



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

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MAYOR OF  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH

## Guidance

# Adult Skills Commissioning Strategy 2025 – 2028

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
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## Introduction

Welcome to Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority’s Adult Skills Commissioning Strategy. This document outlines how the Combined Authority will commission provision funded by the Adult Skills Fund (ASF) and Free Courses for Jobs Fund (FCFJF). It has been co-produced with a broad range of skills providers delivering adult skills across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

- 1.1 The Combined Authority’s approach to commissioning will involve a combination of plan-led commissioning through the agreement of delivery plans with grant-funded providers and a procured provision delivered through contracts for services.
- 1.2 CPCA will publish a 3-year Local Skills Improvement Plan, in partnership with the designated Employer Representative Body (Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce), which will be refreshed annually. This concise document will guide commissioned providers to align the provision and skills offered to local needs. This will inform the plan-led grant-funded agreements and shape what is procured and delivered through contracts for services.
- 1.3 CPCA will also publish the Get Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Working Plan which will focus on tackling economic inactivity, specifically due to ill health and address key labour market challenges.

Commissioned Skills delivery partners must use this plan to inform and shape the planning and delivery of skills provision that is focused on supporting the unemployed, the development of transferable skills, provision to support young people NEET and those with long term disabilities and health conditions, including mental ill health.

- 1.4 This Adult Skills Commissioning Strategy 2025 – 2028 replaces the existing Adult Education Budget Commissioning Strategy 2020-2025: A Framework for Partnership - Working together to ensure a world-class offer for adult education.
- 1.5 Under orders from the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, adult education functions from the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 have been transferred from the Secretary of State for Education to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority since August 2019. A recurrent ring-fenced grant of approximately £12m per academic year is transferred to the Combined Authority to discharge the transferred duties.
- 1.6 The Adult Skills Fund's purpose is to provide relevant adult education functions (for learners aged 19+) and towards expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred through the associated Adult Skills Fund and Free Courses for Jobs fund.
- 1.7 This strategy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:
- CPCA's Local Growth Plan, Get Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Working and the Local Skills Improvement Plan
  - Adult Skills Performance Monitoring and Interventions Policy
  - Adult Skills Funding Rules and Regulations (for the relevant academic year)
  - Adult Skills Funding Rates and Formulas (for the relevant academic year)

## Learning for Life – The Role of Adult Skills in Developing Thriving Communities

- 2.1 Research conducted by the Local Government Association, in partnership with HOLEX<sup>1</sup>, found that as well as having clear and direct benefits in terms of economic prosperity, employment and productivity, adult learning through skills provision is linked to the ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle, grow confidence and self-esteem and provide meaning and purpose in life. Associated outcomes of participation include the development of collaborative and creative thinking skills such as problem-

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<sup>1</sup> [Learning for Life: the role of adult community education in developing thriving local communities - A handbook for councillors | Local Government Association](#)

solving, innovation, curiosity and adaptability; enhanced physical and mental health; greater interest in politics and community engagement; and greater diversity in the workforce.

2.2 Effective leadership of Adult Skills funding can lead to 9 distinct outcomes:

- 1.3 **Employment, skills and qualifications:** getting people onto the skills ladder and helping them gain, retain and progress at work
- 2.3 **Health and wellbeing:** supporting people with physical and mental health issues, thus reducing health costs such as GP visits
- 3.3 **Integration and inclusion:** reducing isolation, promoting interaction and integration and bringing communities together
- 4.3 **Culture and creativity:** supporting individuals and communities in becoming creative and cultural producers
- 5.3 **Attitudes, aptitudes and characteristics:** helping people to acquire the characteristics needed to participate fully in work and life
- 6.3 **Life transitions:** helping people to navigate challenges such as redundancy, retirement and parenthood.

