

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Employment and Skills Strategy

October 2021 - DRAFT

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Executive Summary

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is core to the UK's future growth, global competitiveness and zero-carbon transition. It is a major economic engine of the national economy and the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and, prior to the pandemic, a net contributor to the public finances of the UK.

Firing this engine are the thousands of people who live and work in the area. Now, more than ever, as our people and the businesses and organisations in which they work emerge from the distress and disruption wrought by Covid-19, there is a need for an employment and skills system that matches their needs and opportunities.

There are large employed workforces in much of the area, and growth in priority sectors in places with strengths in agritech, advanced manufacturing, digital and life sciences. But high level skills growth is slowing, and school leavers are more likely to go straight into work than further/higher education or training, risking people missing out on upskilling and further career progression.

The raft of changes facing businesses from Covid recovery, Brexit, transition to net zero and Industry 4.0, is driving evolving skills needs for employers. As our society ages and people pursue longer and changing careers, and people seek full lives, we need agile people-centred life-wide learning and careers support, strengthened links between employers and providers for careers advice beyond school, and expanded support for people into and between work.

Vision and priorities

Our Strategy vision is for:

A successful, globally competitive economy offering high-skilled, well-paid, good quality jobs, delivering increased productivity and prosperity to support strong, sustainable and healthy communities and enabled by an inclusive, world-class local skills system that matches the needs of our employers, learners and communities.

This means for our people, employers, providers and place leaders:

People experience fulfilment and good physical and mental health with productive, quality working lives. They drive their own learning and career journeys and feel confident to enter and re-enter the labour market over the course of their lives. They can access support and learning to meet their ambitions when and how they need.

Employers are providing good quality jobs; have the skills they need in their staff and can recruit the right person for the right job. They understand their skills needs and their inputs shape an agile, responsive skills system that delivers a regional pipeline of talent, matched to job opportunities to support strong businesses and enable business growth.

<p>Providers work collaboratively across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in an integrated education and skills system to deliver learning, qualifications, careers education and support to enable people to enter the labour market in the ways that suit individual's needs and ambitions.</p>	<p>Place leaders secure outcomes for the whole place, convening and supporting collaboration between employers and the integrated skills system, as well as linking into other local services for people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to lead healthy lives and fulfilling careers.</p>
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We are pursuing **three long-term change projects** that we believe are critical to ensuring our skills system can truly meet the needs of our local communities:

1. **A regional curriculum, with learning and training aligned to local job opportunities and careers** – using robust data and information from employers to inform the experiences, skills development and qualifications that school, college and university students need for local job opportunities and careers.
2. **A dual-track system, anticipating long-term needs and responding with agility in the short-term** – with providers who can *both* lead on future workforce development to provide a pipeline of talent and respond to short term skills need from industry.
3. **Co-ordinated place-based action areas, to engage all stakeholders in addressing multiple/complex issues** – convening place leaders, providers, schools, and partners to focus on improving skill and qualification levels and getting people into good jobs and to achieve higher earnings.

These three projects will ensure **effective** provision is delivered using an **agile** approach, in a way suited to the nuances of **our places**.

Our vision for the skills system will not be achieved overnight. Our **starting point is ensuring that short-term strategic priorities** are approached as a step in the right direction towards longer-term change. We will monitor progress on our priorities through a set of measures.

Figure 1. Short-term priorities

	Priorities	Progress measures
<p>Pre-work learning and formal education</p> <p>People can access learning and experiences during formal education that provide a strong foundation for labour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving careers education, specifically around STEM and green skills, as well as information, advice and guidance • Widening education access and participation to make education more inclusive and the student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising rates of people qualified to NVQ Level 4+ above national levels (especially in Peterborough, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire)

<p>market entry and future working lives.</p>	<p>body (and future workforce) more diverse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing exposure to role models, work experience, and understanding of various training routes into sectors and occupations • Capital investment to improve teaching facilities and kit, particularly at FE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing vocational courses age 16-18 studied at Level 3 (especially in Fenland) • Increasing progression rates post-18 into HE (especially in Peterborough, Fenland, East Cambridgeshire), FE (especially in Fenland, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridge), and apprenticeships (especially in Cambridge, Peterborough), above national levels for the whole area
<p>Employer access to talent</p> <p>Employers both drive and consume a dynamic market of skills provision, which shapes the current and future workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting covid recovery, growth and net-zero transition by developing priority skills and responding to acute issues • Increasing employers' engagement and influence on education and training • Embedding modern work practices and conditions and improving job quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing jobs across sectors – especially at least at level 3 in Peterborough and Fenland, and at level 4+ particularly in priority sectors • Increasing GVA growth (especially in Fenland and Cambridge), and overall above national levels • Increasing productivity (especially in Fenland, East Cambridgeshire, South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge), and overall, above national levels of growth • Increasing levels of employment especially in Fenland and Huntingdonshire • Continued growing employment in priority sectors in growth areas • Increasing earnings in Fenland and Peterborough
<p>Life-wide learning and training</p> <p>People are aware of their learning needs and opportunities and able</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age • Providing support to upskill and reskill in response to economic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing numbers of workers at level 1 and increasing at level 3 (especially in Peterborough and Fenland)

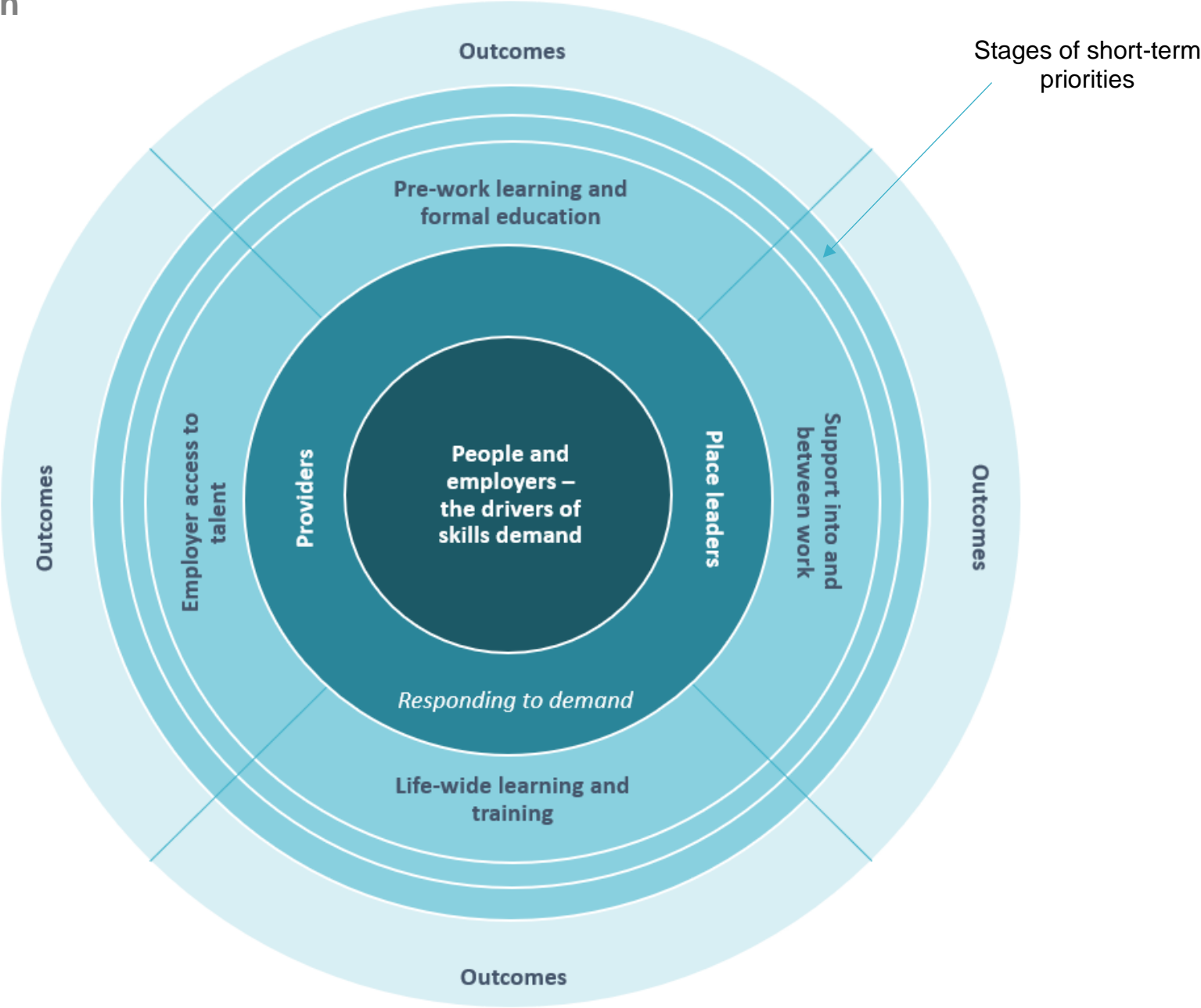
<p>to access provision that enables their development.</p>	<p>restructuring (e.g. following covid-19, Brexit, further digitisation, as net-zero transition intensifies)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing work-based learning, particularly apprenticeships, and introducing more accessible formats (e.g. short courses/ online/blended learning). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing rates of in work training (provided flexibility at various levels)
<p>Support into and between work</p> <p>Coordinated support is available for those who need additional assistance to transition into or between work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting unemployed and NEETs into training and employment Providing support for disadvantaged groups to access the labour market Targeting support for Covid-19 recovery and transitions for displaced workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving transport and digital connectivity for all communities Reducing UC claimant levels Falling levels of economic inactivity Reducing NEET numbers

In order to deliver on our priorities, we will set **strategic delivery plans with five-year terms**. This will form part of our wider Business and Skills Strategy. We will develop and agree with partners detailed action plans, addressing short-term priorities and move forward the process of delivering the long-term vision. Areas where we will pursue action now and in the first five years will focus on key areas:

- **Developing growth in jobs** – focused on business, GVA, productivity and jobs growth at least at level 3 in Peterborough and Fenland, and at level 4+ focusing on priority sectors across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- **Supporting people into growing, changing and new jobs** – throughout people's lives – from creating strong pathways post-18 to utilising Life Long Skills Guarantee and entitlements – with higher level skills that employers need. In line with Government's Skills White Paper, this means including employers in shaping the system.
- **Co-designing with stakeholders and place leaders an agile skills system** for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, with a regional curriculum, and enabling support through our Transport Improvement Plan and infrastructure and digital investment.

The Combined Authority role in delivering this strategy is as a place leader with partners, and convener of skills provision across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We will continue to expand our delivery and direction of adult skills programmes, support partners to overcome barriers and improve place outcomes for our residents, and make the case for expanded devolution of economic growth funding and flexibilities.

Our strategy in summary



1 Introduction

Context

An area of contrasts, there are distinct differences in those needs and opportunities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Our 2018 Independent Economic Review identified three interdependent subeconomies across our geography, Greater Peterborough, Greater Cambridge and the Fens. The six local authority areas which make up our place each have different strengths and challenges, but the global competitiveness of our area depends on the future success of all.

CPCA's previous Skills Strategy *Developing Talent: Connecting the Disconnect* was published in 2019 with an overarching imperative to deliver 'an inclusive, world-class local skills ecosystem that matches the needs of our employers, learners and communities'.

Whilst few would question the ongoing relevance of this mission, the intervening years have seen significant changes the national and global context: Great Britain has left the European Union and Covid-19 has impacted the economy, people's health, wellbeing, and how they work and learn. The UK's economic recovery from the pandemic has been aligned both to the levelling-up agenda, aiming to reduce inequalities between different parts of the country that covid has laid bare and the intensifying drive to attain net-zero carbon emissions in the UK by 2050. Locally, Mayoral elections in 2021 brought a new Mayor, Dr Nik Johnson, to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, mandated to place his values of compassion, co-operation and community at the heart of future strategic plans.

With the economy now re-opening, vaccination numbers rising and deaths falling, a new set of challenges are to be faced by the region. In the short-term, the end of the government's extensive employment support schemes mean many individuals, particularly those in precarious work, are at risk of unemployment. Longer-term, Covid-19 has accelerated trends such as automation which combined with transitioning industries to net zero risk further unemployment and will require reskilling and upskilling.

