

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Skills Report. January 2022

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Skills Advisory Panel



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Chapter 1: Foreword



Al Kingsley, Chair of the Skills Advisory Panel

I became the chair of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (Skills Advisory Panel) in June 2020. The last eighteen months has and continues to be, a challenging time for individuals, providers and employers navigating through a fast changing and often unknown landscape. This context makes the role of the Skills Advisory Panel (SAP) even more important as it advises the leaders in the Combined Authority – through the use of data and local intelligence – to inform the strategic direction to ensure the Region’s skills provision meets the needs of the local economy, driving productivity and rebound the economy.

The Skills Advisory Panel comprises members from local providers, employers and stakeholders as representatives from the region to make sure the unique strengths of our three sub-economies and our growth sectors are capitalised on to realise the opportunities to match the supply and demand of skills.

The Combined Authority- informed by the SAP- has a vision to grow a successful, globally competitive economy grounded in high-skilled, better paid jobs, increased productivity and strong sustainable communities through an inclusive, world-class local skills system that matches the needs of our employers, learners and communities.

The Skills Strategy, developed in consultation with the SAP, is a blueprint for designing and applying skills policies that makes the most of the region’s workforce and for maximising the skills of its residents to drive up productivity, enable economic growth and support social inclusion. However, the region does not operate in isolation and recognition is given to national initiatives that will impact on the local skills landscape.

This report highlights the significant progress that has been achieved in the region, including the development of the new university in Peterborough, at the same time it acknowledges where focus must be given moving forward to ensure we are able to achieve our ambition to make sure that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is ‘the best place in the world to live, learn and work’.

We have recently published our new Employment and Skills Strategy, which has been developed in partnership with many of our key stakeholders. We are committed to make a difference for the lives of our residents and believe the successful implementation of our new strategy will provide opportunities for all.

Chapter 2: Introduction

Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs): the national context

Since 2018, Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) have been bringing together employers, skills providers and key local stakeholders to better understand and resolve skills mismatches at a local level. SAPs are part of Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships and there are 36 in total across England. The Department for Education (DfE) has supported SAPs with grant funding primarily to produce high-quality analysis of local labour markets and publish **Local Skills Reports which set out the local skills strengths and needs and how the SAP proposes its area addresses its key priorities.**

This second iteration of SAPs' Local Skills Reports comes at a time when DfE is Trailblazing new Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), in eight areas of the country. Developed by Employer Representative Bodies, LSIPs are part of a suite of reforms launched in DfE's "**Skills for Jobs**" White Paper that aim to put employers more firmly at the heart of the skills system. An evaluation of the eight Trailblazers will inform the national roll out of the programme. In the meantime, and before LSIPs are rolled out across the country, it is DfE's intention that Skills Advisory Panels and this Local Skills Report should continue to influence the behaviour of local partners and feed intelligence to central government, including to sectoral focussed skills teams and the national-level Skills and Productivity Board (SPB).

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough SAP

Locally, the function of the Skills Advisory Panels is delivered by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Employment and Skills Board (ESB). The board was established in the autumn of 2019 and comprises business leaders, education representatives, local authority leaders, and representation from other government agencies.

The ESB helps to steer the skills agenda in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough plus build on the good work being undertaken by all partners. It aims to support the implementation of the Local Industrial Strategy and support the recommendations of the Skills Strategy and its supporting evidence base.

Although the strategic focus of SAPs is to look across wider geographies, and this is reflected in the core indicators provided for all SAPs (Annex A), the **evidence base for our local skills**

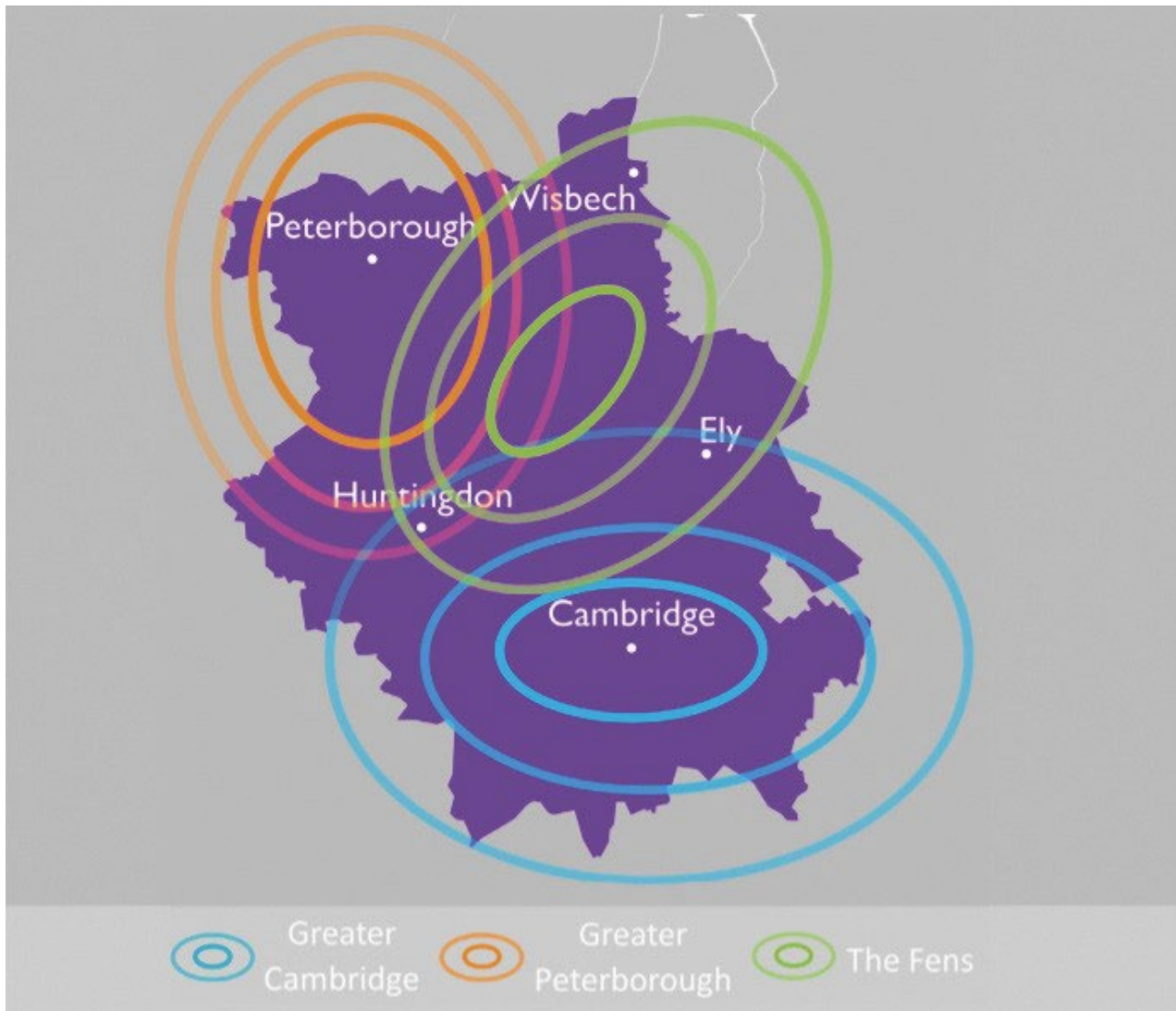
strategy highlighted that the Combined Authority area is home to three overlapping labour markets which inform the demand and flow of labour across the region, as highlighted in **map 1**. These are:

- Peterborough and surrounding areas (including North Huntingdonshire)
- The Fens (including Fenland, some of East Cambridgeshire and part of Huntingdonshire)
- Greater Cambridge area (including southern parts of Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire as a third).

The socio-economic makeup of these three sub-economies is explored in more detail in Chapter 3, which provides the evidence base for our local strategies set

out to meet our ambitions.

Map 1: Overview of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough SAP area and a breakdown of local 'sub-economies', Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Industrial Strategy



As mentioned, the Combined Authority Employment and Skills Board (ESB) also contains private sector board members who are drawn from across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to ensure aspread of representation of our key sectors and varying sizes of employers.

Currently, the ESB meets once every three months. You can access the minutes of our most recent meeting, including the latest data and evidence that gets presented to the board everyquarter, [here](#).

The lead contact for the Skills Advisory Panel in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is Fliss Miller, she can be reached at Fliss.miller@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk

Chapter 3: Skills strengths and needs

- A cross-cutting strength for the Combined Authority area comes through the devolved budget responsibilities attached to Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) areas. The devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) responsibilities gives us strength by providing the tools to support learners to secure foundation skills, progression and diversification and is pivotal in supporting the needs of local people into employment.
- Within the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Fenland is ranked third of all 316 local authorities nationally for Education, Skills and Training need, where 1 is most deprived. Peterborough is ranked 31st, which is the second lowest rank across the Combined Authority. These two areas show much higher levels of deprivation compared to other districts in the area. This directly translates to lower educational attainment.
- The Greater Cambridge area has the highest skilled population and best educational outcomes across the Combined Authority area, leading to a strong supply of skills.
- While Peterborough has lower educational attainment, the demand for work remains high. 79% of the working age population in Peterborough are economically active, the same as the England average.
- The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority benefits from an extensive network of further education (FE) providers, with a focus on the 16-19 (post 16) age group. These institutions seek to maximise the employability of students, through the delivery of vocational qualifications and training.
- The employment sectors which have seen the most growth between 2019 and 2021 are Green Jobs, Agri-Tech and Construction, all of which have seen over a 50% increase in vacancies in this time, this is against a 5% increase across all vacancies.

area has seen a 7.6% increase in total population since 2011. The socio-economic and demographic makeup of this growing population, which makes the area unique, is explored in detail in Annex A.

