

# Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Skills Report. March 2021.

## Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Skills Advisory Panel



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

**JAMES PALMER**  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE &  
PETERBOROUGH MAYOR



# Contents

---

<b>Chapter 1: Foreword</b> .....	4
<b>Chapter 2: Introduction</b> .....	5
Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs).....	5
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough SAP .....	5
<b>Chapter 3: Skills strengths and needs</b> .....	7
Local landscape .....	7
Local policy context.....	8
<i>Summary of skills strengths across the area and our sub-economies</i> .....	8
Local Population .....	8
Growth Sectors.....	8
Provision.....	9
Delivery.....	9
<i>Understanding the variation in skills need across the area and our sub-economies</i> .....	10
Impact of COVID-19 and factors influencing future skills demand .....	11
Concluding statement.....	11
<b>Chapter 4: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Skills Strategy</b> .....	12
COVID-19 Recovery .....	13
Creation of a new University.....	15
Social Mobility and Widening Participation .....	15
Opportunity area .....	15
Investing into the Skills Infrastructure: Strategic Use of Funds .....	16
Adult Education Budget (AEB).....	16
European Social Fund (ESFA) Provision .....	16
Local Growth Fund.....	16
<b>Chapter 5: Skills Action Plan</b> .....	17
The development of a new University.....	17
The strategic disbursement of Adult Education Budget.....	18
Workforce Skills.....	21
Careers Education.....	23
<b>Chapter 6: Assessment of Progress</b> .....	24
Enhancing Local Knowledge .....	24

---

Impact on Local Skills Provision.....	24
Development of a New University .....	25
Adult Education Budget.....	25
Technical Education and Apprenticeships.....	26
Careers Education.....	27
Widening Participation and Social Mobility .....	28
COVID-19 recovery and renewal plans.....	28
<b>Chapter 7: Case Studies and Positive Impact Stories .....</b>	<b>30</b>
Flexible FE Provision: Cambridge Regional College.....	30
Raising Aspirations in School Children: The Harbour School.....	31
Support for the unemployed: Reed in Partnership.....	32
Health and Care Sector Work Academy: Peterborough College .....	32
Industry and Education Partnership Working: The College of West Anglia and Anglian Water.....	33
Industry Led Learning : Kennedy’s .....	33
Data Driven Learning in Cambridgeshire: Cambridge Spark, Anglia Ruskin University and Cambridge Assessments.....	34
A Rich Heritage in Engineering, developing talent through Apprenticeships: Marshall Centre .....	35
Developing a Talent pipeline and learning culture: Metalcraft .....	36
<b>Chapter 8. Looking forward .....</b>	<b>47</b>
Next steps within a new policy landscape.....	48
Areas for future development .....	48
Future actions.....	49

# Chapter 1: Foreword

---



*Al Kingsley, Chair of the Skills Advisory Panel*

*I became the chair of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (Skills Advisory Panel) in June 2020. The last twelve months has and continues to be, a challenging time for individuals, providers and employers navigating through a fast changing and often unknown landscape. This context makes the role of the Skills Advisory Panel even more important as it advises the leaders in the Combined Authority – through the use of data and local intelligence – to inform the strategic direction to ensure the Region’s skills provision meets the needs of the local economy, driving productivity and rebound the economy.*

*The Skills Advisory Panel comprises members from local providers, employers and stakeholders as representatives from the region to make sure the unique strengths of our three sub-economies and our growth sectors are capitalised on to realise the opportunities to match the supply and demand of skills.*

*The Combined Authority- informed by the SAP- has a vision to grow a successful, globally competitive economy grounded in high-skilled, better paid jobs, increased productivity and strong sustainable communities through an inclusive, world-class local skills system that matches the needs of our employers, learners and communities.*

*The Skills Strategy, developed in consultation with the SAP, is a blueprint for designing and applying skills policies that makes the most of the region’s workforce and for maximising the skills of its residents to drive up productivity, enable economic growth and support social inclusion. However, the region does not operate in isolation and recognition is given to national initiatives that will impact on the local skills landscape.*

*This report highlights the significant progress that has been achieved in the region, including the development of the new university in Peterborough, at the same time it acknowledges where focus must be given moving forward to ensure we are able to achieve our ambition to make sure that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is ‘the best place in the world to live, learn and work’.*

*Following publication of this report, the SAP consultation will begin for the development of a new skills strategy. We would welcome your input to collectively create the plan and to realise our ambition.*

# Chapter 2: Introduction

---

## Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs)

Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) bring together employers, skills providers and key local stakeholders to better understand and resolve skills mismatches at a local level. There are 36 SAPs across England as part of Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships.

The Department for Education (DfE) supports SAPs with grant funding primarily to produce high quality analysis of local labour markets and **Local Skills Reports**. **The Reports set out the local strengths and skills needs and how the SAP proposes its area addresses its key priorities.** The Reports aim to influence local partners and feed intelligence to central government, including the national-level **Skills and Productivity Board (SPB)**. In January 2021, DfE published its White Paper “**Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth**,” which sets out a number of reforms aimed at putting employers more firmly at the heart of the skills system.

The White Paper outlined plans to test in 2021-22, in a small number of areas, “Local Skills Improvement Plans” created by business representative organisations. The White Paper committed to build on the work of SAPs to date. SAPs and their Local Skills Reports will continue as the DfE trailblazes “Local Skill Improvement Plans” and until any potential changes are made to a SAP’s remit and responsibilities.

## Cambridgeshire and Peterborough SAP

Locally, the function of the Skills Advisory Panels is delivered by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Employment and Skills Board (ESB). The board was established in the autumn of 2019 and comprises business leaders, education representatives, local authority leaders, and representation from other government agencies.

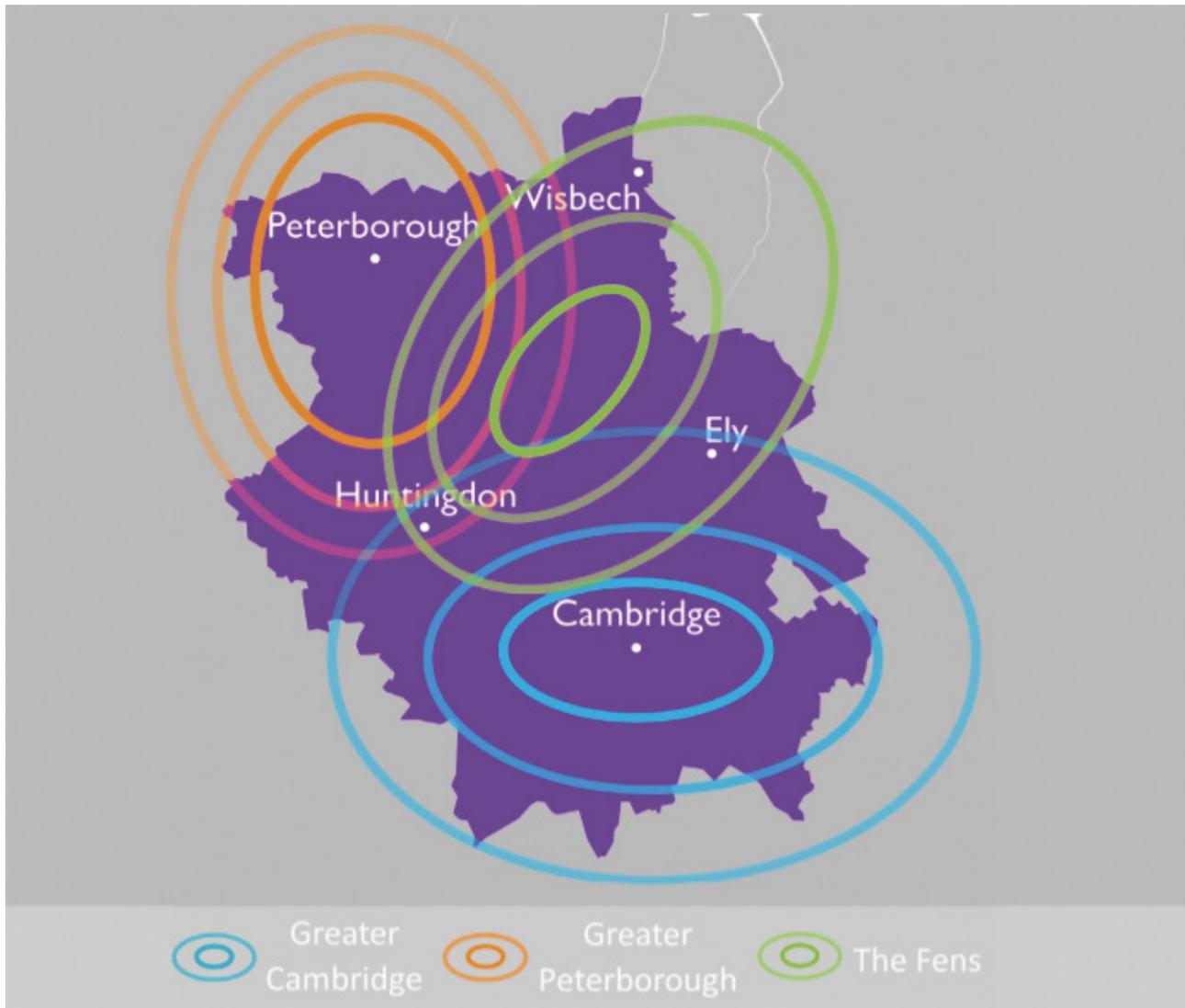
The ESB helps to steer the skills agenda in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough plus build on the good work being undertaken by all partners. It aims to support the implementation of the Local Industrial Strategy and support the recommendations of the Skills Strategy and its supporting evidence base.

Although the strategic focus of SAPs is to look across wider geographies, and this is reflected in the core indicators provided for all SAPs (Annex A), the **evidence base for our local skills strategy highlighted that the Combined Authority area is home to three overlapping labour markets which inform the demand and flow of labour across the region**, as highlighted in **map 1**. These are:

- Peterborough and surrounding areas (including North Huntingdonshire)
- The Fens (including Fenland, some of East Cambridgeshire and part of Huntingdonshire)
- Greater Cambridge area (including southern parts of Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire as a third).

**The socio-economic makeup of these three sub-economies is explored in more detail in Chapter 3, which provides the evidence base for our local strategies set out to meet our ambitions.**

## Map 1: Overview of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough SAP area and a breakdown of local 'sub-economies', Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Industrial Strategy



As mentioned, the Combined Authority Employment and Skills Board (ESB) also contains private sector board members who are drawn from across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to ensure a spread of representation of our key sectors and varying sizes of employers.

Currently, the ESB meets once every three months. You can access the minutes of our most recent meeting, including the latest data and evidence that gets presented to the board every quarter, [here](#).

**The lead contact for the Skills Advisory Panel in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is Fliss Miller, she can be reached at [Fliss.miller@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk](mailto:Fliss.miller@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)**

# Chapter 3: Skills strengths and needs

---

## Local landscape and context

**Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has a growing population.** The Combined Authority area has seen a 7.6% increase in total population since 2011.<sup>1</sup> The socio-economic and demographic makeup of this growing population, which makes the area unique, is explored in detail in Annex A.

The core indicators covered in Annex A help to underpin our local understanding of the variation in skills strengths and needs across the region. This variation is reflective of the three distinctive sub-economies of the area, each having their own individual strengths and needs, and are defined within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER)<sup>2</sup> as:

**1 Greater Cambridge area** (which takes in Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire, and parts of Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire), while not without deprivation, is prosperous and attracts many international businesses to come to the area and grow. **Skills levels and wages are high.** In the Greater Cambridge economy, businesses have brought about revolutionary advances in a wide array of fields, transforming lives around the world.

Growth within the **Greater Cambridge sub-economy has not been entirely positive.** There is a future risk of increasing housing and living costs in the area causing society to continue to **drift irreparably away from less well-paid workers**, whilst the ageing of the city (whose housing ladder's bottom rung is out of reach of the vast majority of the young) will threaten its dynamism.