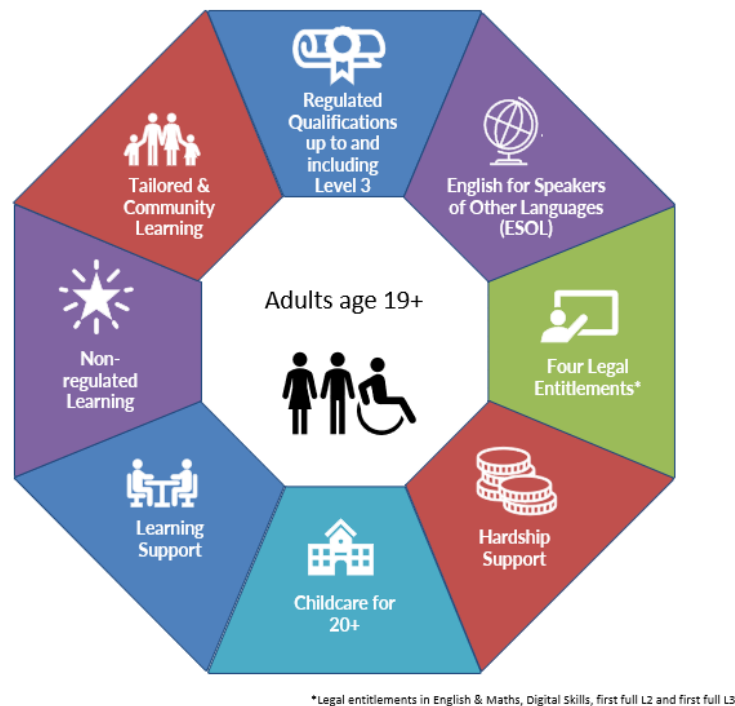
2.3 It is the ambition of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority to deliver outstanding leadership across the adult skills sector so that everyone can realise their potential

## Adult Skills Fund and Free Courses for Jobs Fund

### Purpose

- 3.1 The ASF aims to support adult learners (aged 19+) in gaining skills that will lead them to meaningful, sustained, and relevant employment or enable them to progress to further learning that will deliver that outcome. The Funding Rules and Regulations document, published annually for each corresponding academic year, outlines what and who the CPCA funds through the ASF and FCFJF.
- 3.2 ASF will fund accredited and non-accredited provision at Level 3 and below. This includes GCSEs, awards, certificates and diplomas in vocational and technical subjects, and skills for life qualifications in Mathematics, English and Digital. Within the ASF, further learning provision supports wider outcomes, such as improving health and well-being, equipping parents/carers to help their child's learning, and developing stronger communities (Tailored Learning/Community Learning/Non-Regulated Learning). There is flexibility within the funding to enable providers to use it for learning support, childcare costs for learners aged 20+ and hardship payments.

### 3.3 Infographic of the Adult Skills Fund and what it covers:



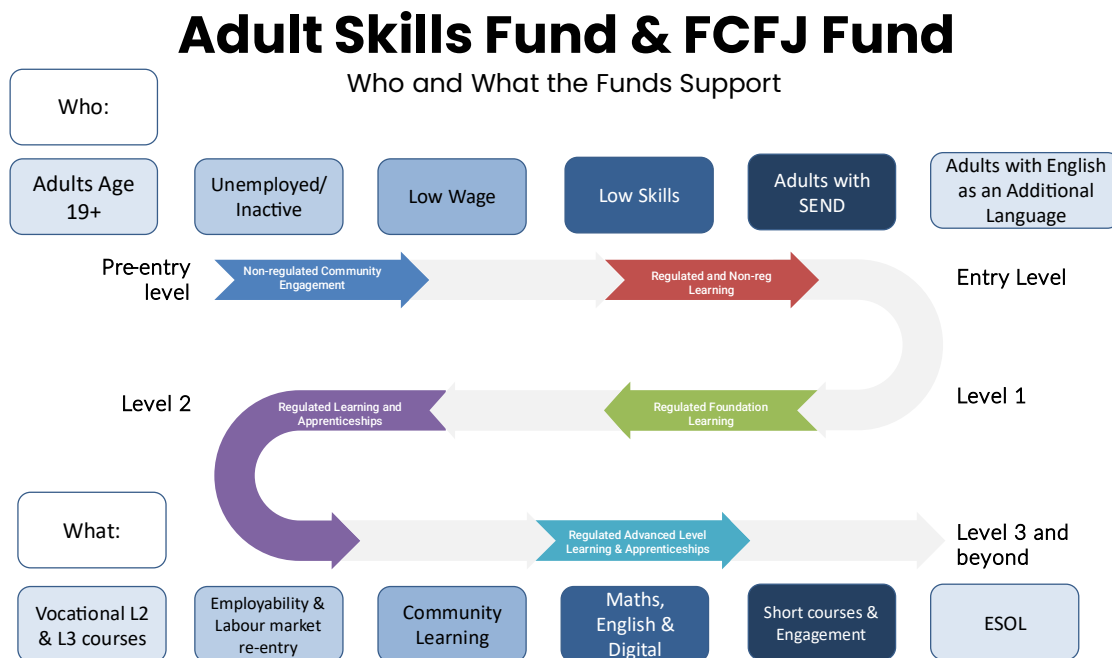
3.4 The Free Courses for Jobs Fund is a targeted Level 3 offer to support adults who meet the definition of being below the earnings threshold.