The core indicators covered in Annex A help to underpin our local understanding of the variation in skills strengths and needs across the region. This variation is reflective of the three distinctive sub-economies of the area, each having their own individual strengths and needs, and were defined within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER)² as:

- 1) **Greater Cambridge area** (which takes in Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire, and parts of Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire), while not without deprivation, is

¹ Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local population estimates and forecasts, Cambridgeshire County Council.

² Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER).

prosperous and attracts many international businesses to come to the area and grow. **Skills levels and wages are high.** In the Greater Cambridge economy, businesses have brought about revolutionary advances in a wide array of fields, transforming lives around the world.

Growth within the **Greater Cambridge sub-economy has not been entirely positive.** There is a future risk of increasing housing and living costs in the area causing society to continue to **drift away from less well-paid workers**, whilst the ageing of the city (whose housing ladder's bottom rung is out of reach of the vast majority of the young) will threaten its dynamism.

- 2) **Peterborough and surrounding areas**, where there is much industry and potential; however, deprivation levels are higher, and many residents feel untouched by the economic success of the Greater Cambridge area. **It has a lower proportion of higher-level skills than elsewhere in the area, and educational and health outcomes in Peterborough are relatively poor.**

The city's industrial origins, first in brickmaking, and then manufacturing, have laid the foundations for a dynamic business environment. **It continues to be a magnet for engineering talent**, and trades well upon its connection to strategic infrastructure (which caused the city to boom in the first place).

- 3) **The Fens** are in some ways the most challenged economically of the three. Many market towns have lost their former glory and struggle to attract or retain young people. The development of the knowledge economy, with its high premium on proximity and agglomeration, has left **rural communities struggling to maintain distinctive high-value industries.**

However, 50% of UK Grade 1 agricultural land is found in the Fens. There is immense potential for the fens to be renowned as **the apex of British agricultural production.**

Each of these individual sub-economies help us to understand skills demands within the collective Combined Authority area. The current demand for skills across the Combined Authority is determined by its sectoral makeup and the types of businesses that are active within the area. The CPIER³ and its interim reports also identified the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough economy to have demonstrable specialisms and strengths in the following **strategic growth sectors:**

- Agriculture and Food (Agri-tech)
- Life Sciences
- IT and Digital
- Manufacturing, Advanced Manufacturing and Materials
- Logistics and Distribution
- Education and Professional Services

Engagement with local councillors and business leads also identified **Health and Social Care** and **Construction** as growth sectors.

In addition to the above growth sectors, the following sectors are among those considered a priority across government, most of which overlap with those identified locally:

³ Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER)

- Adult Social Care
- Construction (including buildings/retrofit)
- Digital and Technology
- Haulage and Logistics
- Manufacturing.
- Green Jobs⁴

The below table highlights demand in the sectors discussed above through local vacancy data, looking at change in demand in these sectors from 2019 to 2021 demonstrates which sectors have seen the most growth. **The sectors which have seen the most growth in this time are Green Jobs, Agri-Tech and Construction, all of which have seen over a 50% increase in vacancies from 2019 to 2021, this is against a 5% increase across all vacancies.** Demand in Education has decreased in this time, with less vacancies, on average, in 2021 than in 2019. In 2020/21 the Health, Public Services and Care subject sector saw the second highest proportion of adult education and training achievements across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This sector along with Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies also saw high proportions of apprenticeship achievements, suggesting a strong supply of employees for these relevant growth sectors.

Sector	Average monthly vacancies in 2019	Average monthly vacancies in 2021	% Growth
Agriculture & Food (Agri-Tech)	463	746	61%
Adult Social Care	3,339	3,809	14%
Construction	2,427	3,684	52%
Digital and Technology*	5,112	6,839	+34%
Education	2,543	2,269	-11%
Green Jobs	131	219	67%
Haulage and Logistics	1,478	1,951	32%
Life Sciences	323	373	16%
Manufacturing	4,734	6,114	29%
All sectors	47,976	50,508	5%

* digital sector definition calculated using DCMS Digital Sector SOC code definition.

The growth sectors listed above are the most dynamic and offer the best prospects for future growth and prosperity. These sectors are used to determine the focus of the Skills Strategy, as discussed in [Chapter 4](#).

The Combined Authority works to ensure the highest possible quality of training across the region, working in collaboration with regional training and skills providers to match supply with the demand of the three local sub-economies.

These local ambitions sit alongside a range of work which will be progressed collectively across the Cambridge-Oxford Arc, a world-leading economic area. This growth will be

⁴ Green jobs are calculated by EMSI, who use over 350 job titles to identify green vacancies. The top 5 titles over the last three years are:

1. Environmental Consultants
2. Environmental Health and Safety Specialists
3. Environmental Health and Safety Managers
4. Wind Turbine Technicians
5. Environmental Advisors

underpinned by a high-quality environment, which will create jobs and boost local and regional economies.⁵

Local policy context

A cross-cutting strength for the Combined Authority area comes through the **devolved budget responsibilities attached to Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) areas**. These responsibilities provide the strength of having greater flexibility to match local skills supply with demand.

These devolved responsibilities help to facilitate targeted commissioning to meet the skills needs of our individual sub-economies and growth sectors.

Summary of skills strengths across the area and our sub-economies

Local Population

The Greater Cambridge area has the highest skilled population and best educational outcomes across the Combined Authority area, leading to a strong supply of skills. This is explored further in our Skills Supply Section of Annex A. While Peterborough has lower educational attainment, as highlighted in Core Indicator 11, the **demand for work remains high. 78% of the working age population in Peterborough are economically active, only slightly below the England average of 79%⁶**. As highlighted in the **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Skills Strategy⁷** the working age population is projected to grow more slowly than the national average.

Growth Sectors

Strengths in skills demand come from our individual sub-economies and growth sectors. The growth sectors across the Combined Authority area offer a local strength in skills demand, as they allow for significant occupational crossover, with many commonalities between the skills required for different occupations within these sectors. **This offers opportunities of transferability of skills within our growth sectors.**

Each of the individual growth sectors offer key strengths to the local area. For example, in recent decades, life sciences has become one of the UK's greatest business strengths, and **the reach of the biomedical industry in the Greater Cambridge area is international.** Similarly, in the north of the area, the CPIER discusses the **Combined Authority's very strong high-tech manufacturing base.** With a manufacturing history in Peterborough, large firms such as [Caterpillar](#) have engineering bases there.

Provision

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority **benefits from an extensive network of further education (FE) providers**, with a focus on the 16-19 (post 16) age group. **These institutions seek to maximise the employability of students**, through the delivery of vocational qualifications and training. They also deliver more traditional academic qualifications and **provide an important bridge for those looking to progress to higher education (HE).**

We have a vast range of FE colleges across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, delivering a wide variety of different courses. Some of our key institutions such as [Cambridge Regional College](#), [Long Road Sixth Form College](#), [Hills Road Sixth Form College](#), the [College of West Anglia](#), [City College Peterborough](#) and the [Inspire Education Group](#) in Peterborough **provide**

⁵ Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Industrial Strategy: A Partner in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

⁶ Annual Population Survey: July 2020-June 2021.

⁷ Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Employment and Skills Strategy; October 2021.

the majority of FE provision in the area. There are also 16 School Sixth-Forms providing academic pathways and two University Technical Colleges in the region for 14-19 year olds.

One of the **key strengths of skills supply across the area is local Higher Education provision in the south of the Combined Authority area** which is home to the [University of Cambridge](#), one of the world's leading academic centres and [Anglia Ruskin University](#), an innovative global university.

Delivery

The two maps outlined in Annex B illustrate where further education courses are being delivered and where the learners who are undertaking these courses reside. This demonstrates **that most FE courses are being delivered within Cambridge and Peterborough, with some higher concentrations of delivery evident near the market towns.**

The devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) responsibilities gives us strength by providing the tools to support learners to secure foundation skills, progression and diversification and is pivotal in supporting the needs of local people into employment. Improving workforce development is crucial to achieving the economic development of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, particularly in those areas where levels of educational attainment are currently low.

Strength in the local supply has also come through apprenticeship delivery, where we have seen higher proportions of apprenticeship starts in higher apprenticeships. **The Combined Authority is also a net importer of learners.** 1,365 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough residents learn outside of the area, while 1,500 learners live outside Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and study within the geography, resulting in a net inflow of 135 learners⁸.

Understanding the variation in skills needs across the area and our sub-economies

Detailed analysis into skills supply and demand has shown **skills deficits and lower quality employment in the north of the economy**⁹. There is variation in the socio-economic make up across the Combined Authority area and variation in deprivation (Core Indicator 10) directly reflects localised skills strengths and needs.

Within the Indices of Multiple Deprivation¹⁰, Fenland is ranked third of all 316 local authorities nationally for Education, Skills and Training need, where 1 is most deprived. Peterborough is ranked 31st, which is the second lowest rank across the Combined Authority. These two areas show much higher levels of deprivation compared to other districts in the area. **This directly translates to lower educational attainment.** East Cambridgeshire also shows higher levels of relative deprivation for Education, Skills and Training relative to its overall deprivation rank.

While we have real strengths in HE provision in the south of the Combined Authority, there are **clear gaps in HE provision in the north**, where there is a limited HE offer through Peterborough University Centre, a partnership between Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) and

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⁹ Annual Population Survey, September 2020; Business Register and Employment Survey, 2019; Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2014-2019; and Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019.