**2 Peterborough and surrounding areas**, where there is much industry and potential; however, deprivation levels are higher, and many residents feel untouched by the economic success of the Greater Cambridge area. **It has a lower proportion of higher-level skills than elsewhere in the area, and educational and health outcomes in Peterborough are relatively poor.**

The city's industrial origins, first in brickmaking, and then manufacturing, have laid the foundations for a dynamic business environment. **It continues to be a magnet for engineering talent**, and trades well upon its connection to strategic infrastructure (which caused the city to boom in the first place).

**3 The Fens** are in some ways the most challenged economically of the three. Many market towns have lost their former glory and struggle to attract or retain young people. The development of the knowledge economy, with its high premium on proximity and agglomeration, has left **rural communities struggling to maintain distinctive high-value industries.**

**However, 50% of UK Grade 1 agricultural land is found in the Fens.** There is immense potential for the fens to be renowned as **the apex of British agricultural production.**

**Each of these individual sub-economies help us to understand skills demands within the collective Combined Authority area.** The current demand for skills across the Combined Authority is determined by its sectoral makeup and the types of businesses that are active within the area. The CPIER<sup>3</sup> and its interim reports also identified the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough economy to have demonstrable specialisms and strengths in the following **strategic growth sectors:**

---

<sup>1</sup> Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local population estimates and forecasts, Cambridgeshire County Council Business Intelligence.

<sup>2</sup> Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER).

<sup>3</sup> Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER)

- Agriculture and Food (Agri-tech)
- Life Sciences
- IT and Digital
- Manufacturing, Advanced Manufacturing and Materials
- Logistics and Distribution
- Education and Professional Services

In addition to these six growth sectors, we have an additional two priority sectors, as identified through engagement with local councillors and business leads: **Health and Social Care** and **Construction**.

**The growth sectors listed above are the most dynamic and offer the best prospects for future growth and prosperity.** These sectors are used to determine the focus of the Skills Strategy, as discussed in [Chapter 4](#).

The Combined Authority works to ensure the highest possible quality of training across the region, working in collaboration with regional training and skills providers to match supply with the demand of the three local sub-economies.

These local ambitions sit alongside a range of work which will be progressed collectively across the Cambridge-Oxford Arc, a world-leading economic area. This growth will be underpinned by a high-quality environment, which will create jobs and boost local and regional economies.<sup>4</sup>

## Local policy context

A cross-cutting strength for the Combined Authority area comes through the **devolved budget responsibilities attached to Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) areas**. **These responsibilities provide the strength of having greater flexibility to match local skills supply with demand.**

**These devolved responsibilities help to facilitate targeted commissioning to meet the skills needs of our individual sub-economies and growth sectors.**

## Summary of skills strengths across the area and our sub-economies

### Local Population

**The Greater Cambridge area has the highest skilled population and best educational outcomes across the Combined Authority area, leading to a strong supply of skills.** This is explored further in our Skills Supply Section of Annex A. While Peterborough has lower educational attainment, as highlighted in Core Indicator 11, the **demand for work remains high. 80% of the working age population in Peterborough are economically active, slightly above the England average of 79.7%**<sup>5</sup>.

### Growth Sectors

Strengths in skills demand come from our individual sub-economies and growth sectors. The growth sectors across the Combined Authority area offer a local strength in skills demand, as they allow for significant occupational crossover, with many commonalities between the skills required for different occupations within these sectors. **This offers opportunities of transferability of skills within our growth sectors.**

---

<sup>4</sup> Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Industrial Strategy: A Partner in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

<sup>5</sup> Annual Population Survey: September 2020.

**Each of the individual growth sectors offer key strengths to the local area.** For example, in recent decades, life sciences has become one of the UK's greatest business strengths, and **the reach of the biomedical industry in the Greater Cambridge area is international.** Similarly, in the north of the area, the CPIER discusses the **Combined Authority's very strong high-tech manufacturing base.** With a manufacturing history in Peterborough, large firms such as **Caterpillar** have engineering bases there.

## Provision

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority **benefits from an extensive network of further education (FE) providers**, with a focus on the 16-19 (post 16) age group. **These institutions seek to maximise the employability of students**, through the delivery of vocational qualifications and training. They also deliver more traditional academic qualifications and **provide an important bridge for those looking to progress to higher education (HE).**

We have a vast range of FE colleges across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, delivering a wide variety of different courses. Some of our key institutions such as **Cambridge Regional College**, **Long Road Sixth Form College**, **Hills Road Sixth Form College**, the **College of West Anglia**, **City College Peterborough** and the **Inspire Education Group** in Peterborough **provide the majority of FE provision in the area.** There are also 16 School Sixth-Forms providing academic pathways and two University Technical Colleges in the region for 14-19 year olds.

One of the **key strengths of skills supply across the area is local Higher Education provision in the south of the Combined Authority area** which is home to the **University of Cambridge**, one of the world's leading academic centres and **Anglia Ruskin University**, an innovative global university.

## Delivery

The two maps outlined in Annex B illustrate where further education courses are being delivered and where the learners who are undertaking these courses reside. This demonstrates **that most FE courses are being delivered within Cambridge and Peterborough, with some higher concentrations of delivery evident near the market towns.**

**The devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) responsibilities gives us strength by providing the tools to support learners to secure foundation skills, progression and diversification** and is pivotal in supporting the needs of local people into employment. Improving workforce development is crucial to achieving the economic development of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, particularly in those areas where levels of educational attainment are currently low.

Strength in the local supply has also come through apprenticeship delivery, where we have seen higher proportions of apprenticeship starts in higher apprenticeships which has been explored in our skills deep dive. **The Combined Authority is also a net importer of learners.** 1,235 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough residents learn outside of the area, while 1,543 learners live outside Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and study within the geography, resulting in a net inflow of 308 learners<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority: Implications of Covid-19 for CPCA's labour market: February 2020. Metro-Dynamics.

## Understanding the variation in skills needs across the area and our sub-economies

Detailed analysis into skills supply and demand has shown **skills deficits and lower quality employment in the north of the economy**<sup>7</sup>. There is variation in the socio-economic make up across the Combined Authority area and variation in deprivation (Core Indicator 10) directly reflects localised skills strengths and needs.

**Within the Indices of Multiple Deprivation<sup>8</sup>, Fenland is ranked third of all 316 local authorities nationally for Education, Skills and Training need, where 1 is most deprived. Peterborough is ranked 31<sup>st</sup>, which is the second lowest rank across the Combined Authority.** These two areas show much higher levels of deprivation compared to other districts in the area. **This directly translates to lower educational attainment.** East Cambridgeshire also shows higher levels of relative deprivation for Education, Skills and Training relative to its overall deprivation rank.

While we have real strengths in HE provision in the south of the Combined Authority, there are **clear gaps in HE provision in the north**, where there is a limited HE offer through Peterborough University Centre, a partnership between Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) and Peterborough College. Equally, whilst HE provision is a real strength in the southern parts of the Combined Authority area, data on University graduates, as outlined in Core Indicator 19, **indicates that the majority of graduates from HEIs in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough move away from the area after completing their studies, representing a loss of skilled labour and economic capacity.** As we explore further in [Chapter 4, ARU Peterborough](#) will be a regional HE provider, with a strategic aim of delivering courses that will meet the skills needs of our local sub-economies, whilst addressing the lack of HE provision in the north.

Parts of Peterborough, the Fens and the surrounding areas generally experience greater economic inactivity compared to the rest of Cambridgeshire, **suggesting a sub-economy marked by longer-term issues relating to engagement and long-term alienation.** The pattern of supply suggests that there is an area-wide reliance on migrant workers in the north of the local economy as well as a suggestion that any **future employer demands will have to be met from a proportionately smaller working age population as the existing population continues to grow and age.**

Local needs relating to skills are not restricted to just the north of the Combined Authority area and there are challenges that the area faces as a whole. In terms of needs surrounding matching skills supply with demand, core indicators in Annex A show that for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as a whole, **the primary driver of hard-to-fill vacancies has been low numbers of generally suitable applicants, with those lacking suitable skills also a challenge.**

Within the strength of the Combined Authority growth sectors there are also challenges relating to the demand for unique skills. For example, Agri-Tech demand specific skills and **therefore skills gaps in the sector may be harder to fill through employees transferring from other sectors and applying a common skill set.**

---

<sup>7</sup> Annual Population Survey, September 2020; Business Register and Employment Survey, 2019; Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2014-2019; and Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation in England and is part of a suite of outputs that form the Indices of Deprivation (IoD). It follows an established methodological framework in broadly defining deprivation to encompass a wide range of an individual's living conditions. For more information see: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/835115/IoD2019\\_Statistical\\_Release.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835115/IoD2019_Statistical_Release.pdf)

## Impact of COVID-19 and factors influencing future skills demand

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **Greater Cambridge economy was the fastest growing economy in the UK, outside of London. It is arguably the most likely to rapidly reverse the impacts of COVID-19** on overall output and regain its previous growth trajectory, which is vital for the UK's sustainable economy.

The long-term impacts of COVID-19 on the labour market and the skills that employers need from the workforce remain unknown but factors influencing future skills demand include:

- **Structurally higher unemployment** as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to endure for some time and the burden will **fall disproportionately on more deprived people and places**.
- The crisis has **sped up the process of digital technology adoption in businesses**. In addition to the current disruption to labour markets and workplaces, technological adoption by companies will transform tasks, jobs and skills over the next five years.
- The spatial pattern of economic activity and the relationships between places for work, living, leisure and learning are changing. The 'future of work' has already arrived for a large majority of the online white-collar workforce. Now more workplaces and occupations are amenable to remote working, **skills gaps may increasingly be filled by workers not physically near their workplace**.

The impact has been noticeable on service sectors where the level of skills demand (**measured in terms of average qualification levels**) is relatively low. This means that as these service sectors have shut down due to the pandemic significant numbers of relatively unskilled people have been made redundant or are supported by the government furlough scheme. This underlines the potential 'skills challenge' that the area faces; **can people losing work in one sector be supported to transfer to higher skilled and more productive work in another sector?**

Despite these short-term challenges for the area, the strengths and opportunities that the area offers have also been highlighted in our skills deep dive. This includes:

- Post COVID-19 prospects for the **Life Sciences sector remain strong. Firms in the sector have held up well across the board**.
- Government target to increase national spending on Research and Development by a third will be delivered by the Life Sciences Sector. Continued strong skills demand is expected.
- Workers across many of our **priority sectors** have in general been **well placed to switch to remote working over the course of 2020**. A key consideration for the future is the extent to which some of this switch to remote working becomes a permanent characteristic of the sector's workforce.

## Concluding statement

Through this Chapter we have identified that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has a diverse economy and has a number of strengths to build on and specific skills needs to address. Our strength of having devolved powers through being an MCA area means that **our local strategies are underpinned by the need to capitalise on our strengths and target funding to meet our needs**.

The socio-economic context of the area underpins our skills strategy and local action plans and these are summarised in **Chapters 4 and 5**. The Local Economic Recovery Strategy will drive the economic recovery that will shape future skills demand.

# Chapter 4: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Skills Strategy

---

Through recognising the unique strengths of our three sub-economies and our growth sectors we can capitalise on the opportunities to match the supply and demand of skills. **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is in a favourable position in that it is a Combined Authority in which the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), known as the Business Board, is coterminous.** This ensures connectivity between the business community and the education and skills leaders in the region.

The Combined Authority – advised by the SAP – take a programmatic lead of funding in the region. **Skills Supply is directly influenced by skills demand, thus creating a dynamic and responsive skills environment in each of the three sub-economies identified Chapter 3.**

The Combined Authority devolution deal established an agreement between Government, the seven local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnership to devolve a range of funding, powers and responsibilities. The devolution of skills powers to the Combined Authority framed the impetus for the Skills Strategy. **This Strategy provides a framework within which expenditure against strategic priorities can be judged; it is focused on learning that delivers sustained job outcomes, productivity and economic growth.** At a practical level, the Skills Strategy informed the best use of the devolved Adult Education Budget from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019. It has also guided expenditure ensuring that businesses have the skills they need to improve productivity and drive economic growth.

