



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

JAMES PALMER
CAMBRIDGESHIRE &
PETERBOROUGH MAYOR

Skills Committee Minutes

Date: Monday 11 January 2021

Time: 10.00am – 10.56am

Present: Councillors John Holdich (Chairman), David Ambrose-Smith, Lis Every, Jon Neish, Mike Sargeant, Chris Seaton and Eileen Wilson.

Apologies: Councillor Mike Davey

Part 1 - Governance Items

114. Announcements, Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies received from Councillor Mike Davey.

Councillor Chris Seaton declared an interest as his wife worked at the College for West Anglia in the Apprenticeships Division.

115. Minutes of the Skills Committee meeting on 9 November 2020

The minutes of the meeting on 9 November 2020 were approved as an accurate record. A copy would be signed by the Chairman when it was practical to do so.

116. Petitions

No petitions were received.

117. Public Questions

No public questions were received.

118. Skills Committee Agenda Plan

It was resolved to note the agenda plan.

119. Combined Authority Forward Plan

It was resolved to note the forward plan.

Part 2 – Delivery

120. University of Peterborough – Incorporation of Propco2

The Committee received a report that gave an update on the progress of the University Phase 2 Research and Development project.

Introducing the report officers explained that the report covered three key aspects of the project; the project's legal arrangement, the governance and ownership, and the procurement approach to appoint the building contractor, commercial operator and the project management agreement. Officers stated that Phase 2 of the project was to deliver an Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Eco-system for Peterborough and the north of the economy. Officers explained that the Research and Development building would be a 3,283m² build across 3 floors and would facilitate a mix of high-quality technical laboratory and office space for incubations and start-ups. Officers highlighted that the Combined Authority element of the budget for the project was made up of £14.6m Getting Building Fund (GBF) from Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the award of the funding followed a formal joint application process by the Combined Authority and its partner Photocentric, which was approved by the Business Board and Combined Authority Board in November 2020

In discussing the report Members:

- Stated that it would be helpful to have an organigram that showed the interdependencies of the different elements of the overall project. **ACTION**
- Queried how Photocentric had become a partner in the project. The Director of Business and Skills stated that the project was put forward and selected for the Getting Building Funding last year. He explained that the project was subject to the local framework and there had been a mini call out to all organisations in the CPCA area. He stated that Photocentric had put forward and application through this process and that application had been verified by independent advisors and then was scrutinised by the Entrepreneurs Panel, before the contract was awarded

It was resolved unanimously to:

To note the content of the report.

121. Adult Education Budget Statutory Annual Return

The Committee received a report that gave an overview of the first submission of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) Statutory Annual Return to the Department for Education (DfE), in relation to the 2019/20 academic funding year and the first year of devolution.

Introducing the report officers explained that a full evaluation of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) was tabled for the March Committee. Officers explained that in 2019-20 there had been 14,067 enrolments and that 8,848 had benefitted from the Adult Education Budget. Officers explained that the Combined Authority were looking to be more transformational and that there was a shift to invest in more deprived areas in the region which had seen an increase of funding from 22% to 35% of the total budget. Officers stated that there had been an increase in individuals from businesses approaching the Combined Authority to become mentors. Officers clarified that as part of the Growth Coaching Programme, which was part of the Growth Service, there had been 45 Coaches register so far with another 20 applicants. Officers updated the Committee on the impact of apprenticeship numbers due to COVID and stated that the detailed data would not be available until the end of the month. Officers explained that there had been a 38% decrease in the take up of apprenticeships locally with a 46% decrease nationally since the start of the pandemic. Officers stated that the Kickstart Scheme had helped to counteract this in terms of starting to advertise apprenticeship vacancies and that there was a dedicated resource available for this scheme within the Growth Service.

In discussing the report Members:

- Requested a drill down by district on the strategy in relation to COVID. Officers explained that District information would be available through the evaluation report coming to Committee in March. Officers highlighted that there had been some good stories in relation to the Kick Start Scheme and that they did not want to lose momentum. Officers explained that the enrolment offer was due to be promoted in the next few weeks with a new social media campaign. Officers clarified that most providers had successfully moved on line and that work was ongoing to tackle digital exclusion, including seeking funding for devices. Officers explained that the Combined Authority Website was being refreshed and that this would revitalise the channels and tools on offer to promote the AEB.
- Highlighted the need to use District Councillors who were place based to promote the AEB.
- Sought clarity on whether the evaluation of the AEB would involve looking at outcomes that promoted the improvement of job opportunities and focus on levelling up across the County. A Member highlighted that there were pockets of deprivation in prosperous areas such as South Cambridgeshire and that all areas of deprivation should be considered. Officers explained that the evaluation would be a deep dive down to local levels. Officers clarified that the report would focus on the wider outcomes including Community Cohesion, engagement and family learning. Officers explained that Community Learning was still a key part of the agenda and would be crucial in levelling up in terms of the wider outcomes. Officers highlighted that the destination data was a challenge nationally and that providers had not been systematically collecting the data. Officers explained that the Combined Authority would be providing support in collecting the data going forwards and that intelligence from local members was also key in improving the reach.

- Highlighted the problems that SME's were facing in terms of retaining individuals but taking people on due to COVID and some individuals were unable to fulfil their needs at college as they needed to keep businesses afloat. Officers explained that there was ongoing lobbying through the M9 in this area and that there was a whole package for SMEs through the Growth Service. The Chairman commented that there had been a recent announcement in relation to redundancies at the Debenhams's Warehouse in Peterborough and sought clarity on if the Combined Authority were aware of any support being provided to the individuals affected. He explained that Opportunity Peterborough had started to look at the support that could be provided. The Director of Business and Skills explained that this was a recent announcement and that an action plan was being developed through the Growth Hub, working with Opportunity Peterborough and the action plan would be circulated imminently to both Skills Committee and Business Board.
- ACTION**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Approve the AEB Statutory Annual Return for sending to the Department for Education. This is the first Statutory Return since devolution of the AEB which provides an overview of performance of the first year of devolution
- b) Note the planned Annual Review of AEB 2019/20 has been carried forward to the March 2021 meeting of the Skills Committee.

122. Budget and Performance Report

The Committee received a report that gave an update and overview of the revenue and capital funding lines that are within the Business & Skills Directorate as of 31 October 2020.

Introducing the report officers highlighted that in all future reports there would be a summary of the forecast income for each year.

In discussing the report Members;

- Queried the legal costs for the University of Peterborough outlined in 3.1 of the report. Officers explained that the costs would be recharged and that this had been a holding area for the costs due to the set-up of the Propco being finalised.

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 3 – Date of the next meeting

123. It was resolved to:

Note the date of the next meeting as Monday 15 March 2021.