¹⁰ The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation in England and is part of a suite of outputs that form the Indices of Deprivation (IoD). It follows an established methodological framework in broadly defining deprivation to encompass a wide range of an individual's living conditions. For more information see: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835115/IoD2019_Statistical_Release.pdf

Peterborough College. Equally, whilst HE provision is a real strength in the southern parts of the Combined Authority area, data on University graduates, as outlined in Core Indicator 19, **indicates that the majority of graduates from HEIs in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough move away from the area after completing their studies, representing a loss of skilled labour and economic capacity.** As we explore further in [Chapter 4, ARU Peterborough](#) will be a regional HE provider, with a strategic aim of delivering courses that will meet the skills needs of our local sub-economies, whilst addressing the lack of HE provision in the north.

Parts of Peterborough, the Fens and the surrounding areas generally experience greater economic inactivity compared to the rest of Cambridgeshire, **suggesting a sub-economy marked by longer-term issues relating to engagement and long-term alienation.** The pattern of supply suggests that there is an area-wide reliance on migrant workers in the north of the local economy as well as a suggestion that any **future employer demands will have to be met from a proportionately smaller working age population as the existing population continues to grow and age.**

Local needs relating to skills are not restricted to just the north of the Combined Authority area and there are challenges that the area faces as a whole. In terms of needs surrounding matching skills supply with demand, core indicators in Annex A show that for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as a whole, **the primary driver of hard-to-fill vacancies has been low numbers of generally suitable applicants, with those lacking suitable skills also a challenge.**

Within the strength of the Combined Authority growth sectors there are also challenges relating to the demand for unique skills. For example, Agri-Tech demand specific skills and **therefore skills gaps in the sector may be harder to fill through employees transferring from other sectors and applying a common skill set.**

Impact of COVID-19 and factors influencing future skills demand

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **Greater Cambridge economy was the fastest growing economy in the UK, outside of London. It is arguably the most likely to rapidly reverse the impacts of COVID-19** on overall output and regain its previous growth trajectory, which is vital for the UK's sustainable economy.

The long-term impacts of COVID-19 on the labour market and the skills that employers need from the workforce remain unknown but factors influencing future skills demand include:

- **Structurally higher unemployment** as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to endure for some time and the burden will **fall disproportionately on more deprived people and places.**
- The crisis has **sped up the process of digital technology adoption in businesses.** In addition to the current disruption to labour markets and workplaces, technological adoption by companies will transform tasks, jobs and skills over the next five years.
- The spatial pattern of economic activity and the relationships between places for work, living, leisure and learning are changing. The 'future of work' has already arrived for a large majority of the online white-collar workforce. Now more workplaces and occupations are amenable to remote working, **skills gaps may increasingly be filled by workers not physically near their workplace.**

Despite these short-term challenges for the area, the strengths and opportunities that the area offers have also been highlighted in our skills deep dive. This includes:

- Post COVID-19 prospects for the **Life Sciences sector remain strong. Firms in the sector have held up well across the board.**
- Government target to increase national spending on Research and Development by a third will be delivered by the Life Sciences Sector. Continued strong skills demand is expected.
- Workers across many of our **priority sectors** have in general been **well placed to switch to remote working over the course of 2020**. A key consideration for the future is the extent to which some of this switch to remote working becomes a permanent characteristic of the sector's workforce.

Concluding statement

Through this Chapter we have identified that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has a diverse economy and has a number of strengths to build on and specific skills needs to address. Our strength of having devolved powers through being an MCA area means that **our local strategies are underpinned by the need to capitalise on our strengths and target funding to meet our needs.**

Chapter 4: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Skills Strategy

Through recognising the unique strengths of our three sub-economies and our growth sectors we can capitalise on the opportunities to match the supply and demand of skills. **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is in a favourable position in that it is a Combined Authority in which the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), known as the Business Board, is coterminous.** This ensures connectivity between the business community and the education and skills leaders in the region.

The Combined Authority – advised by the SAP – take a programmatic lead of funding in the region. **Skills Supply is directly influenced by skills demand, thus creating a dynamic and responsive skills environment in each of the three sub-economies identified Chapter 3.**

The Combined Authority devolution deal established an agreement between Government, the seven local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnership to devolve a range of funding, powers and responsibilities.

The devolution of skills powers to the Combined Authority framed the impetus for developing the previous Skills Strategy. It provided **a framework within which expenditure against strategic priorities to inform** the best use of the devolved Adult Education Budget. It also guided expenditure to ensure that businesses have the skills they need to improve productivity and drive economic growth.

Given the fast-moving pace of the skills requirement in a post COVID era, along with the impact of Brexit, requirements of NetZero and the evolution of the LERS, the **Skills Strategy has been refreshed to reflect the changing skills needs and challenges in the current and predicted future economic context.**

An updated vision

Building on the ambition for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough set out in the 2019 skills strategy, the updated vision is for:

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 still has work to do 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. Employers can access the skills they need for their staff, providers work collaboratively across our area, and the Combined Authority and place leaders empower, enable and convene.

The updated vision also defines new themes on which to focus our strategy. These reflect the four areas where residents and employers can benefit most from an ambitious skills system that supports the development of life and work skills, and through which the area grows a strong and inclusive labour market.

Core themes for employment and skills



Pre-work learning and formal education

People can access learning and experiences during formal education that provide a strong foundation for labour market entry and future working lives.



Employer access to talent

Employers both drive and consume a dynamic market of skills provision, which shapes the current and future workforce.



Life-wide learning and training

People are aware of their learning needs and opportunities and able to access provision that enables their development.



Support into and between work

Coordinated support is available for those who need additional assistance to transition into or between work.

Whilst the detail of the action required to ensure these elements are in place will evolve as time passes and the context changes, these themes should remain stable, setting the direction *and* providing a reference point to maintain course.





To guide action under each of these themes the strategy document sets out a series of long-term outcomes and progress measures, to steer the work of partners across the area in achieving the vision and enabling people, employers, providers and place leaders to experience the skills system in this way.

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. Focus now and in the first five years will be on the following short-term priorities:

Short-term priorities

Pre-work learning and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving careers education, specifically around STEM and green skills, as well as information, advice and guidance
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<p>formal education</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Employer access to talent</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting covid recovery, growth and net-zero transition by developing priority skills and responding to acute issues • Driving up and sustaining employers' engagement with and influence on education and training • Embedding modern work practices and conditions and improving job quality
<p>Life-wide learning and training</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, further digitisation, as net-zero transition intensifies) • Increasing work-based learning, particularly apprenticeships, and introducing more accessible formats (e.g. short courses/online/blended learning).
<p>Support into and between work</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting unemployed and NEETs into training and employment • Providing support for disadvantaged groups to access the labour market • Targeting support for Covid-19 recovery and transitions for displaced workers

To deliver on short-term priorities, CPCA will set strategic delivery plans with five-year terms that will form part of the wider Business and Skills Strategy. Detailed action plans will be developed and agreed for each Local Authority, addressing short-term priorities in such a way that action will move forward the process of delivering the long-term vision.

These action plans take into account:

Things already in motion - activities/interventions which are funded, approved and are either already being delivered or which will be delivered over the next five years.

Things needed in the future - activities/interventions which are needed to underpin longer term and future development/growth, for which additional exploration, investment and potentially system change will be required.

Together partners across the area will start preparing the ground now for some bigger change projects that the vision calls for. Some of these can be contributed to by shorter-term projects, but they will need further scoping and iterative development to ensure all partners and stakeholders are brought along the change journey.

Three change projects have been identified to ensure **effective** provision is delivered using an **agile** approach, in a way suited to the nuances of **our places**:

1. A regional curriculum enabling strategic collaboration across providers, with learning and training aligned to local job opportunities and careers.
2. A dual-track system, anticipating long-term needs and responding with agility in the short-term.
3. A coordinated place-based action framework, to engage all stakeholders in addressing multiple/complex issues.

Cutting across all of these will be ongoing the action of CPCA, Local Authorities and Cambridge and Peterborough Integrated Care System to work together, and with wider partners, to place health and wellbeing at the centre of system development and delivery.

A visual of the Employment and Skills strategy is detailed below:



Chapter 5: Skills Action Plan

As discussed in the previous Chapter the new Employment and Skills Strategy has informed a comprehensive action plan that will be reviewed twice a year by both the Employment and Skills Board (SAP) and the Skills Committee. The action plan has been created by place, recognising the differing needs across the Combined Authority. The action plan will be reviewed on a six monthly basis.