The offer includes:

Level 3 qualifications that will support the development of new skills for adult learners and improve the prospects of eligible adults in the labour market. Eligible adults can now access fully funded level 3 provision from the list of level 3 FCFJF qualifications available via the DfE list of qualifications approved for funding.

3.5 The ASF and FCFJF creates learning pathways at entry level up to and including L3 and supports a wide range of adults, including those who are unemployed or who are seeking wider skills development linked to future employment opportunities. The funding also delivers provision that reaches adults from vulnerable backgrounds including those with English as a second language and adults with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

### 3.6 Infographic of who and what the ASF/FCFJ supports:



## The Strategic Intent of the ASF and FCFJ in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

The strategic use of the devolved ASF and FCFJ will focus on the continued development of a lifelong learning culture, where personal and professional development delivers outcomes for our people, our economy, and our communities.

Funding will be aligned with priority residents and growth sectors (as outlined in the Local Growth Plan and Local Skills Improvement Plan) so that everyone can realise their potential, benefit from and contribute to economic and social prosperity and be an active citizen in their local community.

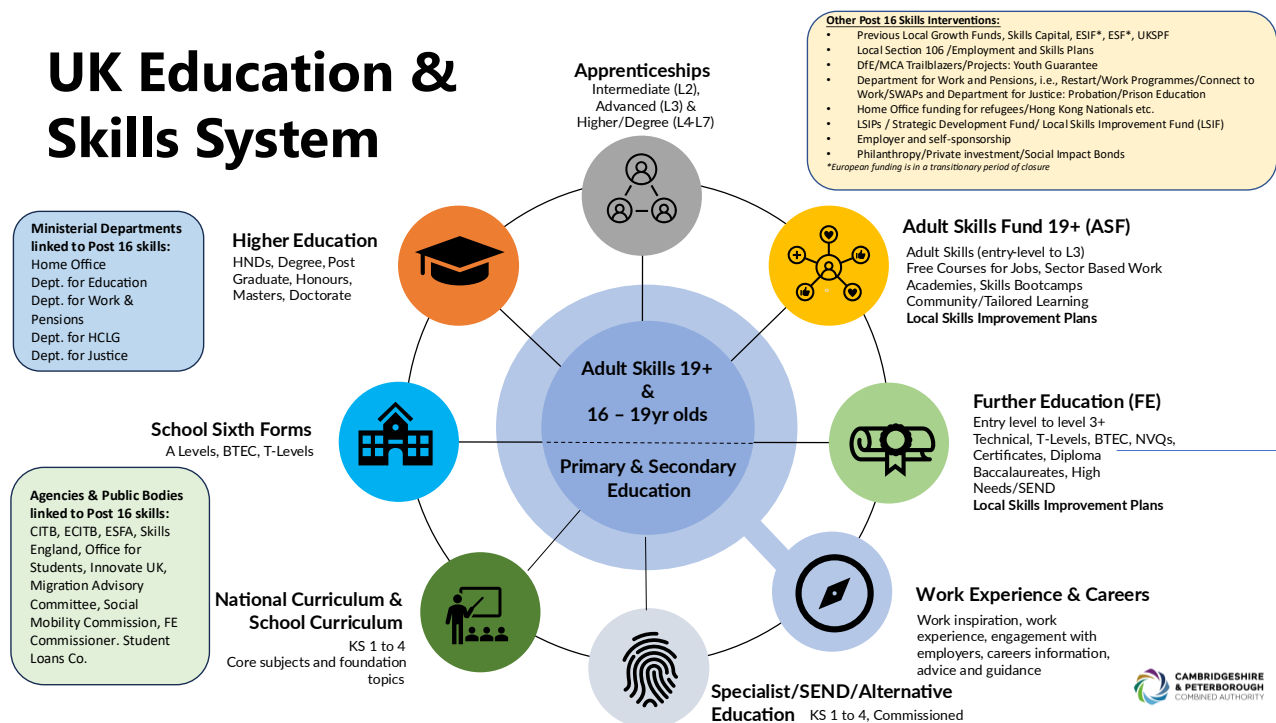
4.1 The Combined Authority's vision is for the Adult Skills Fund and FCFJ to deliver broad outcomes. The Combined Authority has established the following Success Measures that will enable us to monitor and evaluate the impact of this funding.

