Programme Level Highlight Report

for the Period:

1 November 2023 to 31 December 2023

Improvement Plan Phase 2
Improvement Plan Phase 2 **Programme Level Highlight Report for the Period:** **Period – 1 November 2023 – 22 December 2023**

Lead Executive Director Overview

I am pleased to present the highlight report for the Improvement Plan for November and December 2023.

As with previous highlight reports, I continue to highlight the five themes of this phase of our improvement journey and how this focusses tightly upon the expectations- based upon their advice and feedback - of our Independent Improvement Board, DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) and the external auditor to ensure our priorities for improvement reflect those of our partners and stakeholders. It should be noted that these themes encapsulate actions to address in full both the issues raised by DLUHC in their Best Value Notice letter of January 2023 and the letter received from the External Auditor raising concerns in July 2022.

Regarding the safeguarding of staff, the cross-party Hearing Panel of the Audit & Governance Committee met in November to consider the conclusions of the independent investigator's report. The unanimous decisions of the Hearing Panel are a matter of public record but, in the context of our improvement journey, I believe demonstrate that we have established effective processes to consider and conclude such matters, whilst also noting that we will continue to review and improve those processes as part of continuous learning and improvement.

The Board meeting in November also saw a number of workstreams once again return for endorsement and approval of our progress. For example:

Following Board approval of the draft Single Assurance Framework (SAF) in September and its subsequent submission to, and approval by, Government the Final SAF was approved. I am pleased to note that at present the CPCA is the only Combined Authority with a Government approved Assurance Framework that has been assessed under English Devolution Accountability Framework requirements. This places us at the forefront of this work and the team are to be congratulated on this achievement.

The Board also agreed significant revisions to the Officer Scheme of Delegation included within the Combined Authority's Constitution to bring them in line with the SAF, the procurement review and other work undertaken by the Improvement Programme.

Finally, Grant Thornton who have been commissioned by the LGA to develop key guidance on governance for Combined Authorities met with us to understand the new governance arrangements at the CPCA, the new SAF and the Performance Management Framework and how they all linked together to drive effective decision-making and delivery. It is expected that this feedback will form a significant element of the guidance being developed and is another example of how our improvement journey is placing us as an example of best practice amongst Combined Authorities.

At the IIB meeting in November progress on Improvement was warmly received. However, the IIB also reflected upon the Partnership Working theme and next steps. It was noted that an exercise had been completed to develop a series of case studies which will serve as a benchmark of progress with our partnership journey. These case studies will allow us to look across the partnership landscape, draw lessons for further improvement and from that

draw up the next stage of our partnerships action plan. The IIB asked that we use this work to set an ambitious baseline to embed partnership working across the authority, with a particular focus upon member activities.

Given this positive progress and based upon the information in this report, the direction of travel for the Improvement Programme, as demonstrated by the agreed RAG ratings, is positive with 4 themes rated as green & Partnerships rated as green/amber, meaning that delivery of all the agreed outcomes to time and budget is considered by the CMT (Corporate Management Team) workstream lead to be highly likely.

I continue to be confident of progress and achievement as we move forward and expect this to continue to be reflected in future highlight reports.

	This Period		Last Period	
Governance and decision making	Green		Green	
Procurement	Green		Green	
Project plans and delivery	Green		Green	
Partnership working	Green	Amber	Green	Amber
Confidence, culture, and capacity	Green		Green	

Programme Governance

Workstream Highlight Reports

Governance and Decision Making

Project Description:

To embed the governance structures & constitutional changes agreed at CA Board, enabling sound decision making & implementation. Create confidence and evidence to ensure external scrutiny of the CPCA (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority) governance arrangements is positive. Increase & improve the representation on decision making committees & boards of councillors from across the political spectrum.