The current Skills Strategy was created in 2019. The strategy is clearly aligned to the Local Industry Strategy (LIS) and has subsequently informed the development of the Local Economic Recovery Strategy (LERS) in relation to Skills. Given the fast-moving pace of the skills requirement in a post COVID-19 era and the evolution of the LERS, the **Skills Strategy will be refreshed in June 2021 to reflect the changing skills needs and challenges in the current and predicted future economic context.**

The existing Skills Strategy sets the vision to grow a successful, globally competitive economy grounded in high-skilled, better paid jobs, increased productivity and strong sustainable communities through: ***‘An inclusive world-class local skills eco-system that matches the needs of our employers, learners and communities’.***

This strategy is informed by Central Government Skills Policy and the landscape at the time, which included the introduction of T-Level qualifications, Apprenticeship Reforms, The National Retaining Scheme and the National Careers Strategy as well as the Industrial Strategy’s Grand Challenges: Artificial Intelligence and data, ageing society, clean growth and the future of mobility.

**The Skills Strategy is a blueprint for designing and applying skills policies that makes the most of the region’s workforce and for maximising the skills of its residents to drive up productivity, enable economic growth and support social inclusion.**

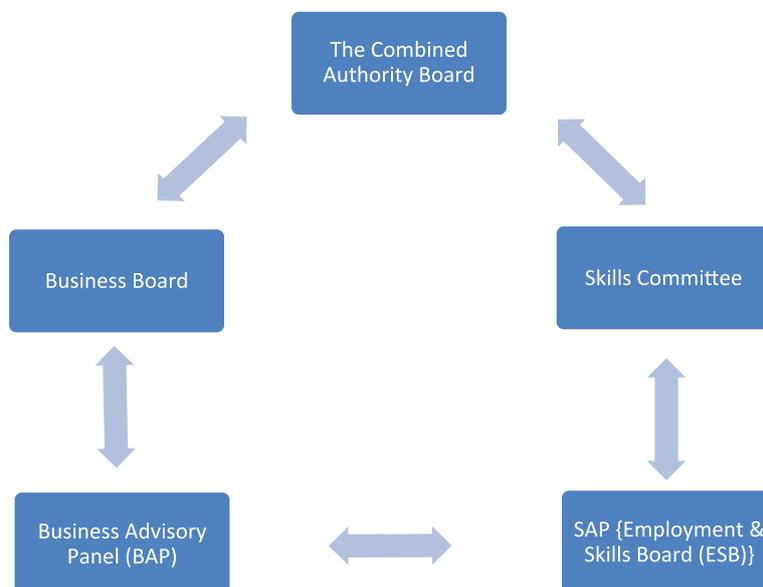
The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough **Skills Advisory Panel aims to support delivery against the Skills Strategy to enable sustainable futures** by creating a culture of positive change within the skills arena following three key themes:

1. Achieve a high-quality offer tailored to the needs of the three sub-economies.

2. Empower local people to access education and skills to participate fully in society, to raise aspirations and enhance progress into further learning or work.
3. Develop a dynamic skills market that responds to the changing needs of local business.

The Skills Strategy is underpinned by the three themes outlined above as well as the eight local priority sectors identified in **Chapter 3**. The full Skills Strategy can be viewed [here](#).

The Governance to implement the Skills Strategy is outlined below.



The Skills Strategy should be viewed alongside the Local Economic Recovery Strategy which looks at the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and reflects the commitment to respond effectively to the specific needs of Greater Peterborough, the Fens, and Greater Cambridge – whilst building the connections and relationships that will unlock the full economic potential of the whole region. **This includes recognising existing and future skills needs.**

Given the fast-moving pace of the skills requirement in a post COVID-19 era the Skills Strategy will be refreshed in June 2021 **to reflect the changing skills needs and challenges in the current and predicted future economic context.** This is discussed in more detail in **Chapter 8**.

The current strategy has guided how investment has been distributed in a programmatic way. **The Combined Authority has used its devolved funding powers for AEB together with the Local Growth Fund (LGF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) to strategically invest in ways to meet the unique needs of each of the sub-economies** outlined in **Chapter 3**.

The Skills Strategy is ambitious – one of the key strands was to recognise the HE cold-spot in the north of the Combined Authority and to create a new University in Peterborough. This is due to open to students in 2022 with a target of 2,000 enrolments in its first year.

## COVID-19 Recovery

In immediate response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the **Economic Recovery Strategy Group (ERSG), as part of the wider Local Resilience Forum, was formed in March 2020** to respond to the Economic and Business Impacts of COVID-19.

The ERSG, comprising of Senior Officers of our Local Authorities together with representatives of local Business Membership Organisations, committed to developing a joint Local Economic

Recovery Strategy (LERS) which laid down a roadmap formed of specific interventions with the aim to accelerate the recovery of the local economy.

The core mission of our COVID-19 Economic Recovery Strategy is to:

***“To lead the nation out of recession – by accelerating the recovery, rebound and renewal of our economy and achieving our ambition to double GVA by 2042 – in a new and more digitally enabled, greener, healthier and more inclusive way than ever before.”***

Our Local Economic Recovery Strategy is constructed to address the three phases of recovery – and has 5 Pillars of delivery:



These 5 pillars align with and reflect the aims of the Local Industrial Strategy:

**People:** Through local collaboration and strong leadership, deliver a fair and inclusive economy by empowering local people to access the education and skills needed to meet the needs of the local economy and business, both now and in the future.

**Ideas:** Ensuring that the area’s economic base grows by harnessing innovation, enhancing Cambridge’s position nationally and globally, especially around life science, artificial intelligence and data technologies, whilst bringing innovation-based growth to Peterborough and the Fens.

**Business Environment:** Accelerating and sustaining higher levels of business growth in start-ups and scale-ups, whilst attracting new and more knowledge intensive firms to our economy, to drive both growth and productivity.

**Infrastructure:** Enhancing the current transport and housing infrastructure that is hampering growth in the south, whilst investing in commercial infrastructure to bring inclusive growth to the north.

**Place:** Tailoring interventions to meet the needs of our cities and districts at local level.

Our interventions for medium-term recovery over the next 12-18 months will **help ensure the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough economy rebounds faster and with growth that is more inclusive, greener and sustained longer at higher rebound rates than would have naturally occurred**. This also includes a specific focus being placed on those sectors and places in most need and with the longest forecast recovery rates, so they start to recover sooner.

**Planning for longer-term recovery by making strategic investments that enable greater future resilience strengthens our economic assets and address the inherent disparities across sectors and places.**

Within the current Skills Strategy, the biggest challenge was to create a new University which is highlighted below. Other individual elements of the strategy are discussed in more detail in the following Chapters.

## Creation of a new University

**Peterborough is a recognised cold spot for Higher Education (HE).** To address this, the Combined Authority and Peterborough City Council (PCC) committed to securing a new University for the City in readiness for the Academic Year 2022/23.

Following a procurement exercise, Anglia Ruskin University has been appointed as HE partner to run the new Campus and develop a curriculum geared to the needs of learners and the local economy. The first phase of the University will open in a 5300 sqm academic building in 2022 with an investment of over £30m. **The curriculum will be centred around subjects which integrate with the local economy and embrace new technologies.**

**ARU Peterborough** is key to the regeneration of the skills and education marketplace for higher value skills. **It will focus on the skills gaps within the Peterborough, Fenland and Huntingdon areas.** Currently the East of England is the 2nd lowest of all regions in the UK for participation in HE at 44%. The national average is 47%.

The HE academic offer will be tailored to the current and future demands of businesses in the City and wider area as well as leveraging new, high value businesses to the region. **The new University delivery model will be agile and flexible in its approach to delivery** with a curriculum offer in health and social care, education, business, sciences, digitalisation and technologies as well as agriculture and environmental sustainability.

**ARU Peterborough will provide access to higher level skills and knowledge for local people** but will also in due course become a means of **attracting fresh talent to support the growth of a more knowledge intensive, high value economy.**

## Social Mobility and Widening Participation Opportunity area:

Opportunity areas are part of the government's national plan for dealing with social mobility through education.

**Fenland and East Cambridgeshire** form one of 12 Opportunity Areas nationally. **In part, this is in response to the specific Education, Skills and Training (EST) needs** as identified in **Chapter 3**. For example, **Fenland had the third highest needs out of all Local Authorities in England** based on EST needs in the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation. Meanwhile, East Cambridgeshire had higher EST needs compared to wider deprivation.

Similarly, in 2016 the Social Mobility Index (SMI) set out the differences between where children grow up and the opportunities they have for doing well in adult life. Out of 324 Local Authority Districts (LAD) nationally, **the SMI ranked Fenland 319th and East Cambridgeshire 311th out of the 324**. The OA has four priorities:

**Priority 1:** Accelerate the progress of disadvantaged children and young people in the acquisition and development of communication, language and reading.

**Priority 2:** Strengthen the effectiveness of support for children and young people with mental health concerns and those with Special Educational Needs.

**Priority 3:** Raise aspirations and increase access for young people to a wide range of career choices and post-16 routes.

**Priority 4:** Recruit, develop and retain the best leaders and teachers in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire.

## Investing in the Skills Infrastructure: Strategic Use of Funds

To support the implementation of the skills strategy, a number of funds have been deployed to make the most impact. Each of these funds are discussed below:

### Adult Education Budget (AEB)

The primary purpose of the Combined Authority's AEB fund is to **engage adults aged 19+ and provide them with the skills and learning needed for work or further learning.**

The primary strategic purpose of the Combined Authority AEB fund is to **maintain an appropriate mix and balance of provision** that engages adults to:

- Provide them with the skills and learning needed for work or further learning through a suite of accredited qualifications up to Level 3, entitlements and digital skills.
- Improve employability skills including communication, self-confidence, and attitude to work and enable people to contribute to the social wellbeing of their community.
- To help those furthest away from the labour-market to access learning and work.
- To provide enriching learning opportunities in the community that promote health and wellbeing, self-esteem, community connection and cohesion.

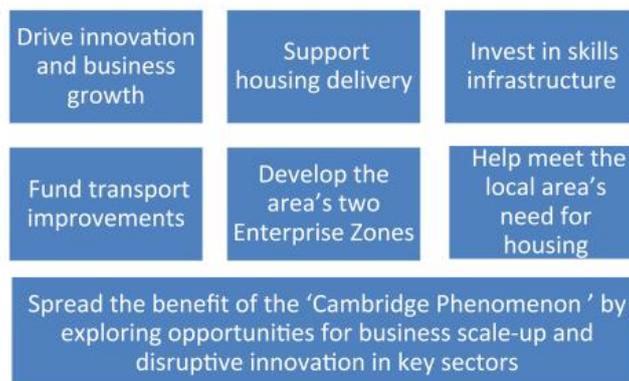
### European Social Fund (ESFA) Provision

The Combined Authority has **strategically coordinated the allocation of ESF funded provision across the area** to ensure that there is activity across all available investment priorities in the ESF Programme. This includes measures to support access to employment; sustainable integration of young people, active inclusion through to skills for growth provision including access to lifelong learning and an overarching Combined Authority project 'STAR Hub', aimed at improving the labour market relevance of education and training, coordinating all other provision across the area.

### Local Growth Fund

The former Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough LEP, and subsequently Combined Authority, has **invested £147 million of Local Growth Fund (LGF) in 2016-2020 into further and higher education.** This equates to 20% of the total allocation.

