



# Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority

## Employment Skills and Strategy

### Executive Summary 2022

Metro — Dynamics



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

# Context

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is core to the UK's future growth, global competitiveness and zero-carbon transition. It is a major economic engine of the national economy and of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and, prior to the pandemic, a net contributor to the Exchequer.

Firing this engine are the thousands of people who live and work in the area. Now, more than ever, as people and the businesses and organisations in which they work continue to face distress and disruption wrought by Covid-19, there is a need for an employment and skills system that matches their needs and opportunities and disparities between places.

There are large, employed workforces in much of the area and employment growth in places which host priority innovation based growth sectors, such as agritech, advanced manufacturing, digital and life sciences. However, this is not a consistent pattern. High-level skills growth is slowing, and school

leavers across the area are more likely to go straight into work than on to education or training, risking people missing out on upskilling and further career progression. Stimulating the supply of higher value, good quality jobs for those residents to go into will be key.

A recent rise in economic inactivity and claimant counts as a result of Covid means that support for people in and outside of the DWP system could be strengthened. This, with the raft of changes facing employers in Covid recovery, Brexit, transition to net zero and Industry 4.0, point to a need for life-wide and lifelong learning and careers support, and strengthened links between employers and providers.

This points to two priorities for the area: connecting people to places where jobs are concentrated, and creating good jobs where connectivity is more limited.

## An Updated vision

Our vision is updated from our 2019 Skills Strategy to:

***A successful, globally competitive economy offering high-skilled, well-paid, good quality jobs, delivering increased productivity and prosperity to support strong, sustainable and healthy communities and enabled by an inclusive, world-class local skills system that matches the needs of our employers, learners and communities.***

Going further than the 2019 strategy, this update also sets out what this vision means for each of the groups interacting with the skills system: people, employers, providers and place leaders:



**People experience fulfilment and good physical and mental health with productive, quality working lives. They drive their own learning and career journeys and feel confident to enter and re-enter the labour market over the course of their lives. They can access support and learning to meet their personal and work ambitions when and how they need.**



**Employers are providing good quality jobs; have the skills they need in their staff and can recruit the right person for the right job. They understand their skills needs and their inputs shape an agile, responsive skills system that delivers a regional pipeline of talent, matched to job opportunities to support strong businesses and enable business growth.**



**Providers work collaboratively across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in an integrated education and skills system to deliver learning, qualifications, careers education and support to enable people to enter the labour market in the ways that suit individual's needs and ambitions.**



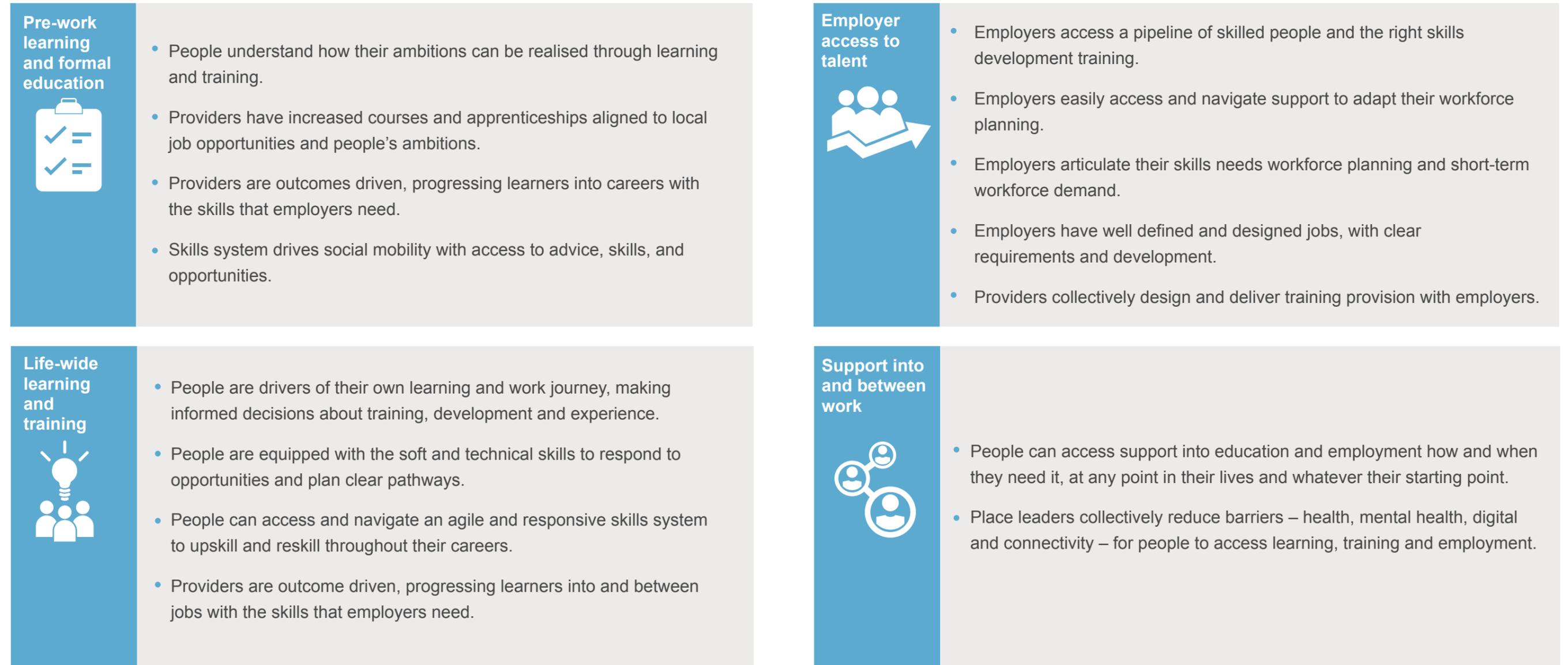
**Place leaders secure outcomes for the whole place, convening and supporting collaboration between employers and the integrated skills system, as well as linking into other local services for people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to lead healthy lives and fulfilling careers.**

