



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

## Skills Committee Minutes

Meeting: Monday 14 June 2021

Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm

Venue: The Burgess Hall, St Ives

Present:

Councillor Lucy Nethsingha - Chair and Member for Cambridgeshire County Council  
Councillor Lynne Ayres - Peterborough City Council  
Councillor Mike Davey - Cambridge City Council  
Councillor Lis Every - East Cambridgeshire District Council  
Councillor Neil Gough - South Cambridgeshire District Council  
Councillor John Neish - Huntingdonshire District Council

Apologies:

Councillor Eileen Wilson, Councillor Neil Gough substituting  
Councillor Chris Seaton - Member for Fenland District Council

### Part 1 - Governance Items

#### 1. Appointment of the Chair

The Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that Councillor Lucy Nethsingha was appointed as the Chair of the Skills Committee at the Annual Combined Authority Board Meeting on 2 June 2021.

#### 2. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies received from Councillor Eileen Wilson, Councillor Neil Gough substituting and Councillor Seaton.

### 3. Approval of Minutes and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting on 15 March 2021 were approved as an accurate record and the action log was noted.

### 4. Public Questions

None.

### 5. Skills Committee Agenda Plan

In discussing the agenda plan a Member requested that an item on the Impact of Brexit on Covid recovery be added to the agenda plan for a future meeting. **ACTION**

It was resolved to note the agenda plan.

### 6. Combined Authority Forward Plan

It was resolved to note the forward plan.

## Part 2 – Reports to Combined Authority Board

### 7. Adult Education Budget (AEB) 2021-22 Funding Allocations and Policy Changes

The Committee considered a report which sought authority to make the funding allocations from the devolved Adult Education Budget of £11.9m for the academic year 2021/22 to the providers.

Introducing the report officers explained that the funding allocations, set out in table A of the report, totalled £9.9m. Officers clarified that a further allocation of £1m from the devolved AEB was also required for current providers to make Growth Cases, demonstrating alignment with local skills needs. Officers explained that funding agreements would be issued based on performance during the academic year and that underspends would be recovered. Officers highlighted that the agreements would be procured using the Combined Authority's 'Light Touch' Commissioning approach to contract with new providers as required during the academic year, to meet gaps in provision. Officers stated that the authority, under the devolution deal, had funding flexibilities and was at liberty to set its own policies and funding rules which could deviate from the national Adult Education Budget funding rules as set by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), this helps to better direct and improve outcomes for citizens in the region. Officers stated that there was need to raise participation levels amongst adult learners particularly those residents that lived in the most deprived wards and supporting the vulnerable including care leavers, using devolved powers to raise participation and looking to level up.

In discussing the report Members:

- Thanked officers for all of their work in this area and particularly the work that was being done with care leavers and those leaving the armed forces.
- Highlighted the difficulties in getting young adults to engage and queried what work was being done with 19-24 year olds to encourage participation. Officers stated that they were in co-production with training providers and would be working with them over the summer on how the policy changes would be implemented and how young people would be engaged in the process.
- Queried if there would be any growth cases focused below level three. Officers explained that there would be a mix and balance of provision. Officers stated that the majority of investment was at level two and below 2% was on level three.
- Questioned how funding would be allocated to providers and whether it would be based on past performance. Officers stated that they were looking to rebalance funding based on past performance and that providers had done well at closing the gaps and were responding well to online learning provision throughout the pandemic. Officers stated that they would be implementing a second growth case opportunity in January.
- Queried why Steadfast were being dealt with separately to the other providers. Officers explained that the contract with Steadfast was for over £1/2 million and constitutionally there was a requirement to request funding separately for contracts over this amount from the Combined Authority Board.
- Questioned the response from the providers in relation to the changes. Officers stated that that providers had welcomed the opportunity to have a transformational relationship and where there had been pressure points officers had been able to have conversations.
- Queried whether the predicted out turn for 2021 would be the same as the allocation. Officers explained that they would not have the final outturn figures until November as providers would not submit their final claims until the Autumn. Officers clarified that the final outturn would be reported to Committee in November.
- Sought clarity on whether the growth cases had put additional pressure on providers. Officers stated that the process was agile and light touch but none the less robust so there would be no undue additional pressures on providers. Officers explained that they sought regular feedback from providers to ensure that any pressure points were removed.
- Queried the number of providers that had come forward in Huntingdonshire and questioned what levels of understanding there was in relation to district level participation in understanding the gaps in provision. Officers explained that a lot of work had been undertaken when undertaking the Skills Strategy refresh to look at gaps in provision within districts. Officers highlighted that over the summer period they would be working with district colleagues to do a deeper dive into the localised issues.