Strategic action: Fenland

	Pre-work and formal education	Employer access to talent	Life-wide learning and training	Support into and between work
Strategic priorities				
First priorities for Fenland:	Widening education access and participation and increasing school achievement at level 3	Supporting businesses to start up, grow and create good jobs – upskilling people in leadership and management	Providing support to upskill and reskill in response to economic restructuring (e.g. following Covid-19, Brexit, further digitisation, as net-zero transition intensifies)	Supporting unemployed, NEETs and young people into training and employment
	<p>Connecting people to education and training through transport and digital inclusion</p> <p>Enhancing exposure to role models, work experience, and understanding of various routes into sectors and occupations</p> <p>Capital investment to improve teaching facilities and kit, particularly at FE</p> <p>Focus of increasing level 4+ qualifications on in-work training and progression</p> <p>Improving careers education, information, advice and guidance</p>	<p>Supporting Covid recovery, growth and net-zero transition by developing priority skills and responding to acute issues</p> <p>Embedding modern work practices and conditions and improving job quality</p> <p>Increasing employers' engagement and influence on education and training and connecting residents in Fenland to opportunities across the area</p>	<p>Increasing work-based learning, particularly apprenticeships, and introducing more accessible formats (e.g. short courses/ online/blended learning)</p> <p>Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age</p>	<p>Targeting support for Covid-19 recovery and transitions for displaced workers</p> <p>Providing support for disadvantaged groups to access the labour market</p> <p>Connecting people to work through transport and digital inclusion</p>
Actions				
	<p>College of West Anglia Wisbech campus development</p> <p>Expand employers engaging with schools and colleges in T Level placements</p> <p>Continue to deliver Growth Works Talent Pledge – linking employers to schools and colleges and enterprise advisers, and providing careers advice</p> <p>Social value contracts - require businesses receiving local funding to do outreach in schools</p>	<p>CRF – Start and Grow pre-start up and micro business enterprise skills support for individuals</p> <p>Expand Growth Works in business management and leadership emphasising job design and creation, and skills training for small business leaders</p> <p>Continue delivery of Growth Works Skills Brokerage and Digital Talent Platform and engagement model</p> <p>Rapid response skill gap mapping for Recover/Brexit</p>	<p>Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age</p> <p>Direct AEB funding to priority skills needs, use AEB Innovation Fund to pilot new forms of training provision</p> <p>Green Jobs Action Plan and build on success of Form the Future model, supporting skills for the future</p>	<p>CRF – Turning Point funded internships and short courses for work re-entry and digital/management</p> <p>Deliver local ESF projects up to 2023 focused on young people, NEETs, ex-offenders, and furthest from labour market, and national DWP support</p> <p>Add Work and Health Programme to Growth Works</p> <p>Expand short courses through innovative course design, such as skills bootcamps</p>
Progress measures				
	<p>Increasing proportion of vocational courses age 16-18 studied at Level 3</p> <p>Increasing progression rates post-18 into HE and FE towards national levels</p>	<p>Increasing number of professional & technical jobs, at least at level 3</p>	<p>Reducing numbers of workers at level 1 and increasing at level 3</p> <p>Increasing rates of in-work training (provided flexibility at various levels)</p>	<p>Falling levels of economic inactivity and UC claimants</p> <p>Increasing investment in connectivity</p> <p>Reducing unsustained destinations after school</p>

Strategic action: Peterborough

	Pre-work and formal education	Employer access to talent	Life-wide learning and training	Support into and between work
Strategic priorities				
First priorities for Peterborough:	Widening education access and participation, increasing school achievement, and progression into technical education	Supporting Covid recovery, growth and net-zero transition by developing priority skills and responding to acute issues in priority sectors such as manufacturing and digital	Providing support to upskill and reskill in response to economic restructuring (e.g. following Covid-19, Brexit, further digitisation, as net-zero transition intensifies)	Supporting unemployed, NEETs and young people from deprived communities into training and employment
	<p>Increasing level 4+ qualifications through progression and access into HE locally</p> <p>Enhancing exposure to role models, work experience, and understanding of various routes into sectors and occupations</p> <p>Capital investment to improve teaching facilities and kit, particularly at FE</p> <p>Improving careers education, information, advice and guidance</p>	<p>Higher skilled jobs creation through innovation</p> <p>Embedding modern work practices and conditions and improving job quality</p> <p>Increasing employers' engagement and influence on education and training and connecting residents in Fenland to opportunities across the area</p>	<p>Creating and growing more level 3 and 4 jobs across sectors</p> <p>Increasing work-based learning, particularly apprenticeships, and introducing more accessible formats (e.g. short courses/online/blended learning)</p> <p>Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age</p>	<p>Targeting support for Covid-19 recovery and transitions for displaced workers</p> <p>Providing support for disadvantaged groups to access the labour market</p>
Actions				
	<p>Continue establishment and development of ARU Peterborough</p> <p>Green skills centre and net zero ARU programme</p> <p>Expand employers engaging with schools and colleges in T Level placements</p> <p>Continue to deliver Growth Works Talent Pledge – linking employers to schools and colleges and enterprise advisers, and providing careers advice</p> <p>Social value contracts - require businesses receiving local funding to do outreach in schools</p>	<p>Net-zero Green Skills Centre</p> <p>CRF – Start and Grow pre-start up and micro business enterprise skills support for individuals</p> <p>Energy Hub supply chain development</p> <p>Rapid response skill gap mapping for Recovery/Brexit</p> <p>Continue delivery of Growth Works Skills Brokerage and Digital Talent Platform, using Growth Works as a local engagement model</p>	<p>Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age</p> <p>AEB Innovation Fund - pilot new provision</p> <p>Green Jobs Action Plan and build on success of Form the Future model, supporting skills for the future</p>	<p>CRF – Turning Point funded internships and short courses for work re-entry and digital/management</p> <p>Deliver local ESF projects up to 2023 focused on young people, NEETs, ex-offenders, and furthest from labour market, and deliver DWP support</p> <p>Add Work and Health Programme to Growth Works model</p> <p>Expand short courses through innovative course design, such as skills bootcamps</p>
Progress measures				
	Increasing progression rates post-18 into HE, FE, and apprenticeships towards national levels	Increasing number of professional & technical jobs, at least at level 3	Reducing numbers of workers at level 1 and 2 and increasing at level 3 and 4	<p>Falling levels of economic inactivity and UC claimants</p> <p>Reducing NEETs and unsustainable destinations after school</p>

Strategic action: Huntingdonshire

	Pre-work and formal education	Employer access to talent	Life-wide learning and training	Support into and between work
Strategic priorities				
First priorities for Huntingdonshire:	Widening education access and participation and increasing progression and achievement at level 4+	Supporting Covid recovery, growth and net-zero transition by developing priority skills and responding to acute issues	Providing support to upskill and reskill in response to economic restructuring (e.g. following Covid-19, Brexit, further digitisation, as net-zero transition intensifies)	Targeting support for Covid-19 recovery and transitions for displaced workers
	<p>Growing numbers of apprentices delivered with local employers</p> <p>Enhancing exposure to role models, work experience, and understanding of various routes into sectors and occupations</p> <p>Capital investment to improve teaching facilities and kit</p> <p>Improving careers education, information, advice and guidance</p>	<p>Embedding modern work practices and conditions and improving job quality</p> <p>Increasing employers' engagement and influence on education and training and connecting residents in Fenland to opportunities across the area</p>	<p>Increasing work-based learning, particularly apprenticeships, and introducing more accessible formats (e.g. short courses/online/blended learning)</p> <p>Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age</p>	<p>Supporting unemployed into training and employment</p>
Actions				
	<p>St Neots FE provision improvements</p> <p>Continue delivery of Apprenticeship Levy Pooling, apprenticeship delivery through local development projects at level 3 upwards for young people</p> <p>Expand employers engaging with schools and colleges in T Level placements</p> <p>Continue to deliver Growth Works Talent Pledge – linking employers to schools and colleges and enterprise advisers, and providing careers advice</p>	<p>CRF – Start and Grow pre-start up and micro business enterprise skills support for individuals</p> <p>Rapid response skill gap mapping for Recovery/Brexit</p> <p>Continue delivery of Growth Works Skills Brokerage and Digital Talent Platform, using Growth Works as a local engagement model</p>	<p>Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age</p> <p>Direct AEB funding to priority skills needs, use AEB Innovation Fund to pilot new forms of training provision</p> <p>Green Jobs Action Plan and build on success of Form the Future model, supporting skills for the future</p>	<p>Deliver local ESF projects up to 2023 focused on young people, NEETs, ex-offenders, and those furthest from the labour market, and deliver national Covid support programmes with DWP</p> <p>Add Work and Health Programme to Growth Works model</p> <p>Expand short courses through innovative course design, such as skills bootcamps</p>
Progress measures				
	Increasing progression rates post-18 into FE and apprenticeships towards national levels	Increasing number of professional & technical jobs, particularly in priority sectors	Increasing receipts of/participation in careers IAG for adults	Reducing unsustainable destinations after school

Strategic action: East Cambridgeshire

	Pre-work and formal education	Employer access to talent	Life-wide learning and training	Support into and between work
Strategic priorities				
First priorities for East Cambs:	Widening education access and progression into HE, increasing achievement at level 4+	Supporting Covid recovery, growth and net-zero transition by developing priority skills, and growing jobs at level 4	Increasing work-based learning, particularly progression into level 4 skills, and introducing more accessible formats (e.g. short courses/online/blended learning)	Targeting support for Covid-19 recovery and transitions for displaced workers
	Capital investment to improve teaching facilities and kit, particularly at FE Connecting people to education and training through transport and digital inclusion Enhancing exposure to role models, work experience, and understanding of various routes into sectors and occupations Improving careers education, information, advice and guidance	Increasing employers' engagement and influence on education and training and connecting residents in Fenland to opportunities across the area Embedding modern work practices and conditions and improving job quality	Providing support to upskill and reskill in response to economic restructuring (e.g. following Covid-19, Brexit, further digitisation, as net-zero transition intensifies) Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age	Connecting people to work through transport and digital inclusion Supporting unemployed into training and employment
Actions				
	Development of FE provision Expand employers engaging with schools and colleges in T Level placements Continue to deliver Growth Works Talent Pledge – linking employers to schools and colleges and enterprise advisers, and providing careers advice	Rapid response skill gap mapping for Recovery/Brexit Continue delivery of Growth Works Skills Brokerage and Digital Talent Platform, using Growth Works as a local engagement model	Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age Direct AEB funding to priority skills needs, use AEB Innovation Fund to pilot new forms of training provision Green Jobs Action Plan and build on success of Form the Future model, supporting skills for the future	Deliver local ESF projects up to 2023 focused on young people, NEETs, ex-offenders, and those furthest from the labour market, and deliver national Covid support programmes with DWP Add Work and Health Programme to Growth Works model Expand short courses through innovative course design, such as skills bootcamps
Progress measures				
	Increasing progression rates post-18 into HE and FE towards national levels	Increasing number of professional & technical jobs, at least at level 3	Reducing numbers of workers at level 2 and increasing at level 3	Increasing investment in connectivity Reducing unsustained destinations after school