These vision statements may read as common sense, but the system across the area struggles (and has historically struggled) to deliver these experiences. There is more that can be done so that people are universally drivers of their own personal development, learning and careers journeys, and can access the support they need, so that employers can get the skills they need for their staff, so that providers work collaboratively across our area, and so that the Combined Authority and place leaders empower, enable and convene. More, and more effective, collaboration between all parties in the system is critical to achieving this as the status quo in the future.

The updated vision also defines new themes on which to focus the strategy. To guide action under each of these themes, this Strategy sets out a series of long-term outcomes and progress measures, steering the work of partners across the area.



## Figure 1. Long-term outcomes



## Moving forward

This vision for the skills system is a long-term project. The starting point is ensuring that short-term strategic priorities are approached as a step in the right direction towards longer-term change.

The Combined Authority will set strategic delivery plans with five-year terms that will form part of the wider Economic Growth Strategy. Detailed action plans will be developed and agreed for each Local Authority, addressing

short-term priorities and progressing into delivering long-term outcomes. Together partners across the area need to start preparing the ground now for some bigger change projects that the vision calls

for. They will need further scoping and iterative development – focus now and in the first five years will be on short-term priorities:



## Figure 2. Short-term priorities

### Pre-work learning and formal education



- Improving careers education, specifically around STEM and green skills, as well as information, advice and guidance
- Widening education access and participation to make education more inclusive and the student body (and future workforce) more diverse
- Enhancing exposure to role models, work experience, and understanding of various training routes into sectors and occupations
- Capital investment to improve teaching facilities and kit, particularly for providers of FE, alongside support for staff capacity building

### Employer access to talent



- Supporting Covid recovery, growth and net zero transition by developing priority skills and responding to acute issues
- Driving up and sustaining employers' engagement with provision
- Embedding modern work practices and conditions and improving job quality.

### Life-wide learning and training



- Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age
- Providing support to upskill and reskill in response to economic restructuring (e.g. following Covid-19, Brexit, digitisation, as net zero transition intensifies)
- Increasing work-based learning, particularly apprenticeships, and introducing more accessible formats (e.g. short courses/ online/blended learning)
- Ensuring inclusion in continued and community learning and support for disadvantaged people, adults with SEN, care leavers and ex-offenders

### Support into and between work



- Supporting unemployed and NEETs into training and employment
- Providing support for disadvantaged groups to access the labour market
- Targeting support for Covid recovery and transitions for displaced workers



To place health and wellbeing at the centre delivery, the Combined Authority, local authorities, community and NHS partners will work together to support the workforce. CPCA will hold itself and partners to account to these outcomes with clear set of progress indicators, working as a set of measures cutting across our groups and themes:

**Figure 3. Progress measures**

Group	Indicator	Pre-work learning and formal education 	Life-wide learning and training 	Employer access to talent 	Support into and between work 
	Economic activity (increasing)				✓
	Low or no qualifications (decreasing)	✓	✓	✓	
	In work Universal Credit (decreasing)				✓
	Median wages (increasing)		✓	✓	
	GVA and productivity (increasing)		✓		
	Skilled jobs (increasing)		✓		
	Participation rates (increasing)	✓		✓	
	Progression at 18 into FE, Vocational and HE (increasing)	✓			
	Skill levels (increasing)	✓	✓	✓	
	Employment levels (increasing)		✓		✓
	Economic inactivity (decreasing)				✓
	Travel to work and learn times (improving)	✓		✓	✓

