

SKILLS COMMITTEE – 14 September 2020**PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
1.	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Skills Committee	<p>Item 2.1 Business Growth Service Full Business Case (BGS)</p> <p>Para 5.2 of the cover report (page 22 of the agenda pack) describes the intention to develop support for entrepreneurs, either for young people or for mature, displaced workers seeking new employment following loss of their current employ.</p> <p>What does the BGS bring to this area when the report acknowledges that there are many layers of existing support? It mentions mentoring, grants, incentives and leveraging other programmes, but could the pathway for a potential client be described in a way that illustrates how this will work to help people in their local area to become effective entrepreneurs?</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	<p>The Business Growth Service (BGS) does not seek to duplicate the layers of support that are available for job seekers and those that might be displaced from employment due to the impacts of COVID 19 on some sectors. Instead it intends to link with existing players, in particular, our DWP partners within Job Centre Plus, to make them aware of the entrepreneurship support available through BGS, for supporting potential entrepreneurs to start-up a business. It is envisaged that this will be a relatively small proportion of the clients handled by Job Centre Plus, that both express an interest in starting up their own company rather than seeking employment, and demonstrate the capacity and capability to do so.</p> <p>The pathway created would be for the advisor in Job Centre Plus to refer specific clients (as described above) to a Growth Advisor within BGS. The Growth Advisor</p>

			<p>would then meet the individual to establish and validate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The level of ambition of the individual with support being focused on start-ups with the ambition to grow rather than remain sole traders 2. The validity and potential of their business idea to succeed in the market 3. The individual's capacity, capability and networks to establish and grow a start-up 4. The barriers to that success relating to the idea, the business plan or the individual's skills and experience. <p>This will then lead to a definition of the scope of support that overcomes those barriers to success. Depending on affordability, the individual will then be referred into the pool of coaching, for 50% funded coaching, or referred into the pool of mentors (BGS coached alumni) for free of charge mentoring.</p> <p>The pathway into further services, onward from either coaching or mentoring, will be through a referral from the client's coach or mentor, into the growth grants and equity investment service. Once referred in, an Access to Growth Finance Advisor will assess the entrepreneur's business plan for growth beyond their own employment, and for potential to attract either a capital growth grant or and equity investor.</p> <p>The pathway from there, into the Skills Brokerage to help the entrepreneur recruit and train new talent to grow the start-up into a scale-up, will be through a referral from the coach or mentor (who will be assigned for 12-24 months) into the Skills brokerage.</p> <p>Having all these service-lines within one integrated Business Growth Service makes referrals, customer journey management and the customer experience, much easier to ensure and coordinate.</p>
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2.			<p>Item 2.1 Business Growth Service Full Business Case</p> <p>Paragraph 6.0 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FOR GROWTH COMPANY – Page 24 of the agenda pack</p> <p>How will the activities of GrowthCo be examined by the Skills Committee as it begins it's work? The report indicates governance through the shareholders, and further into the body of the report it describes certain members of the Skills Committee having various roles, as well as bimonthly meetings with the chief exec, but what is the role of oversight and scrutiny for CPCA and it's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)?</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
			<p>The Full Business Case (FBC) specifically omitted specifying the role of the OSC within the oversight of the delivery contract for BGS or the Skills Committee's governance of that contract. This was because OSC call-in powers are set out within the CPCA's Assurance Framework.</p> <p>However, it is envisaged, that just as OSC request updates from the Chief Officer of the Business Board on implementation of the LIS, as a significant element of the LIS Implementation Plan, OSC would want similarly regular updates on progress of BGS against the job creation and training outcomes set out in the FBC.</p> <p>On 24th February 2020, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was presented with a report on the Scrutiny of the Trading Companies. That report outlined the following '...as decisions relating to the companies go to the Combined Authority Board, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can scrutinise decisions of the companies (exercising powers listed above in 2.7) as the Committee would scrutinise any other decision.</p> <p>To recap, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to:</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken on connection with the discharge of any function which are the responsibility of the Combined Authority. • Review and scrutinise a key decision made but not implemented and to: (a) direct that a decision is not to be implemented while it is under review by the Committee, and (b) recommend that the decision be reconsidered. • Review and scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken on connection with the discharge of any function which are the responsibility of the Combined Authority. • make reports or recommendations to the Combined Authority Board: (a) with respect to the discharge of any functions that are the responsibility of the authority; (b) on matters that affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of the area. <p>Ultimately the CPCA is the decision maker for all consent matters for all CPCA companies including Growth Co, which is the arrangement dictated by the shareholder agreement. When decision relating to Growth Co are presented to the CPCA, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can review and scrutinise those decisions. Please also refer to the appendix 8 of the Full Business Case which is the decision-making hierarchy.</p>
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3.	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Skills Committee	<p>Item 2.1 Business growth service full business case</p> <p>P122 of 538 - Appendix 3. Local economic development areas.</p> <p>The appendix suggests only Cambridge to be ready to develop their response, with all other areas behind. Can this disparity in response be explained, and what efforts are in place to ensure all areas are engaged fully?</p>
	Response From:	Response to:	Response:
	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Discussions have taken place with economic development officers of all the Local Authorities in terms of how the BGS will operate and focus in their areas. This is illustrated on pages 111-120 in great detail. The table on page 122 was merely to illustrate progress on discussions with each LA on provision of touch down space