| <b>Success Measures:</b>  |
|---|
| a) Reduction in skills shortages, gaps and hard-to-fill vacancies.  |
| b) An increase in adult learners starting and completing a L3 qualification.  |
| c) An increase in the participation of adult learners who are unemployed/economically inactive. Particularly in Peterborough and Fenland.   |
| d) An increase in the participation of 19-21 yr olds who are NEET. Particularly in Peterborough and Fenland.  |
| e) High job outcomes for learners who participate in learning that leads to employment (65% or more)  |
| f) Improved Adult Learning participation rates in cold spots (St Neots and East Cambs).   |
| g) Measurable improvements to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and mental wellbeing</li> <li>• Confidence and self-esteem</li> <li>• Financial awareness</li> <li>• Sustainability/carbon literacy awareness</li> <li>• Improved independent living skills</li> <li>• Improved soft skills</li> </ul> |
| Outcomes against these success measures will be monitored and evaluated regularly and reported quarterly at the Skills Committee.   |

4.2 Adult skills funding and the provision it delivers benefit from a broad eligibility criterion, but the available funding level is finite. Whilst the devolved adult skills fund and free courses for jobs funding are integral to the skills and employment landscape, they are not the only part. This commissioning strategy recognizes that funding must be carefully prioritised to support the residents, employers and communities most in need and likely to benefit the most.

4.3 The wider skills and employment landscape includes other public funding streams, such as Skills Bootcamps and Sector-Based Work Academies. It also includes Apprenticeships, privately or corporately funded professional development, and a wide range of non-regulated learning opportunities provided by the Community and Voluntary sector. The Combined Authority will endeavour to avoid disrupting or destabilising the sector by effectively implementing this commissioning strategy and continuing to commit to its role as a systems leader across the skills landscape.

#### 4.4 Illustration of the breadth of the Education & Skills landscape:



## Operational Principles

5.1 This strategy is underpinned by the Combined Authority's commitment to operate under the following principles, aligned with the [National Operational Guidance \(DfE\)](#) on the Devolved Adult Skills Fund.

'We' refers to Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority:

- We will consistently use a place-based approach to targeting needs and commissioning. Local data, intelligence and understanding will inform this.
- We encourage and support the delivery of provision in partnership with local employers and key organisations.
- We effectively use local 'Freedoms & Flexibilities' to change and adapt funding rules, rates, and eligibility criteria to meet our local challenges and opportunities best.
- We support innovation and new targeted provision. For example, we will trial new payment models, funding rates, and eligibility for a specified activity, pilot niche provision or delivery models, and scale up existing activity for cohorts, priority learners, or employment sectors.
- We demonstrate fairness, reasonableness and proportionality in our work.
- We will continue to consult with providers on our approach to funding and performance management rules, funding rates, and formulas and publish the conditions of funding that providers should deliver in advance of the start of the funding year.



- g) We will consider the DfE's key milestones for adult skills funding when communicating funding plans and allocations, including methodologies. This will help providers who may receive adult skills funds from the DfE, and the CA plan their overall adult provision staffing and delivery and manage their business model and income appropriately and efficiently to ensure value for money.
- h) We will ensure that providers have a point of contact to discuss their delivery, payments, or funding arrangements.
- i) We will conduct appropriate and proportionate due diligence in establishing which providers will deliver Adult Skills-funded provision, complying with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, as appropriate.
- j) We will commission providers who have previous experience of delivering in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough and/or have a region-wide training infrastructure.
- k) We have a clear commercial strategy to undertake legally compliant exercises
- l) We will conduct appropriate and proportionate contract/performance management regimes (set out in the Assurance Framework).
- m) We have clear market entry arrangements available to potential providers.
- n) We have a clear strategy for funding reduction and/or exit requirements.
- o) We will continue to monitor the adult skills cold spots and take timely action to resolve them.
- p) We will have a continuous and open dialogue with FE Colleges, all skills providers, and key stakeholders.
- q) Through our assurance framework, we will openly and transparently monitor, review, and support the quality assurance of each grant and contract.

