



Skills & Employment Committee – Draft Minutes

Monday 17 June 2024

Venue:	CPCA Office, Pathfinder House, Huntingdon PE29 3TN	
Time:	11.00 to 13.00	
Present:	Councillor Lucy Nethsingha Councillor James Lay Councillor Eileen Wilson Councillor Sam Carling Councillor Sam Wakeford Councillor Katy Cole Charlotte Horobin Katy Davies	Chair and Member for Cambridgeshire County Council East Cambridgeshire District Council South Cambridgeshire District Council Cambridge City Council Huntingdonshire District Council Peterborough City Council Business Board Co-Opted Member Business Board Co-Opted Member
Apologies	Councillor Ian Benney Mayor Dr Nik Johnson	Fenland District Council CPCA Mayor

Minutes:

1 Announcements and Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Cllr Katy Cole from Peterborough City Council and Katy Davies, Business Board Representative as the newest members of the Committee.
- 1.2 The Chair advised the Committee that this would be Melissa Gresswell's, (Project Manager: Skills Bootcamps and Special Projects) last meeting and thanked her for her valuable contribution to the work of the Committee.
- 1.3 Members were reminded that any political comments should be avoided during the meeting due to the restrictions of the pre-election period.
- 1.4 Apologies were received from Councillor Benney and the Mayor.

2 Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 No declarations of interest were made.

3. Election of Vice- Chair

- 3.1 RESOLVED:
On being proposed by Cllr Nethsingha and seconded by Cllr Wilson, Cllr Sam Wakeford was unanimously appointed as Vice-Chair for the Committee.

4 Minutes of previous meeting and action log

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting on 4 March 2024 were approved as an accurate record.
- 4.2 The Action Log was noted

5 Public Questions

- 5.1 No Public Questions had been submitted.

<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p>	<p>Combined Authority Forward Plan</p> <p>There were no comments from the Committee.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED:</u></p> <p>A That the Combined Authority Forward Plan be noted.</p>
<p>7</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p> <p>7.3</p> <p>7.4</p>	<p>Wider Outcomes Framework`</p> <p>The Committee received a presentation (appended to the minutes) from Helen Plant, Skills Consultant on developing a framework to evidence the outcomes of learning funded through the Adult Education Budget (AEB).</p> <p>During discussion the following points were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The report was part of ongoing work to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) and its focus was on moving beyond merely quantifying learners and qualifications to assessing broader impacts on health, well-being, and community engagement. b) The methodology included the latest research and best practice and highlighted that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough were at the cutting edge of developing outcome measurement frameworks. c) The report was crucial for the Combined Authority's ongoing devolution efforts, ensuring that meaningful value and impact were demonstrated. d) Three main themes had been identified within the report; purposes and priorities, current data collection approaches, and systems for measuring outcomes and impact e) Interviews had been conducted with stakeholders within and outside the Combined Authority and included direct feedback from learners themselves about their experiences and the outcomes that mattered most to them. Helen and her team would continue with further planned learner consultation events. f) Members asked about 'digital badge' initiatives and how employer recognition of these badges could enhance the broader outcomes of community learning. g) The rationale behind the GLA's selection of volunteering as a metric was discussed, highlighting its significance in both community engagement and as a stepping stone towards employment. h) It was agreed that the sub-criteria for measuring outcomes within the three broad themes would be shared with the committee for review and feedback before final implementation. i) Further feedback and insights from stakeholders, including those currently involved in Community Learning would be integrated into the developing framework. j) The Assistant Director for Skills thanked Helen for her work and also acknowledged Jaki Bradley, Head of Adult Education Skills for driving this initiative forward. k) It was anticipated that an update on this work would be ready to come to the September meeting of the Committee. <p><u>ACTIONS:</u></p> <p>1. Officers to circulate to the Committee, for review and feedback, the final criteria for measuring outcomes within the three broad themes.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u></p> <p>A The Skills and Employment Committee noted the CPCA's Wide Outcomes Framework (Phase One)</p>
<p>8</p> <p>8.1</p> <p>8.2</p> <p>8.3</p>	<p>AEB and FCFJ Commissioning and Funding Flexibilities (Academic Year 2024-25)</p> <p>The Committee received a report from the Head of Adult Education Budget which set out the CPCA's approach to Adult Education Budget (AEB) and Free Courses for Jobs (FCFJ) Commissioning for 2024-25. The Interim Director for Skills and the Skills Partnership Manager introduced the report.</p> <p>During discussion the following points were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Commissioning approach was focussed on priority sectors Life Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing, Digital, Agri-Tech, Green Sectors and also the enabling sectors of Construction, Health and Social Care, Engineering, Transport, and Logistics. b) There was encouragement for providers to support in-work upskilling, cross-skilling, and reskilling.