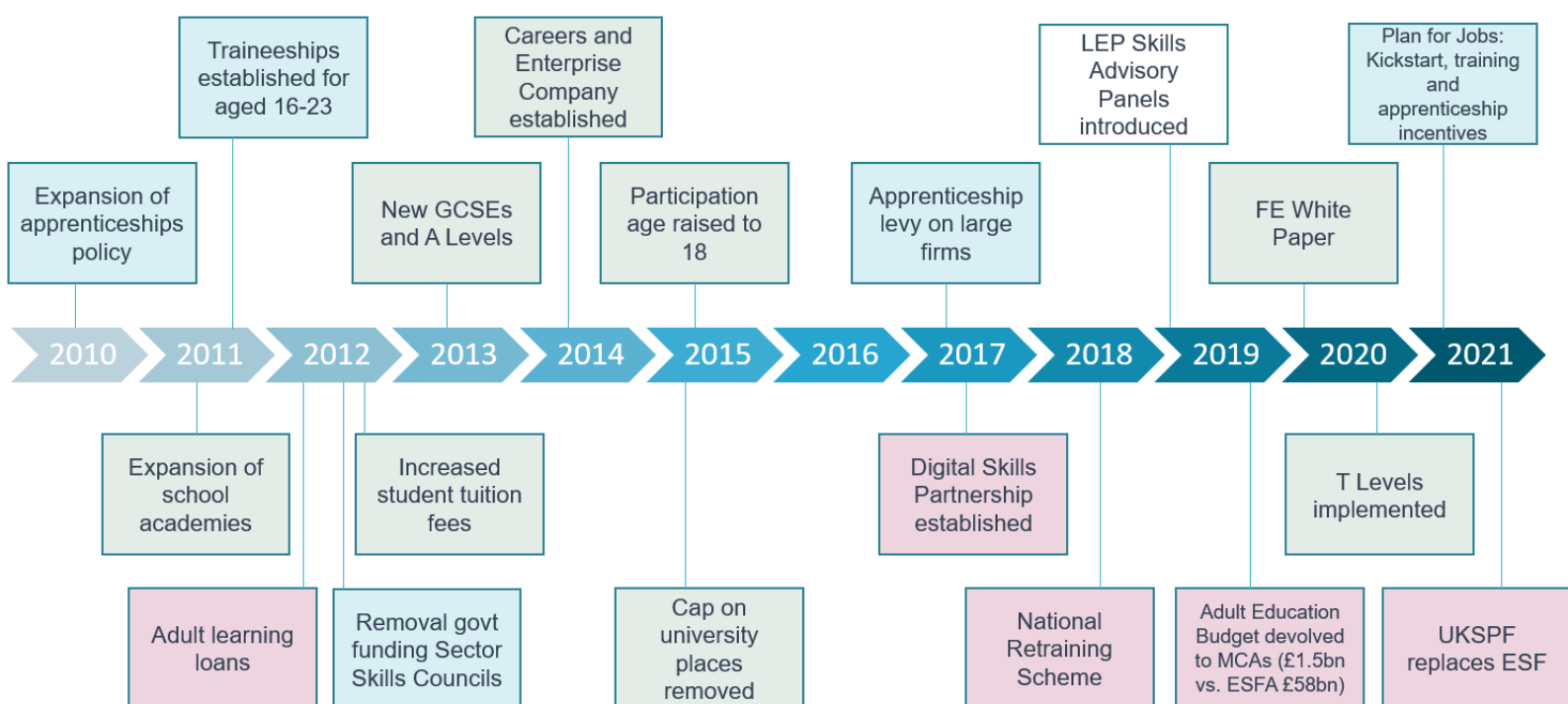
Few would question the ongoing relevance of the mission at the core of *Developing Talent*, and many good things have been achieved through the actions flowing from it, not least of which are the establishment of the new Anglia Ruskin University Peterborough (set to open in the academic year 2022/23), the first localised commissioning of Adult Education with devolved funds and the launch of Growth Works with Skills, a demand-led online platform connecting learning and employers across the region.

However, since 2019, we have seen significant changes in the national and global context. As we move through the *Respond* phase of the LERS and further into *Recovery*, it has been essential to review and update the skills strategy, to reflect the changing skills needs and challenges in the current and future economic context.

Anchored by the priorities identified in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review and the region's Local Industrial Strategy and reflecting the current Local Economic Recovery strategy, this refreshed skills strategy convenes and validates the current strategic priorities for the area. Looking further to the future, the document also sets out a longer-term vision for the future of the skills system in the region and the outcomes it needs to deliver for local people and businesses, reflecting nuances in places across the area.

This balance of current and future perspective will allow local stakeholders to coalesce around a shared set of objectives and outcomes, matching investment opportunities to local priorities in the short-term, for example as further packages of recovery support are released from Government, as well guiding longer-term change, for example the transition to net-zero.

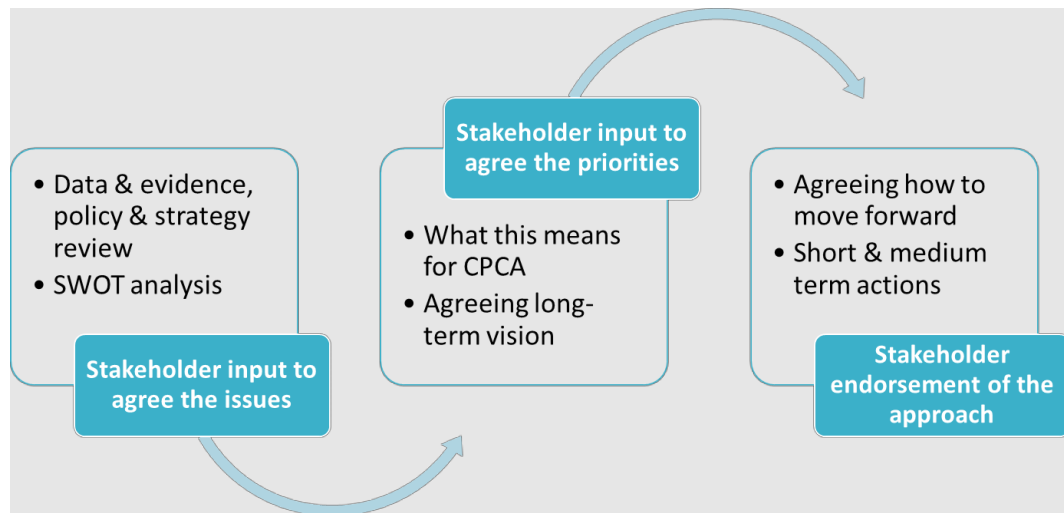
Figure 2. Key national skills policy developments 2010-2021



Approach

The work to develop this strategy was undertaken between June and October 2021, incorporating a detailed data and evidence review, an open call for evidence from partners across the region and a series of stakeholder workshop sessions. Throughout the process the CA's Skills Committee and Employment and Skills Board and Business Board have provided input to guide and shape the strategy. The process has been iterative, with partners and stakeholders from across the area engaged multiple times to provide input as the development of the strategy progressed.

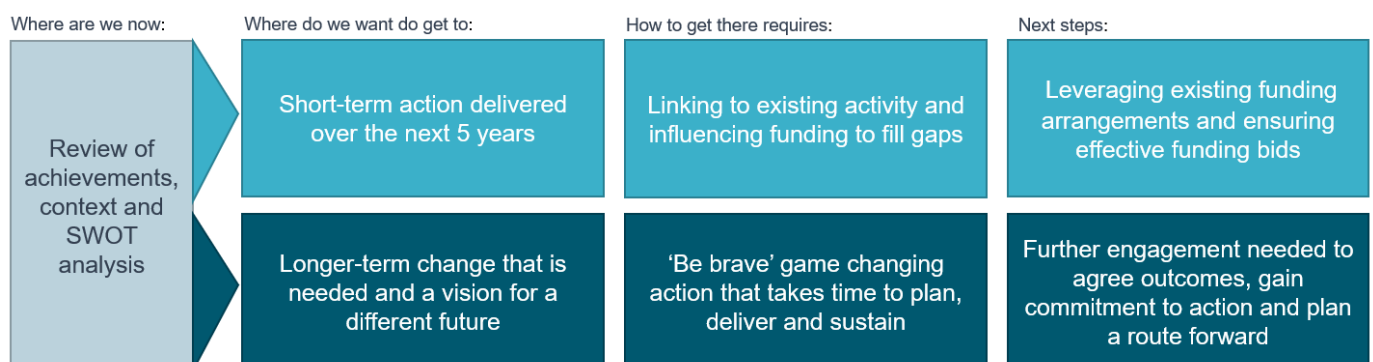
Figure 3. An iterative approach to developing the strategy



A challenge put to us by stakeholders in the early stages of the strategy development process was to ensure that this document effectively balanced short-term and long-term strategic priorities; recognising imperatives to act to deliver on existing and pressing priorities *and* setting a vision for change, particularly where issues identified were symptoms of deeper causes which were likely to require sustained, incremental action over a longer period of time.

We accepted this challenge, and the strategy presents both long-term outcomes and short-term strategic priorities. Moving forward, it is our aim to set strategic planning periods for a maximum of five years, agreeing a sub-set of core priorities, objectives and outcomes to pursue, monitoring progress to delivering on these, and then taking stock and calibrating prior to setting out a subsequent strategic plan.

Figure 4. Balancing short and long-term perspectives



2 Where we are now

Population and labour market context

This section considers the current context across the CPCA area and each of the six local authority areas: Cambridge, Peterborough, Fenland, Huntingdonshire, East Cambridgeshire, and South Cambridgeshire. From the evidence review, stakeholder and partner insights, and an open call for evidence, we have developed an analysis of key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the labour market and skills system across the CPCA area and in each of the six local authority areas, and detail in this section the key challenges and issues for a new Strategy.

The context in this section provides clear areas for our strategy now to focus on:

- gaps in pre-work learning and formal education
- boosting employer access to talent
- strengthening life-wide learning
- ensuring support for people into and between work – in and outside of the DWP system and throughout their lives.

Population trends

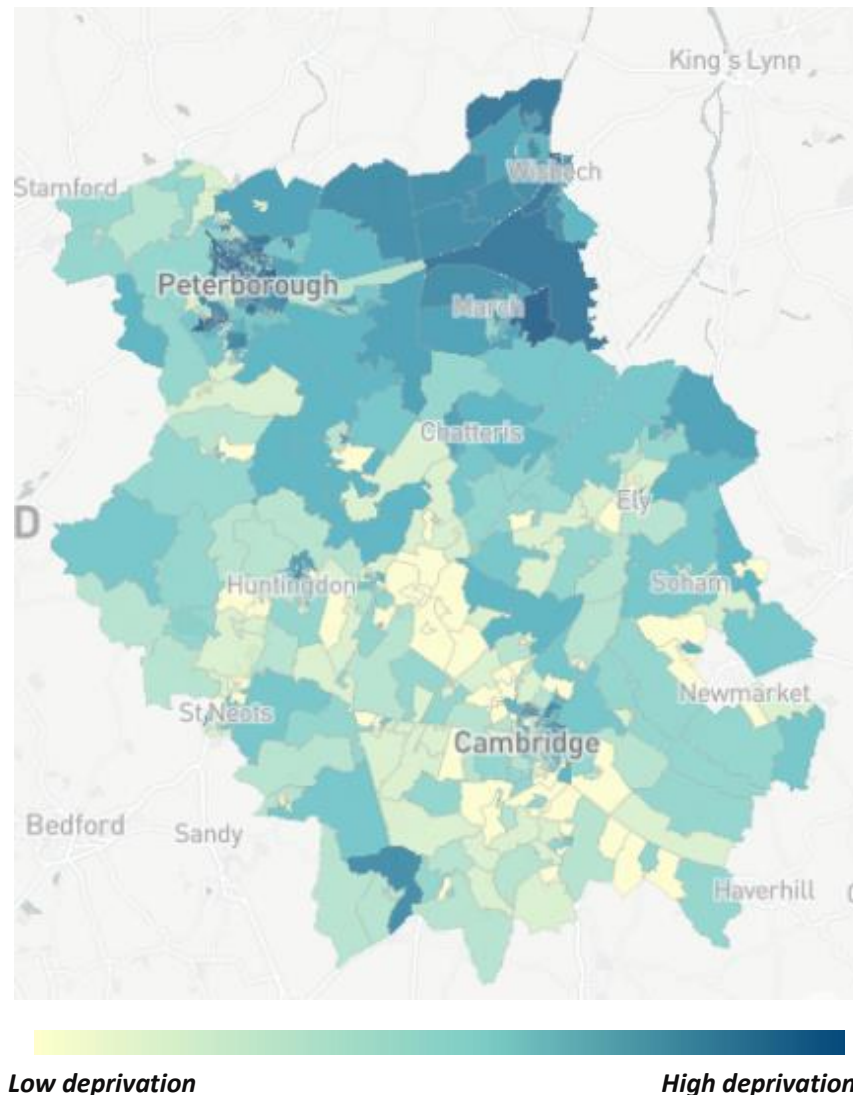
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is an area of more than 850,000 people, with population centres in Peterborough and Cambridge, and much of the population living in surrounding rural towns and villages. **The area is growing**, with population growth projected at 2.6% by 2040 against a national projected fall of -13.6%. However, only two of the local authority areas are projected to grow – Peterborough and Fenland – at 11.7% and 9.1%.