Strategic action: Cambridge City

	Pre-work and formal education	Employer access to talent	Life-wide learning and training	Support into and between work
Strategic priorities				
First priorities for Cambridge:	Ensuring access to technical education, apprenticeship and training choices are available to students not following A Level and university routes	Supporting Covid recovery, growth and net-zero transition by developing priority skills and responding to acute issues	Increasing work-based learning, particularly apprenticeships and for those with lower level skills, and introducing more accessible formats (e.g. short courses/ online/blended learning)	Targeting support for Covid-19 recovery and transitions for displaced workers
	Capital investment to improve teaching facilities and kit, and expanding access Improving careers education, information, advice and guidance, particularly for students not following A Level and university routes	Increasing employers' engagement and influence on education and training and connecting residents in Fenland to opportunities across the area Opening up access in priority sectors to students following vocational and technical routes	Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age	Providing support for disadvantaged people to access the labour market Supporting unemployed into training and employment
Actions				
	Continue delivery of Apprenticeship Levy Pooling, apprenticeship delivery through local development projects at level 3 upwards for young people All Age Careers Advice throughout school years Continue to deliver Growth Works Talent Pledge – linking employers to schools and colleges and enterprise advisers, and providing careers advice	Rapid response skill gap mapping for Recovery/Brexit Continue delivery of Growth Works Skills Brokerage and Digital Talent Platform, using Growth Works as a local engagement model	Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age Direct AEB funding to priority skills needs, use AEB Innovation Fund to pilot new forms of training provision Green Jobs Action Plan and build on success of Form the Future model, supporting skills for the future	Deliver local ESF projects up to 2023 focused on young people, NEETs, ex-offenders, and those furthest from the labour market, and deliver national Covid support programmes with DWP Add Work and Health Programme to Growth Works model Expand short courses through innovative course design, such as skills bootcamps
Progress measures				
	Increasing progression rates post-18 into FE and apprenticeships towards national levels for young people following vocational routes	Reversing employment level decline	Increasing rates of in-work training (provided flexibility at various levels)	Reducing localised inequalities

Strategic action: South Cambridgeshire

	Pre-work and formal education	Employer access to talent	Life-wide learning and training	Support into and between work
Strategic priorities				
First priorities for South Cambs:	Widening progression into HE from local schools and into FE and technical education	Supporting Covid recovery, growth and net-zero transition by developing priority skills and responding to acute issues	Increasing work-based learning to support growing productivity, and introducing more accessible formats (e.g. short courses/online/blended learning)	Targeting support for Covid-19 recovery and transitions for displaced workers
	Capital investment to improve teaching facilities and kit, particularly at FE Improving careers education, information, advice and guidance	Increasing employers' engagement and influence on education and training and connecting residents in Fenland to opportunities across the area	Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age	Supporting unemployed into training and employment
Actions				
	Continue delivery of Apprenticeship Levy Pooling, apprenticeship delivery through local development projects at level 3 upwards for young people All Age Careers Advice throughout school years Continue to deliver Growth Works Talent Pledge – linking employers to schools and colleges and enterprise advisers, and providing careers advice	Rapid response skill gap mapping for Recovery/Brexit Continue delivery of Growth Works Skills Brokerage and Digital Talent Platform, using Growth Works as a local engagement model	Improving access to careers information, advice and guidance at any age Direct AEB funding to priority skills needs, use AEB Innovation Fund to pilot new forms of training provision Green Jobs Action Plan and build on success of Form the Future model, supporting skills for the future	Deliver local ESF projects up to 2023 focused on young people, NEETs, ex-offenders, and those furthest from the labour market, and deliver national Covid support programmes with DWP Add Work and Health Programme to Growth Works model Expand short courses through innovative course design, such as skills bootcamps
Progress measures				
	Increasing progression rates post-18 into HE and FE towards national levels	Increasing number of professional & technical jobs, at least at level 3	Increasing receipts of/participation in careers IAG for adults	Reducing unsustained destinations after school

Chapter 6: Assessment of Progress

As the new Employment and Skills Strategy and action plan commences in January 2022 these actions are too new to assess. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the actions of the 2019 Skills Strategy and assesses progress made and those actions which are being carried forward into the new action plan.

2019 Strategy action	Progress
Opportunity Area to improve education in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire	Achieving – received additional year of funding from DfE – we want to make more progress on skills and market towns
Skills brokerage service and strong early engagement between businesses and providers including in careers advice with targeted support on STEM, T Levels, employer outreach, work readiness and careers pilots	Achieving – skills brokerage service launched in February 2021 as part of Growth Works
Apprenticeship levy pooling to improve access for SMEs, and provide placements through sector academy apprenticeship hubs across the area	Achieving – apprenticeship levy pooling mechanism in place, CPCA Skills, Training, Apprenticeship and Recruitment Hub in place
Connect local businesses in key sectors to the Digital Talent Portal for greater visibility of talent for employers and attracting young people to jobs through social media	Achieving – digital talent portal launched as part of Growth Works
Health and care sector work academy – 2,100 new learners	In progress – lower levels of uptake so far than expected – the project has been reprofiled with DWP to run to 2023
University for Peterborough that raises HE participation and aspiration, and delivers technical courses aligned to local employers’ needs and jobs of the future	In progress – ARU Peterborough in development and on track to open in 2022. Three phases of funding secured.
Work and Health Programme to support progression of adults into work who have become disconnected from the labour market	Achieving – DWP Restart contract with Reed replaced Work and Health Programme to operate over next 3 years

2019 Strategy action	Progress
Achieve a skills base that matches business needs through funding and programmes that CPCA has responsibility for – map AEB provision and improve provision through transition pilots and sector focused retraining schemes	In progress – sector retraining schemes launched in 2020, AEB progressing – fewer learners in 2020 than 2019 due to Covid
Lobby government for further devolution opportunities and to shape skills reforms to make an outcomes based and business led skills system	In progress – further lobbying on further devolution and local control of funding for skills, including National Careers Service and Careers and Enterprise Company activity
Sector pilots and skills hubs to overcome rurality with transport links	In progress – Chatteris hub in development

Enhancing Local Knowledge

Since the board was established, it has worked hard to make sure it is serviced with high quality data analysis and research. **The need to have timely labour market information has been magnified over the last twelve months as the partnership have looked to understand the impacts of COVID-19 and support local recovery planning.** This work has included monthly monitoring of key datasets as identified by the national SAP programme team and the receipt of quarterly data updates.

One of the priorities of the SAP is to understand the skills demand and skills supply in the region. To this end, additional work was commissioned to increase the analytical capacity

of the SAP. This included the production of the skills deep dive report, and the online publication of an interactive dashboard. The findings from **this report highlighted some gaps in the local evidence base and a further study will be commissioned.** This work, together with local intelligence, has informed the refresh of the skills strategy published in January 2022.

Through existing evidence, **there is a greater understanding of the three sub-economies and priority actions and funding has been allocated based on the differing localised needs.** This evidence continues to underpin our key strategies.

In February 2021, we launched a new Labour Market Information (LMI) Portal, providing high quality, reliable labour market information to two main audiences – learners making decisions about their future careers, and leaders looking for a better understanding of our region’s labour market.

Bringing together a series of interactive tools, the portal helps young people and careers advisors to understand the types of roles currently in demand, and the sectors that are growing, or likely to grow, in the near future.

This advice will help our learners get the information they need, empowering them to make informed decisions and build a rewarding career. For leaders, the LMI provides a strategic

overview of the regional labour market, including current skills shortages, opportunities, and how the local labour market affects our region's economy.

A further dashboard has been developed providing data on the skills supply and qualifications achieved within the Combined Authority. This is used to help understand the gaps in provision.

