined Authority's role could be over the next 2 years and offered a proposed way forward in realising the opportunities available to ensure the success of the University and its Campus.

Discussing the report Members:

- Queried whether Metrodynamics were working with the CA and the University to review the metrics. Officers explained that they were commissioned under phase three of the University to help deliver and rewrite the full Business Case to be taken to Skills Committee and CA Board in January 2023.
- Congratulated officers on the number of students currently enrolled and the new intake that was due in January 2023. Members requested a visit to the University in the new year. **Action required.**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the progress of the development of the University of Peterborough, the opening and operation of the phase 1 building to students by ARU Peterborough and its initial and potential performance against the original business plan objectives.

- b) Note the future role of the Combined Authority in the next few months in the further evolution and development of the University through the following:
- i. Preparation and submission for approval of the Phase 3 full business case including a review of the University's original quantitative objectives set at the Phase 1 full business case, with further recommendations about how to reset these for effective monitoring of the new University.
 - ii. Update and preparation of the University Programme Business Case including partners strategy for delivery.
 - iii. Supporting and managing the preparation and submission of an outline planning application for a scheme to articulate the vision to potentially expand the University campus beyond the phase 3.
 - iv. To review the business plan and approach to lettings for the phase 2 building to achieve the best outcome.

99. Skills Committee Agenda Plan

It was resolved to note the agenda plan.

100. Exclusion of the Press and Public

It was resolved unanimously;

to exclude the press and public from the meeting to discuss appendix 1 of item 2.8 'University of Peterborough, Delivery Update and Future CPCA Role' which is exempt from publication under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, in that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information.