## Volumes of Funding Available

6.1 Annually, the Combined Authority receives a ring-fenced Adult Skills Fund grant allocation of £12,180,000<sup>2</sup> and a funding allocation of £954,000<sup>3</sup> from the Free Courses for Jobs Fund (FCFJF). These figures were allocated in 2024-25 and are subject to possible change each year. The Combined Authority receives confirmation of funding allocations every March/April for the proceeding academic year.

6.2 To determine how much of this funding can be commissioned, the Combined Authority will deduct a volume of funding to be ring-fenced for Skills Innovation Funds, cross-border agreements, and a management fee.

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<sup>2</sup> This amount can vary and is confirmed annually by the Department for Education. Publications can be found here: [Adult education budget: devolved grant determination letters 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>3</sup> This amount can vary and is confirmed annually by the Department for Education. Publications can be found here: [Adult education budget: devolved grant determination letters 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

6.3 The table below provides an indicative illustration of how the ASF and FCFJF are managed. In total, 95% of the Adult Skills Fund and 99% of the Free Courses for Job Fund go directly to the provision of adult learning throughout Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

| Item                           | Amount      | Percentage |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Adult Skills Fund (ASF)        | £12,180,000 | 100%       |
| FCFJ Fund                      | £954,000    | 100%       |
| Skills Innovation Fund (ASF)   | £250,000    | 2%         |
| Cross Border Agreement (ASF)   | £10,000     | <1%        |
| ASF Management Fee             | £602,000    | 4.94%      |
| FCFJ Management Fee            | £9,540      | 1%         |
|                                |             |            |
| Available Adult Skills Funding | £11,318,451 | 93%        |
| Available FCFJ Funding         | £944,460    | 99%        |
|                                |             |            |
| ASF Grant Funded Awards        | £10,200,000 | 90%        |
| FCFJF Grant Funded Awards      | £707,000    | 75%        |
|                                |             |            |
| ASF available for Contracts    | £1,118,451  | 10%        |
| FCFJF available for Contracts  | £237,460    | 25%        |

6.4 Currently 90% of the Adult Skills Fund is allocated to Grant Funding Agreements, leaving 10% (c£1.1m) to be commissioned via procurement. 75% of the FCFJF is allocated to Grant Funding Agreements, leaving 25% (c£237k) to be commissioned via procurement.

6.5 The Combined Authority retains a management fee of 4.94% from the ASF and 1% from FCFJ. This retained funding is used to adequately staff, manage and administer the funding, ensuring this duty meets funding rules and regulations as well as statutory requirements for quality assurance. The Combined Authority is the responsible authority for setting the strategic direction for Adult Skills and for ensuring grant agreements and contracts for services are delivered and fulfilled and that the quality of learning and outcomes is high. The Combined Authority will lead strategic relationships with the Department for Education and other key stakeholders to ensure the delivery of adult skills is informed by local expertise and knowledge.

6.6 The management fee will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains reasonable and proportionate.

# Grant Funding Agreements

7.1 Grant funding agreements are an established part of the Authority's approach to commissioning adult skills. The Combined Authority intends to continue the current arrangement of grant funding agreements with existing providers. It will award Grants over three years (2025 – 2028) to encourage sustainability and capacity building.

7.2 The Combined Authority awards Grants to:

- Cambridge Regional College
- Cambridgeshire County Council (Cambridgeshire Skills)
- Inspire Education Group (Peterborough College)
- Peterborough City Council (Peterborough City College)
- College of West Anglia
- West Suffolk College (North Cambridgeshire Training Centre)
- Workers' Educational Association (WEA)
- Bedford College

7.3 Grant-funded providers must work with the Combined Authority and submit a strategic delivery plan and an annual accountability statement demonstrating how they intend to respond to the Local Skills Improvement Plan and Get Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Working Plan. Further guidance will be included in the Performance Monitoring and Intervention Policy.

7.4 Under grant funding agreements, checks and balances on performance through the Combined Authority's published Performance Monitoring and Intervention Policy continue. Multi-year funding will always be subject to the DfE funding being devolved. This will be made explicit in the funding agreement.

7.5 The Combined Authority is committed to Grant Funding Agreements for the following reasons:

## **Greater Flexibility in Programme Design**

Grant-funded organisations are more agile and work with a funder in how they design and implement their programmes. This flexibility allows them to innovate, address specific community needs, and pivot strategies as challenges arise without being tightly bound by a contract's terms.

