

Cambridgeshire Skills Six Month Review

To: Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee

Meeting Date: 2 December 2021

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 the end of the academic year 2020 / 2021.

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 the Service operating as 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 (CPCA) 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, the CPCA Skills Strategy and the Post-Covid Local Economic Recovery Strategy (LERS).
- 1.2 Since August 2019, the Adult Education Budget within Cambridgeshire has been devolved to the CPCA, 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/or whose current educational level of attainment is Level 2 and below.
- 1.3 During the academic year August 2020 – July 2021, 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.
- 1.4 The service was last inspected by our regulator, Ofsted, in June 2016 and was graded "good". We are expecting Ofsted to inspect the service during 2021/22.

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

- 2.1 During this period, Cambridgeshire Skills can report many successes, including 3,786 enrolments onto courses to support residents' economic and social wellbeing. These enrolments target those furthest away from learning and work and to upskill those with a low skill set.
- 2.2 The Adult Education provision has been designed to meet corporate priorities of the Council's Business Plan for 2020/21, 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
 - 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, Cambridgeshire Skills is 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 skilled, low paid work
- Providing education and training opportunities to those who are furthest away from learning and work

- 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.

- March Community Centre hub for local College services for Fenland and Huntingdonshire
- Ely Library Learning Centre space for the East Cambridgeshire spoke
- Cambridge Central Library spoke delivering learning in Cambridge City

2.5 To further enable place-based delivery across the priority areas set out above, Cambridgeshire Skills delivered from 51 additional 'spoke' delivery sites up to the first Covid lockdown. These were 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. Covid has hampered our ability to deliver from our place-based venues in the past 6 months, and as demonstrated by the heatmap links in 2.6, the large majority of our provision has been online. During 2021 – 2022, it is our intention to grow place-based venues once again to support local delivery to local residents, however this is proving a challenge with 30% maximum room occupancies or venues not allowing any external bookings (particularly schools).

2.6 Cambridgeshire Skills has delivered 3,786 enrolments to 2,678 people from 1 August 2020 up to the end of July 2021. Due to Covid restrictions, lockdowns and the loss of the majority of our spoke venue bookings, these enrolments have been largely delivered online. Courses have ranged from accredited and non-accredited Basic Skills programmes – namely English, Maths, IT, Family Learning and courses for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). The service has also developed a range of accredited and non-accredited vocational programmes to meet local needs. Examples of this include Retail, Customer Service, Volunteering, and Teaching Assistant.

In addition to the direct delivery classes above, the service works with 15 strategically placed subcontracted partners to extend its reach further.

95% of learners have been retained, and of those, 89% have achieved their programmes of study.

Following the completion of their courses, 89% of enrolments (3,365) have a progression and destination record. Some noteworthy highlights are listed below:

- 1,090 enrolments went on to employment
- 181 went into further education
- 80 went into self-employment
- 79 went into volunteering

In total, our current social return on investment is calculated as in excess of £7m¹, meaning that for every £1 of contract used to date, there is a £4.57 social return.

¹ Calculated via the [socialvalueengine.com](https://www.socialvalueengine.com)

When the service last reported, the Committee asked for a breakdown by district council area to demonstrate impact and this is attached at Appendix 1. This information includes data on starts, retention and achievement by geography.

Further data can be found by using our heatmaps mapped to the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation data linked below:

- Map 1: Delivery by Location over Education, Skills and Training IMD decile This shows accurately where we physically delivered courses during 2020-21 (not easy during Covid Lockdowns). It does not show online delivery as this map was designed to show our place-based delivery locations over the deprivation index (the darker the colour, the higher the overall deprivation score).
- Map 2: Learners by LSOA, including Cambridgeshire Skills delivery locations This map shows where our learners live. The darker the colour the more learners come from that area. It accurately represents our reach and, when compared to the venue map which shows the deprivation scores, it demonstrates that we have attracted learners from those areas.

- 2.7 During the academic year 2020/21, Cambridgeshire Skills worked with internal stakeholders and some local employers, for example G's 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, including a service level agreement with the 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 Early Years teams and the Learning and Development team for Level 2 and Level 3 delivery.

Cambridgeshire Skills is also administering the internal delivery of the Council's Apprenticeship Levy on behalf of the Learning and Development team. This was previously administered via LGSS.

The service continues its work to develop relationships and engage with employers. Addenbrookes Hospital, Anglia Ruskin University, Coveris, Fenmarc and G's in Ely are coming on board in the coming months to develop staff training and retention programmes.

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

- 2.8 During 2020, the service was assessed 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.
- 2.9 We have piloted a Job Club model in Huntingdonshire in collaboration with the District Council and have commissioned Social Echo to run the Job Club in Yaxley.
- 2.10 During 2020, the Service was successful in winning a £400k capital funding bid from the CPCA Growth Fund. This grant has refurbished aspects of March Community Centre and created five more vocational classrooms, with the work completed in May 2021. In addition to the education side, the community space will expand for our stakeholders and the centre

will continue to be a vibrant centre for the residents and groups in the surrounding area. Staff and students returned to the centre in September 2021 and the official opening was held on 5 November, where the service was joined by the Rt Hon. Stephen Barclay MP and Mayor Dr Nik Johnson to cut ribbons and say a few words.

- 2.11 Looking forward, the delivery plan for 2021/22 has been planned for post-Covid social and economic recovery. This includes the demand for re-skilling those residents who now find themselves claiming Universal Credit and/or 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.
- 2.12 The voices of the Local Authority and local people continue to be represented at strategic level with our 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 CPCA Skills and Employment Board and has regular meetings with the CPCA Director for Business and Skills in order to support, advise and influence the direction of skills across the County.
- 2.13 Critical to Cambridgeshire Skills' success is strong governance. The current Governing Board, established by the former Communities and Partnership Committee and now accountable to this Committee, is now well established and has been invaluable to the development of the Service. Governing Board members 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 focussed on quality and curriculum, and the other focussed on finance and resources. Councillor Tom Sanderson chairs the Governing Board. The Committee receives copies of the minutes and a minimum of two reports a year from Cambridgeshire Skills.

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do

The service's vision is to:

- deliver countywide place-based Adult Education
- promote and develop peoples' social mobility and economic wellbeing
- engage with businesses, partners and other stakeholders to identify the skills needed both now and in the future to help drive the economy (including Covid recovery)

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 of 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 50 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 2030.

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 2030.

4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Positive

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

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

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability and management:

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

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

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 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: Adrian Chapman

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: Adrian Chapman

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

Name of Officer: Kate Parker

5. Source documents

5.1 None