Project Outcomes:
- Plan for embedding new structures
- Review membership of committees, & advisory groups
- Review of BB (Business Board) role & role of BAP
- Develop Terms of Reference for each group
- Create Financial Regs, Procurement Code & SAF
- Consideration of EDAF (English Devolution Accountability Framework) Requirements
- Internal review of governance arrangements by A&G (Audit & Governance)
- Review councillor representation
- Guidance documents and training
- Member renumeration
- Review role of Scrutiny function
- Review non-councillor membership in groups (CIPF code)

Workstream Sponsor:	Nick Bell
Project Manager/s:	Louisa Simpson
PMO (Programme Management Office) Support:	Heidi Robinson
Agreed Completion Date:	30/05/2024
Forecast Completion Date:	30/05/2024

Reporting Period:		01/11/2023 – 31/12/2023
Governance and Decision-Making Project Status	**This Period:**	Green
	Previous Period:	Green

Governance and Decision Making – November / December Project Update:

Key Activities:

The project workstream have met and have moved forward several key activities linked to the Improvement Plan. The key activities undertaken this period:

> Training roll-out – specifically how the CA works in relation to the districts/unitary authorities.
> SAF & EDAF links have been discussed and DLUHC have signed off the SAF and agree it is an exemplar for other authorities to reference.
> We have reviewed the risk register to ensure the risks reflect where we are in terms of governance – part of effective project management.
> The audit of governance has been completed & the findings are being reviewed to ensure they are covered in the workstream.

Engagement:

The workstream group have agreed to move to monthly meetings which will jointly focus on progress and risks.

SAF sign off by DLUHC moves the framework to the next stage of implementation and the governance structures are in place to support this.

There is further work required in the Members arena to ensure that there is safe space for challenge outside of the formal CA Board, a space where they can agree joint purpose & focus.

Finally, the new Business Board and governance and processes are beginning to be embedded, the successful recruitment of new members supports this, and the Economic Development Group have met twice.

The scrutiny work undertaken by the CA is being considered as best practice, for example a case study has been provided to the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny (CfGS) to demonstrate the development of the scrutiny roles specific to Combined Authority. As a result, discussions are taking place with CfGS about how the scrutiny developments that have been undertaken could helpfully contribute to the guidance for CA scrutiny being developed by CfGS and other MCAs are now looking at what we have done with O&S as leading practice.

Concerns/Issues:

There are no concerns relating to the changes to Governance & Decision making, there is a requirement to focus on the training support for CMT colleagues with regards to ensuring the committees are utilised correctly for decision making. The Member arena is still an area for concern but the workstream are not able to influence this, this needs to be driven by CMT and the Mayor's Office.

RAG Rating:

The RAG rating of Green reflects the progress & achievability of the project. The mitigations in place ensure we retain our green RAG rating. Training is being rolled out and CMT continue to engage with colleagues to explain/highlight the benefits of the new governance arrangements.

Governance and Decision Making: Workstream Sponsor Comments:

Further good progress has been made on this workstream during November and December. The Board decision on 29th November to approve the SAF and its implementation plan (following its sign off by the DfE, DfT, DLUHC and the relevant DLUHC Director) and the approval of a revised scheme of officer delegations were important milestones for us.

Much work was also undertaken to develop a more open and transparent process for the refresh of the Corporate Strategy and the Medium-Term Financial Plan, which included strong engagement with key partners, constituent councils and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee leading up to the draft MTFP being approved for consultation on the 29th of November. Specific training on budget scrutiny was also provided to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Members during this period.

Although not a specific deliverable in this workstream, the conclusion of the Code of Conduct at the Hearing Panel on the 14th of November was a major step for the Combined Authority, and Audit & Governance Committee will review lessons learned from the process at its future meetings.

Overall, I am pleased with progress on this workstream which remains on track to deliver its key outputs by the end of the year.

Governance and Decision Making - Key Milestones/Activities this Period:		Status
1	Expansion of Shareholder Comm to Investment Committee – in line with the agreed SAF	Ongoing
2	Agree officer support requirements for O&G	Ongoing
3	Complete BB governance changes	Ongoing
Governance and Decision Making - Key Milestones/Activities Planned for Next Period:		
1	Expansion of Shareholder Comm to Investment Committee – in line with the agreed SAF	
2	Agree officer support requirements for O&G	
3	Complete BB governance changes	
4	Implementation plan development for SAF	
Governance and Decision Making - Project Risks:		
	Risk Description	**Mitigation**
1	Financial instability of partner Authorities	"Stay aware of the financial health of partner authorities. Working with Section 151 Officers - Nick Bell organised 151 group."
2	Scrutiny role not developing in line with EDAF expectations	Financial planning workshops and training. Monitoring Officers have been contacted regarding workshops with other O&S (Overview & Scrutiny) committees.
Governance and Decision-Making Report Completed By:		**Louisa Simpson**
Completion Date:		**19/12/2023**

