

## Cambridgeshire Skills Six Month Review

To: Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee

Meeting Date: 23 March 2023

From: Head of Cambridgeshire Skills, Tom Molloy.

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Outcome: For the Committee to receive information relating to key progress made by Cambridgeshire Skills in relation to its delivery plan.

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

Note the 6-month progress of the service operating as Cambridgeshire Skills.

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### Member contacts:

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## 1. Background

- 1.1 Cambridgeshire Skills is the Council's adult education service within the Strategy and Partnerships Directorate, where it sits alongside Libraries and Think Communities. Externally funded through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and the Department for Education (DfE), with total funding currently at £2.3m. This is for the provision of adult learning and training that is aligned to the ambitions of the Council and the Combined Authority's Skills Strategy.
- 1.2 During the last 6 months, the focus of the service has been to ensure it meets the outcomes set out in the business operating plan to meet both the Council's priorities and its contractual requirements.
- 1.3 The Adult Education budget for Cambridgeshire has been devolved to the Combined Authority, which has prescribed the types, levels and geographical locations that the service should target. These are those furthest away from the labour market, 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.

## 2. Main Issues

- 2.1 Cambridgeshire Skills has been taken back into the Council's corporate centre, having spent three years as an arms-length organisation. The Strategy and Partnerships directorate was identified as best-placed to support the service to continue to be agile and responsive to local needs, while also integrating it more fully with other Council service areas, such as Libraries and Think Communities.
- 2.2 This change has resulted in altering the governance structure from a Board of Governors to an Advisory Board. The new board will meet for the first time in April 2023 to set key performance indicators and objectives for the service that align with the new Strategic Framework. The Advisory Board will provide the service greater scrutiny with new aims, objectives and outcomes being developed that link to the new Strategic Framework 2023-2028, which will be monitored and challenged by Committee.
- 2.3 The service was assessed and retained the Matrix Standard in November 2022. The Matrix Standard is owned by the DfE, and is the international quality standard for organisations that deliver information, advice and/or guidance to clients, either as their sole purpose or as part of their wider service offer.
- 2.4 Achieving the Standard involves an agreed assessment process, where the quality and delivery of information and advice is assessed against the matrix standard's four main elements: leadership and management; resources; service delivery; and continuous quality improvement.

### Work with other Council departments and services

- 2.5 The service continues to develop its relationships with other Council departments:

- 2.6 It is working with colleagues in libraries to improve accessibility to learning and the sharing of resources. This includes supporting the Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) financially from 1 April 2023, as funding from the British Library comes to an end, and in doing so ensuring this valuable resource remains available to residents of Cambridgeshire.
- 2.7 Cambridgeshire Skills is working alongside the library service to develop proposals to utilise £150k of capital funding from the Combined Authority to enhance libraries to improve access to and provision of learning. Locations are yet to be identified and proposals are subject to review and approval by the Combined Authority.
- 2.8 It works alongside the Council's Traveller Health team, delivering one-to-one literacy, digital and work skills to adults and families from the Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller community, and supporting 40 individuals to progress into further learning and employment. This includes 12 learners progressing to HGV driver training through Peterborough Regional College and gaining employment in this sector.
- 2.9 It supports the Early Years Qualification Centre with funding, quality improvement and developing progression pathways that have been developed to support unemployed people into the sector and career progression, once employed, with 49 learners so far this academic year.
- 2.10 Targeted Support (previously known as Early Help) Cambridgeshire Skills is now funding their parenting programmes, with 20 parents already engaged, with an anticipated 100 by the end of the academic year.
- 2.11 The Council's Learning & Development (L&D) service: funded delivery of the Level 3 in Adult Care, which provides access to training for those where an apprenticeship may not be the most suitable model. Developments include the review of all staff development and training opportunities delivered by L&D, to ascertain whether these are fundable through the contract.
- 2.12 The Spinney Adventure Playground: Wellies in the Woods has been delivered to 10 parents, and encourages literacy development in 0-5 year olds in Waterlees, Wisbech, with additional courses planned for this academic year.