- c) In terms of reducing the Skills Gap there was a particular focus on economically inactive individuals.
- d) An 'Into Employment Program' with wraparound support for employability and career guidance had been introduced, as well as ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) support for professionals.
- e) The aim was to support individuals to enable them to reach their potential.
- f) The AEB transitioned to the Adult Skills Fund in July 2023, with new national funding rules. Most national rules would be adopted, with a few exceptions where regional flexibilities would be applied.
- g) Under Devolution rules, the CPCA could adjust funding rules for the Adult Education Budget (AEB) in line with regional priorities, deviating from national rules.
- h) Applicable flexibilities from the previous year would be maintained
- i) There would be increased funding for training providers in areas with higher disadvantage (a disadvantage uplift) and a new tiered system would ensure fair support across all districts.
- j) Full funding for Maths and English qualifications would be maintained.
- k) The CPCA had already used its regional flexibility to allow individuals to undertake a second Level 3 qualification regardless of prior attainment, helping to support career changes and sector transitions, and this had now been adopted as a new national rule.
- l) The Low Wage threshold was set to increase to £30,491 to allow more individuals to access free training and qualifications.
- m) Funding rules for 2024-2025 were set by the Committee and any future rules, caused by a potential change in Government, would be reviewed annually.
- n) Consistency was required for providers to ensure effective program planning, despite potential changes in national policies.
- o) There was a focus on boosting confidence and employability for young people, as there had been extensive research showing the mental health impact of the pandemic on this age-group.
- p) There were Cambridgeshire County Council initiatives to deliver programmes closer to learners in order to minimise travel needs.
- q) Improved bus routes and fares would benefit some learners, but further solutions were necessary for those with disabilities

8.4 RESOLVED:

On being proposed by the Chair and seconded by Cllr Sam Wakeford, the Committee resolved to:

- A. Note the CPCA's approach to AEB & FCFJ Commissioning for 2024-2025
- B. Recommend that the Combined Authority Board approve CPCA's funding flexibilities for 2024-2025 (permitted under the CPCA's devolved AEB powers)

9 **Employment and Skills Board Update**

9.1 The Project Manager: Skills Bootcamps and Special Projects, and lead officer supporting the Board provided a verbal update on the meeting of the Employment and Skills Board which took place on 17 May 2024.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- a) The focus of the meeting had been on unemployment data, apprenticeships and the Good Work Charter
- b) Two new members, Lee Roberts and Katy Davies, were welcomed to the Board.
- c) DWP data showed the lowest unemployment rates in East Cambridgeshire (3%) and the highest in Peterborough (5%). There was further discussion on specific demographics in particular the 16-24 age range.
- d) The ongoing impact of COVID and mental health issues on unemployment was noted.
- e) The presentation on the pathways into Apprenticeships and Technical Education had led to a discussion on employer willingness to take on and support apprenticeships and an action to look into employer support and the conversion rates for apprenticeships.
- f) The Assistant Director for Skills provided the Board with an update on the Good Work Charter and highlighted the strong regional interest in practical tools for employers. A Task and Finish Group was being formed to further develop the Charter.
- g) The Board had acknowledged the importance of addressing regional unemployment challenges and supporting young people and disadvantaged groups in accessing training and employment opportunities.

	h) Members of the Committee endorsed the importance of supporting employers through initiatives like the Good Work Charter. They emphasized the need for employers to be knowledgeable and confident in providing support to employees with disabilities or health issues
10.	Budget Performance Report
10.1	The Finance Manager provided a financial update, highlighting the budget allocation and expenditure plans for the current fiscal year The Committee: <u>RESOLVED:</u> A To note the budget of the Skills Division for the financial year 24/25.
11.	Skills and Employment Committee Agenda Plan
11.1	The agenda plan for future meetings was briefly discussed, with adjustments noted due to political considerations, including items deferred to the meeting on July 29th, 2024. The Committee: <u>RESOLVED:</u> A To note the Skills and Employment Committee Agenda Plan
12.	Date of Next Meeting
12.1	The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 29 July 2024. ---o0o--- Acknowledging it was her last meeting before departure, the Chair ended the meeting by expressing her thanks, and those of the Committee, to Claire Paul, Interim Assistant Director for Skills, for her work with the Committee and everything she had done for the CPCA. ---o0o---

Meeting Ended: 12.25pm