

SKILLS COMMITTEE – 27 March 2020**PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question
1.	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Skills Committee	<p>Item 2.1: Adult Education Budget – Innovation Fund</p> <p>Is the premise of the fund still on target when the impact of social distancing is to have substantial and medium term impact on the ability of training organisations to delivery any face-to-face training? Is there a review in place to consider how best to deliver training and skills through virtual and distance learning programmes over all areas if social distancing measures make standard training delivery more difficult? How nimble is the current strategy to the possible impact of longer term social distancing measures?</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response
	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	<p>The premise of the innovation fund is to facilitate activity that sits outside the normal funding model and methodology. Covid 19 has given the fund a more short term immediacy to facilitate distance learning which is the only option for the vast majority of adult learners in the coming months. The sector is seeking support for more disadvantaged learners who do not have easy access to the internet and who may require access to such items as chrome books or laptops. In terms of quality, all providers are working hard to give virtual face to face support and indeed are working extra hours to maintain motivation and answer queries or remove difficulties.</p> <p>Some learners are able to facilitate their own learning (similar to an open University course) others want a virtual classroom in which the lecturer teaches on their own and the students virtually participate. Cambridge Regional Course for example believes the former is about 75% of their present provision and the latter is 25%.</p> <p>The vast majority of providers are offering distance learning only.</p> <p>The providers have impressively responded to the present circumstances in an</p>

			expedient manner. We are working with the sector and its senior leaders to plan and prepare for adult learning provision in the summer months and in the Autumn as the local labour market needs shift.
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2.	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Skills Committee	<p>Item 3.2 - Work Readiness And Careers Aspiration Pilot – Hampton Academies Trust Future Funding Arrangements</p> <p>We note the project is on hold for 6 months due to school closure measures. What is being done over this six month period to ensure the project can restart after the pause in work – NEET learners are already the most difficult group to engage with in terms of training delivery. What assurances can be given that the participating students will remain engaged with the project and be guided into work in the current climate? What alternatives are in place to facilitate their continued engagement during the “lockdown” period?</p>
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	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	<p>At the time of writing the report, it was unclear how the project would continue through the lockdown, however, we have now had confirmation that although the careers promotion and STEM promotion workstreams are on hold, the work with the vulnerable learners – the pre-NEET group continues through the school’s Bridge facility. The learners in this group are receiving daily input from the staff working on this project, with some of the learners attending school and all of the learners in contact virtually. To that end, the teachers are continuing to support all the students involved to ensure they fully participate and engage. It is more important than ever during this period of lockdown that these vulnerable learners are fully supported.</p>
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3.	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for	Skills Committee	Item 3.3 - Employment and Skills Board Update

	Skills		Clearly the impact of the pandemic on businesses in the CA area has been profound and there are significant levels of uncertainty ahead as the country seeks to recover from the “lockdown”. How well is the ESB sighted on the impact of the pandemic measures on local business and how long will it take to be able to provide strategic leadership on what future skills development and learning programmes will be necessary to support local businesses in the recovery phase?
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	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	The first ESB meeting since the impact of COVID-19 takes place on 30 th April 2020. The previous meeting was on the 26 th February, were the signs of COVID-19 were not as prevalent in the UK. The meeting on the 30 th April will be convened in order to discuss the impact on skills, the interventions that the Combined Authority has introduced, the interventions others are doing and future planning for skills and the workforce.