The stated aims of the Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough Growth Deals were to:



The combined strategies have informed the use of funds to deliver impact; levelling up the provision to ensure the region is well equipped to develop the skills required to meet the needs of the future economy. Progress against these strategies are outlined in the specific actions which are overviewed in the following Chapter.

## Chapter 5: Skills Action Plan

As discussed in the previous Chapter we have a number of interlinked strategies and operational plans in the Combined Authority. These all have specific objectives and actions. **All skills related actions have been combined into one coherent Skills Action Plan.** All actions are aligned to strategic priorities at the Combined Authority. As the Skills Strategy is nearing the end of its terms, **a new Skills Action Plan will be formed when the new skills strategy is complete.** Throughout this section the current skills actions will be discussed.

### The development of a new University

ARU Peterborough	Action	Source	Owner	Indicative timeframe	Target group
ARU Peterborough	Improve HE participation locally to raise aspirations for young people and ensure the curriculum meets the needs of the local employers, students and communities by developing a University for Peterborough.	Skills Strategy	SRO Higher Education	Ongoing	
	Look at scope to create a new university in Peterborough, that will attract highly skilled, productive individuals to the city, and develop the skills of the local population.	LIS	SRO Higher Education	Complete	
	Procurement of a University Partner to be complete		SRO Higher Education	Complete	
	University to open to students		SRO Higher Education	On track	

The development of the new university in Peterborough is on track to open to take its first cohort of students in 2022. Plans and Strategic Outline Business cases are currently in development for a further four phases up to 2030.

## The strategic disbursement of Adult Education Budget

Theme	Action	Source	Owner	Indicative timeframe	Target group
<b>Adult Education Budget</b>					
	Maximise devolved AEB to target investment and the related outcomes for individual opportunity and business needs.	LIS	SRO Adult Education	Annual programme of implementing and evaluating impact of funding policy changes.	Adults aged 19+
<b>AEB1.0</b>	Map the current skills provision through the AEB to improve future commissioning to develop courses, employer engagement and learner engagement that links with Apprenticeship and job progression, and sector focused retraining schemes.	Skills Strategy	SRO Adult Education	In-Year and strategic commissioning to fill gaps in provision 2021/22 Re-tendering of AEB 2022/23	
<b>AEB2.0</b>	Improving Digital Skills	LEERS	SRO Adult Education	Set targets for individual providers for 2021/22 to increase digital skills	
<b>AEB3.0</b>	New Funding for Training for School & College Leavers Unable to Find a Job	LEERS	SRO Adult Education	High Value Course funding commissioned for 2020/21 and 2021/22 Gaps in provision commissioning with local authorities for 16-18 NEET <sup>9</sup> s and 19-25 through AEB.	

<sup>9</sup> Not in Education, Employment, or Training

Theme	Action	Source	Owner	Indicative timeframe	Target group
<b>Adult Education Budget</b>					
<b>AEB4.0</b>	Increase number of residents over 19 with a level 3 qualification from 30% in 2011 to 40% by 2031	The Combined Authority Implementation Plan	SRO Adult Education	Set individual targets for providers for Level 3 provision. Commission Level 3 adult offer	
<b>AEB5.0</b>	Increase the number of Peterborough and Fenland residents with a Level 2 qualification from 62% in 2016 to the national average of 75% by 2025	The Combined Authority Implementation Plan	SRO Adult Education	Set individual targets for providers to drive-up Level 2 provision.	
<b>AEB6.0</b>	Co-design with providers an employment outcome tracking process for unemployed learners in 2021/22	The Combined Authority Implementation Plan	SRO Adult Education		
<b>AEB7.0</b>	Work with training providers to supply starting point data and destination data for at least 50% of learners		SRO Adult Education		
<b>AEB8.0</b>	Utilise a budget of £1M of AEB funding to achieve social and economic value in community learning		SRO Adult Education	Co-produce a Community Learning Policy to maximise use and reporting of outcomes in Community Learning.	

Theme	Action	Source	Owner	Indicative timeframe	Target group
<b>Adult Education Budget</b>					
<b>AEB9.0</b>	Targeting low skilled and low paid adults to support them in upskilling.	The Combined Authority Business Plan 2021/22	SRO Adult Education	Evaluate Low-Wage pilot in 2019/20 and 2020/21 and increase wage threshold to £20K for 2021/22.	

## Workforce Skills

Workforce Skills	Action	Source	Owner	Indicative timeframe	Target group
<b>Skills Brokerage</b>	Create a Skills Brokerage Service, bringing together demand and supply through a new, dedicated service. To increase enrolments in: Apprenticeships, traineeships and kickstart, T-Levels	LIS	SRO Workforce Skills	3 year contract commenced February 2021	Local employers, providers, schools and learners
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	Establish an Apprenticeship Ambassador Network, a voluntary network of business champions encouraging businesses to overcome reticence to create apprenticeships and encourage uptake.	LIS	SRO Workforce Skills	02/ 2019	Local employers
	Provide sector specific support by continuing to deliver the CITB Construction Hub to provide on-site training for workers from declining sectors and military veterans.	LIS	SRO Workforce Skills		
<b>Health and Care Sector Work Academy</b>	Create a Health and Care Sector Work Academy to tackle the local shortage of skilled workers and provide a further 2,100 learners into the sector.	Skills Strategy	SRO Workforce Skills	3 year contract from March 2018	Health and Social Care employers and learners.
<b>Skills Talent &amp; Apprenticeship Recruitment Hub</b>	Connect business with providers and talent with the targeted support for STEM, T-levels, Employer Outreach, CEIAG, Work Readiness and Careers Pilots through a robust Skills Brokerage Service. Create greater visibility of talent to support businesses with recruitment/ training and using social media to attract young people into key sectors by connecting into the Digital Talent Portal.	Skills Strategy	SRO Workforce Skills	3 year contract commenced February 2021	Local employers, providers, schools and learners

Workforce Skills	Action	Source	Owner	Indicative timeframe	Target group
<b>Apprenticeship Levy Pooling</b>	Use the levy pot better to connect SMEs into wider value chains, spreading funding more effectively across local sector clusters by the creation of A Levy Pooling Mechanism. Manage the levy pooling to support micro businesses currently unable to take on an Apprentice due to either their size or specialist nature by connecting into an Apprenticeship Training Academy.	Skills Strategy	SRO Workforce Skills	Levy Sharing Service launched in November 2018 and is an ongoing service.	Local and national businesses and providers.
	Working with the Work and Health programme to support adults who have become disconnected from the labour market to support their progression into work.	Skills Strategy	SRO Workforce Skills	ongoing	Adults
<b>T-Levels</b>	Development of T-Levels with guaranteed progression pathways into the New University		SRO Workforce Skills	First levels to be delivered in 2023	Providers, employers and learners.

**Significant progress has been made in relation to workforce skills but COVID-19 has impacted on the volume of apprenticeships starts. However, with the new Business Growth Service launched, it is anticipated that apprenticeship starts will begin to rebound.**

## Careers Education

Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance	Action	Source	Owner	Indicative timeframe	Target group
	<b>All eligible schools in the region to have the opportunity to sign up to the Enterprise Advisor Network</b>		SRO Workforce Skills	Ongoing	Schools
	A Greater Cambridge pilot for the wider economy to <b>encourage more large local employers to generate more active engagement with schools</b> , leading to more work mentoring, work experience, and industry placements. Cambridge Ahead will be deliver this pilot through its 48 Members across the Greater Cambridge sub-economy.	LEERS	SRO Workforce Skills		Schools, employers, learners
	To secure a careers Hub in the region.		SRO Workforce Skills	2021	Schools
	Undertake an in-depth evaluation of actions being taken as part of the Opportunity Area in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire, to inform future locally-led interventions which may be developed through focussed work on market towns in the area.	Skills Strategy	SRO Workforce Skills	End of 2021	

All actions are reviewed on a regular basis and assessment of progress of these actions is discussed in the next Chapter.

## Chapter 6: Assessment of Progress

---

The Combined Authority has delivered against the priority actions outlined in the action plan. **This has been achieved by taking a programmatic approach to funding through clarity of thinking informed by a collaborative working to develop clear and ambitious strategies and plans.** The SAP has advised on the direction of these plans and will be integral to the development of the forthcoming skill strategy refresh.

**Progress will be assessed by three areas; enhanced local knowledge, impact on local skills provision (including the skills action plan) and COVID-19 recovery and renewal plans.**

### Enhancing Local Knowledge

Since the board was established, it has worked hard to make sure it is serviced with high quality data analysis and research. **The need to have timely labour market information has been magnified over the last twelve months as the partnership have looked to understand the impacts of COVID-19 and support local recovery planning.** This work has included monthly monitoring of key datasets as identified by the national SAP programme team and the receipt of quarterly data updates.

**One of the priorities of the SAP is to understand the skills demand and skills supply in the region.** To this end, additional work was commissioned to increase the analytical capacity of the SAP. This included the production of the skills deep dive report, and the online publication of an interactive dashboard. The findings from **this report highlighted some gaps in the local evidence base and a further study will be commissioned.** This work, together with local intelligence, will inform the refresh of the skills strategy to be published in September 2021.

Through existing evidence, **there is a greater understanding of the three sub-economies and priority actions and funding has been allocated based on the differing localised needs.** This evidence continues to underpin our key strategies.

It was acknowledged that, as a region, this evidence should not be restricted to just the SAP board, and leadership would come through **ensuring our Schools, Colleges and Businesses have access to relevant and accessible Labour market Information.** This will help **inform our young people of the opportunities available to them within the area.** This has been created and is available for all to use. It is dynamic and will also have quarterly refreshes.

### Impact on Local Skills Provision

The Combined Authority has significant strengths in its skills provision across the region which has already been highlighted in previous Chapters. Funding has been targeted through the priorities of the Skills Strategy and LERS. The Combined Authority **has encouraged a programmatic approach to the use of funds in the region.** This includes **the Adult Education Budget, Local Growth Fund, European Social Fund, Towns Fund and Market Towns Fund** amongst other smaller grants from Central Government Departments. The impact of these initiatives is evidenced throughout this Chapter, linked to the different sections of the Skills Action Plan in **Chapter 5.**

## Development of a New University

**The Combined Authority has invested £40.3 million and leveraged £9m of private sector funding into Phase 1 and 2 of the New University.** Building works have commenced and a university partner has been secured – Anglia Ruskin University. Detailed planning and engagement with local businesses is progressing to design and develop curriculum to meet the needs of the local economy. **The University will welcome its first cohort of students in 2022.**

**Phases 3 and 4 are currently being planned and the Combined Authority is in the process of raising a further £44m of public and private sector finance to fund these phases. This will include improvements to further education delivery to develop the pipeline of students into the new university, with the goal of reaching 5,000 enrolments p.a. by 2025.**

## Adult Education Budget

An external evaluation of the impact of the first year of AEB in the Combined Authority during 2019/20 has been commissioned and the main findings are:

- Simplifying and streamlining the provider base from 190 in 2018/19 to 17 in 2019/20, with a reduction in sub-contracting, **creating a more localised provider network and skills system.**
- **Adult education delivery has been re-balanced**, with a considerably higher proportion of adult skills courses and a reduction in unaccredited Community Learning.
- **Community Learning has been targeted to areas of educational and social deprivation**, particularly in Peterborough and Fenland, to re-engage adults into learning.
- **The Combined Authority focussed learning delivery to learners residing in areas of high deprivation**, which increased from under a quarter (22%) in 2018/19 to just over a third (34%) in 2019/20
- **Low Wage Pilot initiative was successfully delivered in 2019/20 and increased for 2020/21.**

Key achievements include:

- 14,067 enrolments delivered to 8,421 learners.
- 78% completing and achieving the desired outcome for their learning aim.
- £7.84 million of the £11.33 million spent, with an average spend per learner of £914.67.
- 50% of enrolments were level 2, 37% were level 1 or below.
- 50% employed at time of enrolment (+6% compared to 2018/19), 40% unemployed.
- 47% of learning fully funded, a further 36% co-funded.
- 20% of learners considered themselves to have a learning difficulty or disability and health problems (+6% compared to 2018/19)
- 22% of learners were from ethnic minority groups.
- 897 learners were eligible for the low wage pilot (funding for those employed and earning less than £16k per annum)

**The Combined Authority launched an Innovation Fund in 2020** to support A) the testing of new approaches that deliver tangible learning, progression, employment, and social outcomes for residents, and communities within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and B) the testing of new learning opportunities that target adults who may be disadvantaged, or digitally excluded in terms of skills and/or devices. **The aim of the Innovation Fund is to support applications that demonstrate innovation in the delivery of adult education.**

Since its launch in October 2020, the **Adult Education Budget Innovation Fund has awarded over £570,000 of funding to thirteen projects that will help reduce skills and employment gaps of learners who are currently underrepresented in the labour market, and groups**

digitally excluded from accessing learning in lockdown. These groups include the unemployed, those that have English as a second language, health volunteers, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) learners and ex-offenders.