In bringing the discussion to a close the Chair thanked officers and highlighted the importance of the flexibility as it was an important time for adult education and supporting reskilling coming out of the pandemic.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Recommend the Combined Authority Board approve the funding allocations for the 2021/22 academic year, from the devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) to the providers, set out in Table A below.
- b) Recommend the Combined Authority Board grant authority to enter into contract for services, with Steadfast Training Ltd.
- c) Delegate authority to the Director of Business and Skills in consultation with Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer, to enter into contract for services, with the providers set out in Table A, on behalf of the Combined Authority.
- d) Delegate authority to the Director of Business and Skills, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer to enter into Grant Funding Agreements, with the providers set out in Table A, on behalf of the Combined Authority. Page 21 of 188.
- e) Delegate authority to the Director of Business and Skills, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer to procure, award and enter into contract, with recommended new providers, as required within the devolved AEB Grant for 2021/22, set out in the AEB Commissioning Guiding Principles.

## 8. Future Funding Strategy

The Committee received a report that sought approval for the processes being co-ordinated by the Combined Authority for the selection of bids to the Levelling-Up Fund (LUF) and the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) from constituent Local Authorities to the Government on 18th June 2021. .

Introducing the report officers stated that approval of the process would provide the opportunity for bids to be put forward to the Government by the required deadline and in advance of the Combined Authority Board meeting on 30 June 2021, via a Mayoral Decision Notice, subsequent to the Business Board meeting on 12 May 2021. Officers explained that the final selection of bids for submission for the LUF would be by a Panel from each Local Authority, led by the Leader of the Local Authority and MP for each place, but with participation of the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and the Chair of the Business Board and the selection process for the CRF would be by the Leaders from each Local Authority with consultation from the Mayor. Officers stated that Fenland District Council had decided not to bid into the first deadline for projects as they had no shovel ready projects that fitted with the timescales. Officers explained that the Combined Authority would also lead the writing and development of a submission from Peterborough City Council for £20m to the LUF, to part fund the development of

the Phase 3 of the Peterborough University, in the form of a second teaching building. Officers clarified that in total seven bids were selected and that details of the bids would be circulated to the Committee. **ACTION**

- Queried if there had been collaborative bids between districts. East Cambridgeshire District Council were keen to work with Fenland District Council on their Metalcraft Hub. Officers stated that there had already been discussions in relation to the apprenticeship hub. The Director of Business and Skills stated that a number of the bids were spread across districts and officers were looking at what could be done to spread the opportunities. He commented that there would be greater opportunities to bid with £4.3 billion available for future years.
- Highlighted that transport was key in relation to access to skills for younger people. The Director of Business and Skills stated that officers were looking at using some AEB funding to fund a pilot on transport subsidies.
- Queried if it was possible that there was a bid through Norfolk that would help Fenland. The Director of Business and Skills stated that a bid put in by Cambridge ACRE was Fenland focused and there was also a Combined Authority Bid around transitioning people into work which would benefit Fenland.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the recommendations to the Mayor to approve:
  - i) The process for selecting the candidate bids to be submitted to Government for the CRF, based on the Combined Authority's mandate to do so as Lead Authority for bids to the UK Community Renewal Fund (CRF);
  - ii) The process for selecting the candidate regeneration bids to be submitted to the Government for the Levelling-Up Fund (LUF), on the basis of the voluntary arrangement agreed between the Combined Authority, Peterborough City Council and Fenland District Council; and
- b) Note the intent of the Combined Authority to pursue Lead Authority status for the LUF regeneration bids and its existing status as Lead Authority for transport bids. Page 31 of 188
- c) Note the intent of the Combined Authority to submit for the £20m LUF, an application for development of the Phase 3 of the Peterborough University, in the form of a second teaching building.