			<p>for BGS staff in their area.</p> <p>The LA specific BGS mobilisation plans on page 111-120 will be developed over the first 6 months of the service and all LAs will be fully and equally engaged in delivery of BGS.</p>
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4.	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Skills Committee	<p>Item 2.2 COVID-19 Evidence & Insight Report</p> <p>Metro Dynamics Report, Emerging implications for CPCA strategies</p> <p>The Metro Dynamics report into the impact of Covid-19 on the local economies within CPCA indicates a minimum 20% reduction across all economies and with a variety of impacts on sectors which differ across the three. The downturn requires a number of initiatives to rebuild the local economy. One of these is to encourage relocation of quality businesses from London permanently to the area. How is this to be achieved? Is it realistic?</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	<p>We are soon to launch the Business Growth Service and it will contain a wide package of support to assist scale up / high growth businesses restart and continue their growth plans, part of the range of services will include assistance for businesses who wish to relocate in the medium term. As part of this new service, we will continually explore and promote opportunities to support businesses who may want to relocate, this will include grants, growth coaching programmes, skills and recruitment, bespoke support advice, guidance and introductions to the local eco-system through dedicated account managers. Although, this won't just be centred on targeting London but also other regions/counties who border CPCA e.g Northamptonshire.</p> <p>Also, Central Government Departments in London are reviewing their estate requirements with potential for relocation out into the regions and the Mayor, Leaders and Combined Authority have already communicated with them.</p>

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5.	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	Skills Committee	<p>Item 2.3 - Covid-19 Local Economic Recovery Strategy.</p> <p>P270 of the agenda pack Local Economic Recovery Strategy (LERS)</p> <p>The graphs show a disproportionate impact on unemployment due to COVID-19 on Peterborough than other areas in the Combined Authority Area, with the current downturn potentially doubling after the ending of furlough support to the local economy.</p> <p>Predictions of economic recovery by 2022 further in the paper points out that Unemployment rates will not recover as quickly. The indications are, therefore that Peterborough will continue to lag behind the rest of the combined Authority economy and the relative position of the Northern economy will worsen. What interventions are available to the skills committee to mitigate these concerning predictions, and what is realistically achievable in terms of skills investment disproportionately higher in Peterborough than in other areas to level up economic activity with more successful areas?</p>
	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	Cllr John Holdich – Chairman of Skills the Committee	Cllr Coles – Overview and Scrutiny Lead for Skills	<p>Inclusive growth (or levelling up as it is more popularly described currently) is a key goal of the LIS and the Skills Strategy.</p> <p>The LERs confirms various national forecasts that put Peterborough amongst the hardest hit and slowest to recover cities and Cambridge among the least impacted and fastest to recover. This disparity in economic performance, partially linked to skills provision and availability, was highlighted in the CPIER and LIS also. Hence it is not surprising these relative strengths and weaknesses are highlighted through an event such as the COVID19 pandemic and the economic shock associated with it.</p> <p>Hence, disproportionate investment was already planned, as part of the LIS, to promote a more inclusive growth dynamic for the future. This is being continued as</p>

			<p>part of the LERS.</p> <p>The budget allocations of the CPCA's adult education budget already favour Peterborough and the Fens for the 20/21 academic year, and could potentially favour those areas more in 21/22 subject to Skills Committee approval.</p> <p>The LGF investment in skills in the north is far higher than that in the South of the economy, with flagship projects like the £12.5m investment in Peterborough University Phase 1 and the £14.6m investment in Peterborough University Phase 2. Of the total £47,479,000 of LGF skills investment, £31,246,000 has been invested in Peterborough and Fenland, with the remainder being invested in Huntingdonshire and Kings Lynn (just £450k under the old LEP).</p>
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