The Combined Authority has four operational Community Fund ESF projects; three covering geographical areas and one 'New Horizons' which is a thematic project supporting financial confidence. All are performing well and have been extended by the Community Fund. In addition, we have a Community Led Local Development (CLLD) plan operating in Wisbech which will support 1,200 participants.

Via the Local Growth Fund (LGF), £400,000 has been awarded to Cambridgeshire Skills in order to fund a refurbishment of March Community Centre, enabling residents in the area to utilise the space for learning opportunities.

## Technical Education and Apprenticeships

While the Combined Authority Skills Strategy identifies Technical Education as a priority for both 16–19 year-olds and adults, **local providers have been inhibited by quality and structural constraints**. For example, **there will be no T-Level providers operating in the region until after 2023, despite it being a flagship Government programme**. Additionally, we have **limited high-quality Independent Training Providers (ITP)** based in the region. This inhibits capacity, particularly for the delivery of Apprenticeships.

**In Chapter 3, we identified that apprenticeships have given real strength to the area**, however, COVID-19 has had a clear impact on learners. **Analysis shows an encouraging increase in the number of apprenticeship starts in 2018/19** (+14% on the previous academic year), following a national decline as a result of the reforms in 2017, however this has been undone in 2020. The number of apprenticeships starts in 2019/20 (4,300) was slightly lower than starts in 2017/18 (4,450) and recent analysis has shown that apprenticeship starts have declined by 10% since 2018.

**To help grow apprenticeships in the region, a number of the projects have been funded via LGF which are designed to increase apprenticeship capacity**. To this end we have invested:

- £10,500,000 into iMET
- £3,160,000 into an Apprenticeship Academy and incubator in Fenland- The Metalcraft Advanced Manufacturing Centre
- £586,000 into a Food Manufacturing Apprenticeship Academy with Inspire Education Group in Peterborough
- £450,000 into a Construction Apprenticeship Academy with CITB in Kings Lynn and West Norfolk
- £2,500,000 into a further Construction Academy with Cambridge Regional College, in Huntingdon

In addition, an ESF contract was awarded to The Target Apprenticeships delivered by the College of West Anglia which seeks to work with employers to engage 1,852 participants in workplace learning.

Through this investment it is expected to achieve an additional 2,000 apprenticeship starts.

To further stimulate the demand of apprenticeships from employers, the Combined Authority launched the Business Growth Service (BGS) in February 2021. BGS has four service lines that support businesses. By integrating all these services into one single-front-door BGS will create a total of 5,278 jobs. **We will better connect our places and business clusters and provide across them a quality and connectivity of growth support that reflects, and has the**

**potential to develop towards, the support eco-system developed over half a century within Greater Cambridge.** To do this, the Service will expand and build on the growth support networks that are already present in and around Cambridge and develop a commercial marketplace for advisory and investment services, as well as a mentoring culture amongst supported entrepreneurs.

The Service will provide:

(a) A Growth Coaching Service to engage and support our highest potential firms to speed their growth, build their capacity for growth, sustain their period of growth, or all three, to create 3,498 jobs.

(b) An Inward Investment Service to better connect us into global markets, to engage and persuade firms to locate into our economy or invest in our strategic projects, to create 1,328 jobs.

(c) A Skills Brokerage Service to link learners and those retraining for new jobs, to employers and skills providers to improve the supply of skills to our growth sectors, to provide 3,505 people with better skills for new jobs, including 1,600 apprenticeships. A new Digital Talent Portal will also be created to support this service.

(d) A Capital Growth Investment Fund to help SMEs grow through organic expansion, offering an integrated range of grants, loans and equity products unavailable commercially, to create 1,500 jobs

## Careers Education

The Combined Authority holds the contract with the **Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC)**. The CEC work to facilitate a world-class careers education, inspiring and preparing young people for the world of work. We have 76 Schools in the region with a total of 4 enterprise coordinators who work alongside employers, schools, colleges, and providers, to deliver high impact careers and enterprise support to young people (12-18yrs) **that is responsive to individual pupil needs and is underpinned by the internationally recognised Gatsby Career Benchmarks.**

**We will be applying for a Careers Hub this Spring to further enhance the careers offer in the region.**

As part of the Opportunity Area there is a strong group of Cornerstone employers who are linking directly with Schools – impact case studies are provided in the following Chapter.

The Region, through Cambridge Ahead, is also asking Government for funding to develop a three-year pilot to test the recommendations from commissioned research by RAND Europe analysing the provision of career guidance in the region's schools. Findings show that current provision is failing to adequately meet the needs of young people as well as the needs of businesses. Institutions involved in the system, including schools, employers and providers, recognise the current failings and are committed to doing more for young people.

Cambridge Ahead identified five key recommendations for schools, providers, businesses and Government to take forward to improve the provision of career education in schools. At the heart of these is the need for additional capacity within schools as the foundation needed to build an effective system.

The Combined Authority invested £164,500 into Hampton Academies Trust Work Readiness and Careers Promotion Pilot. Its aims were to:

To develop an innovative programme for a group of targeted learners aged 13-16 to:

- a. Develop student confidence, resilience and the personal skills required to flourish in the work place.
- b. Identify and support learners who could become NEET after 16 by tracking their progress for 3 years through stakeholders and multi-disciplinary teams.
- c. Develop a supported and personalized learning pathway for vulnerable learners, with progression routes to local training/further study/local employment opportunities.
- d. Optimise learners' progress from their starting points and support them to gain recognized qualifications for work at 16 and beyond.
- e. Identify potential barriers to progression from schools by exploring transitional programmes.

The pilot has just completed, early findings from the project indicate the success of personalised, intensive support with those learners identified as being at risk of becoming NEET.

## Widening Participation and Social Mobility

**Opportunity Area** – through our contract with the Careers and Enterprise Company, we support schools in the Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area, to raise aspiration and educational attainment in one of our most challenged areas.

The vision for Fenland & East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area is to improve social mobility by ensuring that all children and young people have access to high quality education, training and employment. Access should be regardless of ability, background or where they live or go to school. This will be achieved by addressing the **4 identified priorities above on page 18**.

The schools in the Opportunity Area are part of the Careers & Enterprise Adviser Network. Schools receive the support of an Enterprise Adviser, a senior person from the business sector, who is matched to their school. They also have access to an enterprise co-ordinator who can support the school with their careers and employer engagement strategy, signpost to resources and other CEIAG service providers. The area is also fortunate to be supported by 6 cornerstone employers who will give additional support to schools where needed. Projects currently being planned include development of support for virtual work experience by local employers as well as a collaboration between a national employer, STEM Learning and the Combined Authority on a mentoring project for Year 10s for one of the special schools.

27 secondary schools receive funding from 'The Network for East Anglian Collaborative Outreach'. NEACO aims to help young people from East Anglia with little or no experience of university to explore the world of higher education. They work with students in years 9-13 who live in areas identified by the Government with low rates of progression to higher education. Some schools have used the funding and invested in digital careers platforms such as Unifrog or Kudos and this has proven particularly beneficial during COVID-19.

## COVID-19 recovery and renewal plans

The local economic recovery group meets fortnightly. The LERs was published in Autumn 2020 and many of the interventions are in progress. A **refresh of the LER is currently underway and all members of the SAP were invited to workshop sessions to input into the new version of the SAP**. The data provided at the request of the SAP is used and feeds into the direction and creation of the LERs.

**Local intelligence from members of the SAP is welcomed and acted upon in the recovery of the local economy.**

As already noted in the action plan – all LER actions are incorporated in the Skills Action Plan. Many of the ESF funded projects are supporting the local recovery. The ESF funded and DWP

Jobcentre Plus contracted 'Work Routes' programme is the participant led package of tailored employment and employability support to help reduce worklessness. Over 4,000 participants have been supported and the project is in the process of being extended. Skills Support for the Unemployed (SSU) is provided via an ESFA contract with Ixion who aim to deliver to over 1,700 participants. Provision for young people that are NEET or at risk of NEET is provided through the TCHC 'My Future' Programme last reported to have exceeded targets with over 1,300 participants. Skills Support for the Workforce (SSW) and Skills Support for Redundancy (SSR) is delivered via an ESFA Opt-In contract through SERCO. Over 2,000 participants are contracted.

The Combined Authority, guided and advised by the SAP, is making an important and significant impact on the Region's provision of skills, increasing capacity in disciplines which are in most demand by employers. There is still work to do though, which will be realised through the refreshed skills strategy.

# Chapter 7: Case Studies and Positive Impact Stories

---

The Skills Strategy details how the Combined Authority will enable sustainable futures by creating a culture of positive change within the skills arena following three key themes. Evidence of impact is provided through a series of case studies.

## **1. Achieve a high-quality offer tailored to the needs of the three sub-economies.**

### **School Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance**

The Combined Authority set out in the Skills Strategy a commitment to play a critical role in facilitating skills growth via Careers Education Information and Guidance.

TBAP Octavia is an Alternate Provision of 35 mixed students who are amongst the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in Fenland. The school has been identified by AIM Group as a development school which will afford students access to enhanced support.

As a development school, the students will receive additional support for two years. This support varies from group sessions or 1:1 support for individual students looking for an apprenticeship programme to start their careers.

Two local employers have agreed to support this initiative: Stainless Metalcraft of Chatteris and M J Services of March. Both employers will share the experiences of their own Apprentices and inhouse Apprenticeship programmes with students which will allow students to understand what opportunities exist, what expectations employers have and the variety of job roles available in the area. It is hoped this will prove to be invaluable as many students have limited or no experience of the world of work.

The additional support provided by AIM will better prepare students for life after formal education, drive forward the Apprenticeship agenda and promote social mobility.

### **Flexible FE Provision: Cambridge Regional College**

Greater Cambridge is a diverse sub-economy within the Combined Authority area which includes Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (including southern parts of Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire)

Cambridge Regional College is a bedrock of the Further Education Estate in Cambridgeshire. With some of the best facilities in the country, they offer a wide range of courses, delivered in industry-standard workshops, studios and salons. They support thousands of full-time students, adult learners and Apprentices every year.

During the pandemic, like many businesses, they had to adapt their ways of working and as a college, they needed to do so to be able to address the needs of the wider economy. In doing so, they have been able to continue to support their current students, but have also engaged with a wider demographic that have previously been in employment and have not participated in formal learning for a number of years.

Rebecca struggled with her self-esteem, confidence, and anxiety as a result of being made redundant after an 18-year career with her employer. She was unsure of her skills and knowledge and what transferable skills she had. Rebecca enrolled with Cambridge Regional College during

the Pandemic and completed Explore Business Admin and Stress Awareness /Mental Health Awareness course, both online.

Rebecca initially found the online learning a challenge due to her not having much experience in the use of digital platforms. Her tutor discovered that by harnessing Rebecca's creative skills her confidence improved and as a result, her work did too. As the course progressed, Rebecca used her leadership skills to good effect.