## 9. Growth Works Management Review May 2021

The Committee considered a report that gave an update on the programme performance up until 15 April 2021 and sought a nomination from the Members of Skills

Committee to be a member of Growth Works Programme Management Committee.

Introducing the report officers explained that on 12 February 2021, the contract for the Business Growth Service was signed between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Business Growth Company Limited (Growth Co) and Gateley Economic Growth Services (GEG) and its consortium and the Service commenced on 14 February 2021 and was in a mobilisation phase up until the public launch on 27 May 2021. Officers explained that the report set out the Governance of the Growth Works Investment Evaluation Panel and the Programme Management Committee. Officers clarified that a separate reporting structure would be made available through a portal so that information could be accessed on a real time basis and that an update on progress and performance would be brought to the next Committee meeting.

In discussing the report Members;

- Queried how long it would take to engage with all special educational needs schools (SEND) to bring them into the Enterprise Adviser Network (EAN). Officers stated that all SEND schools would be contacted by the end of the summer term.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Nominate Councillor Lis Every to be a member of the Programme Management Committee;
- b) Note that there will be representation from the Business Board on both the Growth Works Investment Panel and Programme Management Committee; and
- c) Note the financial and non-financial performance of Growth Works and request any required changes to reporting going forward.

## Part 3 – Delivery

### 10. Local Skills Report

The Committee received a report informing them of the publication of the Local Skills Report. The publication of the Local Skills Report is a requirement of the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP), funded by the Department for Education (DfE). The report was approved for publication by the Employment and Skills Board in March 2021.

Introducing the report officers explained that there were a number of minor corrections to make to the report in relation to the skills investments as some had been slower to achieve outcomes than had been envisaged.

In discussing the report Members;

- Queried whether there had been any opportunities for East Cambridgeshire and Fenland to work together. Officers stated that they were engaged with this work and that the next report on the agenda the new 'Employment and Skills Strategy' would be looking at a place-based approach.
- Questioned how performance would be reported back to the Committee and if there would be any emphasis on T levels and if the Hampton Pilot would be rolled out to other schools in the region. Officers stated that there would be an action plan designed concurrently with the strategy and that there would be reporting at regular intervals. Officers explained that they were pulling together a T level plan working alongside Pat Carrington at City College Peterborough. Officers explained that the Hampton Pilot would not be rolled out as it was quite cost intensive but that the lessons learnt would be taken forward. Officers explained that there would be a report back to Committee in November.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the publication of the Local Skills Report

## 11. Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority's Employment and Skills Strategy

The Committee considered a report that gave an overview of the proposed approach to the development of the refresh of the current Skills Strategy.

Introducing the report officers outlined the consultation process which would be focused on place and professions and would take into account the impact of the pandemic on skills requirements and skills to the green economy. Officers explained that they would be using existing committees to make sure the consultation process was as comprehensive as possible.

In discussing the report Members;

- Expressed their concerns in relation to the ambitious timescales and sought clarity from officers in terms of the tight timescales with publication set for September. Officers highlighted that the timescales were ambitious and that they had been planning the work for quite some time with quite a lot of the work already being done. Officers stated that they would keep the Committee updated and they would flag if they were unable to stick to the timescales. Officers stated that they would report back to the next Committee. **ACTION**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Recommend to the Combined Authority Board approval of the proposed approach to the development of the Employment and Skills Strategy.

## 12. Budget and Performance Report

The Committee received a report that provided an update and overview of the revenue and capital funding lines that were within the Business & Skills Directorate.

Introducing the report officers explained that the AEB underspend had been discussed in a previous report and that work on the Health and Care Sector Work Academy had started moving again.

In discussing the report Members:

- Queried whether any unspent money would be clawed back in relation to the Health and Care Sector Work Academy. Officers explained that a change request had been made with the Department for Work and Pensions for the allocation of funds following an external review and the spend was set to be reprofiled.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note the update and financial position relating to the revenue and capital funding lines within the Skills Committee remit.

## Part 4 – Date of the next meeting

It was resolved to:

- Note the date of the next meeting as Monday 13 September 2021.