Impact on Local Skills Provision

The Combined Authority has significant strengths in its skills provision across the region which has already been highlighted in previous Chapters. Funding has been targeted through the priorities of the Skills Strategy and LERS. The Combined Authority **has encouraged a programmatic approach to the use of funds in the region.** This includes **the Adult Education Budget, Local Growth Fund, European Social Fund, Towns Fund and Market Towns Fund** amongst other smaller grants from Central Government Departments. The impact of these initiatives is evidenced throughout this Chapter, linked to the different sections of the Skills Action Plan in **Chapter 5.**

Development of a New University

The ARU Peterborough University campus will open in September 2022 with an initial intake of 2,000 students, with future phases of development allowing for up to 7,000 students by the 2030/31 academic year. The campus will be developed via a phased approach, with each phase introducing a new teaching or research building as viability is established. Success of the early phases of the project becomes the foundation for reinvesting in later phases. Existing development plans for the phases are:

- **Phase 1: First Teaching Building** [under construction] - Establish the ARU Peterborough campus in the city via the first teaching building, providing space for 2,000 students from September 2022 and 3,000 in total, studying Health, Social Care, Education, Management, Finance and Law.
- **Phase 2: Net Zero Innovation Incubator** [under construction] - Build a base of innovative and collaborative start-ups to support bottom-up development of the innovation ecosystem: 20 hi-tech start-ups and scale-ups building an indigenous innovation ecosystem specialising in net zero technologies in an innovation incubator on the ARU Peterborough campus with Photocentric as anchor tenant, generating jobs for ARU graduates to enter in the local innovation ecosystem.
- **Phase 3: Second Teaching Building and Living Lab** [funding secured] - Grow the University via a second teaching building supporting 1,000 more students from 2024/25 and 1,750 more students in total, expanding its curriculum into STEM fields and embedding the University in Peterborough through the Living Lab and Cultural Quarter. The Living Lab will be a public-facing, high-quality interactive science centre for Peterborough with public space for exhibitions and events, designed to stimulate and inspire more young people into STEM sectors, particularly in net zero opportunities.
- **Phase 4: Peterborough Research Institute & R&D Programme** – Attract a major Research Institute onto the university campus in Peterborough to support bottom-up

development of the innovation ecosystem focused on net zero technologies. The Research Institute will develop and lead an R&D Programme (the **Peterborough and Fenland Innovate to Grow Programme**) which will help to spread research from the Research Institute and its industrial members into local businesses, enabling collaboration in the ecosystem and creating opportunities for local businesses to link into the Research Institute's global network of major net zero-focused businesses. The ultimate effect of this 'top down' approach to establishing an innovation ecosystem is to stimulate individual and supply chain based local business growth and attract more larger, higher value and knowledge intensive businesses into the region, growing local demand for higher-level skills, aligned to ARU Peterborough's curriculum.

- **Phase 5: Third Teaching Building & Sports Science Facility** – Expand further the teaching capacity with space for an additional 2,250 students on the embankment campus for a total student headcount of 7,000 by 2030/31, allowing the university to reach a critical mass. This Phase will include the relocation of the current Embankment Athletics Track to produce a Sports Science Facility in Peterborough. Like the Living Lab within the Phase 3 building, these sports facilities will be open to the public and play an active role in increasing sports and fitness engagement across the city.

Adult Education Budget

The Combined Authority has continued to build on the strong foundations and governance of devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) that was established during the first year of devolution in 2019/20, into the 2020/21 academic year. Through the evidence provided by the independent evaluation undertaken by Cambridgeshire Insights, published in February 2022, overall, the programme has continued to deliver despite the pandemic and there is emerging evidence of greater impact and commissioned providers pivoting towards delivery of the regional skills strategy.

A core budget of £11.9m is devolved to the Combined Authority which represents only 0.9% of the national AEB. There was an additional £1.3m funding for High Value Courses, Sector Based Work Academies, and the level 3 Adult Offer during 2020/21.

The Combined Authority commissioned the majority of its allocation, amounting to £9m to six further education colleges, three local authorities and one sixth-form college through grant funding agreements. This was supplemented with four independent training providers to a contract value of £1.6m.

Both enrolments and participation have increased year on year, as shown in the table below, bucking the national trend where anecdotal evidence from colleges and providers suggests enrolments and participation both declined, due to the pandemic. As can be seen, Community Learning saw a dramatic increase in both participation and enrolments. However, this remains balanced, representing 23% of provision, compared to over 47% pre-devolution. Providers introduced online and blended learning across both adult skills and community learning courses, which helped to increase participation. Overall, in 2021, performance was strong - 16,000 enrolments were profiled and 15,360 were achieved (96%).

	2019/20	2020/21	% Change	
Enrolments - Adult skills	11,738	11,848	0.9%	↑
Learners - Adult skills	7,251	7,512	3.6%	↑
Enrolments - Community learning	2,329	3,512	51%	↑
Learners - Community learning	1,841	2,794	52%	↑
TOTAL Enrolments	14,067	15,360	9%	↑
TOTAL no of learners	8,848	9,802	11%	↑

The following funding flexibilities that were provided in 2020/21:

- Fully funded first full level 2 qualification for all ages
- Fully funded English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Low wage threshold set at £18,000 before fees become payable
- A four per cent funding uplift for the 20 per cent most deprived post-codes (IMD 2019)

In addition to maintaining participation levels and enrolments, level 3 enrolments were increased from a low base of 0.94% of enrolments in 2019/20 to 1.4% in 2020/21. As of period five, 2021/22, these have increased to 4% of enrolments. Our policy intention is to increase level 3 enrolments to at least 10% of all enrolments.

In addition to the funding flexibilities introduced in 2020/21, a considerable package of funding flexibilities and enhancements have been implemented for 2021/22, deviating from the national funding system and providing greater access to fully funded adult skills programmes, including:

- Continuing to fully fund first level 2 courses for all ages
- Continuing to fully funding English for Speakers of Other Languages (and flexibility to pilot delivery of ESOL in the workplace)
- Fully funding first level 3 courses for all ages and second Level 3 in priority sectors (and for the unemployed looking to reskill)
- Piloting a level 4 and 5 course offer for the low-waged
- Lifting the threshold for low-waged to £20,000 (nationally it is £17,374)
- Providing a bursary of £1200 for Care Leavers aged 19-22 to continue in education
- Providing a four per cent funding uplift for learners from the 20 per cent most deprived localities across the sub-region
- Providing a 10 per cent funding uplift for 19–24-year-olds, to provide greater support for young people to progress to employment or Higher Education

- Allowing funding to be used for purchasing digital devices during the pandemic to tackle digital exclusion.

AEB Innovation Funds

The Innovation Fund was introduced in the 2020/21 academic year to encourage our existing provider base to test and explore new ways of delivering education and training that addresses the AEB Commissioning Strategy priorities. Projects which reduced skills and employment gaps of CPCA residents, disproportionately underrepresented in the labour market. These groups include the unemployed and those with special educational needs and disabilities. For 2020/21 the priorities of the fund were to support innovative proposals that support and maximise participation, the main themes were:

- Improving participation in digital skills training
- English for Speakers of Other Languages
- Support for those affected by jobs displacement and redundancy

The initial budget of £660,400 included £336,700 AEB matched with £323,700 Local Growth Fund (LGF). Of this £579,460 was allocated to five AEB providers across twelve projects. Capital funding was also provided for Adult and Community Learning (ACL) as part of the Innovation Fund and Local Growth Fund. This helped to address a disparity in the national FE capital funding system which has prevented ACL settings from investing in high-quality community infrastructure.

A second Innovation Fund of £500,000 was launched for the 2021/22 academic year fund, to support projects which piloted innovative engagement of atypical learners and enhancing employer responsive approaches to delivery.

Additional funding of £500,000 has been allocated for provider capacity building and collaborative projects. This will support new equipment and curriculum development. An evaluation of the Innovation Fund will be included in the 2021/22 independent evaluation report to look at the impact of these projects, as an additionality of the devolved system to test new approaches.

AEB Commissioning for 2022/23 and beyond

The Combined Authority Board have approved a new multi-year funding approach for grant funded providers from 2022-2025. This will provide them with stability and facilitate more efficient planning and investment of resources, infrastructure, and curriculum development.

In tandem a five-year Commissioning Cycle to grow the Independent Training Provider market and double the number of providers and funding available to £3.5m will be launched in February 2022.

The Skills Escalator - a refreshed AEB Commissioning Statement will be released in February to support and set-out the strategic intent for investment of our devolved AEB.

Community Learning

In providing a balanced and enriching local learning offer, the Combined Authority continues to invest in Community Learning and will plan for 20% of the devolved AEB

allocation to deliver this. The purpose of Community Learning is to develop the skills, confidence, motivation, and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds to:

- Re-engage in learning and progress towards formal learning or employment and/or
- Improve health and well-being, including mental health and/or
- Develop stronger communities.

The Combined Authority will co-produce with stakeholders a clearer specification for Community learning courses within the delivery strands:

1. Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) - learning for personal and community development, cultural enrichment, intellectual or creative stimulation and for enjoyment (in most cases not leading to a formal qualification)

2. Family English, Maths and Language - learning to improve the English, language and maths skills of parents, carers or guardians and their ability to support their children

3. Wider Family Learning - learning to help different generations of family members to learn together how to support their children's learning

4. Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC) - supporting local Voluntary and other third sector organisations to develop their capacity to deliver learning opportunities for the residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Community Learning plays an important role in our Life-wide Learning strand of the new Employment and Skills Strategy. Community Learning supports adults to re-enter learning at any age, through informal routes, short courses, taster sessions and in accessible community venues such as libraries, village schools and community centres. The two main providers of Community Learning are Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council and the intention is to strengthen our partnership to reinvigorate the community learning offer, particularly to support the local 'levelling up' agenda.

The Combined Authority's policy will continue to expect those residents who can't afford to pay for learning, particularly for 'leisure and pleasure' to contribute. AEB funding is targeted to addressing inequalities and supporting 'disadvantaged' learners and those furthest from the labour market.

We will expect all providers to capture the wider outcomes of learning, such as mental health and wellbeing, in-work progression, confidence and self-esteem and community connection.

Capital investment in the FE and ACL providers have included:

- A major capital investment at Cambridge Regional College (Huntingdon) to improve and increase construction skills facilities
- City College Peterborough – creation of a Health and Social Care Lab
- Cambridgeshire Skills – March Community Centre – intensive refurbishment of the centre
- West Suffolk College - purchase of kit and equipment to deliver construction skills bootcamps, IT and engineering facilities

- North Cambridge Training Centre - new facility funded by LGF

Technical Education and Apprenticeships

To further stimulate the demand of technical education pathways- with a specific emphasis on apprenticeships - from employers, the Combined Authority launched the Business Growth Service (BGS) in February 2021. BGS has four service lines that support businesses. By integrating all these services into one single-front-door BGS will create a total of 5,278 jobs. **We will better connect our places and business clusters and** provide across them a quality and connectivity of growth support that reflects, and has the **potential to develop towards, the support eco-system developed over half a century within Greater Cambridge.** To do this, the Service will expand and build on the growth support networks that are already present in and around Cambridge and develop a commercial marketplace for advisory and investment services, as well as a mentoring culture amongst supported entrepreneurs.

