



<b>SKILLS COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM No: 2.4</b>
<b>06 JULY 2020</b>	<b>PUBLIC REPORT</b>

## **INTEGRATED BUSINESS & SKILLS INSIGHT & EVALUATION PROGRAMME**

### **1.0 PURPOSE**

1.1 To propose the consolidation of all Business & Skills activities to provide:

- (a) Economic, sector and place insight to inform the focus of current and future programmes, and
- (b) Monitoring and evaluation of the efficacy of current and past projects to inform the selection of the most effective intervention types for that focus

1.2. This consolidation will integrate currently separate activities as below to create an Integrated Business & Skills Insight & Evaluation Programme:

- (a) The current COVID-19 Impact Survey (co-funded with GCP)
- (b) The planned COVID-19 Impact Econometric Assessment
- (c) The planned COVID-19 refresh of the LIS, Skills and Sector Strategies
- (d) The planned Growth Observatory to identify clients for Growth Service
- (e) The ongoing skills market insight for workforce skills and adult education

1.3. The report recommends resourcing the commissioning exercise through existing MTFP budgets and seek authorisation to consolidate these.

<b><u>DECISION REQUIRED</u></b>	
<b>Lead Member:</b>	<b>Councillor John Holdich</b>
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<b>John T Hill, Director of Business &amp; Skills</b>
<b>Forward Plan Ref: N/A</b>	<b>Key Decision: No</b>
The Skills Committee is recommended to:  1. Approve the Integrated Business & Skills Insight & Evaluation Programme and the commissioning of the programme;  2. Recommend the Combined Authority Board approve the consolidation of the SME Observatory budget and the LGF Top Slice and BEIS Support Funding as detailed in Table 1, to resource the commissioning:	<b>Voting arrangements</b>  Simple majority of all Members

<p>3. Recommend the Combined Authority Board approve the consolidation of the AEB Programme costs, National Retraining scheme and Apprenticeships as detailed in Table 2, to resource the commissioning.</p>	
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## 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In April 2020 the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) and CPCA jointly resourced and commissioned a study into the short-term implications of COVID-19 on business and the economy, through a telephone and virtual meeting survey process. This is led by the GCP and scheduled for completion and sign off in early July 2020. The survey findings will assist the CPCA and Partners in the design of the medium term COVID-19 recovery focus and intervention portfolio.
- 2.2 A more detailed, econometric analysis is required over a period of 6 months to ensure initial interventions are based on quantitative as well as qualitative data and to take account of secondary and tertiary impacts on the local economy.
- 2.3 Other regular insight is undertaken by separate teams for the Employment Skills Board and to inform the commissioning strategy for AEB.
- 2.4 On 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the Business Board approved a further piece of insight work to complement the launch of the Business Growth Service to provide a data driven approach to identifying potential scale-ups for inclusion within the Growth Coaching Service – This was named the SME Observatory.

## 3.0 THE COMMISSIONING AND TIMELINE

- 3.1 It is proposed that independent and specialist support will be commissioned through a procurement exercise by the end of June 2020 in order to undertake detailed research, review and evaluation.
- 3.2 The outputs planned is a detailed report published in September 2020, followed by an updated refresh of recovery status in April 2021.
- 3.3 These detailed reports will enable the CPCA to better design the focus of interventions, the form of interventions and how those should develop and adapt as recovery progresses.
- 3.4 Key to this work will be partnership working with all constituent authorities in the CPCA, business organisations and partner agencies such as Opportunity Peterborough and GCP.

#### **4.0 COVID-19 ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 4.1 The proposed assessment will be undertaken to define the impacts of COVID-19 in the short to medium term. This will include reviewing key CPCA Strategies and Plans including the Local Industrial Strategy, the Skills Strategy, and Sector Strategies. It will also include detailed econometric assessment of COVID-19 impacts on the economy, by sector and place.
- 4.2 The Assessment will build upon the programme undertaken in partnership with the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) to review economic recovery, growth and prosperity.