## **Mission-Driven Focus**

Grant-funded organisations are typically mission-oriented and focus on long-term goals that align with their core values of the area they serve. They are part of the civic infrastructure with their money being ploughed back into the locality. They have the ability to prioritise outcomes that support their mission rather than just fulfilling contractual obligations.

**Sustainability and Capacity Building**

Grants can provide multi-year funding, which supports the sustainability and growth of the organisation. Unlike short-term service contracts, this allows for capacity building and the establishment of more long-term programmes.

**Less Administrative Burden**

Contracted services often come with strict reporting, compliance, and performance metrics, which can lead to a heavy administrative load. Grant-funded organisations will have their own security and governance system therefore funders can have fewer administrative requirements, enabling them to focus more on delivering impactful services.

**Encouragement of Collaboration**

Grant funding often encourages organisations to collaborate with other entities, such as nonprofits, government agencies, or educational institutions. This can lead to stronger community partnerships and broader-reaching impacts than what may be achieved through contractual service delivery.

**Focus on Innovation and Research**

Many grants are designed to foster innovation, allowing organisations to pilot new approaches or conduct research that might not fit into a rigid service contract. This can lead to more creative solutions to complex problems.

**Alignment with Funder's Mission**

Since grants are often provided by organisations with a shared mission, there is a greater alignment of goals. This can foster a stronger sense of partnership and shared purpose between the grantor and the grantee.

In contrast, contracted services tend to be more transactional, with specific deliverables required by the funder. Grant-funded organisations generally have more room to evolve their approach, co- create with an MCA, be community-centred, and work toward broader, long-term goals.

***Extract taken from a paper produced by HOLEX on the wider benefits of Grant Funding Agreements in the Adult Skills Sector.***

7.6 Indicative Funding Allocations for grant-funded providers will be issued in February 2025. The final data returns (R14) on the previous year's performance will be used to calculate the indicative allocation.

7.7 Between February and April 2025, discussions will be held between the Combined Authority and grant providers and the strategic delivery plan will be confirmed.

7.8 Confirmation of final grant funding allocations will be made in April 2025.

- 7.9 An ongoing dialogue will continue through until July 25, when the Combined Authority will work closely with the provider to ensure the annual accountability statement is published and shared.
- 7.10 In July 25, the Skills Committee will receive a high-level report on strategic delivery plans for all grant-funded providers. This report will be for information only; delivery plans do not need to be approved by the Committee.
- 7.11 Delivery will commence from August 2025 through to July 2028 and will be monitored and evaluated under the Assurance Framework.
- 7.12 All Grant Funding Agreements will be continuously monitored throughout the duration of the agreements.

## Procurement and the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS)

- 8.1 The Combined Authority intends to procure Independent Training Providers (ITPs) to deliver c10% of the Adult Skills Fund (c£1.1m) and c25% (c£237k) of Free Courses for Jobs funding.
- 8.2 Procuring 'Contracts for services' enables the Combined Authority to commission and work with a broader range of providers with specifically defined deliverables. Public procurement regulations ensure a clear market entry point for providers to bid to deliver services openly.
- 8.3 The Combined Authority is using the Crown Commercial Service's (CCS) [RM6348 Adult Skills and Learning Dynamic Purchasing System \(DPS\)](#) for the procured element of its adult skills provision. The Combined Authority has chosen this as its route to market due to the benefits it provides for both CPCA and suppliers. For CPCA, it frees up our limited resources, reduces procurement timescales, and enables us to operate more agilely to deliver adult skills. For suppliers, it offers the following benefits:
- The DPS questionnaire removes the need to answer pre-qualification questions for each procurement, saving suppliers time.
  - Buyers contact suppliers, removing the need to search for opportunities themselves.
  - Suppliers are only invited to the call-off procurements relevant to them, enabled by the filtering system.
  - The core contract terms are agreed upon by buyers and suppliers up front, removing the need to review different contracts for each procurement.

- Becoming appointed on the DPS enables suppliers to bid for additional work outside of the CPCA scope, which may include subcontracted grant funded budget within the area, or adult skills contracts outside of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- The DPS enables CPCA to react more quickly to contract underspend and any additional funding, so we can run additional call offs to address it.

8.4 Only appointed suppliers on the Adult Skills and Learning DPS that also meet our essential requirements will be invited to bid for contracts.