Peterborough has been one of the fastest growing cities in the UK in recent years.

The working age population in the area is growing more slowly than average at just 0.1%, compared with 1.5% growth nationally – suggesting **faster future ageing**. This trend is uneven across the area. Only South Cambridgeshire has working age population growth above average – at 2% compared with 1.5% across the UK. In Cambridge and Huntingdonshire the working age population is falling, and faster than the overall projected population change by 2040 – by -3.4% and -0.3% respectively¹.

¹ Metro Dynamics analysis of ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) data (2020).

Figure 5. Index of Multiple Deprivation across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (2019)



In this part of England, there are fewer deprived areas than average – particularly in income, employment and health. But **there is inequality and disparities across the CPCA area** – many places experience very low levels of deprivation and offer good quality of life for residents, but deprivation is clustered in Fenland and Peterborough with pockets in Cambridge².

Pre-work learning and formal education

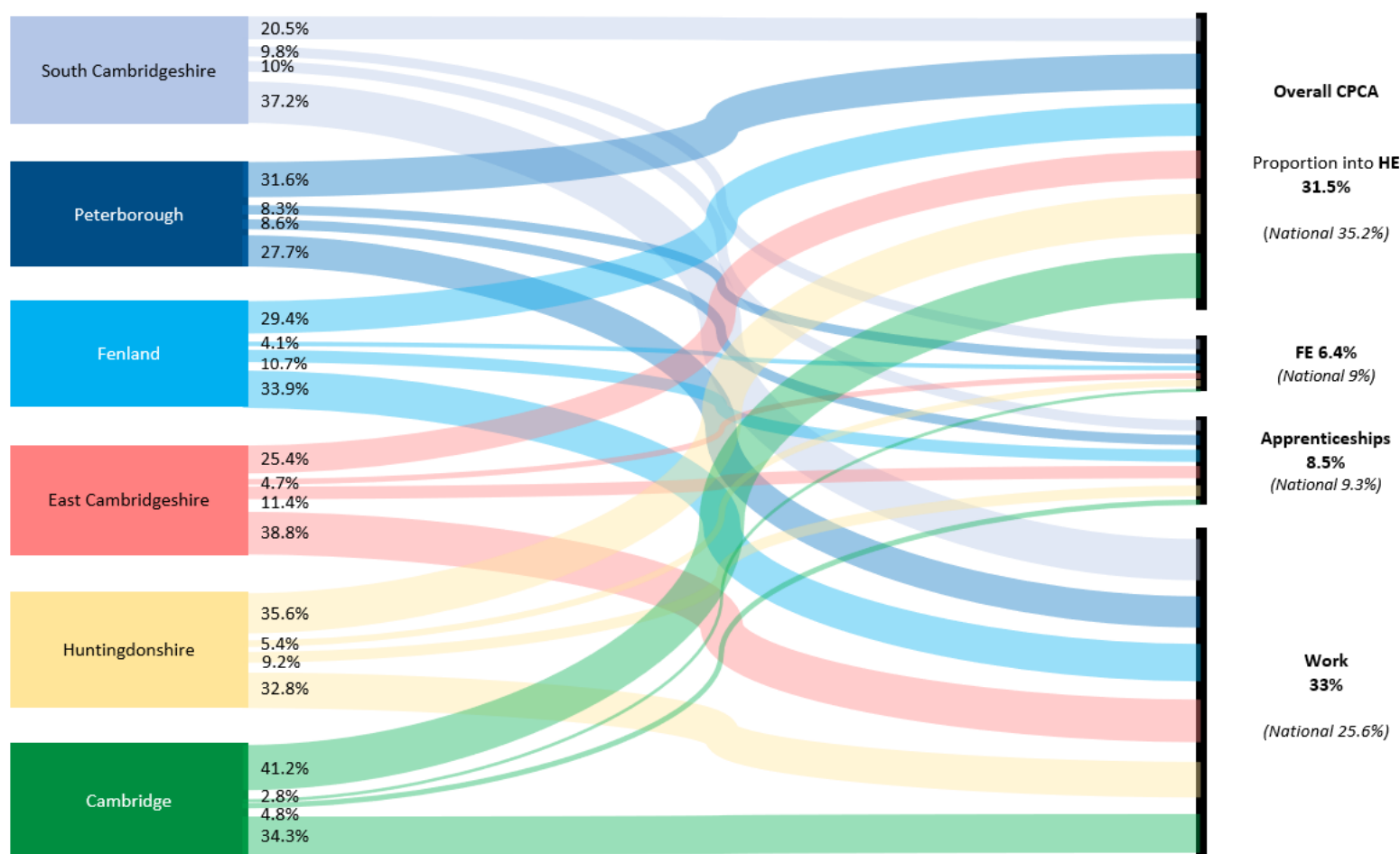
Young people are leaving school at 18 less likely to go on to study in higher education, further education or through an apprenticeship in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough than on average across the country. Only 31.5% are progressing onto HE, compared with 35.2% nationally, with 6.4% progressing onto FE compared with 9%

² Metro Dynamics analysis of MHCLG Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data (2019).

nationally, and 8.5% progressing onto apprenticeships compared with 9.3% nationally. School leavers are more likely to move straight into work rather than continuing education or training than elsewhere in the country.

Progression rates at 18 vary by place. The lowest rates for HE are in South Cambridgeshire at 20.5% and East Cambridgeshire at 25.4% compared with the highest at 41.2% in Cambridge and 35.6% in Huntingdonshire. The lowest progression rates into FE at 18 in the area are in Cambridge at 2.8% and Fenland at 4.1%, compared with the highest at 8.3% in Peterborough and 9.8% in South Cambridgeshire. There is higher than average progression into apprenticeships in East Cambridgeshire at 11.4%, Fenland at 10.7%, and South Cambridgeshire at 10%³.

Figure 6. Progression rates at 18 into HE, FE, apprenticeships, and work by local authority area (2018/19)



Fewer pupils are studying vocational courses aged 16-18 – with falls in every Cambridgeshire district area, but only by -1% in East Cambridgeshire compared with -25% in South Cambridgeshire and -23% in Cambridge between 2016 and 2019. **More students are pursuing lower level vocational qualifications post-16.** In 2019/20, Y11s

³ Metro Dynamics analysis of DfE school leaver destinations data (2019).

progressing onto vocational qualifications were more likely to be at level 1 than 2016-19, and less likely to be at level 3.

More pupils are pursuing A Levels across Cambridgeshire – with an overall 6% rise. But this has grown by 15% in Cambridge compared with a fall of -15% in South Cambridgeshire and little change in Huntingdonshire and Fenland between 2016 and 2019. The vocational/A Level split varies by place – 68% of pupils aged 16-18 in Cambridge study A Levels, while 69% in Fenland study vocational courses. The split is more even in East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire⁴.

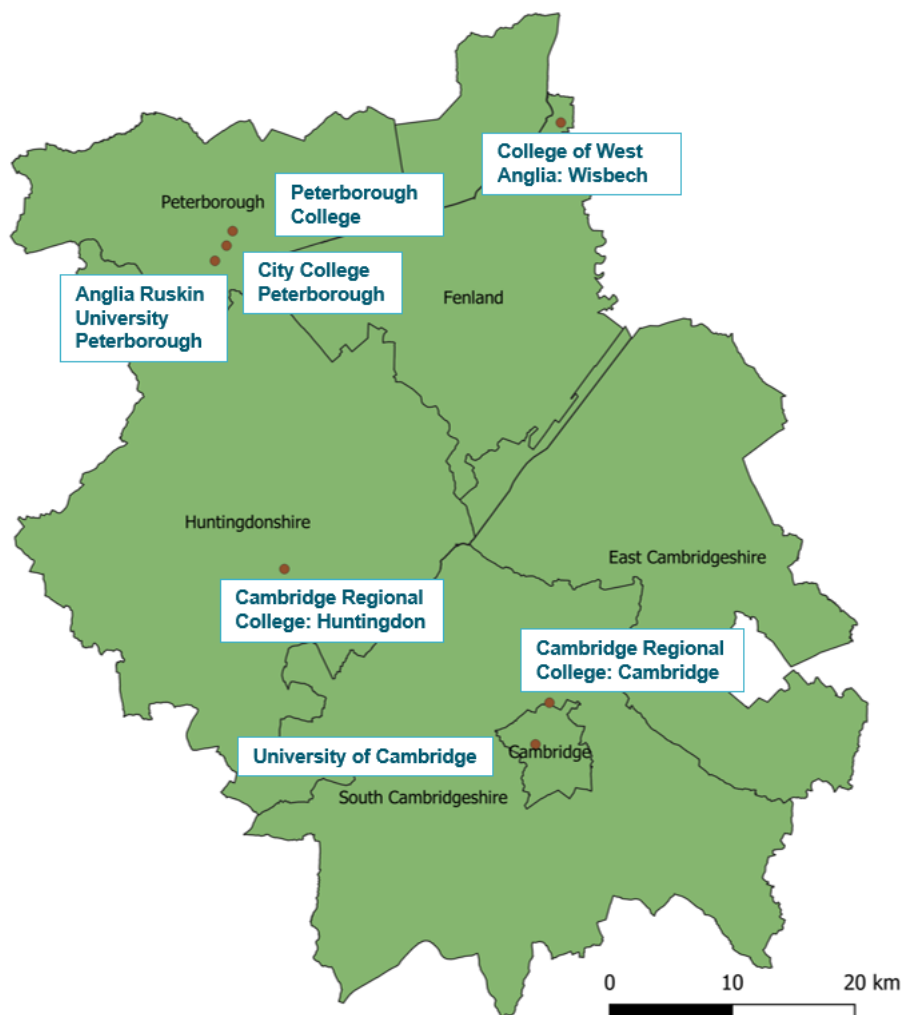
Apprenticeship uptake has been impacted by the Apprenticeship Levy and Covid. The drop in apprenticeship starts between 2019/20 and 2020/21 was larger than the national average at -25% compared with -18%. The most popular subjects of business, administration and law; and health, public sector and care - made up around 60% of total apprenticeship starts, in line with national averages. Manufacturing apprenticeships declined from 16% in 2019/20 to 11% in 2020/21, but apprenticeship starts in construction, planning and the built environment doubled from 4% to 8% of starts from 2019/20-2020/21, increasing to national levels⁵.

Patchy engagement with post-16/18 education is exacerbated by education estate and access cold-spots – notable in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire – and physical and digital – including connection and device – access challenges for rural and deprived communities.

⁴ Cambridgeshire County Council Y11 transitions data (2020).

⁵ CPCA apprenticeships data (2021).

Figure 7. HE and FE institutions mapped across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough



The **area is starting to fall behind the national average on higher level skills**. The proportion of the working age population qualified up to level 3 is rising at 2.3% compared with a fall of 0.1% nationally. This could be positive, however, the proportion of people whose highest qualification is a level 2 is also rising against a national fall, and qualifications at level 4+ are growing more slowly than average.

Currently levels are in line with the rest of the UK at 43% of the working age population qualified at level 4+, but this rate is growing more slowly than average overall, and there is large variation between places. Rates range from 60% of the working population in Cambridge to 27% in Fenland. Rates are rising fastest in Huntingdonshire at 6.7%. But in Fenland, Cambridge and East Cambridgeshire, rates are falling⁶.

Alongside variation in access to education and training across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, there are **gaps in opportunities for work experience and exposure to role models** that showcase the range of occupational opportunities in the area. The

⁶ Metro Dynamics analysis of ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) data (2020).

implementation of T Levels coinciding with Covid has added to the difficulty of students able to access work experience as part of their studies.

Without priority given to careers education and advice at school and in HE and FE provision, **there are gaps in careers guidance, and soft and technical skills that employers need**. A focus on academic routes at school and FE and HE providers incentivised to deliver qualifications rather than skills, means that opportunities are missed to skill up young people in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough for local jobs and future opportunities.

Employer access to talent

Businesses are facing a raft of changes to which they are responding – Covid recovery, impact of Brexit, digitisation and Industry 4.0, transition to net zero, and changes and pressures on supply chains. These are driving new ways of working and demand for new technical skills from the workforce. The local knowledge and manufacturing based economy is well placed to innovate and build new opportunities around Industry 4.0 and net zero priorities. But skills provision needs to both anticipate and respond to the range of changes for sectors and occupations across the area.

GVA and employment in priority sectors is strong and growing – maintaining **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's role as an economic growth centre**. GVA is growing across the area faster than average – at 9.4% compared with 8.6% nationally. Peterborough has the fastest growing GVA levels at 15%. **Productivity overall has fallen slightly** by -1.1% compared with 1.2% growth nationally. Productivity has only grown in Peterborough – by 7.9%, and Huntingdonshire by 2.9%. Fenland has the lowest productivity and GVA levels in the area that are both falling – by -11.6% and -4.1% respectively, and the lowest earnings in the area. The highest productivity levels are driven by manufacturing and in Peterborough and Huntingdonshire⁷.

