

Cambridgeshire Skills Six Month Review

- To: Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee
- Meeting Date: 21 July 2022
- From: Assistant Director Skills, Employment and Libraries, Pat Carrington
- Electoral division(s): All
- Key decision: No
- Outcome: For the Committee to receive information relating to key progress made by Cambridgeshire Skills in the delivery plan up to and including the end of the academic year 2021 / 2022
- Cambridgeshire Skills, the County Council's adult learning and skills service, will continue to improve and enhance its offer to those furthest from learning or employment, impacting positively on our ambition to reduce poverty and social immobility.
- Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:
- a) Note the 6-month progress of Cambridgeshire Skills; and
 - b) Identify other priority areas of focus to support the Council's overall priorities.

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1. Background

- 1.1 Cambridgeshire Skills is the County Council's adult education service, funded through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and the Department for Education (DfE). The Adult Education Budget grant funding, currently £2.3 million, is for the provision of adult learning and training that is aligned to the County Council's priorities, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Skills Strategy and the Post-Covid Local Economic Recovery Strategy (LERS).
- 1.2 The service is managed on a day-to-day basis through a Governing Board, which holds delegated responsibility for the service. This is now well established and has worked well for three years.
- 1.3 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. This pertains to Cambridgeshire Skills working with those furthest away from the labour market, predominantly those who live in areas of deprivation, have multiple health and wellbeing barriers and whose current educational level of attainment is Level 2 and below.
- 1.4 During the academic year August 2021 – July 2022, the focus of the service has been to ensure it meets the outcomes set out in its business operating plan to meet both the Council's priorities and its contractual requirements.
- 1.5 This report is therefore reporting on the service's progress up to 1 June 2022.

2. Progress of the Delivery plan (Business Operating Plan)

- 2.1 During this period, Cambridgeshire Skills can report many successes. The main one being that the service was inspected for the first time since 2016 by Ofsted. The inspection, which occurred in March 2022, determined that Cambridgeshire Skills remained a Good service and found:
 - Learners gain significant benefits from their courses;
 - Learners gain the skills they need to meet the regional and national skills demand;
 - Leaders and managers continue to implement an effective curriculum that meets the needs of the different communities they serve countywide;
 - Learners continue to enjoy a positive learning experience;
 - Learners are highly motivated to succeed;

- Tutors use assessment very effectively in order to enable learners to make rapid progress; and
- Governors provide good support and challenge to senior leaders.

The service has made 2873 enrolments so far this academic year, with the majority of learners now being taught face to face again.

2.2 The Adult Education provision has been designed to meet corporate priorities of the Council's Business Plan for 21/22, specifically:

- Communities at the heart of everything we do ;
- A good quality of life for everyone;
- Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full;
- Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment; and
- Protecting and caring for those who need us.

2.3 The strategy theme of developing a place-based delivery model across all services was a key success factor of delivering targeted adult learning across the county.

In addition to meeting the needs of the Council, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) Industrial and Skills Strategy and the priorities identified, Cambridgeshire Skills is meeting the CPCA priorities for adult skills through promoting the:

- Development of skills to gain a job;
- Retraining / reskilling to change employment;
- Upskilling those in work, particularly those in low skilled, low paid work;
- Providing education and training opportunities to those who are furthest away from learning and work; and
- More recently, providing support for post-Covid social and economic recovery.

2.4 The CPCA identified the importance of targeting provision in the areas of greatest need in Cambridgeshire, namely Fenland and East Cambridgeshire. Cambridgeshire Skills have approached this by providing a hub and spoke model with one Head Office hub and two large spoke venues in the targeted geographical areas.

2.4.1 March Community Centre hub or local College services for Fenland and Huntingdonshire;

2.4.2 Ely Library Learning Centre space for the East Cambridgeshire spoke; and

2.4.3 The Cambridge Central Library spoke delivers learning in Cambridge City.

2.5 Cambridgeshire Skills has delivered 2873 enrolments to 1994 people from 1 August 2021 up to the end of May 2022. Courses have ranged from accredited and non-accredited Basic Skills programmes – namely English, Maths, IT, Family Learning, and courses for English for speakers of another 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.