**Minimum requirements summary:**

- ✓ Cyber Essentials basic certification
- ✓ Minimum insurance requirements:
  - Employer's liability insurance of £5,000,000
  - Public liability insurance of £5,000,000
  - Professional indemnity insurance of £1,000,000
- ✓ Compliance with the Supplier Code of Conduct and Modern Slavery Act
- ✓ Pass a Financial Viability and Risk Assessment (FVRA)
- ✓ Provide a valid UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN) from the UK Register of Learning Providers
- ✓ Agree to help contracted buyers achieve their social value objectives

8.5 Suppliers pay a 1% levy to CCS on payment amounts received from awarded contracts. This levy is standard across CCS agreements. It funds CCS operating costs and enables the benefits that the commercial agreements provide. The Combined Authority will fully reimburse this fee for all CPCA-awarded contracts.

8.6 A competitive tendering process will be launched in February 2025 that will invite ITPs to bid against the following four themes of activity:

| Lot | Activity  | Indicative Funding Value, up to: |
|-----|---|----------------------------------|
| 1   | <b>THE YOUTH OFFER (19–24-year-olds)</b><br>Employed or unemployed        | Up to £434,493 per annum (TBC)   |
| 2   | <b>SKILLS FOR EMPLOYMENT (24+)</b><br>Unemployed or economically inactive | £325,870 per annum (TBC)         |
| 3   | <b>SKILLS FOR GROWTH</b><br>Employed Adults aged 19+                      | Up to £325,870 per annum (TBC)   |

*Note: The figures above are indicative, subject to the Combined Authority receiving its section 31 Grant Determination Letter from the DfE.*

8.7 The following is an indicative timetable of key dates for this procurement:

| Activity | Date          |
|----------|---------------|
| Open DPS | November 2024 |

|                                       |               |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Issue Invitation to Tender (ITT)      | February 2025 |
| Evaluate ITT submissions              | March 2025    |
| Negotiations with preferred suppliers | March 2025    |
| Issue Standstill                      | April 2025    |
| Contract Signature                    | April 2025    |
| Contract commences delivery           | August 2025   |

8.8 The Combined Authority has split the available funding into Lots as set out above. Given the disparities in skill levels and high levels of economic inactivity in Peterborough and Fenland, each lot has an uplift that encourages Bidders to deliver provision within these specific geographic locations and to target learners living within these areas. Bidders should, however, be aware that where funding is not used in full within a given area, this may be reallocated to facilitate offerings that may not otherwise have been supported. Bidders can apply for and be awarded a contract for one, two or any combination of the Lots. Each Lot will be evaluated separately.

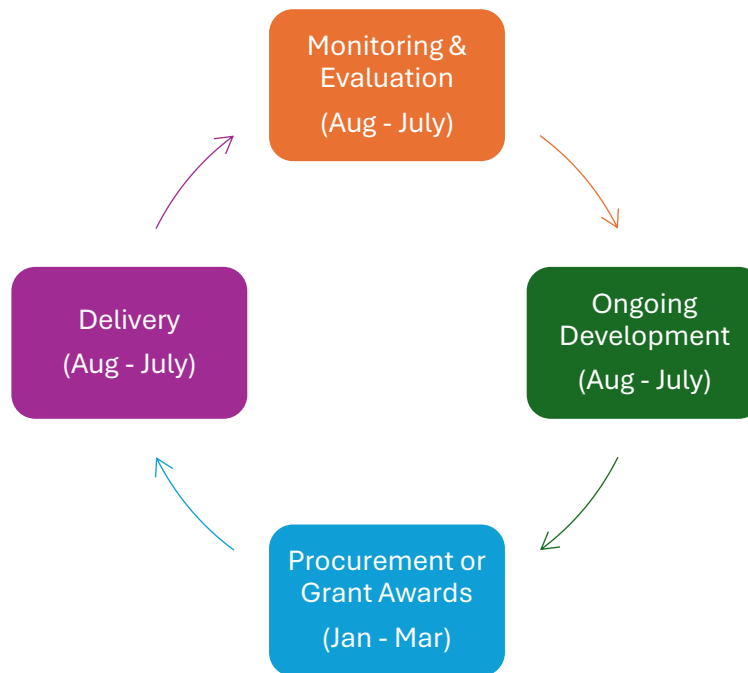
8.9 Contracts awarded for delivery from August 2025 will run for 3 years until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2028. This approach intends to provide stability and investment in a place-based approach and help build capacity in the providers delivering in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. Multi-year funding will always be subject to the DfE funding being devolved. This will be made explicit in the funding agreement.