Strong productivity and GVA performance in Peterborough is not following through to wages for residents. There is **large disparity in residents' earnings across the area**: Peterborough (with Fenland) has the lowest average earnings in the area, at £23,973 compared with £31,673 in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire⁸. The impact of lower skill levels in places such as Fenland means that communities are struggling to benefit from the region's growth, threatening future opportunities.

Providers and place leaders experience inconsistent articulation of skills needs from employers, and there has been a narrow strategic focus on higher level skills and sector strategies for CPCA's priority sectors (advanced manufacturing, agritech, digital, and life sciences). Employers experience a lack of access to information on labour availability locally and up to date intelligence on content of skills provision locally. Further **information and collaboration on recruitment and skills needs as well as provision** – including longer-

⁷ Metro Dynamics analysis of ONS data (2019).

⁸ Metro Dynamics analysis of ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) data (2020).

term trends affecting skills demand in future – could be better joined up between employers and providers, building on the ongoing Growth Works programme, and making the most of Cambridge Ahead and Opportunity Peterborough networks.

Employment levels across the area are high compared to national averages, but levels have fallen in Fenland, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire. Employment in CPCA priority sectors (advanced manufacturing, agritech, digital, and life sciences) is rising faster in the area than average at 17.4% compared with 6.6% nationally. However, the **positive growth in priority sector employment is not experienced evenly across the area** – 20% of total employment in the area falls into the priority sectors, and Fenland in particular is home to very few priority sector jobs.

High levels of self-employment in Fenland point to a strong entrepreneurial culture, but this is the only place that has more people self-employed than employed in a priority sector. Fenland, Peterborough and Huntingdonshire all had lower recent increases in employment levels, closer to (or lower than) the national average than the CPCA average, with much sharper increases in self-employment. Population growth is outstripping jobs growth, with a recent -4.8% fall in employment levels against a 0.7% rise in working age population, indicating further future issues in residents finding job opportunities in Fenland⁹.

The largest employed workforces proportionate to population in the area are in Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire, where earnings are above average levels – offering opportunities and quality of life. **Clusters of employment in CPCA priority sectors are growing** in life sciences in South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge, advanced manufacturing and digital in Peterborough and Cambridge, and agritech in Huntingdonshire, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland. This provides opportunities for residents to benefit from growth with the right skills provision and support. However, priority sectors account for 20% of total employment, and the CPCA Local Economic Recovery Strategy emphasises a focus on the hardest hit foundational sectors that make up the bulk of employment.

There has been resilience in jobs and recovery from Covid – with lower than average furlough rates in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – at 4.2% of the workforce compared with 5% nationally in August 2021. But **foundational sectors continue to face recruitment demand issues** as a result of Covid and Brexit – for example, retail and hospitality vacancies have risen by 40.2% and construction by 25% from February 2020 to May 2021¹⁰. Overall in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, job postings in September 2021 were 3% higher than across the UK, and 13% higher than pre-pandemic levels, and higher in every area except Cambridge (-5% lower)¹¹.

The main skills gaps are in mid-level, skilled roles, these require strong work-related and/or technical training. Therefore, considering these skills needs, the lower occupational levels, and fall in employment levels, in places such as Fenland, **a drive for increasing**

⁹ Metro Dynamics analysis of ONS Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) data (2020).

¹⁰ Cambridgeshire County Council analysis of Burning Glass vacancies data (2021).

¹¹ Cambridgeshire County Council analysis of EMSI vacancies data (2021).

higher level skills alone will not address barriers facing residents and the structure of jobs and businesses¹². There needs to also be a focus on growing local businesses and creating and attracting new jobs to the area.

Life-wide learning and training

With an ageing society, **people will be working for longer and changing jobs more throughout their careers.** This reflects the need for 'life-wide' learning rather than 'lifelong', as careers are becoming less and less linear, with people having a portfolio of jobs and experience throughout their lives. Life-wide also reflects the ability for people to pursue learning in the community for enrichment outside of direct job-related training.

This with the raft of changes facing the economy in the coming years will require a skills system that can respond to local employer needs, and individuals' ambitions and individual technical and soft skill gaps as these develop through their careers. Currently, access to careers guidance and advice beyond a school setting is lacking.

Transitions between jobs, employers, occupations and roles will become more important as driving trends play out in the local economy. Industry 4.0 and automation, potentially accelerated by labour shortages currently being experienced from the effects of Covid and Brexit, are expected to impact priority sectors in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Agritech has the highest exposure to automation at 49% of employment exposed, with 43.9% of employment not overlapping with other priority sectors. Advanced manufacturing faces 39% of employment exposure, with 33% for digital and 31% for life sciences. These three sectors also have more overlapping occupations in other sectors, ranging from 74.2% to 79.9%¹³. Reskilling will be a clear challenge in the coming years, particularly in areas with concentrations of agriculture and manufacturing.

As we transition to net zero with national targets set by 2050, and with CPCA committing its own operations to becoming net zero by 2030, **skills and recruitment needs will grow in order to decarbonise sectors.** Overall, across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, it is estimated that around 10.7% of jobs will require upskilling to become green jobs (slightly higher than nationally at 10.6%). But this is driven by a low proportion in Cambridge (7%) – in Fenland it is 13%, in the other Cambridgeshire districts the figure is 12%, and in Peterborough 11%¹⁴.

Higher workplace training rates in Peterborough and Fenland (with 25.4% and 27.8% reporting receiving training in the last quarter compared with 11.9% in Cambridge) demonstrate that residents can and do access up to date work experience and skills – including digital, technical and soft skills at work¹⁵. However, linked to lower progression

¹² Metro Dynamics analysis of DfE Employer Skills Survey (ESS) data (2019).

¹³ Metro Dynamics analysis for CPCA, *Covid-19 Labour Market Implications for Priority Sectors*, February 2021.

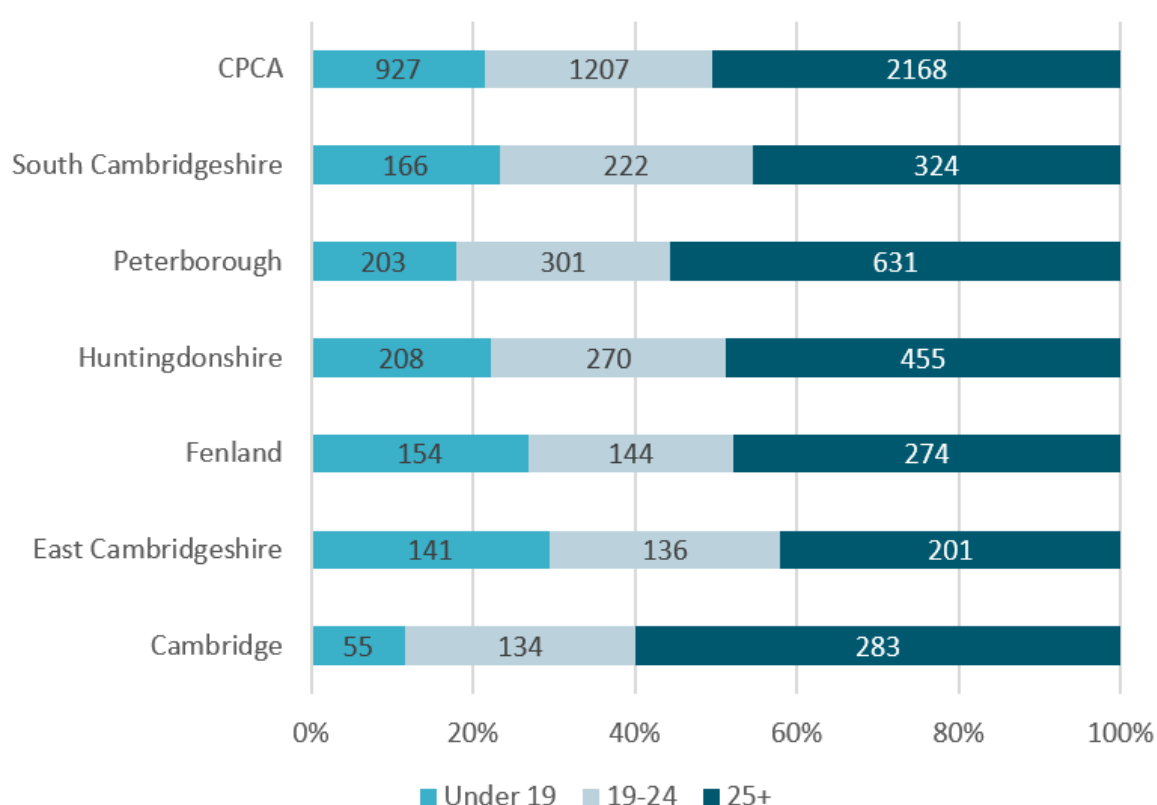
¹⁴ PCAN, LSE, University of Leeds, *Just Transition Jobs Tracker*, March 2021.

¹⁵ Metro Dynamics analysis of ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) data (2020).

from school into FE, HE, and apprenticeships, this also signals that **pre-work education is leaving residents in these places with gaps** in job related, technical, and/or soft skills that employers need, and there is a lack of range in the offer of work-related training from providers.

Across the area, half of all apprenticeship starts are being taken up by people aged 25+, with Peterborough and Cambridge both recording higher proportions of starts by people in this age group. In Fenland and East Cambridgeshire cohorts tend to be younger, with a higher proportion of starts made by people under age 19. CPCA's apprenticeship cohort is getting older. In 2017/18 44% of learners were aged 25+; by 2019/20 50% of learners were 25+. Meanwhile, over the same time period the proportion of stats by people under age 19 fell from 26% to 22%¹⁶.

Figure 8. Number and proportion of apprenticeship starts by local authority area (2019/20)



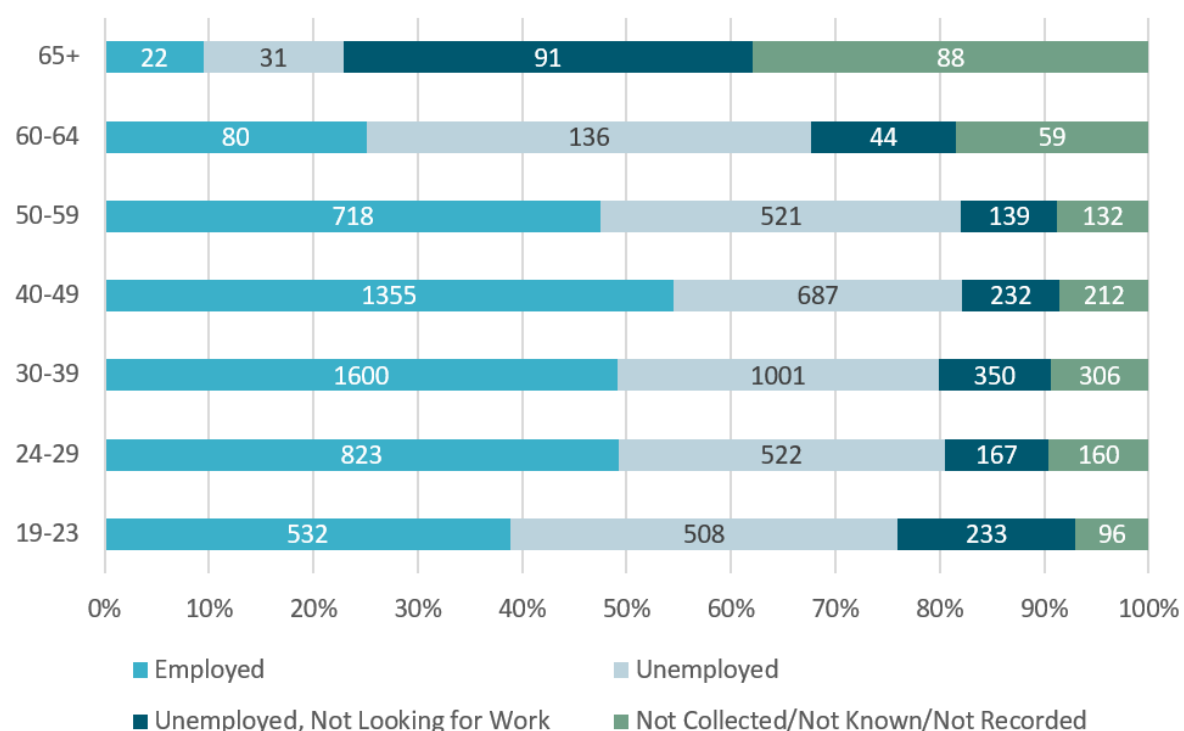
Learner participation in courses funded by CPCA's Adult Education Budget grew from the first year of devolution in 2019/20, from 8,421 to 9,097 (R13), this is despite the disruption to learning caused by Covid. Courses that are so far most popular in 2020/2021 are health, public services and care; preparation for life and work; and information and communication technology.