#### **5.0 EVALUATION OF ALL LGF PROJECTS**

- 5.1 The LGF Monitoring and Evaluation plan was agreed by the Business Board at its meeting in January 2020.
- 5.2 The LGF team were due to commence delivery, this financial year, of the Evaluation part of the plan (phase one; historical completed projects) which included procurement of a contractor to provide data analysis, output/outcome modelling and impact reports for each project.
- 5.3 Due to COVID-19 the LGF team have been refocussed to support COVID-19 grant schemes and support for existing in delivery and pre-contract projects. This has meant that the team have not been able to enact an evaluation plan yet and an update will be taken to Business Board in July 2020.
- 5.4 The work will include the activity of the two temporary staff taken on to assess the success, and efficacy of all LGF funded projects, this is in order to identify which project types and interventions deliver effectively, and which do not.
- 5.5 As part of this joint procurement of a single contractor to provide insight, data analysis and economic impact data in light of COVID-19 across the whole of Business and Skills directorate – will include the LGF Evaluation data analysis, outputs/outcomes modelling, and reporting provision for each project wrapped into this procurement.

#### **6.0 INSIGHT FOR CURRENT DELIVERY PROGRAMMES**

- 6.1 The SME Observatory will act as a Research, Analytical and Market Intelligence function to identify the Combined Authority's target clients at a total cost of £80,000 over 2 years. As part of a parallel procurement of the Business Growth Service, the CPCA will carry out a review of the current, but dispersed evidence base on the flags, characteristics and features within firms and their activities, that indicate the potential for high growth and scale-up businesses. We will make this body of evidence available to the winning bidders.

- 6.2 Skills Insight – funded through the HMG budgets provided to the CPCA for the Employers Skills Board and AEB, this will allow programmes of activity the CPCA undertakes to reorient and adapt, these include Adult Education Budget (AEB), National Retraining Scheme (NRS) and Apprenticeships.

## 7.0. RESOURCING

- 7.1 The CPCA Business & Skills Directorate currently have budgets that include insight, as well as monitoring and evaluation as cost elements within their expenditure. The report outlines what could be achieved through pooling these currently disparate budgets into a consolidated and integrated insight and evaluation programme. The pooling of these budget elements will provide a more cost-effective resource and provide for a more comprehensive procurement rather than undertake a piecemeal approach. It is proposed that the following budget lines contribute towards this commissioning. All budget holders with Business & Skills have been involved with this proposal and fully support it.

<b>Business Board – Table 1</b>			
<b>Budget Line</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Comments</b>
LGF Top Slice	£80,000		Evaluation & Monitoring and Pre & Post Scheme Business Engagement Segments of the budget to be transferred
SME Observatory	£40,000	£40,000	Whole Budget
BEIS Support Funding	£19,000	£290,000	Recently announced funding
<b>Total</b>	<b>£139,000</b>		

<b>Skills Committee – Table 2</b>			
<b>Budget Line</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Comments</b>
AEB Programme Costs	£25,000	£394,100	Partial Budget
National Retraining Scheme	£15,000	£81,400	Partial Budget
Apprenticeships	£10,000	£110,000	Partial Budget
<b>Total</b>	<b>£50,000</b>		

- 7.2 A paper has already been taken to the Business Board on 26<sup>th</sup> May 20 and approved budget lines under their delegation detailed in table 1. It is proposed the Skills Committee approve the recommendation to the CA Board for the consolidation of budgets detailed in table 2.

## 8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This paper proposes a virement of funds from current budgets as detailed in Tables 1 and 2 into one new consolidated budget line. £50k of current Skills budgets and £139k from current Business Board budgets will be vired to

create the Integrated Business & Skills Insight Programme of £189k. There is no request for additional funding and therefore there is no net impact on the CPCA's overall budget. The Business Board have agreed this proposal is recommended to the CA Board and should this be approved by Skills Committee, it will be presented for approval at the next Combined Authority Board.

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no direct legal implications.

## **10.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no specific implications within the decisions recommended. As part of the commission. Officers will ensure a comprehensive and robust consultation and engagement exercise is undertaken with key partners and stakeholders to ensure that the reports presented have both value in the specialism and knowledge acquired and are trusted, implemented and prized by stakeholders and partners.

## **11.0 APPENDICES**

11.1 None

<b><u>Source Documents</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>
A paper has already been taken to the Business Board on 26 <sup>th</sup> May 20 and approved budget lines under their delegation detailed in table 1	The Incubator 2, First Floor, Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon, PE28 4WX