

<b>SKILLS COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM No: 2.1</b>
<b>27 APRIL 2020</b>	<b>PUBLIC REPORT</b>

## **ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET – INNOVATION FUND**

### **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to recommend the establishment of an Adult Education Budget (AEB) Innovation Fund that supports Providers to deliver education and training that addresses the AEB Commissioning Strategy priorities that reduces skills and employment gaps of CPCA learners disproportionately underrepresented in the labour market. These groups include the unemployed, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), health volunteers, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) learners and ex-offenders.
- 1.2. It details how the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) Innovation Fund will be managed for funded delivery with immediate effect, and during the 2020/21 academic year. The Fund will support all CPCA grant funded provision and contract services Providers to apply for additional funding to deliver innovative provision that meets the CPCA priorities for skills and training. It will now give special priority to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact it is having on the delivery of learning for residents.

<b><u>DECISION REQUIRED</u></b>	
<b>Lead Member:</b>	<b>Councillor John Holdich</b>
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<b>Francis Lawlor AEB Strategy Executive</b>
<b>Forward Plan Ref: N/A</b>	<b>Key Decision: No</b>
The Skills Committee is invited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) approve the recommended approach for creation and management of the AEB Innovation Fund and;</li> <li>b) recommend the Combined Authority Board approve the carry forward of 50% of the 2019-20 underspend on the “AEB Devolution Programme – ITP and grant ” funding lines</li> </ol>	<b>Voting arrangements</b>  Simple majority of all Members

and ringfence this for the Innovation Fund in the 2020-21 Budget, up to a maximum of £500k.	
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## 2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1. The CPCA will enable both grant-funded and procured AEB providers delivering to learners in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough to apply for additional funding until the end of the 2019/20 academic year and for 2020/21.

2.2. The CPCA is recommended to create an Innovation Fund and allocate it half the underspend on procured AEB provision from the financial year 2019-20, up to a maximum of £500k. This fund will be available to pay for additional, innovative, provision from providers who are performing well.

2.3. The fund will support

- a) Innovative proposals that support and maximise learning participation in the next 6 months

For instance

- Supporting distance learning for disadvantaged learners
- Creative ways for accessing the internet
- Short course digital skills training

- b) Additional activity including specific pilots and change programmes funded by AEB that

- Meets the AEB Commissioning Strategy priorities for skills and training in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough
- Demonstrate innovation
- Deliver tangible outcomes

For instance

- English for Speakers of Other Languages
- Addressing sectoral priorities in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough
- Support for those affected by jobs displacement and redundancies
- Improving participation in digital skills training

2.4. Appendix 1 expands on the type of activity anticipated and the expected rationale, aims and outcomes from innovative projects. We will encourage more collaborative projects across providers with multiple partners.

2.5. Delivering the CPCA economic and social ambition will take time and the changes to the AEB funded skills system will be evolutionary. However, there is scope from the academic year 2019/20 to use AEB differently and more flexibly

for some groups and/or specific skills within the economy. Changes and innovations will consider the following prioritised by the order below

- a) The short term immediate needs of the next six months
  - b) The medium to long term so that proposals can be more developmental or seeking to plug gaps that is not within existing funding criteria such as new qualifications or meeting employer skills gaps
- 2.6. This process will allow for further data gathering and analysis from fully funded pilot provision to ensure an evidenced based approach to change.
- 2.7. Funding allocated will be additional to the amount already allocated to grant providers and contract service providers delivering to Cambridgeshire & Peterborough learners in 2019/20 and 2020/21.
- 2.8. Flexibilities and any pilots are intended to help providers develop different methodologies that can be mainstreamed in the longer-term dependent upon successful outcomes being realised that go beyond the delivery of qualifications for residents, with a stronger emphasis on outcomes or progression to further learning, employment or progression at work.
- 2.9. In future academic years, the Combined Authority will test further areas of innovation and embed earlier piloted delivery and reporting mechanisms within the AEB funding and performance management rules if any pilots are successful.
- 2.10. The Fund will only support applications that demonstrate innovation in the delivery of adult education providers.
- 2.11. Provision could be innovative in terms of
- (a) Engagement – the method through which the provider engages with or targets learner groups
  - (b) Learning content – the approach taken by the provider to the delivery or content of the curriculum
  - (c) Progression – how the Provider supports learners to achieve employment, learning or social outcomes and progression
  - (d) Measurement – how the impact and outcomes of adult learning are captured and measured.
- 2.12. The Fund will support both
- (a) The testing of new approaches through piloting
  - (b) The scaleup of previously small scale projects which are not eligible to be funded through the current AEB funded rules.
- 2.13. Applicants will need to identify the learning, employment and/or social outcomes their proposed activity will deliver for residents, communities and employers within Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

- 2.14. Table 1, also in appendix 1 outlines the general type of outcomes that could be delivered. Providers will be expected to deliver at least one learner outcome and one employment and skills outcome.
- 2.15. The CPCA AEB team will publish further guidance to providers on how to measure and evidence these outcomes in due course.
- 2.16. Providers will be required to set out;
- (a) The priorities their proposed activity addresses (from the AEB Commissioning Strategy and the Skills Strategy)
  - (b) A convincing account of how the proposed activity will address the challenges identified under the relevant priorities
  - (c) The innovation they believe their proposed activity demonstrates
  - (d) The learning, employment and/or social outcomes their proposed activity will deliver.