¹⁶ Metro Dynamics analysis for CPCA, *Covid-19 Labour Market Implications for Priority Sectors*, February 2021.

Of 14,067 enrolments in 2019/20 (some students enrolled more than once), almost half were in preparation for life and work, while another quarter are in health, public services and care. Peterborough accounts for almost half of all enrolments at 6,720, with the remainder of enrolments spread across the other districts.

As cohorts age, learners are increasingly likely to be employed at the time of their enrolment, up until cohorts aged 50+, when the likelihood of being employed at the time of enrolment begins to decrease. Older cohorts also tend to have higher prior education attainment levels, although it should be noted that in older age groups the proportion of 'unknown/missing' attainment levels increases, making it hard to confirm a trend.

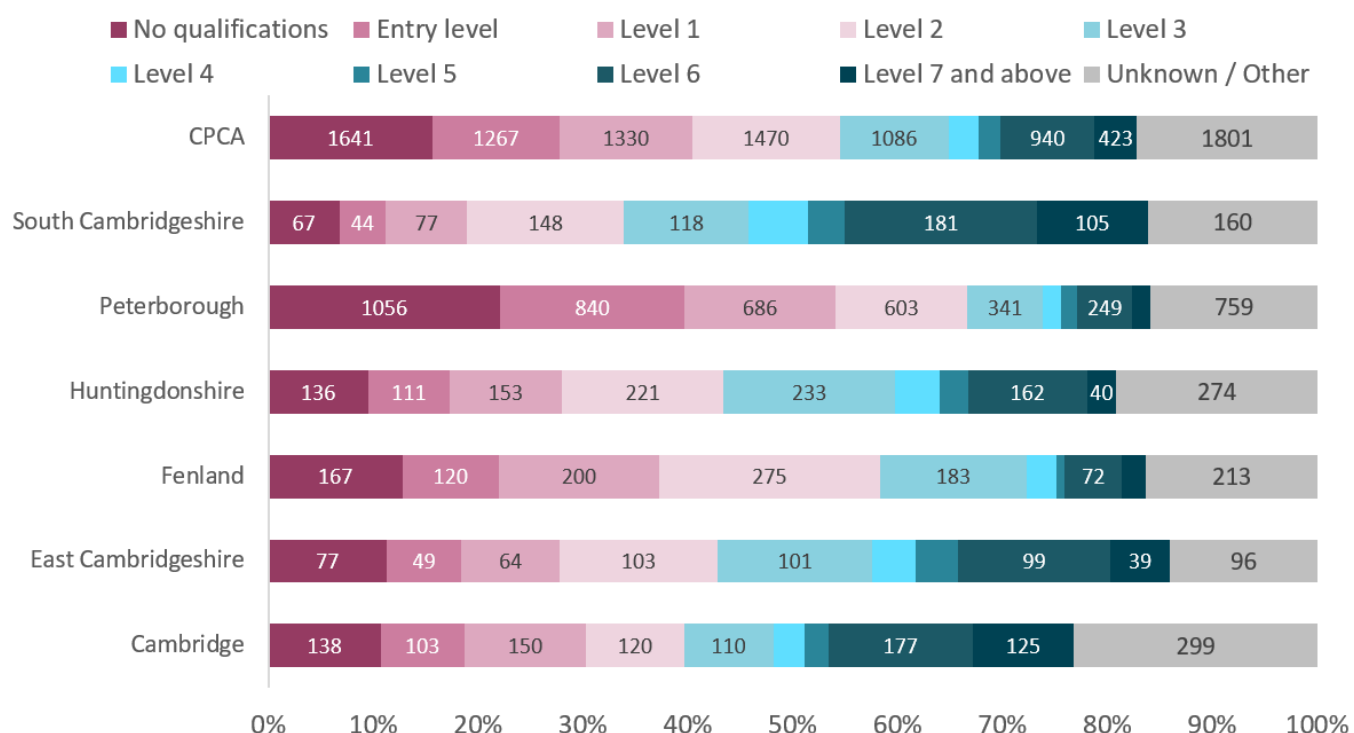
Figure 9. Prior employment status of CPCA AEB learners by age group (2019/20)



Across the area, 55% of learners who enrolled in AEB courses had Level 2 or below prior education levels, including 15% of learners with no qualifications at all. Again, this varies by place: only in Fenland and Peterborough do the proportions exceed half of enrolments, at around 60% and 65% respectively. Across other districts, more learners start at higher prior attainment levels¹⁷.

¹⁷ Metro Dynamics analysis for CPCA, *Covid-19 Labour Market Implications for Priority Sectors*, February 2021.

Figure 10. Prior education attainment levels of CPCA AEB learners by age group (2019/20)



Occupational structure and levels vary significantly across the area. In Cambridge, 53% of residents are working in occupations at skill level 4 (jobs which typically require a degree or equivalent period of relevant work experience), compared with just 14% in Fenland compared with 31% nationally. All areas have lower than average rates of level 3 workers. In Huntingdonshire, Fenland, Peterborough and East Cambridgeshire, around 32% of the workforce is employed in level 2 roles (in line with national averages). Fenland and Peterborough have much higher than average level 1 workers – at 18.3% and 17% respectively compared with 9.2% nationally. Levels reflect the five highest employing occupations across the area: sales and retail assistants, administrative occupations, care workers and home carers, elementary storage occupations, and nurses¹⁸.

There are barriers to people being able to take up the skills provision currently available for adults. Important in an area with rural communities, transport and digital connectivity remain major barriers to learning for many, and this combines with other health, financial, childcare, and mental health barriers that people in more deprived and isolated communities face.

Inflexibility and length of courses, with a **focus on qualifications rather than agile skills provision**, also presents a barrier to entry for people who may have particular job relevant upskilling or reskilling needs, but without the need, financial resources or time to pursue further formal qualifications.

¹⁸ Metro Dynamics analysis of ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) data (2020).

Support into and between work

Sustained support is required for people experiencing multiple and complex barriers to education and labour market entry. Current support being provided through European Social Fund (ESF) funded projects alongside DWP programmes will need to continue in a new funding landscape. However, there will also be a need to support people into and between work who are not picked up by the DWP system.

Covid-19 has triggered significant increases in Universal Credit and Jobseekers

Allowance claimants, weakening the past strength of the area having below average levels of claimants. Claimants (JSA and UC) has risen by 96%, affecting 4.2% of the working age population, compared with 5.3% nationally between March 2020 and August 2021¹⁹.

Continuing close working with DWP and partners will be important to maximise the impact of Kickstart, Restart, Digital Skills Bootcamps, the health and care sector work academy, traineeships, and the Lifetime Skills Guarantee.

Economic inactivity has risen by 19.7% compared with a fall nationally of -4.4%, so rates are about in line with national averages at 21%. The rate for students is higher in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough at 34% compared with 26.8% nationally. This is far more pronounced in certain places, with a very large rise in students in Huntingdonshire of 417.6% and South Cambridgeshire of 134.9%, compared with a fall of -21.1% in East Cambridgeshire and -1.8% in Peterborough²⁰.

Many of the jobs hit hardest by Covid are often held by young people. As we have seen above, pre-pandemic, the proportion of school leavers at 18 progressing into an unstained destination were below average in every place except Peterborough and Fenland, with rates of 15.3% and 13.9% respectively compared with 13.3% nationally²¹. However, **the rate of NEETs (young people not in education, employment or training) across the area in 2021 is low**, at 2.5% across Cambridgeshire, and 4.3% in Peterborough, compared with 9.3% across the UK²².

Overall economic inactivity and unemployment levels have moved closer to national averages, indicating inequality and gaps in people having the experience, exposure and opportunities – from providers and employers – to lead their own learning and career development.

Place context

An area of contrasts, there are distinct differences in those needs and opportunities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The six local authority areas that make up these areas our place each have different strengths and challenges, but the global competitiveness of our area depends on the future success of all.

¹⁹ Metro Dynamics analysis of ONS claimant data (2021).

²⁰ Metro Dynamics analysis of ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) data (2020).

²¹ Metro Dynamics analysis of DfE school leaver destinations data (2019).

²² CPCA NEETs data (2021).

Figure 11. Place context: where we are now SWOT by theme and place

	Strength
	Opportunity
	Weakness
	Threat

	Peterborough	Fenland	Huntingdonshire	East Cambridgeshire	Cambridge	South Cambridgeshire
Population trends	41.1% of Peterborough's communities are deprived	20% of Fenland's communities are deprived, with 23.6% experiencing health deprivation	Low levels of deprivation but highest rise in unemployment of 56% in 2020	Low levels of deprivation but highest rise in claimants during Covid of 104% to August 2021	Very localised inequalities suggested by below average productivity levels and rises in UC claims of 103% and unemployment of 28.6%	Very localised inequalities suggested by below average productivity levels and a 132% rise in UC claims and 60.2% rise in economic inactivity
	Fastest growing population projected at 11.7% by 2040, and working age population currently growing at 1.2%	Population growth projected at 9.1% by 2040 and working age population currently growing at 0.7%	Working age population is falling by -0.3% and the population is projected to further fall to 2040 by -0.6%, suggesting future ageing	Population growth has been slight and isn't projected to grow – suggesting future ageing and a smaller future workforce	Population isn't growing overall, and working age population has shrunk by -3.4%, with a projected population fall of -2.1% by 2040	Fastest growing working age population at 2% against a projected overall fall in population to 2040 of -3.7% – suggesting net workforce growth
Pre-work learning and formal education	Low levels of high skills in the area the proportion of Peterborough's population qualified to NVQ4+ is 32.1%	Lowest levels of high skills with 27% qualified to NVQ4+ and falling, up to level 3 risen by 8.1% at the same time that level 4+ have fallen by 1.5%, post-Y11 vocational courses growing at levels 1 and 2	Higher level skills are growing with 42.1% qualified to NVQ4+	Lower than average and falling levels qualified to NVQ4+ at 38.1%, fastest growth at level 2	Highest rates of residents qualified to NVQ4+ at 60%	High and growing levels of high skills at 56.2% with NVQ4+
	Good engagement in HE with 31.6% of pupils moving from 16-18 study into HE and 6.7% of working age population currently in HE study	Poor engagement in post-18 formal education – the lowest levels of residents in HE in the area at 3.2% and lower progression at 18 into FE at 4.1%	Highest proportion of residents (at working age) in the area in HE at 8% with recent growth, and 35.6% progressing into HE at 18	Poor engagement in post-18 education with lower than average proportions of 18 year olds entering HE at 25.4%	Highest rates of progression onto university from school at 41.2%	At 20.5%, lower progression into HE suggests gaps in the right provision for some cohorts
	Poor engagement in post-18 technical education with just 8.3% of pupils moving from 16-18 study into FE	Higher than average progression at 18 onto apprenticeships at 10.7%	Poorer engagement with formal post-18 education with lower than average progression into FE at 5.4%	Highest rate of progression onto apprenticeships at 18 at 11.4%	Lowest levels of progression at 18 into FE at just 2.8% vs. 9% nationally and apprenticeships at 4.8% vs. 9.3% nationally	South Cambridgeshire is an importer of apprentices for the area, and higher than average school leavers