We work with thirteen strategically placed subcontracted training providers to extend our reach, as well as with several Cambridgeshire County Council delivery teams including:

- Early Years Training Centre
- Traveller Health Team
- Learning and Development
- The Spinney Adventure Playground in Wisbech

95% of all learners have been retained and to date 77% have achieved their programmes of study. (Potential maximum achievement = 93%)

2.6 During the academic year 21/22, Cambridgeshire Skills worked with internal stakeholders and some local employers. These included courses in Ely to upskill English language in their workforce and the County Council to support the upskill of staff and residents in Level 2 and 3 programmes. Examples of this include a service level agreement with the Council's Traveller Health Team to support travellers to develop their literacy and life skills, leading to further formal learning and employment. We are also continuing to work with the Council's Early Years and Learning & Development teams for Level 2 and Level 3 delivery. It will also begin delivery of the new Multiply programme that will offer courses and activities that boosts people's ability to use maths in their daily life, at home and work.

We continue in our work to develop relationships and engage with employers. In the coming months, collaboration will occur with Addenbrookes Hospital, Anglia Ruskin University, Coveris, DHL, Fenmarc and G's in Ely to develop staff training and retention programmes.

The service continues its partnership with the Library Service and Social Mobility teams, and this has been further strengthened during the pandemic in identifying opportunities for new courses.

2.7 We run job clubs in Ely Library and in Huntingdonshire in collaboration with both district councils.

2.8 Looking forward, the Delivery Plan for 22/23 has been developed to help people with the cost-of-living crisis and economic recovery. This includes: the demand for re-skilling those residents who now find themselves claiming Universal Credit and looking for work; supporting businesses; Level 2 and 3 programmes to support 19–24-year-olds; increasing digital inclusion and social mobility; and meeting the priorities set out by the Committee.

Work is required to correct the misconception that courses are unaffordable to some struggling financially or they are not eligible. In fact, courses are free to anyone who earns >£21,000. They are available to those 19 or over and a UK citizen or has permission granted by the UK Government to live in the UK.

- 2.9 The voice of the Local Authority and local people continue to be represented at strategic level with funders. Both the Assistant Director and Head of Service sit on the CPCA Adult Learning Steering Group. In addition, the Assistant Director is a prominent member of the Combined Authority's Skills and Employment Board and has regular meetings with the Combined Authority's Director for Business and Skills to support, advise and influence the direction of skills across the county.
- 2.10 Critical to Cambridgeshire Skills' success is strong governance. The current governing board is now well established and has been invaluable to the development of the service. Governors have a breadth of knowledge and experience which has been integral to the success of the service to date, offering strategic direction, challenge and support. In addition to these meetings, there are two sub-groups: one for quality and curriculum and the other for finance and resources.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do

The report above sets out the implications for this priority below.

Our vision is to: -

1. Deliver countywide place-based Adult Education;
2. Promote and develop peoples' social mobility and economic wellbeing;
3. Engage with business, partners, and other stakeholders to identify the skills needed both now and, in the future, to help drive the economy.

The vision places people and place at the heart of everything we do, and our team all have this values-based culture instilled in them.

3.2 A good quality of life for everyone

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

- To advance education
- To relieve unemployment
- To relieve poverty
- To advance health

- To improve social mobility
- To improve digital inclusion
- The promotion of community participation in healthy recreation, including healthy eating

3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

We have engaged and provided skills to adults to improve support for children and families. Service managers continue to work with the 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. We have donated and distributed fifty devices and internet dongles through the Connecting Families project to improve digital inclusion.

3.4 Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment

All work carried out during the refurbishment of March Community Centre has been approved by the Strategic Property Board and the new heating system complies with the Council's aspiration to be net zero carbon by 2050.

3.5 Protecting and caring for those who need us

Cambridgeshire Skills has a statutory duty to protect our learners through our comprehensive safeguarding policy and procedures.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within 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.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

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

deliver community-based learning, however this is proving difficult in the current Covid climate.

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

4.7 Public Health Implications

Public health is a partner of the Adult Learning and Skills Service and is represented on our Governing Board.

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.

4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas

All work carried out during the refurbishment of March Community Centre has been approved by the Strategic Property Board and the new heating system complies with the Council's aspiration to be net zero carbon by 2050.

4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Positive/neutral/negative Status:

Explanation: Refurbishment work to our Head Office has made the heating system more efficient and has reduced the Centre's carbon footprint.

4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

Explanation:

4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

Explanation:

4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

Explanation:

4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

Explanation:

4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

Explanation:

4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

Explanation:

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Clare Andrews

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement? Yes

Name of Officer: Henry Swan

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or 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: Paul Fox

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?

Yes

Name of Officer: Amanda Rose

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?

Name of Officer: Paul Fox

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?

Name of Officer: Not required as not a key decision

If a key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer? No

Name of Officer: Not required as not a key decision

5. Source documents guidance

None