The Service will provide:

- (a) A Growth Coaching Service to engage and support our highest potential firms to speed their growth, build their capacity for growth, sustain their period of growth, or all three, to create 3,498 jobs.
- (b) An Inward Investment Service to better connect us into global markets, to engage and persuade firms to locate into our economy or invest in our strategic projects, to create 1,328 jobs.
- (c) A Skills Brokerage Service to link learners and those retraining for new jobs, to employers and skills providers to improve the supply of skills to our growth sectors, to provide 3,505 people with better skills for new jobs, including 1,600 apprenticeships. A new Digital Talent Portal will also be created to support this service.
- (d) A Capital Growth Investment Fund to help SMEs grow through organic expansion, offering an integrated range of grants, loans and equity products unavailable commercially, to create 1,500 jobs

Careers Education

The Combined Authority holds the contract with the **Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC)**. The CEC work to facilitate a world-class careers education, inspiring and preparing young people for the world of work. We have 72 Schools in the region with a total of 4 Enterprise Coordinators who work alongside employers, schools, colleges, and providers, to deliver high impact careers and enterprise support to young people (12-18yrs) **that is responsive to individual pupil needs and is underpinned by the internationally recognised Gatsby Career Benchmarks.**

The Combined Authority was successful in their bid for a Careers Hub, which was launched in September 2020. The Careers Hub supports 30 schools and colleges across all districts and it is the ambition of the Combined Authority to secure a second Careers Hub for the remaining 42 schools who are supported via the Enterprise

Advisor Network.

The Careers Hub allows the region to offer and trial innovative ways of improving Careers Education locally that will improve outcomes for young people, education and employers. Through the CPCA Careers Hub, Communities of Practice are being established to improve CEIAG in SEND schools ensuring it is relevant and meaningful with employer support aligned to the needs of the school and their pupils.

As part of the Opportunity Area, there is an established Cornerstone Group who are link directly with Schools. The Careers Hub is in the process of expanding this group to be more representative of businesses in the area to improve careers education, ensuring key skills for their sector are understood by teachers and education leaders, and by championing jobs in their local area.

In anticipation of the launch of the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), the Combined Authority has engaged with a range of stakeholders in the region to undertake a gap analysis on the current provision and to determine the need for future support within careers education. This activity will support the development of a bid that will support the development and delivery of careers provision in the area.

In January 2021 the Combined Authority will be launching their Experiences of Work Charter. This Charter is endorsed by the Mayor and is designed to offer young people wider opportunities of experiencing the workplace. We will be appealing to employers in the area to offer their support by pledging time, resource or experience to support our young people in understanding more about careers, skills and the opportunities available to them.

The Region, through Cambridge Ahead, is also asking Government for funding to develop a three-year pilot to test the recommendations from commissioned research by RAND Europe analysing the provision of career guidance in the region's schools. Findings show that current provision is failing to adequately meet the needs of young people as well as the needs of businesses. Institutions involved in the system, including schools, employers and providers, recognise the current failings and are committed to doing more for young people.

Cambridge Ahead identified five key recommendations for schools, providers, businesses and Government to take forward to improve the provision of career education in schools. At the heart of these is the need for additional capacity within schools as the foundation needed to build an effective system.

The Combined Authority, guided and advised by the SAP, is making an important and significant impact on the Region's provision of skills, increasing capacity in disciplines which are in most demand by employers. There is still work to do though, which will be realised through the refreshed skills strategy.

Chapter 7: Case Studies and Positive Impact Stories

The Skills Strategy details how the Combined Authority will enable sustainable futures by creating a culture of positive change. Evidence of impact is provided through a series of case studies.

Committed to community: Anglian Water upskilling workers and learners since 2013

Anglian Water, one of our Cornerstone employers for the Fens and East Cambridgeshire, believes businesses can and should make a positive difference to the communities they work within. They've committed to focus on a small number of locations in our region and give them the time and dedication needed to deliver valuable change.

Starting in Wisbech, alongside their Alliance partners, and with the help of Business in the Community, Anglian Water seconded a project manager into the town in 2013. Eight years on, that project manager is still there, embedded in the community, understanding its challenges and the actions required to make meaningful, long-term change. Over those eight years Anglian Water has developed a remarkable partnership with Fenland District Council, the Business Board and Combined Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council, the town's schools and colleges, and the local community.

Nurturing young minds

Anglian Water began working with Thomas Clarkson Academy in 2013, supporting assemblies and careers talks. It's since developed a varied programme, ranging from providing whole year group STEM-focused days for year 7, 8, 9, and 10 students, to holding mock interviews and digital solutions Insight Work Experience days for year 12 students. It's developed a close working relationship with the career lead at the academy and held an insight afternoon for all the school's staff to explore curriculum links. It's hosted an annual STEM-focused event to celebrate Women in Engineering Day, with separate days focusing on primary and secondary schools. All primary and secondary schools in Wisbech and the surrounding Fens have been invited to attend.

Ellie Shepherd, Cromwell Community College Student, said: 'I came here, and I didn't realise how many engineering jobs there were. I never really thought about it before and now I see how many opportunities there are.'

Leanne Searle, Assistant Head of Tech, said: 'It's been brilliant to see them engaged, working collaboratively and doing lots of things they wouldn't have the opportunity to do at school. We've really valued the day and had a brilliant time and met some interesting people too.'

Working closely with Thomas Clarkson Academy, Anglian Water has supported over 1,600 students, and in total has helped more than 5,000 young people across the town. With its Alliance partners, it's also developed new courses at the College of West Anglia which feed directly into its apprenticeship programmes, to broaden students' understanding of career opportunities and improve transferable skills. This has been so successful that it's now developed similar partnerships with West Suffolk College, Milton Keynes College and the Grimsby Institute. So far, 72 students have gained apprenticeships, and a further 48 are currently on the programme.

As a Cornerstone employer, Anglian Water can offer face-to-face and virtual insight days, and focused lessons to primary, secondary and SEND schools. Becoming an Enterprise

Advisor for Sir Harry Smith Community College has allowed it to understand the pressures on the secondary schools in the area.

Anglian Water has developed a programme that supports the development of employability skills plus an understanding of STEM careers and the curriculum, whilst encouraging social mobility, diversity and inclusion.

Transforming Wisbech Garden Town

Anglian Water's desire to deliver place-based regeneration goes beyond the education sector. Working with ourselves and Fenland District Council, it's helped build a transformational vision for the Wisbech Garden Town. This vision looks at the regeneration of Wisbech, improving transport links to the surrounding area, including Cambridge, by reconnecting the town to the rail network. Now, Anglian Water works with other stakeholders to unlock the potential of the surrounding area, by managing water in a more integrated way across the Fens – which is vital in our battle against climate change and to secure water supplies for the future. Called Future Fens: Integrated Adaptation, we hope the initiative will become an international exemplar of what can be achieved through holistic planning.

The success Anglian Water has seen in Wisbech is shared equally with those in the community who have worked alongside them. Transformation takes time, but it has shared learnings throughout, and promoted the approach to other areas in our region and beyond. There are now similar place-based pilots across the UK – in Blackpool, Rochdale, Bradford, Lowestoft, Norwich, Coventry and St Austell – with a target to see a total of 12 up and running by 2022. By working with Business in the Community and their members, Anglian Water can spread this model for businesses to deliver support in local communities and drive real improvements in social prosperity.

Jobsmart, Peterborough College

Keith's story: from low confidence to full employment with Jobsmart, Peterborough College

We championed a portfolio of projects that support residents furthest from the labour market to acquire skills and eventually become employed. Keith was one such resident.

Keith had been coming to the Jobsmart Centre since February 2019, attending their positive Mindset course. This is an encouraging course, where clients participate in creative and confidence-building activities to improve their wellbeing and happiness. There are no entry requirements, and local residents are referred or self-refer for many reasons – some are socially isolated, some bereaved, and some have mental health issues. In Keith's case, he was a man in his 50s who had cared for his parents for the last 30 years. When they died, Keith was faced with the prospect of finding work at a time when his confidence was low.

Keith began to blossom on Mindset. By September, the Jobsmart team felt he could go a step further and join the four-week Pathway into Security programme. This is designed so clients can attend with absolutely no knowledge of the security industry, but they leave inspired with the understanding and expertise to embrace a new career. Included in this programme are the Extended Certificate in Understanding Stewarding at Spectator Events, the Award in Working as a Door Supervisor, the Award in Working as a Security Officer and the Award in Working as a CCTV Operator, all at Level 2. Whilst on the course, Keith was given help to set up his Security Industry Authority account and start an application for his Door Supervisor licence. The college funds the license, removing any barriers that could otherwise have prevented him going into work.

Keith's tutor writes: 'Keith was amazing! He really embraced the whole course and became the life and soul of the group. He was the joker, who made us all laugh with his antics when he was acting out being a troublemaker in the car park during the CCTV course – students get to role-play, pretending to be involved in criminal activities so the other students can film them and get used to operating the CCTV equipment. This was so very far removed from the withdrawn individual who had started with us.'