Employer access to talent	and 8.6% onto apprenticeships		and apprenticeships at 9.2%			progress onto apprenticeships at 10%
	Highest GVA growth at 15% and productivity growth at 7.9% in the area	Only place with shrinking GVA at -4.1%, and fastest falling productivity at -11.6%	Higher than average GVA growth at 10.5% and growing productivity at 2.9%	High levels of employment with above average earnings at £27,238, higher GVA growth at 9.4%	High levels of employment in priority growth sectors, and high level earnings of £31,673	Fast growing GVA at 13.1% and higher average annual earnings of £31,425
	Lowest earnings joint with Fenland at £23,973, and job creation has been slower than average at 8% in recent years	Lowest earnings joint with Peterborough at £23,973, and low proportion of jobs in priority sectors with 5.4% growth	Large, engaged workforce earning above average levels with resident annual earnings of £28,911, and self-employment growing	Clusters of employment in priority sectors are growing quickly at 14.3% growth in employment in priority sectors	Falls in employment levels of 3.5% and productivity levels may threaten to limit the growth opportunities of	Highest growth in employment in priority growth sectors at 29.1%
Life-wide learning and training	Opportunity to capitalise on clusters of priority sectors to increase high skilled local opportunities and to promote good work with employers in the foundational economy facing recruitment challenges	Highest levels of self-employment at 18.7% point to a strong entrepreneurial culture	Slower growth in priority sector employment at 7.5% (but still above national average at 6.6%)	Falling productivity at -6% and lower than average level of people working at occupation level 3 at 19.8%	Slowest growth in GVA at 4.6% and falling productivity at -4.8%	Falling productivity at -5.4%
	Relatively high workplace training rates at 25.4% suggest residents can access up to date work experience and skills – but may be employed with lower skills	Relatively high workplace training rates at 27.8% suggest residents are accessing up to date work experience and skills – but may be employed with lower skills	Opportunity to utilise Covid impact of digital by default to increase digital learning and upskilling	Opportunity to utilise Covid impact of digital by default to increase digital learning and upskilling in a rural area and FE cold spot	Lowest levels of in work training – with 11.9% of people reporting having had in work training in the last 13 weeks – threat to leaving behind lower skilled workers	Low levels of in work training – with 13.3% of people reporting having had in work training in the last 13 weeks – threat of leaving behind lower skilled workers
Support into and between work	Higher rate of people working at occupational level 1 (17%) than nationally (9.2%) and lower at level 4	Higher rate of people working at occupational level 1 (18.3%) than nationally (9.2%) and lower at levels 3 and 4	Higher rate of people working at occupational level 4 (37.5%) than nationally (31%) and lower at levels 3 and 1	Lower rate of people working at all occupational levels than nationally	Higher rate of people working at occupational level 4 (53.8%) than nationally (31%) and lower at levels 3 and 2	Higher rate of people working at occupational level 4 (46.2%) than nationally (31%) and lower at levels 3, 2 and 1
	High levels of Universal Credit claimants at 7.2%, lower average earnings, and a rise in self-employment of 12% suggests precarity in work in Peterborough	National average levels of Universal Credit claimants at 5.1%, lower average earnings at £23,972, and a rise in self-employment of nearly 40% suggests precarity in work and other barriers	Higher proportion of people are qualified up to NVQ level 2 than level 3 at 18.9% and 17.6% respectively, threatening residents benefiting from future job opportunities	Highest growth in people qualified up to NVQ Level 2 at 6.5% - while falling elsewhere – and the proportion at this level is 25.1% vs. 15.5% nationally and higher than those qualified to level 3 at 19.2%	Rise in unemployment of 28.6% and rise in UC claimants during the pandemic of 103% shows there are pockets in Cambridge where employment support is needed	High growth of 60.2% in economic inactivity levels and falling productivity may threaten to limit immediate growth opportunities of priority sectors and expanding the benefit among residents
	Higher proportion of people are qualified up to NVQ level 2 than level 3 at	Rural geography and lower physical connectivity is a barrier for people travelling				

	21.1% and 17.8% respectively, threatening residents benefiting from growth	and accessing online learning and work, worsened by flooding risk				
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Figure 12. Place context: major trends and drivers – impact by place

	Strength
	Opportunity
	Weakness
	Threat

	Peterborough	Fenland	Huntingdonshire	East Cambridgeshire	Cambridge	South Cambridgeshire
Covid-19	Covid has exacerbated long term trends in deprivation and low wages in Peterborough – with 88% rise in UC claimants to the highest rate at 7.2%	Covid has exacerbated long term trends in unemployment and deprivation in Fenland – with 83% rise in UC claimants	High rise in UC claimants of 98% during Covid	High rise in UC claimants of 104% during Covid	High rise in UC claimants of 103% during Covid	High rise in UC claimants of 135% during Covid
	High levels of UC claimants may rise with the end of the furlough scheme – despite lower than national furlough levels	UC claimants may rise with the end of the furlough scheme – despite lower than national furlough levels				
Brexit	Covid has impacted global supply chains and disrupted normal distribution and demand patterns – particularly affecting manufacturing	Covid has disrupted education and accelerated digitisation of training – increasing difficulty of access for people and places with digital barriers	Covid has disrupted education and accelerated digitisation of training – increasing barriers in rural areas	Covid has disrupted education and accelerated digitisation of training – increasing barriers in an FE/HE cold spot	Covid has disrupted education and accelerated digitisation of training - increasing inequalities	Covid has disrupted education and accelerated digitisation of training - increasing inequalities
	Supply chains and labour shortages affecting range of industries including manufacturing	Agriculture and food supply chains will continue to be impacted by labour shortages from Brexit over the short term	Agriculture and food, manufacturing supply chains will continue to be impacted by labour shortages from Brexit over the short term	Supply chains and labour shortages affecting range of industries	Hospitality and leisure will continue to be impacted by labour shortages from Brexit over the short term	Supply chains and labour shortages affecting range of industries

Net zero	Transition to net zero will impact manufacturing and supply chains – impacting the jobs and skills employers need	Transition to net zero will impact agriculture and supply chains – impacting the jobs and skills employers need	Transition to net zero will impact agriculture and manufacturing supply chains – impacting the jobs and skills employers need	Transition to net zero will impact supply chains and a range of industries – impacting the jobs and skills employers need		
	Transition to net zero will create new jobs, occupations and new opportunities for those who can access support for new skills					
Infrastructure	Stronger physical connectivity and access to employment and learning	Residents risk being further left behind in growth and upskilling opportunities through weaker digital and transport connectivity to training and jobs	Railway links and employment and learning hubs that could grow	Residents risk being further left behind in growth and upskilling opportunities through weaker digital and transport connectivity to training	Stronger physical connectivity and access to employment and learning	Stronger physical connectivity and access to employment and learning
Education estate and access	Two colleges – City College Peterborough and Peterborough College – operating over same geography and serving students across the region	College of West Anglia campus in Wisbech, but rural access barriers to FE and HE – longer travel times to learning	Cambridge Regional College campus in Huntingdon – serving students across the region along with two Peterborough colleges	FE provision cold spot – lack of physical facilities	Cambridge Regional College based here – serving students across the region. Two Sixth-Form Colleges along with COWA Milton Campus.	South Cambridgeshire is a net importer of apprentices from other districts
	ARU Peterborough being established	Fenland is a net exporter of apprentices to other districts (Peterborough)	Huntingdonshire is a net exporter of apprentices to other districts (mostly South Cambridgeshire)	East Cambridgeshire is a net exporter of apprentices to other districts (mostly South Cambridgeshire)	University of Cambridge	Largest proportion of AEB learners with prior education at level 3 and above
	Peterborough is a net importer of apprentices from other districts	AEB learners more likely to be aged 19-23 than average for CPCA, and with previous education at level 2 or below	Second highest number of AEB enrolments in 2019/20 at 1,798, but significantly lower than Peterborough	East Cambridgeshire has the lowest AEB enrolment in the area, with 783 in 2019/20	Cambridge is a net importer of apprentices from other districts	
	Almost half of all AEB enrolments in 2019/20 were in Peterborough, at 6,720					
Environmental factors	With local jobs being transformed by automation; top occupations currently in retail, care and administration; and the labour market experiences new shortages from Brexit, young people may not have the role models in their communities as exposure for future opportunities	With local jobs being transformed by automation and the labour market experiences new shortages from Brexit, young people may not have the role models in their communities as exposure for future opportunities	With local jobs being transformed by automation; top occupations currently in retail, care and administration; and the labour market experiences new shortages from Brexit, young people may not have the role models in their communities as exposure for future opportunities	With local jobs being transformed by automation; top occupations currently in retail, care and administration; and the labour market experiences new shortages from Brexit, young people may not have the role models in their communities as exposure for future opportunities	Access to HE, FE and priority sector employers should mean good access for young people to experience and role models	Access to HE, FE and priority sector employers should mean good access for young people to experience and role models

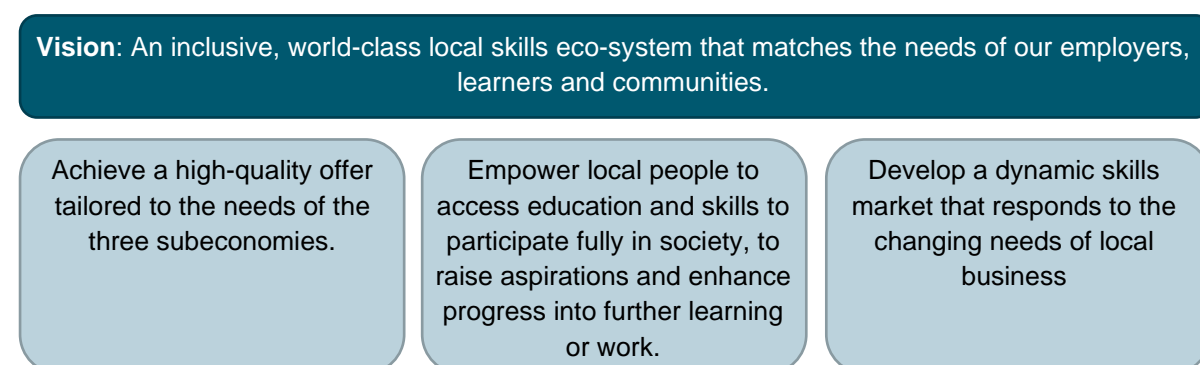
Automation and Industry 4.0		Given low levels of progression into HE and high vocational course uptake post-16, focus on progression to level 4+ qualifications should focus on in work training and progression				
	Transformation in Industry 4.0 through automation and digitisation will continue to change how manufacturing and engineering operates and the skills employees need	Transformation in automation and digitisation will continue to change how agriculture operates and uses technology, and the skills employees need	Transformation in automation and digitisation will continue to change how agriculture and manufacturing operates and uses technology, and the skills employees need	Transformation in automation and digitisation will continue to change a range of industries and the skills employees need	Transformation in Industry 4.0 through automation and digitisation will continue to change how life sciences and manufacturing and engineering operates and the skills employees need	Transformation in automation and digitisation will continue to change a range of industries and the skills employees need
	39% of current employment in advanced manufacturing and materials is exposed to automation	Agritech is the priority sector most exposed to automation at 49% of current employment, and employment in agritech is less transferable to other priorities sectors than others	Agritech is the priority sector most exposed to automation at 49% of current employment, and employment in agritech is less transferable to other priorities sectors than others		31% of current life sciences employment is predicted to be exposed to automation	
	33% of current employment in digital and IT is exposed to automation				39% of current employment in advanced manufacturing and materials is exposed to automation	
					33% of current employment in digital and IT is exposed to automation	

3 Where we want to be

Strategic context

CPCA's 2019 Skills Strategy's overarching vision was to grow a successful, globally competitive economy grounded in high-skilled, better paid jobs, increased productivity and strong sustainable communities.

Figure 13. CPCA 2019 Skills Strategy in summary



This was underpinned by the findings of our 2018 Independent Economic Review (CPIER) and aligned with the aims of our 2019 Local Industry Strategy (LIS).

The Local Industrial Strategy sets out how Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will maximise the economy's strengths and remove barriers that remain to ensure the economy is fit for tomorrow's world. It supports the aims of the National Industrial Strategy by boosting productivity in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

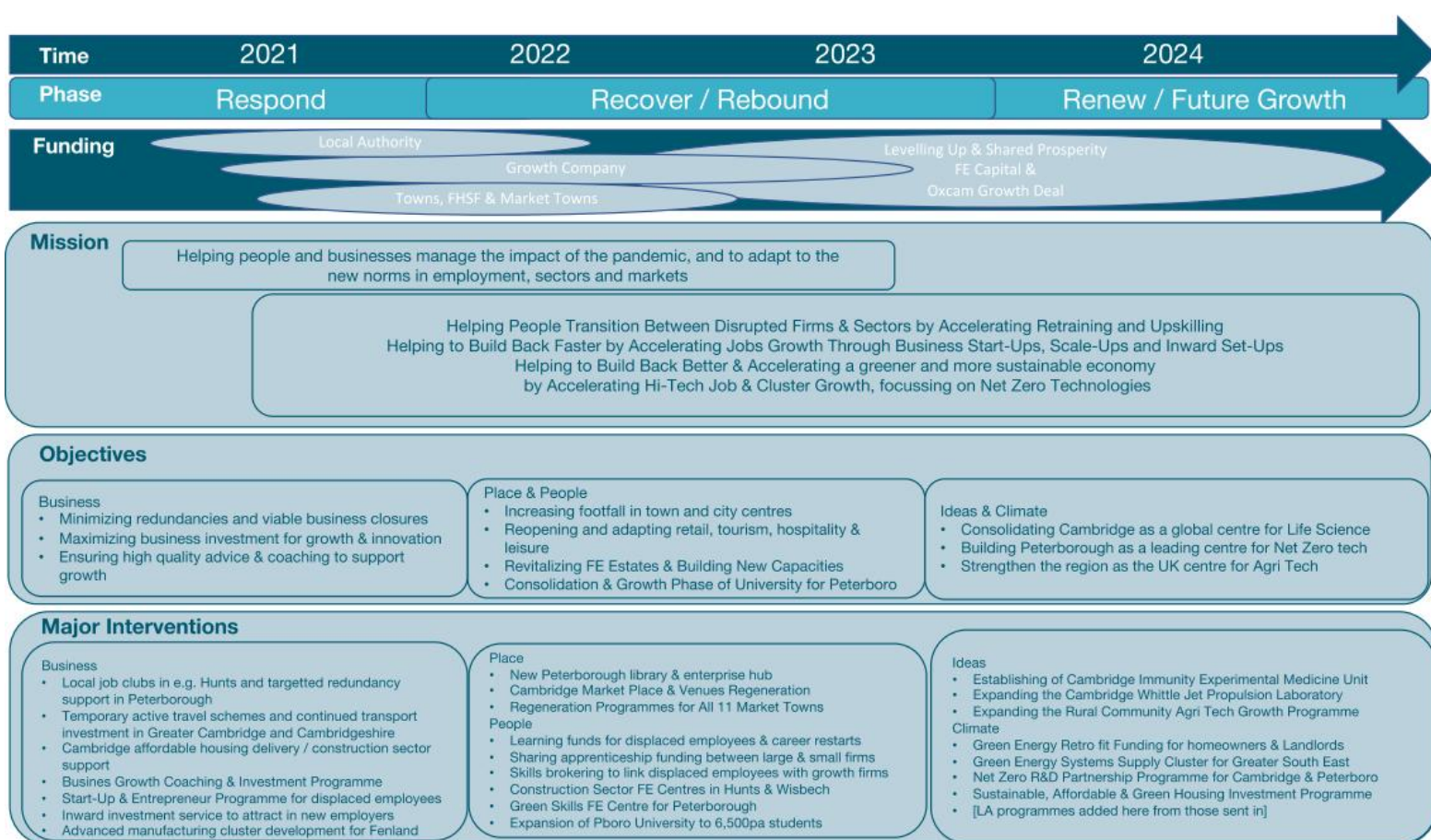
Figure 14. CPCA 2019 Local Industrial Strategy in summary

