



Improvement Framework

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| To: | OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE |
| Meeting Date: | 23 January 2023 |
| Public report: | Yes |
| Lead Member: | Deputy Mayor Cllr Anna Smith |
| From: | Gordon Mitchell, Interim Chief Executive Officer |
| Key decision: | No |
| Forward Plan ref: | N/A |
| Recommendations: | <p>The Overview and Scrutiny is recommended to:</p> <p>a. Consider the Improvement Framework report going to the Combined Authority Board on 23 January 2023.</p> |
| Voting arrangements: | A simple majority of all Members present and voting |

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the agenda item is to provide the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to undertake pre-scrutiny of the Improvement Framework report going to Board on the 23 January 2023.
- 1.2 The purpose of the improvement report going to the Board is to provide an update on the progress made against identified actions set out in the Improvement Plan agreed by Board in October 2022.
- 1.3 The report to Board will also update Board on the development of arrangements for the Independent Improvement Board agreed in October 2022.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Board in October agreed the Improvement Plan to address the Chief Executive's diagnosis assessment of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.
- 2.2 The assessment set out key deliverables over a three month period and what might be different as a result of the proposed activity.

3. 23 January – Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting

- 3.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has an opportunity to undertake pre-scrutiny of the Improvement Framework report going to the Board on 25 January 2023, any comments from the Committee will subsequently be fed back to Board to assist them in their considerations.
- 3.2 Pre-Scrutiny is an important tool in the armoury of the Overview & Scrutiny function. Looking at decisions before they are made provides an important means to influence those decisions, and to improve them. It gives scrutineers an opportunity to challenge assumptions that may have been made as the decision was developed; it also gives them the chance to consider how decision-makers have considered what risks might arise from the implementation of the decision, and how those risks might be mitigated.
- 3.3 Overview & Scrutiny can bring a different perspective to the decision-making process than that provided by Board members or officers, which can help decisions to be more robust. Looking at a decision before it is made can often be seen as a more effective means of scrutiny than looking at a decision after it is made (for example, through the call-in process), when the opportunity to influence and change that decision is quite limited. Of course, post-decision scrutiny can help to influence future policy changes in the medium to long-term.
- 3.4 The Improvement Framework report to Board will be published on the 17 January. The current and final draft of the report and appendix is attached and the final uploaded document and appendix will be accessible via this link: [Combined Authority Board Agenda](#)
- 3.5 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee will have an opportunity to question the Improvement Programme Lead on the Improvement Framework report.

Significant Implications

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 At the Combined Authority Board in July £750,000 was approved to support the scope, development and delivery of work relating to improvement activity.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There is a legal requirement to have a fully functioning Overview and Scrutiny Committee within the CA framework. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee should act as an independent scrutineer for Council activities.

- 5.2 Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities provides that “Ensuring early and regular engagement between the executive and scrutiny – authorities should ensure early and regular discussion takes place between scrutiny and the executive, especially regarding the latter’s future work programme. Authorities should, though, be mindful of their distinct roles”.
- 5.3 CFGS guidance recommends that scrutiny should happen a decent time before the decision comes to be made – not a matter of a couple of weeks. Effective CA forward planning should allow for scrutiny to be forewarned months in advance of particularly critical decisions; such forward planning also helps with fitting this form of scrutiny into the committee cycle. Again, the way that such matters are identified will need to relate closely to scrutiny’s role.

6. Public Health implications

- 6.1 No Public Health implications are directly identified within this report at this stage.

7. Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 7.1 No Environmental and Climate Change implications are identified within this report at this stage.

8. Other Significant Implications

- 8.1 The External Auditor and DLUHC have set out clearly the expected focus for improvement. It is important that the CA can demonstrate its commitment to improve and also the progress it is making on this journey so more formal interventions are not put in place; the unfreezing of future funding is dependent on this.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix A – Improvement Plan Update December 2022 (Report to Combined Authority Board on 25 January 2023)
- 9.2 Appendix B – Improvement Plan Highlight Report December 2022 (Appendix to Combined Authority Board report on 25 January 2023):

10. Background Papers

- October CA Board Report – Improvement Framework
- July CA Board Report - Improvement Assessment
- Governance review
- External Auditors letter