### **3.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. In the short term this is proposed to utilise a current underspend from the 19-20 financial year. As the CPCA Board had already allocated this funding for AEB provision, and it is funded via the devolved AEB there would be no wider impacts on the CPCA's finances.
- 4.2. If this project is continued in future years this would rely on either continued underspend on AEB procured provision, or a reduction in the value of procured AEB delivery in future academic years.

### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (Adult Education Functions) Order 2018 (SI 2018/1146) transfers functions from the Secretary of State to the Combined Authority.

### **6.0 OTHER SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. There are no other significant implications

### **7.0 APPENDICES**

- 7.1 Appendix 1 (below) - type of activity anticipated and the expected rationale, aims and outcomes from innovative projects.

<b><u>Source Documents</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>
None	The Incubator 2, First Floor, Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon, PE28 4WX

## **Appendix 1**

### **1. Covid-19**

#### Rationale

Through more flexible and adaptive adult learning AEB aims to support local residents and employers through the Covid 19 pandemic and its aftermath.

To help in this regard, the funding provided to grant and contracted providers through the innovation fund will be eligible to use as match funding for the new CPCA Covid 19 small grant.

This will be on the basis of a 20% revenue match from the AEB innovation fund attracting an 80% capital grant fund from the Covid-19 small grant fund with a maximum total allocation of £50,000 per project. AEB grant and contract suppliers will be allowed to apply for multiple grants up to a maximum of four.

#### Outcome

Residents, employers and AEB providers are better prepared to adapt to changes in the education and learning market, learner behaviours and industry needs post the pandemic.

It may include

- i. Links to the Covid 19 small grant fund for more technology based products to deliver distance learning to all
- ii. Support for hard to reach learners
- iii. Flexible adult learning and new faculty capabilities to meet employer needs – new qualifications

### **2. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) – flexible and responsive delivery**

#### Rationale

The Government's Casey Review (2016) stated that 'English language is a common denominator and a strong enabler of integration'. The report recommends 'improving English Language provision through funding for community based classes and appropriate prioritisation of adult skills budgets'. Our emerging findings from consultations with Providers, and the local Jobcentreplus offices details the need for

- i. more ESOL tutors to meet demand;
- ii. discrete learning opportunities for those with skills needs related to
  - a. speaking and listening;
  - b. reading and writing;
  - c. ESOL needs appropriate to the workplace.
- iii. opportunities for progression across these disciplines;

- iv. courses at the right level and intensity for learners who may range from illiterate in their own language to graduates including pre-entry ESOL support;
- v. learning experience enrichment with other learning alongside language skills.

The Combined Authority wishes to see true innovation in the delivery of ESOL locally that meets learner needs. Without being prescriptive, key features of a pilot could include one or more of the following:

- i. ESOL tutor training for use across the region – support new peer mentors with teaching qualifications
- ii. Effective initial assessment tools / diagnostic of the ESOL skills needs of learners;
- iii. Testing of bespoke delivery for reading and writing and speaking and listening compared to employment and progression results from mainstream ESOL offers;
- iv. Testing of results from RARPA (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement) approaches compared to mainstream ESOL qualifications;
- v. Development of pre-entry level provision for those illiterate in their own language with opportunities for progression to speaking and listening and reading and writing skills;
- vi. Delivery as a minimum of 8 guided learning hours per week – in smaller class sizes or over an intensive initial period with reported comparisons to mainstream provision;
- vii. Supporting peer language conversational clubs with peer mentor and volunteer support;
- viii. Supporting tutor Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for multiple Providers.

### Outcomes

This may include the following:

- i. Progression to employment or further learning other than ESOL by
  - a. Better initial assessment and diagnostic tools developed;
  - b. Number of new qualified ESOL tutors developed;
  - c. Developing new and better learning pedagogies co-designed with ESOL learners;
  - d. Greater collaboration between Providers to meet needs and support progression;
  - e. Successful testing of co-production techniques that informs future curriculum design;
  - f. Test the success of intensive smaller class sizes for a short initial period of learning.