People	Ideas	Business	Infrastructure	Place
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	Ensuring that the area's economic base grows by harnessing innovation, enhancing Cambridge's position nationally and globally, especially around life science, AI and data technologies,	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.	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.	Tailoring interventions to meet the needs of our cities and districts at local level.

now and in the future.	whilst bringing innovation-based growth to Peterborough and the Fens too.			
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Earlier this year, our Local Economic Recovery Strategy (LERS) set out how we will accelerate the recovery, rebound and renewal of our economy, helping people effected and achieving our ambition to double GVA by 2042 in a digitally enabled, greener, healthier and more inclusive way.

Figure 15. CPCA Local Economy Recovery Strategy in summary (March 2021)



The CPIER and the LIS identified the sectoral strengths and specialisms of CPCA as Life Sciences; Agri-Tech; Digital; and Advanced Manufacturing. To build on these strengths individual plans for each priority sector have been developed and these sectors remain priorities for long-term, innovation-based growth in the region. However, these sectors account for just 20% of employment overall. Identified in the LERS were a set of recovery priority sectors, requiring focus as significant employers and suffering severe disruption from the pandemic: retail, hospitality and leisure, construction, transport, education, manufacturing, health and care.

Few would question the ongoing relevance of the mission at the core of *Developing Talent* to the LERS and many good things have been achieved through the actions flowing from it. However, there is also still work to do.

Figure 16. Progress on 2019 skills strategy actions

2019 Strategy action	Progress
Opportunity Area to improve education in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire	Achieving – received additional year of funding from DfE – we want to make more progress on skills and market towns
Skills brokerage service and strong early engagement between businesses and providers including in careers advice with targeted support on STEM, T Levels, employer outreach, work readiness and careers pilots	Achieving – skills brokerage service launched in February 2021 as part of Growth Works
Apprenticeship levy pooling to improve access for SMEs, and provide placements through sector academy apprenticeship hubs across the area	Achieving – apprenticeship levy pooling mechanism in place, CPCA Skills, Training, Apprenticeship and Recruitment Hub in place
Connect local businesses in key sectors to the Digital Talent Portal for greater visibility of talent for employers and attracting young people to jobs through social media	Achieving – digital talent portal launched as part of Growth Works
Health and care sector work academy – 2,100 new learners	In progress – lower levels of uptake so far than expected – the project has been reprofiled with DWP to run to 2023
University for Peterborough that raises HE participation and aspiration, and delivers technical courses aligned to local employers’ needs and jobs of the future	In progress – ARU Peterborough in development and on track to open in 2022, but the case for success not yet proven
Work and Health Programme to support progression of adults into work who have become disconnected from the labour market	Achieving – DWP Restart contract with Reed replaced Work and Health Programme to operate over next 3 years
Achieve a skills base that matches business needs through funding and programmes that CPCA has responsibility for – map AEB provision and improve provision through transition pilots and sector focused retraining schemes	In progress – sector retraining schemes launched in 2020, AEB progressing – fewer learners in 2020 than 2019 due to Covid

2019 Strategy action	Progress
Lobby government for further devolution opportunities and to shape skills reforms to make an outcomes based and business led skills system	<i>In progress</i> – further lobbying on further devolution and local control of funding for skills, including National Careers Service and Careers and Enterprise Company activity
Sector pilots and skills hubs to overcome rurality with transport links	<i>In progress</i> – Chatteris hub in development

As we move through the *Respond* phase of the LERS and further into *Recovery*, it is important to reflect the changing skills needs and challenges in the current and anticipated future economic context and a shifting policy context.

National policies and strategies

A number of Government policies and strategies are directly relevant to our strategic priorities and will shape the future of funding and devolution through which we will deliver.

HMT's Plan for Jobs (2020) brought together labour market support programmes delivered through DWP and DfE – Kickstart, Restart, apprenticeship and traineeship incentives, Lifetime Skills Guarantee. This focuses on supporting jobs with direct help for individuals to find work and upskill, protecting jobs in those sectors hit hardest by the pandemic, and creating jobs and training opportunities.

HMT's Plan for Growth (March 2021) sets out the vision for building back better through pillars of infrastructure, skills and innovation as key to the UK's recovery from Covid-19. The government wishes to improve productivity and level-up the UK whilst increasing high-quality skills provision and training, and transforming FE. This will in part catalyse the development of creative ideas and technologies that will shape the UK's future high-growth.

The connected Innovation Strategy (September 2021) and Net Zero Strategy (October 2021), aim at boosting Britain's role as a including proposals to make the UK a Scientific Superpower and including policies to boost renewable energy production and heating, power and transport innovation.

DfE's Skills for Jobs White Paper set out current legislative reforms in technical education that is currently being passed into legislation through the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill. Focusing on skills gaps at higher technical levels that risk the UK falling behind its global competitors, reform aims to transform the skills system to put employers at the heart of the system and to make training a lifelong and flexible option for all.

A Levelling Up and Devolution White Paper is anticipated from Government, setting out its approach to developing growth in places and further plans for devolved powers and

funding in England. This is against the backdrop of expected decisions on future growth and skills funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Vision and priorities

Building on ambition for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough set out in the 2019 skills strategy, our vision is for:

A successful, globally competitive economy offering high-skilled, well-paid, good quality jobs, delivering increased productivity and prosperity to support strong, sustainable and healthy communities and enabled by an inclusive, world-class local skills system that matches the needs of our employers, learners and communities.

This means for our people, employers, providers and place leaders:

<p>People experience fulfilment and good physical and mental health with productive, quality working lives. They drive their own learning and career journeys and feel confident to enter and re-enter the labour market over the course of their lives. They can access support and learning to meet their ambitions when and how they need.</p>	<p>Employers are providing good quality jobs; have the skills they need in their staff and can recruit the right person for the right job. They understand their skills needs and their inputs shape an agile, responsive skills system that delivers a regional pipeline of talent, matched to job opportunities to support strong businesses and enable business growth.</p>
<p>Providers work collaboratively across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in an integrated education and skills system to deliver learning, qualifications, careers education and support to enable people to enter the labour market in the ways that suit individual's needs and ambitions.</p>	<p>Place leaders secure outcomes for the whole place, convening and supporting collaboration between employers and the integrated skills system, as well as linking into other local services for people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to lead healthy lives and fulfilling careers.</p>

Based on the evidence, we have defined four new themes on which to focus our strategy. These reflect four areas where residents and employers can benefit most from an ambitious skills system, and through which the area grows a strong and inclusive labour market. We will hold ourselves and partners to account to the below vision statements with clear set of progress indicators and measures.

Figure 17. Core themes for employment and skills

<p>Pre-work learning and formal education</p> <p>People can access learning and experiences during formal education that provide a strong</p>	<p>Employer access to talent</p> <p>Employers both drive and consume a dynamic market of skills provision, which</p>	<p>Life-wide learning and training</p> <p>People are aware of their learning needs and opportunities and able to access provision</p>	<p>Support into and between work</p> <p>Coordinated support is available for those who need additional</p>
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foundation for labour market entry and future working lives.	shapes the current and future workforce.	that enables their development.	assistance to transition into or between work.
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Whilst the detail of the action required to ensure these elements are in place will evolve as time passes and the context changes, these themes should remain stable, setting the direction *and* providing a reference point to maintain course.

For each of these themes we have identified a set of long-term outcomes towards which we need to work in order that learners and employers are able to experience the skills system in this way.

Figure 18. Long-term outcomes

<p>Pre-work learning and formal education</p> <p>People can access learning and experiences during formal education that provide a strong foundation for labour market entry and future working lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People understand how their ambitions can be realised through learning and training and are connected to opportunities, experiences and role models. • Providers have increased numbers of students taking courses and apprenticeships aligned both to local job opportunities and their interests and ambitions. • Providers are outcomes driven, progressing learners into and between jobs and careers with the skills – from basic employability to soft skills, to technical capabilities – that employers need.
<p>Employer access to talent</p> <p>Employers both drive and consume a dynamic market of skills provision, which shapes the current and future workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers can access a pipeline of skilled people seeking to move into the workforce and the right skills development training for their current staff. • Employers can easily access – physically and digitally - and navigate support to adapt their workforce planning in response to structural changes in the economy. • Employers can and do articulate their skills needs both in terms of long-term workforce planning/strategy (skills for which they have consistent/repeating demand over time) and short-term workforce demand (skills which for which they have an immediate, unmet need). • Employers have well defined and designed jobs, for which the skills requirements and development prospects are clear to staff and candidates. • Providers collectively plan, design and deliver learning and training provision responding to employers' long-term needs and can respond with agility to short-term demand.

Life-wide learning and training People are aware of their learning needs and opportunities and able to access provision that enables their development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are drivers of their own learning and work journey, making informed decisions about the selection of training, development and work activities that are right for them. • People are equipped with the soft and technical skills to respond to opportunities in the labour market and see clear pathways into and between a variety of occupations and careers. • People can access - physically and digitally – and navigate an agile and responsive skills system to upskill and reskill throughout their careers. • Providers are outcomes driven, progressing learners into and between jobs and careers with the skills – from basic employability to soft skills, to technical capabilities – that employers need.
Support into and between work Coordinated support is available for those who need additional assistance to transition into or between work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People can access support into education and employment how and when they need it, at any point in their lives and whatever their starting point. • Place leaders collectively reduce barriers – physical, digital and emotional (+ others? health) – for people to access learning, training and employment.

These outcomes are reflected in vision statements for the key actors in the system (people, employer, providers and place leader). These statements may read as common sense, but our system is not yet delivering these experiences for people, employers, providers and place leaders everywhere.

There is more we can do, together, so that people are universally drivers of their own learning and careers journeys and can access the support they need, employers can get the skills they need for their staff, providers work collaboratively across our area, and the Combined Authority and place leaders empower, enable and convene. For each theme these are set out below.

Our vision for the skills system will not be achieved overnight. Our **starting point is ensuring that short-term strategic priorities** are approached as a step in the right direction towards longer-term change. We will monitor progress on our priorities through a set of measures.