### Delivery update

- 2.13 Cambridgeshire Skills response to offer learning opportunities and wider support to individuals with an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) need has increased to include provision to refugees in Cambridge City (Arbury ward), South Cambridgeshire (Greater Shelford), Huntingdon Town, Ramsey, Wisbech, March and Ely. This has resulted in an increase in delivery of 162%, and has led to the recruitment of six further ESOL tutors to meet the demand.
- 2.14 Three large family learning events were developed and delivered in Fenland, engaging with 133 families who participated in learning, leading to 296 adult enrolments with outcomes linked to Confidence and Family Wellbeing.
- 2.15 Child and Family Centre Volunteering courses were launched, running one online course per term supporting volunteers from around the County.

- 2.16 A full family learning programme was reintroduced and 96 targeted learners enrolled to support families with children accessing the funded 2's programmes, with a focus on English, Maths, Health and Wellbeing, including mental health courses. This work has engaged a range of primary schools in targeted deprived wards including: The Shade in Soham, Cromwell Primary in Chatteris, Littleport Community Primary School, Westwood Primary in March, Spring Meadow Nursery in High Barns Ely, Thongsley Field Primary and Huntingdon Nursery in Oxmoor Huntingdon, Priory Juniors in St Neots and Weatherall's in Soham.
- 2.17 A number of Maths programmes were launched and delivered across the County under the National Multiply offer. Eleven courses have been delivered so far, with 90 enrolments.
- 2.18 A number of literacy programmes were launched and delivered in partnership with Public Health England (PHE), focusing on developing literacy skills to improve physical and mental health. Four targeted PHE literacy and 23 targeted ESOL PHE programmes have been delivered, currently working with 101 learners.
- 2.19 Tailored workforce training was delivered with 40 employees from various Council departments, with programmes delivered in ESOL, Functional Skills English and Maths and Customer Service. Outcomes include higher retention rates of staff, reduction in sickness, compliancy with Health and Safety policies and internal progression.
- 2.20 In partnership with East Cambridgeshire District Council, BIPC, Ely Cathedral Business Groups and the Department for Work and Pensions, the Ely Guidance Hub was rolled out. Access continued to be provided to the Guidance Hub to residents in March and Cambridge, with further roll out in Huntingdon, Wisbech and St Neots.
- 2.21 The service has made a strong start to delivery for the academic year 2022/2023, with performance above profile and 1763 enrolments being made since September 2022. It made 3137 enrolments for the whole academic year 2021/22. Appendix 1 presents data on delivery venues and enrolments by district.

## Marketing and Engagement activity

- 2.22 The integration of Cambridgeshire Skills microsite website into the main Council website, with a new design, updated content and improved accessibility, will go live in March 2023. It is forecasted to bring substantially more traffic to the service and realign it with Libraries and Think Communities to offer greater visibility internally and externally, and to strengthen referral routes into learning.
- 2.23 Marketing for Cambridgeshire Skills social media now mirrors the Library Service format, allowing it to further its reach and appear as one to customers.
- 2.24 There is ongoing work with the Child and Family Centres co-delivering parenting interventions and embedding the curriculum, employability and functional skills offer. This approach improves access to individuals who are less likely to enrol on a course, but the additional support and encouragement has seen an increase in take up within this targeted cohort.

- 2.25 Internal colleagues were consulted via a poll on the Council's intranet about the offer from the service, resulting in delivery of the Leadership and Management Level 3, which has been popular with a second cohort planned for Summer 2023.
- 2.26 Cambridgeshire Skills currently has 3,277 followers on social media, which is an increase of 57% since June 2022.

### 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, in the short and even more in the long term, have 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.

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 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: Linda Walker

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

Name of Officer: Lisa Riddle

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes

Name of Officer: Christine Birchall

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

Name of Officer: Lisa Riddle

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes

Name of Officer: Val Thomas

### 5. Source Documents

#### 5.1 None