



<b>SKILLS COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM No: 2.3</b>
<b>06 JULY 2020</b>	<b>PUBLIC REPORT</b>

## **SKILLS BROKERAGE CONTRACT EXTENSION**

### **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1. This report is to request that the Skills Committee approve a 3-month extension for the Skills Brokerage contract delivered by Opportunity Peterborough on behalf of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.
- 1.2. To note that a European Social Fund bid has been submitted by Officers for 3 years of funding to support the continuation of the Skills Brokerage activities via the Skills Talent Apprenticeship & Recruitment (STAR) Hub.

<b><u>DECISION REQUIRED</u></b>	
<b>Lead Member:</b>	<b>Councillor John Holdich</b>
<b>Lead Director:</b>	<b>John T Hill - Director of Business and Skills</b>
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<b>Fiona McGonigle - Business Skills Manager</b>
<b>Forward Plan Ref: N/A</b>	<b>Key Decision: No</b>
The Skills Committee is invited to:  a) Recommend that the Combined Authority Board agree a three-month extension to the Skills Brokerage Contract with Peterborough City Council as accountable body for Opportunity Peterborough and approve the release of the £23k of 'subject to approval' funds on the Skills Brokerage budget line to part meet these costs.  b) Note a European Social Fund (ESF) bid has been submitted to support the continuation and connectivity to Skills Brokerage activities.	<b>Voting arrangements</b>  Simple majority of all Members

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 A significant part of the Combined Authority's emerging role in the skills system will be to ensure there is a coordinated and holistic approach to apprenticeships, education and training that makes it easier for businesses to engage with.
- 2.2 Opportunity Peterborough (OP) has been an effective delivery agent for Skills Brokerage in Peterborough, Huntingdonshire, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire. OP aims to support schools, and colleges in signposting between providers, employers and partners to implement strategic and operational plans. This includes a range of activities as outlined within the current contract such as work experience, mentoring, CV writing and careers fairs. This report recommends approving an extension of up to 4 months for the Skills Brokerage Contract with OP.
- 2.3 OP covers and delivers services to the north of the Combined Authority area, Peterborough, Fenland, East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Brokerage 'Form the Future' provides a brokerage model in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. The Skills Strategy Evidence Base 2018 has stated that two different services allow the opportunity to tailor responses to appropriate geographies, sectors and learners, and therefore this model should also be considered when deciding on the future structure of delivery.
- 2.4 The Skills Brokerage Contract with Opportunity Peterborough via Peterborough City Council is a legacy contract inherited from the GCGP LEP who had previously funded the contract for 5 years. With the merger of the LEP into the Combined Authority in accordance with the CPCA Board Decisions of 25 July 2018 and 26 September 2018 and the new priorities set, it was agreed to extend the Skills Brokerage contract until the new Growth Service was mobilised.
- 2.5 The OP Skills Brokerage contract has continuously been awarded as an annual contract, which had been reviewed every year and then a new contract awarded. The contract had been awarded as an annual contract from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019 to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020. As the Growth Service was due to go to procurement in March 2020, it was agreed to award an extension of 4 months from the period, 1<sup>st</sup> March to the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020. This extension was agreed by the Skills Committee on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2020.
- 2.6 The Skills Strategy recommends that the brokerage and facilitation role bringing employers, learners and providers together is an important intervention for the Combined Authority to undertake. The Combined Authority and its partners already have strong collaboration with Schools, Colleges, Providers, Universities, Business and Local Networks. The Combined Authority now needs to build on that success to make it a more sustainable model.
- 2.7 Creating a 'one stop shop' Skills Talent Apprenticeship & Recruitment (STAR) Hub that connects all these partners will help us achieve our targets and

outcomes. This will strengthen and add real value to what is already happening in our region. Coming together as an integrated offer to all students, parents, businesses and skills providers will help increase supply and better match it to business and learner demand to better equip our young people and those looking for work with the skills for success.

### **3.0 GROWTH SERVICE PROCUREMENT TIMELINE**

- 3.1 The Skills Brokerage - Skills Talent Apprenticeships & Recruitment (STAR) Hub, part of the Growth Service was due to be mobilised on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 as a three-year programme from August 2020 to July 2023, through an application for ESF funding. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, it has become necessary to extend the procurement period for a Prime Contractor to be awarded to deliver the Growth Service due to a number of delays occurring. It is vital that the ongoing work undertaken by OP is continued in the short term between their current contract end of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and the beginning of the newly procured contract of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020. This will allow time for the Combined Authority to award the contract to the Prime Delivery Provider via the current procurement.
- 3.2 Officers have negotiated a short extension to the contract with Opportunity Peterborough to cover Peterborough, Huntingdonshire, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire areas for up to 3 months at a cost of £36,609.
- 3.3 The ESF bid is now at the last phase of being approved and once secured, the newly procured Skills Brokerage Service will take over the continuation of the contract, either from Opportunity Peterborough (OP), if OP are successful in the procurement, or under TUPE transfer to an alternative supplier, if applicable/ required. This would provide a Skills Brokerage offer for the Peterborough, Huntingdonshire, Fenland & East Cambridgeshire area, whilst 'Form the Future' would continue with Skills Service delivery in South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge for the remaining year of their contract with GCP, after which a joined-up provision would be offered through the newly procured all-Cambridgeshire service.

### **4.0 OUTLINE TIMELINE FOR THE NEXT STAGES IN DEVELOPING THE SKILLS BROKERAGE SERVICE VIA THE STAR HUB (MAYOR'S GROWTH SERVICE)**

- 4.1 As an overview to the Committee of developments for the future Skills Brokerage Service via the STAR within the Mayor's Growth Service; the key stages of development are as follows:
  - (i) SOBC – July 2019
  - (ii) OBC – November 2019
  - (iii) FBC – September 2020
  - (iv) Procurement of Skills Brokerage (STAR Hub part of Mayors Growth Service) - between March and September 2020

- (v) Initial contract start - 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020
- (vi) Revised Contract start date – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 As stated in the report the un-budgeted costs of the proposed extension is £36,609.  
Officers are recommending that, in order to meet this pressure, the £23k of funding still 'subject to approval' in the budget be released for use, and that the balance of the costs (£13,609) can be met through careful management of the existing, 'approved to spend', budget of £84k.
- 5.2 As the costs are being managed within the overall (approved and subject to approval) budget for Skills Brokerage there is no impact on the CPCA's wider budgets.

## **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The proposed extension to the Contract is in accordance with the Combined Authority's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 6.2 This Skills Committee meeting shall be conducted in accordance with Parts 2 and 3 of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus)(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings)(England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020 No.392).

## **7.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The skills landscape is going through many changes; in particular the reforms in Technical Education with the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, Trailblazers and T Levels. This has created a more complex system to an already complicated skills eco-system. The Combined Authority needs to ensure it future proofs its investment and ambitions for a skills solution fit for purpose to support the Skills Strategy, LIS and CPIER recommendations.

## **8.0 APPENDICES AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- 8.1 No appendices

<b><u>Background Papers</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>
1. Skills Committee 3 April 2019	<a href="#"><u>Skills Committee 3 April 2019</u></a>
2. Skills Committee 17 January 2020	<a href="#"><u>Skills Committee 17 January 2020</u></a>

3. CPCA Board Decision 25 July 2018	<a href="#"><u>CPCA Board Decision 25 July 2018</u></a>
4. CPCA Board Decision 26 September 2018	<a href="#"><u>CPCA Board Decision 26 September 2018</u></a>
5. CPCA Board Decision 29 May 2019	<a href="#"><u>CPCA Board Decision 29 May 2019</u></a>