

CAMBRIDGESHIRE SKILLS

To: **Communities and Partnership Committee**

Meeting Date: **17 December 2019**

From: **Pat Carrington, Assistant Director Skills and Employment**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **For the Committee to receive information relating to progress made by Cambridgeshire Skills in the delivery plan for the academic year 2019/20.**

Recommendation: **The Committee is recommended to:**

Note the progress of the newly designed service operating as Cambridgeshire Skills.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** Cambridgeshire Skills (formerly Cambridgeshire Adult Learning and Skills Service) is the County Council's adult education service, funded through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and the Department for Education (DfE). This grant funding, currently £2.3 million, is for the provision of adult learning and training that is aligned to the County Councils priorities and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Skills Strategy.
- 1.2** In 2018, the service (formerly known as Cambridgeshire Adult Learning and Skills Service) transferred to the Communities and Safety service directorate and to the responsibility of the Communities and Partnership Committee. The Committee approved a proposal for the service to be managed through a Governing Board, which would hold delegated responsibility for the service. The Committee agreed to the creation of a Shadow Governing Board to oversee the transition of the service.
- 1.3** The newly designed service is now called Cambridgeshire Skills
- 1.4** Prior to August 2019, adult education in Cambridgeshire was funded by the Department of Education. Since August 2019, the Adult Education Budget within Cambridgeshire has been devolved to the Combined Authority, who have prescribed the types, levels and geographical locations that are the priorities for delivery in this area.
- 1.5** In order to identify what would be required by the new service moving forward and running up to this transition of the new funding methodology, the Shadow Governing Board commissioned the new Assistant Director for the service to carry out a review of the service and our preparedness for these funding changes. This review became the evidence base used to design the service and inform and make recommendations to the Committee.
- 1.6** To date, the Committee has approved the outcomes of the review, the creation of a delegated authority service delivery model, detailed management and governance arrangements, and a staffing and service reorganisation. Links to the Decision Summaries of the relevant Committees can be found below:

July 2018:

<https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/840/Committee/44/Default.aspx>

December 2018:

<https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/845/Committee/44/Default.aspx>

May 2019:

<https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/850/Committee/44/Default.aspx>

August 2019:

- 1.7 Since the last report to the Committee, the focus of the service has been to ensure it is operationally ready to deliver an adult skills service that meets both the council's priorities and its contractual obligations, and this report provides an overview of progress to date.

2. PROGRESS OF DELIVERY PLAN

- 2.1 As referred to above, the transfer of the service to a new service directorate and a new Committee enabled a full service review to be undertaken. This review resulted in a full service redesign (including a significant restructure), and a repurposed and rebranded service: Cambridgeshire Skills was created from 1 August 2019.
- 2.2 Since August 2019, Cambridgeshire Skills can report many successes, including securing the £2.15m contract with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), and £146k via the Education Skills and Funding Agency. These contracts will service in excess of 4,500 enrolments with the funding targeted at those furthest away from learning and work and to upskill those with a low skill set.
- 2.3 The Adult Education provision has been designed to meet corporate priorities of the Council's Business Plan for 19/20, specifically:
- A good quality life for everyone
 - Thriving places for people to live
 - The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

The strategic theme of developing a place-based model of practice across all service is a key success factor of delivering targeted adult learning across the county.

- 2.4 In addition to meeting the needs of the Council, the CPCA has developed a local Skills Strategy and, on the basis of the priorities identified, Cambridgeshire Skills are meeting the CPCA priorities for adult skills through the:
- Development of skills to gain a job
 - Retraining / reskilling to change employment
 - Upskilling those in work, particularly those in low skill, low paid work
 - Providing education and training opportunities to those who are furthest away from learning and work
- 2.5 The CPCA has also identified the importance of targeting provision in the areas of greatest need in Cambridgeshire, namely Fenland and East Cambridgeshire. Therefore, Cambridgeshire Skills has approached this by providing a hub and spoke model with two bases in the targeted geographical areas:
- March Community Centre hub (or local college) that will service Fenland and Huntingdonshire

- Ely Library Learning Centre, which has been redeveloped to become the East Cambridgeshire hub that will also provide learning to South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City

To further enable place-based delivery across the priority areas set out above, the “spoke” delivery sites are a combination of Libraries, Community Centres, Children’s Centres, local schools, partner and employer venues and any venue conducive to delivering a positive and nurturing adult learning experience.

2.6 Our partnership with the Libraries and Communities service is a critical one with a Memorandum of Understanding to deliver from meeting rooms in priority areas across Cambridgeshire. This approach is reaping benefits to residents in Ramsey, Yaxley, Whittlesey, Arbury, Littleport and Soham where very little adult skills activity took place prior to this arrangement. Cambridgeshire Skills has also retained its presence in Cambridge Central Library on a full-time basis. Work in further Libraries will be rolled out from January 2020.

2.7 Cambridgeshire Skills has also extended the existing provision of accredited and non-accredited Basic Skills programmes – namely English, Maths, IT and English Language (ESOL). It has also developed a range of accredited and non-accredited vocational programmes to meet local needs. Examples of this include retail, customer service, volunteering, teaching assistant, etc. As a result of this:

- 90 classes are already running in 39 venues
- 70% of the classes are currently held in Fenland/Huntingdonshire and 30% East Cambs/South Cambs/Cambridge City
- This has resulted in 820 enrolments by the end of October 2019

Cambridgeshire Skills continues to signpost community “club” provision such as Makaton / internet clubs to the Voluntary Sector.

2.8 A condition of the CPCA funding is that Cambridgeshire Skills (and other funded providers) do not subcontract more than 20% of their adult education budget funding. The service has therefore planned sub-contracted provision of 20% in priority areas to 13 partner organisations where it adds value or is a niche provision.