Rebecca suffered with anxiety and low mood and by accessing additional support from the college she progressed with her work, creative skills and leadership skills. Rebecca has truly developed as a person and this course has motivated her to continue with learning. Rebecca has progressed on to another course and has started a small business in the arts and craft sector. This business allows her to explore a different way of earning an income, contribute to society and increase her self-belief. The Skills gained during her original courses have helped her to improve her management of stress and her improved administration skills support the running of her business.

***2. Empower local people to access education and skills to participate fully in society, to raise aspirations and enhance progress into further learning or work.***

The Combined Authority strives to empower local people to access education and skills which will not only support academic achievement but will enable them to participate fully in society, raise aspirations and allow them to progress into further learning and work. The importance of inclusive growth is grounded in the fact that the poorest adults with the lowest qualifications are the least likely to access adult training despite being the group that would benefit from it the most (Social Mobility Commission 2019).

## **Raising Aspirations in School Children: The Harbour School**

The Harbour School, Wilburton, is a Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) school in Fenland & East Cambridgeshire OA which focuses on the needs of boys aged 7-16 years. Students at the school are amongst the most disadvantaged in the region and likely to be NEET upon leaving school.

The school engaged with the Careers and Enterprise Company and were matched with an Enterprise Advisor from Morgan Sindall. Enterprise Advisers work with careers leaders and senior leadership teams to develop their careers and employer engagement strategies, and where possible, signpost to opportunities in the community. The school's ambition was to develop a mentoring project which would raise the students' aspirations and introduce them to role models.

Morgan Sindall, STEMPoint East and the Combined Authority collaborated and are organising a mentoring programme suitable for year 10 students to meet the objectives of the programme. STEM Learning Ambassadors have come forward as mentors and members of the school staff are participating in a Stars outcome programme, which underpins three values; empowerment, collaboration, and integration. The mentors will work on one part of the Star, which includes the world of work, employability, and information on the local job market. This programme will improve confidence and knowledge and increase employer engagement, networks, and support for the school, which in turn creates opportunities and raises aspirations of school students.

The above demonstrates a tailored offer that is designed to improve work opportunities and earning potential and support social and economic growth. The offer is aligned to the geographical sub-economies and will move towards addressing the root causes of these inequalities.

## Support for the unemployed: Reed in Partnership

Reed in Partnership deliver the Work Routes programme in the Combined Authority area and support those furthest from the labour market in becoming work ready. They work with individuals, many of whom have complex needs, to be able to fully participate in society which improves their work and pay prospects, in turn supporting social and economic growth.

Samira had been out of work for 16 years claiming ESA and has been suffering from Anxiety, Depression and was lacking self-confidence. Samira joined the Work Routes program after an introduction from a Work Routes Advisor at a local Jobs fair.

With low confidence, Samira attended a Customer services course and whilst she was developing her Customer Service skills, was encouraged to look for voluntary positions as a way of building up her confidence. With a renewed confidence and engagement in learning, Samira progressed to a Sector Based Work Academy and as a result secured a job.

Samira says: “I personally tell everybody, all my friends and family that I am going into work because I am so excited with what I have achieved with Work Routes. I was suffering from Depression and Anxiety for years and I totally lost my confidence and self-esteem. I start to feel that I am good and I am capable of working and making my life. I have started standing on my own feet and I feel like I am human and can function and be helpful to myself and others because of Work Routes”

## Health and Care Sector Work Academy: Peterborough College

Health and Social Care is identified as a priority sector by the Combined Authority and the Health and Care Sector Work Academy (HCSWA) is identified as a Key Intervention which will play a critical role in facilitating skills growth in the region. The HCSWA is a unique £5.2m programme operating only in the Combined Authority area.

Recently, a participant of the HCSWA have been recognised by winning a National Learning Award. Laura Dunn-Green attended the HCSWA which allowed her to discover her passion for care and embark on a new career. Laura had a history of mental health issues and left education after having her daughter at 16 years of age. Laura signed up to the programme after a conversation with her JCP job coach. Initially she found it difficult to engage with the programme, but her confidence built over time and she overcame her shyness.

Returning to learning has transformed Laura’s life. She excelled in her course and is now in a job she loves as a healthcare assistant at a local care home. Laura is keen to continue learning, and to progress in her job role. Laura said: “I’ve become a much more confident person and I feel like I have a purpose. I felt like I had spent so many years being mum and dad that I forgot how to be me, but the work academy helped me find myself and made me realise that I could make my daughter proud of me.”

### **3. Develop a dynamic skills market that responds to the changing needs of local business.**

The creation of a dynamic skills market that will improve prosperity and productivity will be based on local labour market information. The Combined Authority’s commitment to develop future learning pathways, recognises that there is the need to prepare for the unpredictable as the balance of the kind of skills required in key employment sectors changes with time. New and traditional sectors’ occupations require more highly skilled workers and employers’ needs for specific skills are constantly changing, making it difficult to forecast. People entering the workforce and those already in work will need to be continually upskilled and trained to meet the jobs of the future. There is a need to embed a culture of lifelong learning and continuous skills improvement.

## Industry and Education Partnership Working: The College of West Anglia and Anglian Water

The College of West Anglia works in partnership with Anglian Water to offer a level two construction and level three engineering course at the Wisbech campus, providing the skills and knowledge to make students work-ready.

The innovative pre-apprenticeship programme has been designed with the specific aim of attracting new talent into the utility sector and enabling students to go on to work for one of the alliance companies as an apprentice. The majority of study in the year-long course will be delivered by college tutors through practical and theory-based sessions. Students have the opportunity to try the career, while studying, and are guaranteed a job interview with Anglian Water and their partner companies once they have completed their studies.

The Anglian Water Alliances are collaborative organisations of consultants and contractors working together to deliver more than half of Anglian Water's capital investment programme.

The Anglian Water @one Alliance, which is supporting the level 3 engineering course, has a programme of works valued at £1.2bn over the next 5 years, known as AMP6. Anglian Water are responsible for the design and construction of water and water recycling (waste water) treatment centres that serve more than five million people in the East of England and maintain and improve the water mains and the sewerage network in the region. The partner companies forming the co-located collaboration are: Anglian Water, Balfour Beatty Utility Solutions, Barhale, Grontmij, MMB, MWH and Skanska and are based in Peterborough with multiple offices across the East of England and beyond.

Jason Tucker, Anglian Water's Director of Strategic Delivery & Commercial, said: "We are focussed on working with colleges in our region that are committed to building partnerships with industry. These establishments will create opportunities for people by training and developing them with the vital skills and behaviours needed to meet our current and future skills shortages."

Dave Newsome, Collaborative Skills Programme Manager, Anglian Water Alliances, said: "We were impressed by the College's existing provision, their academic teams and "can-do" approach to working with employers. We don't want to sponsor a programme by simply putting our name to it; we want to be in there working side by side with our chosen providers. Together we'll tackle some of the great challenges facing the water industry by teaching and educating future leaders in the field."

## Industry Led Learning : Kennedy's

Kennedy's are a Global Law firm with Offices in Cambridgeshire. They are using Apprenticeships as a way of attracting new and diverse talent to their business. The Apprenticeship programme is designed to help springboard new talent into a successful career by providing a mixture of studying and learning within the workplace with clear career routes. This offers those wanting to enter the legal profession with a real alternative to University. Their Legal Apprenticeship programmes are aimed at school leavers who have completed A Levels or equivalent studies and are looking to embark on an exciting career.

Their two-year paralegal Apprenticeship will result in the Level 4 Certificate of Higher Education in Legal Services, which is equivalent to the first year of a law undergraduate degree. The paralegal apprenticeship offers an introduction to the fundamentals of legal practice and provides a combination of learning and working within one of their legal teams.

Once the two-year paralegal Apprenticeship has been completed, Apprentices who would like to continue their learning may have the opportunity to join the Level 7 solicitor apprenticeship. This

takes four years to complete and involves the completion of a (Hons) degree in legal practice and will lead to qualifying as a solicitor.

“I have my own caseload and work on my own files as well as liaising with clients directly which I was never expecting to do in my first two years of my Apprenticeship” said Maya Taylor, Solicitor Apprentice.

Professional Services are identified as a key priority sector within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and the opportunity offered by Kennedy’s demonstrates how a tailored offer can improve work and pay prospects for local individuals. A career pathway which is perceived as being available only to graduates is using Apprenticeships as a way of breaking down those preconceived barriers and offering opportunities to those for which university would be cost prohibitive.

## **Data Driven Learning in Cambridgeshire: Cambridge Spark, Anglia Ruskin University and Cambridge Assessments.**

The Combined Authority’s Skills Strategy outlines the need for a flexible, dynamic skills market. It is recognised that new and traditional sectors’ occupations require more highly skilled workers and employers’ needs for specific skills are constantly changing making it difficult to forecast.

Demand for Data Analysts is high and, in a knowledge-led economy like Cambridge, competition to recruit and retain is fierce. People entering the workforce and those already in work will need to be continually upskilled and trained to meet the jobs of the future. The need to embed a culture of lifelong learning and continuous skills improvement is delivered by a partnership between Cambridge Spark, Anglia Ruskin University and Cambridge Assessments.

Delivered by Cambridge Spark, Anglia Ruskin University’s MSc Digital and Technology Solutions (Data Analytics) degree apprenticeship equips learners with the tools and techniques to process large complex datasets for business insight.

Dr Sylwia Macinska, Senior Research Manager at Cambridge Assessment, started the two-year apprenticeship in September 2019.

Sylwia first developed an interest in data analysis and modelling whilst studying for her Psychology PhD, and her current role at Cambridge Assessment is heavily focused on using data analysis to find innovative solutions to support learning. With a desire to find more effective ways to analyse data and to model the behaviour of students to predict performance, she applied for the MSc Apprenticeship.

“I thought this was a very exciting time to upskill in data science so we can create more innovative solutions to support teaching and learning. We have been carrying out research, tracking student progress, and analysing data to improve learning for a long time. But now with new opportunities offered by digital data and computational techniques from data science, we can create a more comprehensive picture of learners and provide them with a more personalised experience based on their strengths and areas for improvement”.

The apprenticeship has equipped Sylwia with a comprehensive set of data science skills, including machine learning techniques, data engineering and deep learning. She dedicates one day per week to the Apprenticeship and applies the skills learnt the rest of the week. The skills developed means there is no longer a reliance on additional resource providing data support as she is now able to evaluate the performance of different machine learning techniques. The course is taught via a blend of immersive teaching, online study and a hackathon-style bootcamp which simulates real-world events.

Halfway through the apprenticeship, Sylwia moved into a new position of Senior Research Manager and believes her training was a contributing factor to her being successful in getting the position. She says, "I think that I am perceived as someone who can be a bridge between the researchers and data scientists that are currently working in the organisation, to help bring together the two worlds."

In a world that is increasingly data driven, demand for this skill set is high. There are so many positions that are related to data and there is a huge organisational benefit from learning about data science and its application within the organisation. This programme allows businesses in the area to address their immediate business needs via an Apprenticeship.

## **A Rich Heritage in Engineering, developing talent through Apprenticeships: Marshall Centre**

Marshall Centre, located in Cambridge, is a part of Marshall Aerospace and Defence Group a key employer in the area. Marshall Centre is born out of 100 years' developing future talent for Marshall Aerospace and Fleet Solutions. They are responsible for training over 20,000 apprentices who have made a significant impact in the world of aviation, manufacturing and defence.

Marshall Centre have recently been granted 'Main Provider' status, which allows the Centre to draw on external Businesses' Apprentice Levy and offer apprentice delivery outside of the Marshall Group.

They welcomed their first 25 external apprentices from Horizon Discovery and CamdenBoss in January and are looking to increase their apprentice offering to more businesses within Cambridgeshire to help them upskill their current and future workforce.