8.10 Performance management and assurance processes for contracts for services will be set out in the Performance Monitoring and Interventions Policy and within the contract.

8.11 The commissioning cycle means there will be ad hoc service demands between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2028. Contracts issued within this time frame will vary in length and duration, depending on the type of services to be delivered.

# The Commissioning Cycle

9.1 The commissioning cycle is a cyclical activity process usually repeated annually and part of a long-term plan. The infographic below provides a summary of the cycle and indicative activity timelines.



9.2 **Monitoring & Evaluation:** The Combined Authority will monitor and evaluate the current performance of existing services. This may determine the need for new or additional service providers to meet local needs. For example, suppose a skills provider has not met their contract target of enrolling a certain number of learners. In that case, the Combined Authority may offer the remaining target as a separate contract. Monitoring and Evaluation will also involve ongoing needs analysis and activities such as the ongoing review of FE Cold Spots and the performance against KPIs that may signal a need for different or additional provisions.

9.3 **Ongoing Development** – The Combined Authority will use a Dynamic Purchasing System to continually assess the market and to call on the market when a need arises.

9.4 **Procurement** – The activity of procurement will take place when required. Contracts for services will be issued.

**And/OR**

9.5 **Grant Awards**—The Combined Authority has historically provided Grant Awards to FE Colleges and providers who received a direct award of funding from the Department for Education prior to devolution. This was to ensure the market was not destabilised, and it continues to be a priority for the



Combined Authority. Procurement is not used when the Combined Authority issues Grant Funding Agreements.

9.6 **Delivery** – The chosen skills provider will deliver the contract.

## Contract Growth

10.1 The Combined Authority will publish a policy on contract growth each academic year.

Whilst the Combined Authority recognises the benefits of offering contract growth opportunities, the budgets for both ASF and FCFJ are finite, and contract growth will only be available if there is a budget to fund it.

## NEW Skills Innovation Fund 2025-26

11.1 From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025, the Combined Authority will take a new approach to the Skills Innovation Fund. We will create a single fund to welcome applications from all eligible and credible providers, including the voluntary and community sectors, who are looking to pilot an innovative project linked to the strategic intent and success measures in place for adult skills. The Combined Authority will allocate £250,000 a year from the Adult Skills Fund to create this Innovation Fund. Further guidance will be published in the Spring of 2025 to determine what is in scope and the application process.

11.2 Commissioned Providers with contract values of over £50,000 can ring-fence up to 5% of their contract allocation for Skills Innovation, in addition to bidding to the Skills Innovation Fund. Providers will have to create a specific investment plan that sets out the project's intentions, how it will be implemented, and what the expected impact will be. Further guidance will be given in the ASF Funding Rules and Regulations 2025-26 and within the contract/grant funding agreement.

## Cross Border working

12.1 One of the eligibility criteria for an adult to participate in a provision funded by the Combined Authority is that they must live in Cambridgeshire or Peterborough (determined by their home postcode). This safeguards the funding and ensures it is used for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough residents only.

- 12.2 Neighboring Authorities have a similar policy. Therefore, when a CPCA resident wishes to access ASF or FCFJ provision in Norfolk, Suffolk, Bedfordshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, or Essex, their application is typically declined. In exceptional circumstances, one of these authorities may contact the Combined Authority with a request to fund a CPCA resident to participate in learning out of the county.
- 12.3 The Combined Authority, therefore, reserves up to £10,000 annually to cover the learning costs of eligible CPCA residents who access learning in one of the region's neighbouring Authorities. For this to happen, the residents and the training provider must follow the Combined Authority's Policy on out-of-county provision.
- 12.4 The Combined Authority has close working relationships with the Skills Leads from each of the neighbouring Authorities and collaborates to ensure a consistent policy is applied.

## **Performance Management, Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 13.1 The Combined Authority's Performance Management and Interventions Policy will set out performance management, monitoring and evaluation arrangements. Providers must also adhere to the ASF Funding Rules and Regulations for the corresponding academic year.
- 13.2 The Skills Committee will receive an annual performance report on all commissioned programmes for ASF and FCFJ. This will be published in January following the end of the previous academic year (July). This is to allow for the final data returns to be completed (October R14) and for data validation to take place.