### **3. Digital skills – flexible and responsive delivery**

## Rationale

Digital skills are vitally important to the economic success of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, both as a skill necessary for social inclusion and as they become more prevalent within the skills needs demanded by all employers. A response is needed to the digital skills capabilities needed by employers facing the challenges of industrial digitisation and residents requiring improved digital skills across longer working lives. Digital skills are vitally important to the economic and social cohesion of the region.

Our research on digital skills demand and supply is limited but what little there has identified significant a need for a broad range of skills including Excel, coding skills, web editing and the ability to bring these skills to enhance existing job roles. Nearly all job roles need digital skills and increasingly we all need digital skills to participate in the modern world; employability skills delivery needs to get people digitally equipped to enter the labour market.

## Aim

To meet the demand for digitally skilled labour while ensuring that new workers have access to digital skills. The economic development potential of digitalisation is clear. We will support tackling barriers to accessing digital skills for employment rather than displace current basic AEB funded digital skills that support familiarity with technology and IT confidence.

Target groups for supporting digital skills for inclusive growth will include:

- i. Economically inactive and in need of digital skills to enable employment;
- ii. Learners aged over 50 whose digital skills need improving to support work related skills and employment goals (including changing job roles or sector);
- iii. Those looking to retrain who are already in work;
- iv. Those looking to return to work with greater digital skills following an absence,

The Combined Authority wishes to see true innovation in the delivery of digital skills that delivers skills needed by employers in support of inclusive growth. Key features could include one or more of the following:

- i. Encourage participation of adult returners and the upskilling of learners to progress into employment and progress to further digital learning;
- ii. Delivery across a range of skill levels including units at Level 1 to Level 3
- iii. Digital employability skills and/or skills needed for employment in the digital and creative sector or those digital skills required by other employers;
- iv. Engage employers to help design bite-sized digital skills for new qualifications;
- v. Consideration of employer input - developing a partnership between local employers, to re-train older learners with digital skills that will enable career



progression and potentially lengthen the time that they are economically active.

- vi. Flexibility of learning, using blended approaches of classroom and digital mechanisms that allow repeats of learning sessions and catch up on missed lessons;
- vii. Flexible timing of learning around shift patterns or at weekends reflecting learners' work-life balance;
- viii. Consideration of location of delivery offering local 'pop-up' learning access points to support learning/re-training;
- ix. Delivery in the workplace with digital skills needs that meet learners and employers digital upskilling need supporting learners to retain and progress in employment.

Outcomes - This may include the following:

- i. Better initial assessment and diagnostic tools developed;
- ii. Attract, support and retrain those in work in commercially valued digital skills;
- iii. Participation and upskilling of older working learners (aged 50 and above);
- iv. Number of employers engaged in digital skills co-design and offering access to workers;
- v. Upskilled learners progressing into employment and further digital skills;
- vi. Supporting social mobility - re-training under-represented learners in digital skills.

## 1.1 Table 1

Table 1 – Outcomes

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	
Qualification achievements	Any learning activity with a clearly defined learning aim that results in a qualification awarded by an awarding body approved by Ofqual.
Occupational skills	Any learning activity that equips an individual with the skills required for a particular occupation. This might be to enable them to enter an occupation, make a career change or improve skills identified by their current employer.
Basic skills	Any learning activity that leads to improvements in an individual's basic English or maths skills. This may result in qualifications at a level appropriate to that individual
<b>Employment and skills outcomes</b>	
Poverty reduction	Any learning activity that results in an improvement to the extent to which the material resources available to a household is sufficient to meet its material needs.

Self-efficacy	Any learning activity that supports improvements in an individual's belief in their ability to achieve goals, which may have been impaired by illness, disability or a life experience.
Financial capability	Any learning activity that supports individuals to better manage their money, prepare for and manage life events, and deal with financial difficulties
Digital inclusion	Any learning activity that improves an individual's skills and motivation to confidently go online to access the opportunities of the internet – including use of digital public services
Family learning	Any learning activity that has an impact on the learning outcomes of both children and adult family members and that contributes to a culture of learning in the family
Social integration	Any learning activity that supports how people positively interact and connect with others who are different to themselves and contributes to improvements in the life of a community
Health & wellbeing	Any learning activity that positively impacts on an individual's mental or physical health, on their ability to manage a health condition, or has a positive impact on personal or community wellbeing.
Work readiness	Any learning activity that improves an individual's capacity to find and secure employment.
Progression into employment/ further learning	Any learning activity that results in a learner either gaining employment or enrolling on a further course of learning. This could include access to higher education or higher levels in further education.
In-work progression	Any learning activity that supports an individual's progression at work (e.g. securing extra hours, an increase in pay and benefits, transition to a more secure job status).