Marshall Centre are proud of all their Apprentices and everything they achieve. Haydn Jakes was recently awarded an MBE for winning a gold medal in the WorldSkills final in Kazan, Russia. Mark Johnston started his career as an apprentice and is now Chief Engineer, Steve Silk was awarded an MBE for his contribution to British Engineering and Neil McCombie, former apprentice and now Senior Airframe/Engine Technician, recently delivered the first C-130J Centre Wing Replacement outside of the USA. They have all said that the training they received during their apprenticeship was excellent and prepared them well for their careers.

Alongside apprenticeships, Marshall Centre also deliver several professional qualifications in:

- Aircraft maintenance
- Human Factors
- Aircraft type training
- Leadership and Management
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- APM Accredited Project Management (PMQ and PFQ)

Jack Seeley from CamdenBoss recently completed the APM PMQ and gave some great feedback.

"The course was very well organised with weekly online video calls and excellent revision material, both accessible via the APM book provided by Marshall Centre and the online portal, which allowed 24/7 access to a lot of great material. This helped massively with revision. The weekly calls along with the revision material in the book/online portal gave a conclusive well-structured breakdown of each section, making the course very accessible for anyone who wants to undertake the qualification even if, like me, their prior knowledge is limited at the time of starting. The qualification will not only help with my organisation of tasks but give me a great overview of how each project should run from different stages, who should be involved when, costing

(including time scales) and so much more. Overall, I am very proud to have the qualification and plan to use it throughout my career in design.”

Marshall Centre started delivering Mental Health First Aid courses in January. Dan Edwards, General Manager at Marshall Centre gave this feedback after completing the course, *“The more I watch the news and speak to companies and employees in and around Cambridge it is becoming more and more apparent that Mental ill Health is becoming a crisis that we as business leaders and good human beings need to address and support. I wanted to lead from the front and show everyone at Marshall Centre and within my network that this is important, we should be talking about it and we should be taking the lead in supporting those who have recovered or in recovery from Mental Health experiences. A superb course delivered extremely well and so thought provoking. Best two days of learning I have experienced.”*

## **Developing a Talent pipeline and learning culture: Metalcraft**

Metalcraft, located in Chatteris, manufacture high integrity, mission critical products for some of the world’s most hazardous and dangerous environments, across a wide range of sectors including Nuclear, Medical, Big Science, Energy and other challenging markets. A key employer in the region, they have over 100 years’ experience of training apprentices.

50% of their employees have been trained in-house including members of the board. New Apprentices join with a clear path of progression mapped out and a number of apprentices have been recognised locally, regionally and nationally, winning awards and accolades. Metalcraft also secured both the Princess Royal Training Award & the Queens Award for Promoting Opportunity through Social Mobility.

Stainless Metalcraft are launching a new vocational training centre in Chatteris, a multi-million-pound facility that will accommodate 130 apprentices per year. The training school will be managed by West Suffolk College and Cambridgeshire Skills in support of the development for an Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Launch Pad (AMIL). Stainless Metalcraft have worked with several local organisations to bring the plans to fruition, including The Active Learning Trust, MAKE UK and the University of Cambridge.

The centre, known as the North Cambs Training Centre due to its location, will offer local residents the opportunity to undertake an apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship training or adult education training, gaining a career whilst developing work ready skills. The potential to continue study via higher education can continue up to and beyond degree level qualifications with the new University of Peterborough providing access for degree level Apprenticeships.

## \*\*HEADER TBC

# TBAP OCTAVIA

Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged students in Fenland

Having been designated a 'development school', pupils at TBAP Octavia are now able to access enhanced Careers Education and Guidance via an innovative programme which supports each student for two years.

Scope: An innovative Careers Education and Guidance scheme designed to help students overcome their challenges and expand their horizons

Location: Wisbech (Fenland)

Lead organisation: TBAP Octavia, part of an Academy which empowers learners to take their place successfully in the wider community

The programme empowers students to:

# 01

## Identify new opportunities

Disadvantaged pupils learn that there is a wealth of opportunity open to them via the apprenticeship scheme.

# 02

## Anticipate employers' needs

Engagement with local businesses, such as Stainless Metalcraft and M J Services, and their apprentices helps pupils to understand what businesses need from their employees.

# 03

## Overcome barriers

1:2:1 support sessions ensure that students have a safe environment to communicate, explore and address any barriers to success.



## Benefits for participating employers

The scheme enables local employers to promote their apprenticeship programmes, champion the achievements of their current apprentices and ensure they understand the needs of tomorrow's employees.



Matches the needs of employers, learners & communities



Supports social mobility



Builds relationships with employers

## FLEXIBLE FE PROVISION

# CAMBRIDGE REGIONAL COLLEGE

Helping the unemployed win high-skilled, better paid jobs

COVID-19 provided Cambridge Regional College with the opportunity to deliver online courses which would help the previously employed re-engage with formal learning and develop skills which are needed by local businesses.

Scope: Online courses to support the newly unemployed after COVID-19

Location: Cambridge (Greater Cambridge Area)

Lead organisation: Cambridge Regional College, a 'welcoming college for all'

The poorest adults with the lowest levels of qualifications are the least likely to access adult training despite being the group that would benefit from it the most (Social Mobility Commission 2019).

### Rebecca's story

**Background:** After 18 years with one employer, Rebecca needed help to improve her skills, confidence and knowledge.

**The challenge:** out-of-date skills, a lack of experience in digital platforms, low confidence, anxiety and low mood

**The solution:** Explore Business Admin and Stress Awareness/ Mental Health Awareness online courses with additional support from a tutor to help Rebecca develop a sense of self-worth.

**The result:** Rebecca has used her new-found business skills and confidence to set up a small business. She has also developed a love of learning and has already registered on another course.



Matches the needs of employers, learners & communities



Enables social mobility



Improves productivity through skills

# RAISING ASPIRATIONS IN SCHOOL CHILDREN

Scope: A mentoring programme which raises aspirations and builds relationships

Location: Wilburton (East Cambs)

Lead organisation: The Harbour School

Supported by: The Careers and Enterprise Company and STEMPOINT East

## THE HARBOUR SCHOOL

Supporting heavily disadvantaged pupils who have Education, Health and Care Plans

Students at the Harbour School are likely to be NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) when they leave. However, they now have a brighter future thanks to support from the Careers and Enterprise Company and STEMPOINT East, an educational charity.

Helped by an Enterprise Advisor from a leading UK construction and regeneration company (Morgan Sindall), sourced through The Careers and Enterprise Company, the school has developed a mentoring programme which raises the aspirations of year 10 students and forges mutually beneficial relationships between students, employers and apprentices.

The Stars Programme is underpinned by three values:

01

### Empowerment

Students are given the knowledge and confidence to succeed.

02

### Collaboration

STEMPOINT East's STEM Learning Ambassadors act as mentors. They help the school focus on employability and access information on the local job market.

03

### Integration

The programme reduces the risk of pupils becoming NEET by introducing them to mentors who can help them transition successfully into employment.

### Using local resources **\*\*can lose if needed\*\***

STEMPOINT East's aim is to inspire young people in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). It does this by engaging school pupils in memorable experiences and by introducing them to professional scientists, technologists, engineers and mathematicians.



Matches the needs of employers, learners & communities



Supports social inclusion and mobility



Expands pupils' horizons

## SUPPORT FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

### WORK ROUTES

Helping the long-term unemployed become economically independent

The Work Routes voluntary programme, delivered by Reed in Partnership, helps long-term unemployed or economically inactive people aged over 16 find new opportunities and contribute to the local economy.

Those with barriers to employment, such as lone parents, older workers and the disabled, are empowered to overcome these obstacles via personal support (available for up to a year) and tailored in-work support (for up to 26 weeks).

Scope: A voluntary programme which helps out-of-work individuals (some with complex needs) to find new opportunities

Location: Cambridge

Lead organisation: Reed in Partnership

“ I am so excited with what I have achieved with Work Routes. I was suffering from depression and anxiety for years and I totally lost my confidence and self-esteem. I have started standing on my own feet...because of Work Routes.

Samira

#### Samira's story

Background: A 16-year employment gap had left Samira feeling daunted by the thought of returning to work

The challenge: Lack of confidence, anxiety and depression

The solution: Samira attended a Customer Service course delivered by Work Routes. She was advised to boost her self-esteem through voluntary work

The result: Samira's new confidence and love of learning led her to a Sector Based Work Academy and, ultimately, to paid employment.

Courses completed: Customer Service



Enables the unemployed to contribute further to society



Helps the disadvantaged to develop skills and confidence



Encourages a culture of learning and development

## HEALTH & CARE SECTOR WORK ACADEMY

## PETERBOROUGH COLLEGE

Providing a pipeline of skilled employees for a priority sector

The Health and Care Sector Work Academy (HCSWA) is a Key Intervention which helps carers and potential carers develop the skills that employers need to meet their users' current and future needs.

Over a three-year period, the Academy aims to train 2,100 people and help fill the 14,000 vacancies that exist.

**Scope:** An Academy which offers a range of apprenticeships from entry level to management, free contextualised English and maths training, funding that reduces barriers to learning, free mentoring, networking opportunities and job matches

**Location:** Peterborough (Peterborough and Surrounding Areas)

**Lead organisation:** Peterborough College

“ I’ve become a much more confident person and I feel like I have a purpose. I felt like I had spent so many years being mum and dad that I forgot how to be me, but the work academy helped me find myself and made me realise that I could make my daughter proud of me. ”

Laura, winner of the Festival of Learning 2020 New Directions Award

### Laura’s story

**Background:** After leaving school at 16 to have her daughter, Laura needed to find a fulfilling career with prospects

**The challenge:** Anxiety and depression following a bereavement, difficulty engaging and lack of confidence

**The solution:** Tutors on the HCSWA course provided encouragement, helping Laura discover a passion for care and unlock a potential career in management \*\*do we need to mention the JCP job coach?

**The result:** Laura is now working in a job she loves and has the confidence to plan for her future

**Her tutor comments:** "Laura is flourishing at work and continues learning and upskilling to further her career towards a managerial role. Her determination shines through and she is an amazing role model for her young daughter." \*\*could lose this quote? \*\*



**Innovative  
regional  
pilot**



**Enables the  
unemployed to  
contribute  
further to society**



**Matches the needs  
of employers,  
learners &  
communities**

## INDUSTRY & EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP WORKING

# THE COLLEGE OF WEST ANGLIA & ANGLIAN WATER

Building a talent pipeline

An innovative pre-apprenticeship programme has been launched to attract new talent into the utility sector and pave the way for successful apprenticeships.

Students who complete the courses are guaranteed a job interview with Anglian Water and its partner companies. This helps to ensure that valuable skills and knowledge remain within the region.

Scope: Level 2 Construction and Level 3 Engineering courses

Location: Wisbech (Fenland)

Industry support: Anglian Water and partner companies/industry leaders including Balfour Beatty Utility Solutions and Skanska

“We were impressed by the College’s existing provision, their academic teams and “can-do” approach to working with employers. We don’t want to sponsor a programme by simply putting our name to it; we want to be in there working side by side with our chosen providers. Together we’ll tackle some of the great challenges facing the water industry by teaching and educating future leaders in the field.”

Dave Newson, Collaborative Skills Programme Manager, Anglian Water Alliances



Addresses potential skills shortages



Provides access to highly-skilled, better paid jobs



Builds employer relationships

## INDUSTRY LED LEARNING

Scope: An apprenticeship which enables students to achieve a Level 4 certificate of Higher Education in Legal services (equivalent to the first year of a law undergraduate degree) without the cost of going to university

Location: Cambridge

Lead organisation: Kennedys, a global law firm

## KENNEDYS

Challenging preconceptions about apprenticeships

Kennedy's drive to attract new and diverse talent has been boosted by its two-year paralegal apprenticeship programme. This enables school leavers with A Levels or equivalent to build a stable, rewarding and exciting career in the law without incurring university fees.