2.9 The service has further developed links in disadvantaged communities (such as the Waterlees ward in Fenland) and links with local employers to gain a better understanding of local need and to work together with communities and businesses to meet that need. This includes exciting proposals to work with, for example, two of the main community groups in Wisbech. Although the new service is in its early days, it has already secured a contract with a major local employer to deliver programmes designed to improve English skills within their workforce. The bespoke programme has been contextualised to health and safety rules and quality control, meaning that language skills will be delivered that are tailored to meet business needs.

2.10 The academic year for 2018/19 was closed on 15 October 2019 and the service out-turned a 93% achievement rate (the % of enrolments where the learner completed the course and achieved all the set learning aims), which is a 2% improvement from the previous year.

2.11 During October 2019, the service was assessed for, and maintained, the Matrix award which is required in order to deliver Government and CPCA adult skills contracts. The Matrix Standard is a unique quality standard for organisations to assess and measure their advice and support services, supporting individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals.

2.12 In order to ensure quality resources to our students, the service is upgrading its ICT resources at March Community Centre and Ely Library. This includes essential fibre broadband in March to increase the bandwidth capacity from 3mbps to 100mbps. This will improve the adult learning experience when delivering digital skills.

The Service is also currently completing a capital funding bid to the CPCA Growth Fund which, if approved, will improve March Community Centre and create more vocational learning space.

2.13 The Head of Service has delivered a presentation to an All Members' Seminar at Fenland District Council, informing them where Cambridgeshire Skills can add value to local priorities including Wisbech 2020, the Local Plan consultation, and FDC's strategic priorities around communities and economy. In addition to this, she has attended a Chatteris Town Council meeting and gained momentum in delivering a fit-for-purpose curriculum to its residents. Meetings are taking place with the County Council's Community Champions in December 2019, followed by an All Members' Seminar to raise the profile at East Cambs District Council in January 2020.

2.14 To ensure the voices of the Local Authority and local people are represented, both the Assistant Director and Head of Service now sit on the CPCA Adult Learning Steering Group where negotiations are currently taking place to help influence and shape the future commissioning and partnership strategy to further localise skills priorities for the coming years. In addition, the Assistant Director has been interviewed as a member of the Combined Authority Skills and Employment Board and has regular meetings with the Combined Authority's Director for Business and Skills in order to support, advise and influence the direction of skills across the County.

2.15 To ensure the new service was able to progress at pace, a series of key milestones were set for the first quarter of the academic year. These are set out below, and all have been met:

- New curriculum offer in place and marketing underway – August 2019
- Recruitment of external candidates to restructured/new posts – September 2019
- New Service Centres in place for March and East Cambridgeshire – by September/October 2019
- New staffing structure in place and operational – September 2019
- All posts recruited to and staff in post by October/November 2019

2.16 Critical to the success of Cambridgeshire Skills will be strong governance. The current Shadow Governing Board is now well established and has been invaluable to the development of the repurposed Service. Shadow board members have a breadth of knowledge and experience which has been integral to the success of the new

service to date, offering strategic direction, challenge and support. The Shadow Governing Board meets monthly and in addition has undertaken workshops, with the most recent being on the new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and with the next being a review, moderation and validation of the Service's Self-Assessment Report. The Shadow Board is chaired by the Chairman of the Communities and Partnership Committee, and Committee members receive copies of the minutes from each Shadow Board meeting. Additionally, it was agreed by the Committee that they would receive two formal reports each year to provide an update on progress made – this report represents the latest of those formal reports.

- 2.17** As described above, the primary focus of the service to date has been to transition, at pace, to the new delivery model. The work to develop the delegated authority and structure of the service was therefore separated out so as not to impact on this transition process. However, it is anticipated that the service will move to its new delegated authority model from April 2020.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

The proposed objectives that the service commits to deliver and use its funding to support include:

- To advance education
- To relieve unemployment
- To relieve poverty
- To advance health
- The promotion of community participation in healthy recreation, in particular by the provision of facilities for the playing of sports and related activities

3.2 Thriving places for people to live

The plans for the development of the service, once progressed, will result in increased delivery in the targeted areas of need identified in local social and economic data. This will improve the work and life prospects of local residents.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's Children

Engaged and skilled adults will lead to improved support of children and families. Service Managers continue to work with the councils Talking Together team, local primary schools and the Child and Family Centre Managers to devise pre-entry literacy and other courses and qualifications which will support improved literacy and other skills for local families.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

The report above sets out details of the significant implications

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

No significant implications in this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

No significant implications in this category.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The work carried out by the service is often with the county's most vulnerable residents and as such makes a positive contribution to issues of equality and accessibility.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The Service operates in partnership with local community and voluntary organisations. This work will continue to be further developed and extended.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

At the heart of the Cambridgeshire Skills service is its local engagement and place-based delivery. The development of the service has resulted in the provision of two discrete learning centres, one in March and another in Ely. In addition, the service continues to work to identify accessible, local buildings from which to deliver community-based learning.

The Shadow Governing Board has both County Council and District Council representation.

4.7 Public Health Implications

Public health are a partner of the Cambridgeshire Skills service and will continue to be so in this new model.

The Public Health implications of this paper are positive. Improving access to adult training opportunities with appropriate targeting and positioning of the services will help address health and wellbeing inequalities across Cambridgeshire.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Stephen Howarth
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Gus De Silva
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Matthew Hall
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Tess Campbell

Source Documents	Location
CPCA Skills Strategy	https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/assets/Employment-and-Skills/Skills-Strategy-Final-Version-5.6.19.docx