Figure 19. Short-term priorities

	Priorities	Progress measures
Pre-work learning and formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving careers education, specifically around STEM and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising rates of people qualified to NVQ Level 4+ above

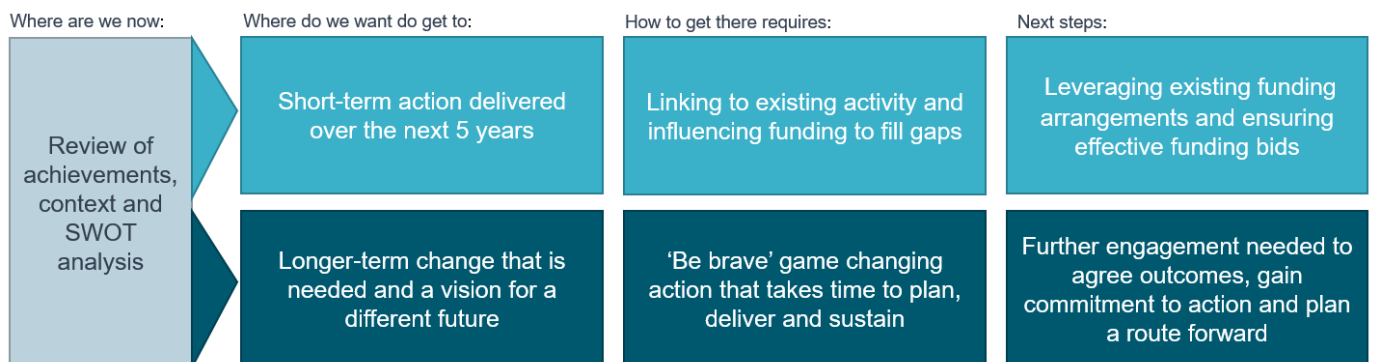
<p>People can access learning and experiences during formal education that provide a strong foundation for labour market entry and future working lives.</p>	<p>green skills, as well as information, advice and guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening education access and participation to make education more inclusive and the student body (and future workforce) more diverse • Enhancing exposure to role models, work experience, and understanding of various training routes into sectors and occupations • Capital investment to improve teaching facilities and kit, particularly at FE 	<p>national levels (especially in Peterborough, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing vocational courses age 16-18 studied at Level 3 (especially in Fenland) • Increasing progression rates post-18 into HE (especially in Peterborough, Fenland, East Cambridgeshire), FE (especially in Fenland, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridge), and apprenticeships (especially in Cambridge, Peterborough), above national levels for the whole area
<p>Employer access to talent</p> <p>Employers both drive and consume a dynamic market of skills provision, which shapes the current and future workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting covid recovery, growth and net-zero transition by developing priority skills and responding to acute issues • Increasing employers' engagement and influence on education and training • Embedding modern work practices and conditions and improving job quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing GVA growth (especially in Fenland and Cambridge), and overall above national levels • Increasing productivity (especially in Fenland, East Cambridgeshire, South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge), and overall above national levels of growth • Increasing levels of employment especially in Fenland and Huntingdonshire • Continued growing employment in priority sectors in growth areas • Increasing earnings in Fenland and Peterborough
<p>Life-wide learning and training</p> <p>People are aware of their learning needs and opportunities and able to access provision that</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age • Providing support to upskill and reskill in response to economic restructuring (e.g. following 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing numbers of workers at level 1 and increasing at level 3 (especially in Peterborough and Fenland)

<p>enables their development.</p>	<p>covid-19, Brexit, further digitisation, as net-zero transition intensifies)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing work-based learning, particularly apprenticeships, and introducing more accessible formats (e.g. short courses/online/blended learning). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing rates of in work training (provided flexibility at various levels)
<p>Support into and between work</p> <p>Coordinated support is available for those who need additional assistance to transition into or between work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting unemployed and NEETs into training and employment Providing support for disadvantaged groups to access the labour market Targeting support for Covid-19 recovery and transitions for displaced workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing UC and JSA claimant levels Falling levels of economic inactivity Reducing NEET numbers

4 How we will get there

As noted in the introduction to this document, a challenge put to us by stakeholders in the early stages of the development process was to balance short-term and long-term strategic priorities; setting out imperatives to act on existing and pressing priorities and a vision for change, particularly where issues identified were symptoms of deeper causes which were likely to require sustained, incremental action over a longer period of time.

Figure 20. Balancing short and long-term perspectives



It is our aim to set strategic plans for a maximum of five years. This will see detailed action plans agreed, addressing a sub-set of core short-term priorities and objectives that will move forward the process of delivering the long-term outcomes. We will monitor progress on these and then take stock and calibrate prior to setting out a subsequent strategic plan.

We also need to start preparing the ground now for some of the bigger change projects that our outcomes call for. Some of these can be contributed to by shorter-term projects, but they will need further scoping and iterative development to ensure all partners and stakeholders are brought along the change journey.

We will work with partners across the area to agree the detail of the strategic action plans and their respective roles and responsibilities in delivery. As such, at this point in time this document provides a starting point for action, reflecting:

- **Things already in motion** - activities/interventions which are funded, approved and are either already being delivered or which will be delivered over the next five years.
- **Things needed in the future** - activities/interventions which are needed to underpin longer term and future development/growth, for which additional exploration, investment and potentially system change will be required.

Areas where we will pursue action now and in the first five years will focus on key areas:

- **Developing growth in jobs** – focused on business, GVA, productivity and jobs growth at least at level 3 in Peterborough and Fenland, and at level 4+ focusing on priority sectors across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- **Supporting people into growing, changing and new jobs** – throughout people's lives – from creating strong pathways post-18 to utilising Life Long Skills Guarantee and entitlements – with higher level skills that employers need. In line with Government's Skills White Paper, this means including employers in shaping the system.
- **Co-designing with stakeholders and place leaders an agile skills system** for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, with a regional curriculum, and enabling support through our Transport Improvement Plan and infrastructure and digital investment.

Actions needed in the future can be achieved through a number of mechanisms:

- Making use of existing structures in order to deliver new projects/programmes, including directing our devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB), expanding the CPCA Growth Works programme, and delivering ongoing programmes with partners such as Sector Based Work Academies and Restart. This may also include forming new sector groups, or modifying place based structures that sprang up in response to Covid.
- Bidding into known upcoming funding opportunities and making the case for devolved control to the Combined Authority – importantly the Levelling Up Fund (LUF), UKSPF, and the National Careers Service, as well as integrating new activity into projects currently being developed, such as ARU Peterborough.
- Initiating longer-term change projects for the skills system (below) – such as a regional curriculum, as well as investment opportunities, a green skills action plan,

The Combined Authority role in delivering this strategy is as a place leader with partners, and convener of skills provision across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We will continue to expand our delivery and direction of adult skills programmes, support partners to overcome barriers and improve place outcomes for our residents, and make the case for expanded devolution of economic growth funding and flexibilities.

We also lead the way on three linked longer-term change projects that we believe are critical to ensuring our skills system can truly meet the needs of our local communities:

1. **A regional curriculum, with learning and training aligned to local job opportunities and careers** – using robust data and information from employers to inform the experiences, skills development and qualifications that school, college and university students need for local job opportunities and careers.
2. **A dual-track system, anticipating long-term needs and responding with agility in the short-term** – with providers who can *both* lead on future workforce development to provide a pipeline of talent and respond to short term skills needs from industry.

3. **Co-ordinated place-based action areas, to engage all stakeholders in addressing multiple/complex issues** – convening place leaders, providers, schools and partners to focus on improving skill and qualification levels and getting people into good jobs and to achieve higher earnings.

These three projects will ensure **effective** provision is delivered using an **agile** approach, in a way suited to the nuances of **our places**.

In order to deliver on our short-term priorities, we will **set strategic delivery plans with five-year terms**. This will form part of our wider Business and Skills Strategy. We will develop and agree with partners detailed action plans, addressing short-term priorities and objectives that will move forward the process of delivering the long-term vision. We will monitor progress on these and then take stock and calibrate prior to setting out a subsequent strategic plan.

Figure 1. Initial potential actions

Need to act to ensure...	Short-term objectives	Actions (short/near term)
Access to learning and experiences during formal education that provide a strong foundation for labour market entry and future working lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving careers education, specifically around STEM and green skills, information, advice and guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver Growth Works Talent Pledge – linking employers to schools and colleges and enterprise advisers, and providing careers advice CRF bid – The Place at Peterborough City College – central city-centre hub for residents to access training and employment support integrated with library and cultural offer All Age Careers Advice – bid for National Careers Service contract plus bid + UKSPF funding for careers support from primary age to late career and mentoring programme + Qdos Manor Careers Hubs Expand employers engaging with schools and colleges in T Level placements Social value contracts - require businesses receiving local funding to do outreach in schools Introduce strategic focus on priority occupations as well as sectors Develop a marketing campaign for careers in the region, modelled on a tourism ‘why visit’ approach
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widening education access and participation to make education more inclusive and the student body (and future workforce) more diverse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue establishment and development of ARU Peterborough, plus ARU Peterborough Phase 4 – Wisbech feeder – through LUF bid Ely and Peterborough T Levels – capacity building for T Level provision in Peterborough and wider vocational post-16 provision in Ely – space to also identify other cold spots (perhaps St Neots) – through UKSPF bid
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital investment to improve teaching facilities and kit, particularly at FE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue establishment and development of ARU Peterborough, plus ARU Peterborough, esp Phase 4 – Wisbech feeder – through LUF bid

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review FE estate quality and access – including Peterborough – review need (possible IoT model/technical centres of excellence) and how ARU Peterborough can offer a hub and spoke model to deliver on needs – through UKSPF bid • Develop a facilities and equipment sharing scheme across providers
Employers both drive and consume a dynamic market of skills provision, which shapes the current and future workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting recovery, growth and net-zero transition by developing priority skills and responding to acute issues • Increasing employers' engagement and influence on education and training • Embedding modern work practices and conditions and improving job quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue delivery of Growth Works Skills Brokerage and Digital Talent Platform, using Growth Works as a local engagement model for picking up what businesses say they need • Rapid response skill gap mapping for Recovery/Brexit • Sector/occupation foresight for Net Zero transition (task and finish, linked to Skills Committee/Business Board/ESB) and development of specific Green Jobs action plan • Continue establishment and development of ARU Peterborough, plus ARU Peterborough Phases 3- 6. • Direct AEB funding to priority skills needs, use AEB Innovation Fund to pilot new forms of training provision • Build on success Form the Model across the area, to support growing skills for the future particularly in digital and advanced manufacturing • Deliver through LGF funding from November 2021 Growth Works years 2 and 3 – Inward Investment Capacity Building and Network of Networks • CRF bid submitted – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Region of Learning – job and talent matching • Add Work and Health Programme to Growth Works model. • Energy Hub Supply Chain – through BEIS funding bid

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build apprenticeship provision at level 2 upwards with pathways into degree apprenticeships • Five year delivery plans for providers linked to identified priority
<p>People are aware of their learning needs and opportunities and able to access provision that enables their development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving careers information, advice and guidance at any age • Providing support to upskill and reskill in response to economic restructuring (e.g. following covid-19, brexit, further digitisation, as net-zero transition intensifies) • Increasing work based learning, particularly apprenticeships, and introducing more accessible formats (E.g. short courses/ online/blended learning). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver Growth Works careers advice and support into learning • Continue delivery of Apprenticeship Levy Pooling, apprenticeship delivery through local development projects, apprenticeship matching through Growth Works • Continue delivery of Digital Skills Bootcamps - build bootcamp model, review scope of existing national skills bootcamps and set up a local designed bootcamp model – e.g. annual bootcamps fund at CPCA level that businesses can bid for with match funding – through UKSPF and National Skills Fund • CRF bid submitted – Start and Grow – Peterborough, Fenland and Huntingdonshire – pre-start up and micro business enterprise skills support for individuals • CRF bid submitted – Fenland Sustainable Futures – investment in Metalworks engineering and advanced manufacturing skills development, upskilling and reskilling • CRF bid submitted – Turning Point – Peterborough and Fenland – reskilling and upskilling support through training needs analysis, funded internships and funded short courses for work re-entry and digital/management skills • Growth Works extension years 4 and 5 through UKSPF bid • All Age Careers Advice – bid for UKSPF funding for careers support from primary age to late career – with a model for individual skills development plans • Academies and incubators – linked to market towns programme – physical space on high streets for skills development and careers advice – through UKSPF bid • Review what is currently being delivered by Growth Works in business management and leadership – perhaps more on emphasising job design and creation, consider what is

		<p>currently thought of as business support as skills training for small business owners and managers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use learnings from Midlife MOT project run by DWP to support people later in their careers to make transitions • Individual skills development plans
<p>Coordinated support is available for those who need additional assistance to transition into or between work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing support for disadvantaged groups to access the labour market • Reducing levels of longer term unemployment and NEETs • Targeted support for Covid-19 recovery and transitions for displaced workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver local ESF projects up to 2023 focused on young people, NEETs, ex-offenders, and those furthest from the labour market. • Deliver national Covid support programmes funded by DWP in a way that works for local communities: extended pilot of health and care sector work academy with DWP, delivery of Kickstart scheme for young people claiming UC until December 2021 through DWP and employers, Restart scheme for people claiming UC and long term unemployed with Reed in Partnership (started in July 2021). • Review OA/recovery operational structures that have allowed for effective combined action • Build on AEB Innovation Fund to deliver support for people to enter the workforce e.g. Care leavers, Support for young adults with SEND and Veterans programmes. • CRF bid submitted – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Region of Learning – job matching support for young people at risk of becoming NEET • CRF bid submitted – Cambridgeshire ACRE – Unleashing Fenland’s Potential – community based employment support with VCSE – • CRF bid submitted – Fenland Sustainable Futures – digital skills for those with barriers to employment, ESOL provision, support for NEETs



Metro — Dynamics