

Skills Committee – 15 March 2021

Public Questions

	Question from:	Question to:	Question
1a.	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Skills Committee	<p>Item 2.1 Life time Skills Guarantee</p> <p>P 19 3.2 and Appx 2 p 26: What other level 3 courses are being considered above the "approved list" to meet local business needs? Are these different across the constituent authorities?</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response
	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	The CPCA ran its Annual AEB Stakeholder Consultation during February which included questions about other qualifications that could be offered through the Lifetime Skills Guarantee. We were inundated with nearly 100 responses to the Consultation, and we are currently analysing the responses, which may include analysis by the constituent authorities. We are aware that Hospitality and Catering and Rail Engineering qualifications have been flagged up to the DfE by the sector.
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1b.	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Skills Committee	<p>Item 2.1 Life time Skills Guarantee</p> <p>How does this provision link to the LERS item 23 (p 118) Local piloting of retraining scheme for adults - is this different £80k fund or part of item 2.1</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response
	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	The Lifetime Skills Guarantee (Level 3 Adult Offer) is new additional funding that has been delegated to the CPCA from April 2021 – July 2022, separate from the Retraining Scheme.

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1c.	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Skills Committee	Item 2.1 Life time Skills Guarantee Appx 2. P 30-31 - PRC delivered 72% of all enrolments eligible. Why such dominance of Peterborough Regional College across the CA area?
	Response from:	Response to:	Response
	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Peterborough College dominates Level 3 adult delivery within AEB, as firstly, they have prioritised Level 3 courses in their Delivery Plan and secondly, as shown in Section 4 of the Paper, Table 4, Peterborough has one of the lowest rates of Level 3 qualifications within its population at 49% compared to the CPCA average of 60.1%. Therefore, there is a larger ‘market-place’ of eligible learners for them to recruit. To note, that other Colleges deliver more Level 3 courses through the Advanced Learner Loans, such as Cambridge Regional College.
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2.a	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Skills Committee	Item 2.2 : Business Growth Service Change Control Request The agenda item as a whole will be perceived as too opaque to residents and likely to cause suspicion as to the Combined Authority’s commitment to transparency. For this particular business proposition, can the committee consider a better process for ensuring greater transparency when such significant changes to a budgets is made?
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	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Transparency is at the heart of the work of the Combined Authority, with decision making processes reflecting this ethos. The Committee will continue to demonstrate a commitment to transparency by seeking to improve, where possible. Whilst no change to any direct CPCA budget is sought, consideration, as requested, to vigorous processes remains a priority.

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2b.	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Skills Committee	<p>Item 2.2 : Business Growth Service Change Control Request</p> <p>P 42-43. The OSC has concern over the technical fault that resulted in the potential loss of substantial EU funding to the BGS and over 600 potential new jobs. What processes are in place to ensure such errors don't happen in the future? What is the likelihood that the claim will be accepted despite the technical fault?</p>
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	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	<p>A number of improvements have been put in place:</p> <p>1) In light of what had happened, the procurement portal provider has updated its processes and procedures to ensure greater clarity and support in dealing with potential issues like this again.</p> <p>2) The CPCA has incorporated clearer instructions around dealing with technical issues in the tender documentation and will also now ensure there is an hour delay between submission deadline to release of tenders so that this situation does not happen again.</p> <p>3) MHCLG have indicated they would not contract on the ERDF Inward Investment project without a re-procurement. That is an option we are considering, although the CPCA would need to find 'new money to match'. MHCLG would be prepared to issue a Funding Agreement prior to the new procurement process. CPCA would need to show how this additional service will complement the contracted service.</p>

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3a.	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Skills Committee	<p>Item 2.3 : Local Economic Recovery Strategy: Updated refresh</p> <p>P 61 There is some concern in the OSC that the CPCA is concentrating mainly on COVID recovery and is not as well sighted on the current impact of Brexit on the local economy. To what extent do the Authority feel they have adequate and sufficient detail of this to mitigate the effects?</p>
	Response From:	Response to:	Response
	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	<p>The economic and business impacts measured in the econometric research that has informed the LERS are a result of the combined effects of COVID and the Trade Deal.</p> <p>However, ongoing work to disaggregate the impacts of these two factors on businesses re a composite of the effects</p> <p>Having analysed the Marketing Plan which the Chamber of Commerce have enacted to raise awareness of the support scheme and ensure that business leaders are aware of the support on offer to them. From 11th Jan 21, the headlines from the marketing campaign to all members and non-members has been:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 6 newsletters b. 29 twitter campaigns c. 6 LinkedIn campaigns d. 6 Facebook campaigns e. 6 external newsletters targeted at specific local authorities f. 2 website articles <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To date the campaign has added an additional 237 new businesses to the Growth Hub’s databases for retargeting in the future. 3. Support measures available to business leaders, free of charge, through our contract with the Chamber of Commerce include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sector specific guidance on importing or exporting goods to and from the EU

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Sessions on how to help employers understand the settled status scheme and what it means for their staff c. Supporting employers to become licensed sponsors d. One to one meeting with advisors to go through specific questions e.g. Do I need a visa or work permit to travel to the EU e. Outbound calls to SME leaders to encourage them to check what has changed
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3b.	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Skills Committee	<p>Item 2.3 : Local Economic Recovery Strategy: Updated refresh</p> <p>Appendix 1 Item 6 p 95 - expand on comments relating to Peterborough University and doubts about delivery online? Was the USP of the university the level of workplace/home working and online delivery of courses?</p>
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	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	The curriculum will be delivered on a blended model of on campus teaching and remote on-line learning, with a 60% off-campus teaching provision. Many HE institutions have successfully overcome the challenges of on-line teaching and it is now an acceptable mode of delivery, including for lab-based delivery where necessary. Blended learning allows for agile learning whilst the economic benefits in terms of lower operational and capital expenditure for the institutions are driving this mode of delivery amongst universities.

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3c.	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Skills Committee	<p>Item 2.3 : Local Economic Recovery Strategy: Updated refresh</p> <p>P 113 - 114. Item 9. Please expand on how the CA Skills Committee intends to address perceived disconnect between schools and employers in employment opportunities? Is it just that employers and teachers are not engaging with each other in a productive way, or is there a fundamental problem with curriculum that creates the disconnect,?</p>
	Response From:	Response to:	Response
	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	<p>Engagement between schools and employers could always be improved both in quantity and quality. To help facilitate this, the CPCA provides schools with current and relevant Labour Market Information (LMI). Last week we launched a new LMI portal with two sections: leaders and learners. The portal will improve the data available to all school and college leaders to help inform curriculum design and to support young people (learners) with their career choices.</p> <p>In addition to a data driven approach we will also be encouraging greater connectivity between schools and colleges with local businesses. Too often the educational provision is learner led rather than business led. Through the skills service within the recently launched Business Growth Service (BGS) we will be facilitating meaningful conversations between employers and schools about future skills needs and talent pipelines as well as encouraging businesses to engage with schools directly to inform their wider curriculum and careers strategy and associated action plans.</p>