Students, who are paid whilst they work, achieve a Level 4 certificate and have the option of progressing to a four-year Level 7 solicitor apprenticeship which includes the completion of a degree in legal practice.

Throughout the course, students are entrusted with the responsibility for their own caseload and for communicating with clients.



work on my own files as well as liaising with clients directly which I was never expecting to do in my first two years of my apprenticeship.

Maya Taylor



Provides access to highly-skilled, better paid jobs



Improves workplace diversity



Encourages a growth mindset

# DATA DRIVEN LEARNING IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

## CAMBRIDGE SPARK, ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY & CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENTS

Giving local businesses the insight they need to thrive

**Scope:** A work-based degree apprenticeship programme which enables businesses to harness the power of business intelligence

**Location:** Cambridge (Greater Cambridge Area)

**Lead organisations:** Cambridge Spark and Anglia Ruskin University

Business intelligence helps organisations to become more profitable, competitive and resilient. The demand for data analysts is high and there is fierce competition to recruit and retain them, especially in knowledge-led economies like Cambridge's.

Anglia Ruskin University's MSc in Digital and Technology Solutions (Data Analytics), a two-year degree apprenticeship delivered by Cambridge Spark, aims to address this challenge by creating more skilled data specialists who have the tools and techniques needed to help local businesses unlock the secrets held within their data.



I think that I am perceived as someone who can be a bridge between the researchers and data scientists that are currently working in the organisation, to help bring together the two worlds.

Dr Sylwia Macinska



### Sylwia's story

**Background:** Having joined Cambridge Assessment, the university's international exam group, Sylwia wanted to create a more comprehensive picture of learners and provide them with a more personalised experience based on their strengths and areas of weakness

**The challenge:** Developing the skills needed to analyse complex data gathered from over eight million learners

**The solution:** Attend the MSc programme to build a set of data science skills, including machine learning techniques, data engineering and deep learning

**The result:** Sylwia's new skillset means that the company is no longer reliant on external resource. She believes that the course contributed to her being offered a specialist role as \*\*, a role which has a heavy focus on data analysis.



Matches the needs of employers, learners & communities



Provides access to highly-skilled, better paid jobs



Helps local businesses become more competitive

## DEVELOPING TALENT THROUGH APPRENTICESHIPS

### MARSHALL CENTRE

Sharing knowledge to support other local businesses

Having trained over 20,000 apprentices who have made a significant impact in the world of aviation, manufacturing and defence, Marshall of Cambridge has diversified into delivering apprenticeships outside the Marshall Group.

Marshall's new 'employer provider' status enables it to share its expertise with other local businesses keen to derive a competitive advantage from upskilling employees.

Having recently welcomed the first 25 external apprentices to the Marshall Centre, the firm now plans to increase the programme's reach so it can support more organisations.

Scope: A programme which allows an experienced employer to diversify and share its expertise with other local businesses

Location: Cambridge (Greater Cambridge Area)

Lead organisation: Marshall of Cambridge



Matches the needs of employers, learners & communities



Gives students a career path



Shares knowledge to support other businesses

## DEVELOPING A TALENT PIPELINE & LEARNING CULTURE

# THE NORTH CAMBS TRAINING CENTRE

Continuing a rich heritage in engineering

Having used its apprenticeship scheme to address a potential skills shortage caused by an aging workforce, Stainless Metalcraft is now fully committed to helping locals develop work-ready skills whilst undertaking an apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship training or adult education.

Situated in an area of deprivation, the firm's new multi-million pound vocational training centre will enable 130 apprentices each year to develop the specific technical skills needed by Stainless Metalcraft and other local employers.

Students will be able to progress to the new University of Peterborough after completing their apprenticeship.

The training school will be managed by West Suffolk College and Cambridgeshire Skills in support of the development for an Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Launchpad (AMIL).

Scope: A vocational training centre which opens career opportunities for locals, raises aspirations and increases diversity

Location: Chatteris (Fenland)

Lead organisation: Stainless Metalcraft, holders of the Princess Royal Training Award and the Queen's Award for Enterprise in Promoting Opportunity through Social Mobility

Supported by: The Active Learning Trust, MAKE UK and the University of Cambridge



Helps meet the need of local employers



Provides access to highly-skilled, better paid jobs



Enables further personal development

## Chapter 8: Looking forward

---

The SAP has provided a greater impetus to understand the current and future skills supply and demand in the region. The analytical capacity and understanding of the SAP has matured over this tenure. **This insight will continue to inform practice and how future decisions and strategies are developed.**

**Significant progress has been achieved, investments have been made with a clear understanding of the need and impact required.** The new university will welcome students in September 2022, whilst the capital projects funded via LGF are underway creating many new learning opportunities. Devolved AEB is making a significant impact to engage, upskill, reskill and provide support to residents made redundant during the recession. Further flexibilities and funding rule changes will be implemented, such as fully funded ESOL and full funding for **first full level 2** qualifications for residents aged 24+. A further £1m of additional funding will provide free Level 3 courses to adults without a first Level 3. Strategic commissioning to target provision 'cold-spots' and a 'nudge' marketing campaign to promote the economic and social value to individuals of adult learning will be implemented.

The business growth service launched in February. **The three-year project seeks to deliver an additional 1,400 apprenticeships and over 1,700 other learning outcomes aligned to skills demand will be delivered.**

**Continued targeted investment informed by understanding the local need will transform the lives of individuals whilst concurrently advancing the rebound of the economy.**

The new University in Peterborough will open its doors to 2,000 students in 2022, with an ambition to offer courses for up to 12,500 by 2030.

Phase two of the University developments have already been planned. The Phase 2 project is to complement the 2020-22 investment of £30.47m from the Combined Authority, PCC and private sector into a Phase 1 Academic Teaching Building for a new University in Peterborough, to produce 3,000 p.a. graduates.

The Research & Development Centre will be a 2,200 sqm build and consist of 3 floors with a mix of high-quality technical laboratory and office space for incubations and start-ups. **The £14.6m of funding for the project has been allocated to the Combined Authority by MHCLG and the formal application process for our Innovation Delivery Partner**, and their partners, to apply for and utilise the funding is currently underway.

Planning is due to be approved in Spring with a spade in the ground March/April 21 and completion of the build by 31 January 22. The timeframe on this project is extremely tight with a build programme of 41 weeks following procurement of the main contractor. **The building will be built by end of January 2022.**

The biggest challenge the Combined Authority continues to face is adapting and proactively embracing the intricacies of each of the three sub-economies within the region, all with unique challenges and opportunities to thrive. COVID-19 has impacted the sub-economies in different ways – all have planned interventions to support the rebound of their economies. **Strategies and plans need to be dynamic to quickly respond to external changes in the system.**

To this end, the Combined Authority has already developed a plan to achieve this, working in partnership with key stakeholders:

- **Refresh of the LERS** – workshops are underway to consult with key stakeholders in the region, including members of the SAP to ensure the rebound and recovery strategy meet the changing needs of the economy.
- **Refresh of the Skills Strategy** – this will follow on from the refresh of the LERS. The new strategy will have both tactical and structural ambitions to ensure the Combined Authority area has the necessary skills to meet the future needs of the economy. The SAP will be central to the development of the new strategy, which will have a number of clearly identified workstreams to ensure the strategy is all encompassing of the skills strategy for the region. New cross cutting themes will be integral to the new refreshed strategy.

## Next steps within a new policy landscape

The DfE has published the Skills for Jobs White Paper, setting out an ambitious reform agenda for lifelong learning for job opportunities and economic growth. At the heart of the reforms is the role of Technical Education and FE colleges working symbiotically with local businesses. Local colleges are anchor institutions, with the potential to enable the unemployed, low skilled and to upskill the existing workforce **to access better jobs as a catalyst for recovery and transformation, as the economy evolves to automation, digital and net zero.**

**To facilitate delivery, the DfE have allocated £1.3bn capital funding through the new Further Education Capital Transformation Fund**, to which college corporations may bid directly. Previously, FE Capital was included in the Local Growth Fund (LGF) and approx. £30m was invested by the Combined Authority into FE projects.

The lack of a cohesive FE Capacity and Infrastructure Prospectus for the Combined Authority region will inhibit our recovery and future growth ambitions. It is therefore proposed to develop an FE Capital Prospectus, across all providers which looks to FE assets as a 'system,' which serves business and communities, rather than autonomous competing providers. The Capital Investment Prospectus will coalesce existing strategies such as the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), Local Economic Recovery Strategy (LERS), Skills Strategy and the new, statutory, Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), **into a unifying and coherent plan for capital investment.**

**The Investment Prospectus will survey the estate and review curriculum pathways in the context of the LSIP and propose the investment required across the Combined Authority to 'future-proof' the estates.** The risk for the Combined Authority is that Ad Hoc capital projects, which are not aligned to our LSIP and do not accelerate the delivery of technical education and meeting skills gaps may be approved directly by the DfE. **Without a coherent FE Capital Investment Prospectus, it will be difficult to align provision providing clarity for business and government on local needs.** The requirements need to align to the refreshed Skills Strategy and growth and priority sectors for the Combined Authority region.

The opportunity is to influence all potential investment in FE Capital through the mechanism of the Prospectus, not limited to the FE Capital Transformation Fund. This includes Shared Prosperity Fund, Towns Fund, Levelling Up Fund, Strategic Development Fund and other major Trusts and Grant Funders. **The ambition is to take a proactive approach to target and attract investment over the next five years.**

## Areas for future development

- Continuing to strengthen local governance of AEB through the Skills Committee and ESB to ensure responsiveness of provision to meet local skills needs.
- Building trust with provider-partners and stakeholders to facilitate co-design of provision, securing value for money and maximising outcomes for learners.

- To showcase the Combined Authority devolved AEB as an exemplar for regional delivery in order to influence further devolution or delegation of funding.
- Ensuring alignment with the SAP and LSIP
- With additional funding for the Lifetime Skills Guarantee – Level 3 Offer, of fully funded courses from a prescribed list of 400 courses, there is a need to build capacity among the provider-base and to promote the offer to potential learners. Given that only 1% of AEB enrolments were for Level 3 courses in 2019/20, we are starting from a low-base.
- Levelling Up – tackling education disadvantage in Peterborough, Fenland, wider Cambridgeshire, and target wards within Cambridge City.
- Identifying Education provision cold-spots, commissioning providers to fill gaps and co-creating new solutions with and between groups of providers, both FE and HE working in partnership, potentially through joint ventures
- Enabling and championing FE Capital and Infrastructure investment to deliver aspirational learning environments for technical pathways into HE and employment.
- Revitalise the Community Learning offer in the region through co-producing with stakeholders a Lifelong Learning Policy.
- Response to redundancy and supporting unemployed learners into employment.
- Careers Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults – improving quality and capacity.
- Developing Sector-Based Work Academies in priority sectors.
- Good LMI, appropriate for all people

## Future actions

In addition to the commissioned research there is a need for some more granular qualitative survey work to understand the medium-term needs of the top-performing companies whom are most likely to grow in the region. Asking them for their skills needs will then help determine future skills needs as these are the businesses which will be providing future jobs.

**To address future skills gap, there is a need to commission another piece of work to build a picture of what our employers may look like in 3-5 years** and then extrapolate from that the skills needs.

To then anchor this, we need something less theoretical which is grounded in community and business engagement to assess what skills are viewed as important in future in the Combined Authority region, combined with an understanding of the changes in working behaviour driven by COVID-19. This will identify the ‘softer’ skills people will need in the workplace to be effective and to drive productivity. For example, developing management and leadership skills in how to manage an organisation remotely is a key area and a national challenge that could be pioneered in our Combined Authority region.

The Skills Advisory Panel will continue to work with local employers and business to ensure that the skills supply matches the needs of the local economy and business requirements. **As we develop the new Skills Strategy for the region, we seek engagement from key stakeholders to ensure the new strategy equips our young people and current workforce to continue to rebound and rebuild the economy.**