Keith secured employment with a local funeral director as a funeral assistant. The security qualifications on his CV had shown the employer he had the personal discipline and ability to operate at this level. His kindness and warm personality were able to shine out at the interview.

Keith is still working there now. He has also improved his health and wellbeing, having lost over two stone in weight, and is feeling good about himself.

Multi-million-pound Construction Hub nears completion at Cambridge Regional College, Huntingdon Campus

'A key enabler of further economic development': state-of-the-art Construction Hub at the Cambridge Regional College Huntingdon Campus.

The Hub is designed to support construction skills development in the region, and therefore the growing job market in the sector.

Addressing skills shortages

Cambridge Regional College is the largest provider of construction training in the area, and the new Huntingdon campus development will address high levels of skills shortages in occupational areas including construction, electrical, brickwork and carpentry – all of which will be catered for in the new facility.

The Hub will see a further 180 people trained each year, including school leavers, adults, and apprentices. This facility will also see the creation of nine direct employment opportunities at Cambridge Regional College.

The hub recruited its first students in September 2021.

Principal Mark Robertson said, 'We are delighted that the new training facilities at our Huntingdon campus will provide industry standard training for many more people to develop the skills they need for good jobs in the construction industry. With the construction sector booming in the region, this is the perfect time for students to gain the skills that will give them great employment opportunities.

This development has come at a time of high demand, with a 2018 Construction Industry Training Board study identifying Huntingdon as the location for the largest percentage of the Combined Authority's 9,000 construction employers, accounting for 12% of all firms, many of which are small to medium enterprises.

With further data suggesting a shortage of around 15,000 skilled people in the Eastern region, and 47% of all vacancies in the construction industry remaining unfilled due to skills shortages, the Construction Hub is identified as a key enabler of further economic development in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPEIR) and Local Industrial Strategy (LIS).'

Health and Care Sector Work Academy: City College Peterborough

Health and Social Care is identified as a priority sector by the Combined Authority and the Health and Care Sector Work Academy (HCSWA) is identified as a Key Intervention which will play a critical role in facilitating skills growth in the region. The HCSWA is a unique £5.2m programme operating only in the Combined Authority area.

The Academy will train 2100 learners throughout the lifetime of the project.

Recently, a participant of the HCSWA has been recognised by winning a National Learning Award. Laura Dunn-Green attended the HCSWA which allowed her to discover her passion for care and embark on a new career. Laura had a history of mental health issues and left

education after having her daughter at 16 years of age. Laura signed up to the programme after a conversation with her JCP job coach. Initially she found it difficult to engage with the programme, but her confidence built over time, and she overcame her shyness.

Returning to learning has transformed Laura's life. She excelled in her course and is now in a job she loves as a healthcare assistant at a local care home. Laura is keen to continue learning, and to progress in her job role. Laura said: "I've become a much more confident person and I feel like I have a purpose. I felt like I had spent so many years being mum and dad that I forgot how to be me, but the work academy helped me find myself and made me realise that I could make my daughter proud of me."

we want to be in there working side by side with our chosen providers. Together we'll tackle some of the great challenges facing the water industry by teaching and educating future leaders in the field."

Developing a Talent pipeline and learning culture: Metalcraft

Metalcraft, located in Chatteris, manufacture high integrity, mission critical products for some of the world's most hazardous and dangerous environments, across a wide range of sectors

including Nuclear, Medical, Big Science, Energy and other challenging markets. A key employer in the region, they have over 100 years' experience of training apprentices.

50% of their employees have been trained in-house including members of the board. New Apprentices join with a clear path of progression mapped out and a number of apprentices have been recognised locally, regionally and nationally, winning awards and accolades. Metalcraft also secured both the Princess Royal Training Award & the Queens Award for Promoting Opportunity through Social Mobility.

Stainless Metalcraft are launching a new vocational training centre in Chatteris, a multi-million-pound facility that will accommodate 130 apprentices per year. The training school will be managed by West Suffolk College and Cambridgeshire Skills in support of the development for an Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Launch Pad (AMIL).

Stainless Metalcraft have worked with several local organisations to bring the plans to fruition, including The Active Learning Trust, MAKE UK and the University of Cambridge.

The centre, known as the North Cambs Training Centre due to its location, will offer local residents the opportunity to undertake an apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship training or adult education training, gaining a career whilst developing work ready skills. The potential to continue study via higher education can continue up to and beyond degree level qualifications with the new University of Peterborough providing access for degree level Apprenticeships.

The SAP has provided a greater impetus to understand the current and future skills supply and demand in the region. The analytical capacity and understanding of the SAP has matured over this tenure. **This insight will continue to inform practice and how future decisions and strategies are developed.**

Significant progress has been achieved, investments have been made with a clear understanding of the need and impact required. The new university will welcome students in September 2022, whilst the capital projects funded via LGF are underway creating many new learning opportunities. Devolved AEB is making a significant impact to engage, upskill, reskill and provide support to residents made redundant during the recession. Further flexibilities and funding rule changes will be implemented, such as fully funded ESOL and full funding for **first full level 2** qualifications for residents aged 24+. A further £1m of additional funding will provide free Level 3 courses to adults without a first Level 3. Strategic commissioning to target provision 'cold-spots' and a 'nudge' marketing campaign to promote the economic and social value to individuals of adult learning will be implemented.

The business growth service launched in February. **The three-year project seeks to deliver an additional 1,400 apprenticeships and over 1,700 other learning outcomes aligned to skills demand will be delivered.**

Continued targeted investment informed by understanding the local need will transform the lives of individuals whilst concurrently advancing the rebound of the economy.

The new University in Peterborough will open its doors to 2,000 students in 2022, with an ambition to offer courses for up to 12,500 by 2030.

Phase two of the University developments have already been planned. The Phase 2 project is to complement the 2020-22 investment of £30.47m from the Combined Authority, PCC and private sector into a Phase 1 Academic Teaching Building for a new University in Peterborough, to produce 3,000 p.a. graduates.

The Research & Development Centre will be a 2,200 sqm build and consist of 3 floors with a mix of high-quality technical laboratory and office space for incubations and start-ups. **The £14.6m of funding for the project has been allocated to the Combined Authority by MHCLG and the formal application process for our Innovation Delivery Partner**, and their partners, to apply for and utilise the funding is currently underway.

The biggest challenge the Combined Authority continues to face is adapting and proactively embracing the intricacies of each of the three sub-economies within the region, all with unique challenges and opportunities to thrive. COVID-19 has impacted the sub-economies in different ways – all have planned interventions to support the rebound of their economies. **Strategies and plans need to be dynamic to quickly respond to external changes in the system.**

To this end, the Combined Authority has already developed a plan to achieve this,

through working in partnership with key stakeholders a refresh of the LERS was undertaken in 2021 and the new Employment and Skills Strategy is to be published in 2022.

Areas for future development

The main focus of the SAP will be to implement the new Employment and Skills Strategy. This provides the blueprint for all the future development required in the region. Some areas of focus include:

- Continuing to strengthen local governance of AEB through the Skills Committee and ESB to ensure responsiveness of provision to meet local skills needs.
- Building trust with provider-partners and stakeholders to facilitate co-design of provision, securing value for money and maximising outcomes for learners.
- To showcase the Combined Authority devolved AEB as an exemplar for regional delivery in order to influence further devolution or delegation of funding.
- Ensuring alignment with the SAP and LSIP
- With additional funding for the Lifetime Skills Guarantee – Level 3 Offer of fully funded courses from a prescribed list of 400 courses, there is a need to build capacity among the provider-base and to promote the offer to potential learners. Given that only 1% of AEB enrolments were for Level 3 courses in 2019/20, we are starting from a low base.
- Levelling Up – tackling education disadvantage in Peterborough, Fenland, wider Cambridgeshire, and target wards within Cambridge City.
- Net Zero – informing and equipping our residents to empower them to meet our targets
- Identifying Education provision cold-spots, commissioning providers to fill gaps and co-creating new solutions with and between groups of providers, both FE and HE working in partnership, potentially through joint ventures
- Enabling and championing FE Capital and Infrastructure investment to deliver aspirational learning environments for technical pathways into HE and employment.
- Revitalise the Community Learning offer in the region through co-producing with stakeholders a Lifelong Learning Policy.
- Careers Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults – improving quality and capacity.
- Developing Sector-Based Work Academies in priority sectors.
- Good LMI, appropriate for all people

Future actions

In addition to the commissioned research there is a need for some more granular qualitative survey work to understand the medium-term needs of the top-performing companies who are most likely to grow in the region. Asking them for their skills needs will then help determine future skills needs as these are the businesses which will be providing future jobs.

To address future skills gap, there is a need to commission another piece of work to build a picture of what our employers may look like in 3-5 years and then extrapolate from that the skills needs.

To then anchor this, we need something less theoretical which is grounded in community and business engagement to assess what skills are viewed as important in future in the Combined Authority region, combined with an understanding of the changes in working behaviour driven by COVID-19. This will identify the 'softer' skills people will need in the

~~Chapter 3: Skills strengths and needs~~
workplace to be effective and to drive productivity. For example, developing management and leadership skills in how to manage an organisation remotely is a key area and a national challenge that could be pioneered in our Combined Authority region.

The Skills Advisory Panel will continue to work with local employers and business to ensure that the skills supply matches the needs of the local economy and business requirements. **As we develop the new Skills Strategy for the region, we seek engagement from key stakeholders to ensure the new strategy equips our young people and current workforce to continue to rebound and rebuild the economy.**