

Governance Arrangements for Cambridgeshire Skills

To: Communities, Social Mobility, and Inclusion Committee

Meeting Date: 8 December 2022

From: Interim Deputy Director for Communities, Employment and Skills, Paul Fox

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Outcome: Integrate Cambridgeshire Skills into the Council's Strategy and Partnerships directorate and ensure robust governance structures are in place

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Amend the current governance arrangements for the Cambridgeshire Skills service to reflect its status as a delivery service within the Council;
- b) Create an Advisory Board to replace the current Board of Governors, and approve the Terms of Reference, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- c) Subject to recommendation (b), appoint a member of the Committee as a representative on the Cambridgeshire Skills Advisory Board.

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1. Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 20th December 2018, the Communities and Partnership Committee agreed that Cambridgeshire Skills would operate as an arm's length body. As part of this arrangement, the Council delegated the management of day-to-day operations, service quality, finance, and human resources to a Governing Board. Also as part of this arrangement, the Head of Service reported to an Assistant Director for Skills and Employment, a post shared with Peterborough City Council (PCC).
- 1.2 The service remains legally constituted as part of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC). In addition, one of the impacts of the pandemic was that the management of finance and human resources functions were not transferred from the Council to the governing board.
- 1.3 In September 2022, both councils finalised restructures of their senior management teams and directorate structures. As part of that process:
 - It was agreed by both councils that the role of Assistant Director for Skills and Employment would no longer be shared between the authorities.
 - Cambridgeshire Skills became part of a new Strategy and Partnerships directorate. The Skills service was more closely aligned with Communities and Libraries services, placing all three services under the responsibility of a new post, Assistant Director for Communities, Employment and Libraries.
- 1.4 The changes set out above put the service at the centre of the Council, reflecting the importance attached to the role the Skills service can play in delivering the Council's ambitions and strategic framework.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The Council has made operational and organisational changes to the Skills service, which affirm the importance of the service, reposition it at the strategic centre of the organisation and align it with other services that are key assets working with and alongside communities. That has prompted a reconsideration of the governance arrangements for the service.
- 2.2 The governing body model provides valuable engagement and a source of expertise and input from a range of partners. However, this 'arms-length' model of governance does not reflect the organisational changes that seek to put Cambridgeshire Skills at the heart of the Council.
- 2.3 It is therefore recommended that the Cambridgeshire Skills service is formally reintegrated into the governance structures of the Council. This would mirror the operational changes described above, and bring the service more directly under the oversight of the Council's governance structures, specifically this Committee. The legal basis for this change is set out in Section 85 of the Further and Higher Education Act (1992), which allows the reversal of any previously delegated provisions and termination of any existing Governing Body arrangements.
- 2.4 As part of this change, the Council would formally accept sole responsibility for the governance and the management of all aspects of the service, including, but not limited to, finance, human resources, facilities and property management, health and safety, and non-

teaching information technology functions.

- 2.5 The Council would not, however, wish such a change to weaken its ability to access advice and expertise from relevant stakeholders. It is therefore also recommended that the current Governing Board become an Advisory Board, to complement and enhance the revised governance arrangements. The proposed functions of the Advisory Board are set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Environment and Sustainability

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.2 Health and Care

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.3 Places and Communities

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.4 Children and Young People

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.5 Transport

There are no significant implications for this priority.

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

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

- 4.7 Public Health Implications
Improving the skills of the population can have, in the long-term, an important impact on health and well-being. It is important that this agenda continues to be driven forward.
- 4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas
There are no significant implications within this category.
- 4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.
Status: Neutral
Explanation:
- 4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.
Status: Neutral
Explanation:
- 4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats and land management.
Status: Neutral
Explanation:
- 4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.
Status: Neutral
Explanation:
- 4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:
Status: Neutral
Explanation:
- 4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.
Status: Neutral
Explanation:
- 4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.
Status: Neutral
Explanation:

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?

Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade

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

Yes

Name of Officer: Clare Ellis

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or Pathfinder Legal?

Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your EqIA Super User?

No

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?

Yes

Name of Officer: Paul Fox

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health?

Yes

Name of Officer: Val Thomas

If a Key decision, have any Environment and Climate Change implications been cleared by the Climate Change Officer?

Yes

Name of Officer: Emily Bolton

5. Source Documents

5.1 [Further and Higher Education Act \(1992\)](#)