Procurement

Project Description: To redesign the Procurement function in line with the Price Waterhouse Cooper Procurement Review report commissioned by the CA, ensuring that Governance, Operating Model, Capability & Capacity and Compliance are reflected in the redesign. Then conducting the practical elements of updating the Contracts Register, revising the Procurement Strategy, Policy & Procedures. Finally, ensuring the embedding of the new design through corporate training & support

Project Outcomes:
- Redesign the procurement function
- Agree operating model
- Develop operating model in line with recommendations
- Refresh the contracts register
- Revise procurement strategy, policies, and procedures
- Establish a procurement hub
- Implement procurement and contract management training
- Communication Strategy in place to support changes
- Develop procurement KPIs
- Develop M&E framework
- Regular reviews and periodic evaluations

Workstream Sponsor:	Nick Bell
Project Manager/s:	Louisa Simpson
PMO Support:	Heidi Robinson
Agreed Completion Date:	29/03/2024
Forecast Completion Date:	29/03/2024

Reporting Period:		01/11/2023 – 31/12/2023
Procurement Project Status	**This Period:**	Green
	Previous Period:	Green

Procurement – November / December Project Update:

Activities:
> Recruitment of procurement staff to support new structure – completed. The Contract Manager post is in train. The JD being written and expected to be advertised by January.
> Procurement training for all staff – this has been issued and staff are completing.
> Complete the development of standard templates for procurement documentation – not completed yet, will be on the HUB, completed by 31 December 2023.
> Agree a scheme of "Delegated Procurement Authority" (Delegated Authority) – this is linked to sign off the SAF which was signed off at the CA Board on the 29th of November 2023, the updating of contracts is also linked to this decision point at Board.
> The procurement Hub, completed by the end of November 2023.
> The comms strategy to support the roll out of the procurement hub and support documents is being developed due to be completed by December 2023.
> Development of Procurement KPIs, links have been made with the Strategy & Policy Team to support the development of KPIs.

Engagement:
The subgroup is moving to monthly meetings to monitor progress & risk.
The SAF been signed off by DLUHC – this supports the requirement for Procurement involvement in Business Case development.
The Procurement Team recruitment has enabled the team to be embedded in the CA and offer timely support across new projects.
Procurement colleagues have worked with the Policy Team to look at the development of KPIs and is working with the Comms Team to develop a comms plan for the procurement function.

Issues/Concerns:
Currently there are no issues or concerns, the delivery of the action plan and outcomes is on target and is happening at the required pace.

RAG Rating:
The RAG rating remains green, and the subgroup are confident of delivery on time. The mitigations in place support the delivery of outcomes and are monitored at each subgroup meeting. Where external support is required to ensure mitigation of risk it is being secured and where potential changes to government policy is being highlighted this is being built into the new documentation the CA is developing.

Procurement: Workstream Sponsor Comments:

Further positive progress has been made during November and December. The new procurement hub to provide a single point of contact for the Combined Authority on procurement and contract management issues has been launched, new documentation has been completed for procurement and Grant Funding Agreements and is being rolled out to relevant staff, and basic training on procurement has been rolled out to every member of staff of the Combined Authority. More specific training for complex procurements and for contract managers has been sourced for relevant officers and will be delivered in January and February. Further KPIs to help demonstrate how procurement is delivering best value and social value have been developed and will be rolled out early in the New Year.

Work continues reviewing the main contracts used by CPCA and the workstream is in a very good place to have delivered its key outputs by the end of the year.

Procurement - Key Milestones/Activities this Period:	Status
1	Engage HR to support any potential contractual changes to support SAF	Ongoing
2	Complete Contract Manager recruitment	Ongoing
3	Launch Procurement Hub	Ongoing

Procurement - Key Milestones/Activities Planned for Next Period:
1	Engage HR to support any potential contractual changes to support SAF
2	Complete Contract Manager recruitment
3	Launch Procurement Hub
4	Develop KPIs linked to Procurement

Procurement - Project Risks:

	Risk Description	Mitigation
1	Financial delegations not agreed by Board	Working closely with the Board to ensure there is agreement of the delegated financial options proposed.
2	Fail to demonstrate Best Value in Procurement	The documents being developed are focused on achieving the outcomes required to achieve best value. We have engaged external support to ensure delivery on time. The Policy team are assisting with developing Procurement KPIs using the approved Performance Management Framework.
3	Procurement staff are not retained leading to loss of necessary skills and experience	Provide appropriate induction upon employment commencing. training opportunities to develop skills, provide a scope of work that is interesting to the individual and captures their attention, ensure inexperienced staff are engaged in all staff events to embed positive culture and new values. Finally, ensure staff progression is clear, membership opportunities are in place and a clear training and support plan is in place.
4	Contract & Grant Register not up to date	The Contract Register is complete, and discussions are being held on how far back the dates should go. New Procurement Officers will keep on top of this work until the new Contract Manager comes onboard.
5	Procurement and Contract Management training does not improve Officer knowledge.	Thorough research to ensure best provider secured to deliver the training. Contacted providers who can tailor the training to our processes and contextualise the learning to promote further embedding. Training to be reviewed regularly and could be incorporated into appraisal process.
Procurement Report Completed By:		**Louisa Simpson**
Completion Date:		**19/12/2023**

Project Plans and Delivery

Project Description: Development of an inclusive Single Assurance Framework (SAF)

Project Outcomes:

- Agreement by the CPCA and partners of a SAF
- Agreement of a Performance Management Framework and reporting Dashboard.
- Adoption of a new corporate risk management framework
- A revised PMO with expanded responsibility for corporate performance

Workstream Sponsor:	Steve Cox
Project Manager/s:	Jodie Townsend
PMO Support:	Thomas Farmer
Agreed Completion Date:	31/06/23
Forecast Completion Date:	30/06/23
Reporting Period:	01/11/2023 – 31/12/2023

Project Plans and Delivery Project Status	**This Period:**	Green
	Previous Period:	Green

Project Plans and Delivery – November / December Project Update:

Key Activity

The key activity since the draft SAF was approved at the September Board meeting has been focused on the Single Assurance Framework, this has involved liaison with Government Departments to seek clearance of the SAF, as well as preparing the report required for Board consideration on 29 November and developing the SAF implementation plan.

The SAF was approved by the DLUHC, DfT and DfE review teams and was officially signed off by the relevant DLUHC Director on 20th November. DLUHC and DfT provided some advice on elements of the SAF that could be worded more effectively during the review process, this advice has been taken on board in full and incorporated into the final SAF document.

It is our understanding that at present the CPCA is the only Combined Authority with a Government approved Assurance Framework that has been assessed under English Devolution Accountability Framework requirements.

Board considered proposals for the publication and implementation of the SAF on the 29th of November, the proposals were to implement SAF Phase A between January and May 2024 and to implement SAF Phase B between January and June 2024. SAF Phase C will be implemented following the Board AGM in June 2024 as it requires the appointments to be made to the new Investment Committee.

Board approved the implementation report as presented which now shifted the focus in December onto implementation. In early December, the Project Manager and PMO have met to discuss and review the implementation plan.

A significant amount of work has been undertaken in support of the implementation, embedding and upskilling required that sits around the Single Assurance Framework regarding training. The Project Lead (Heidi) leading on training has engaged with the Association of Project managers (APM) to schedule the following:

- o Scheduled APM PFQ training – arranged for 30 CPCA staff and 34 Partners.
- o Scheduled APM PMQ training – arranged for 26 CPCA staff and 31 Partners.

Heidi is also currently in the process of making arrangements for business case training for both CPCA staff and Partners (mainly Constituent Council Officers). All this upskilling is vital in support of implementing and embedding SAF.

Grant Thornton, who have been commissioned by the LGA to develop key guidance on governance for Combined Authorities met with the Project Manager who took them through the new governance arrangements at the CPCA, the new SAF, the PMF and explained how they all plugged into each other to drive effective decision-making and delivery. It is expected that this feedback will form a significant element of the guidance being developed.

Further work to develop the Performance Management Framework has been completed in preparation for presentation to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 November and Board on 29 November.

The presentation of the Corporate Performance Report has been adapted in response to member feedback. The Balanced Scorecard is now a more central element of the report; the narrative element of the exception report on red rated metrics has been removed from the covering paper; and further commentary has been added on the overall trends of the time series data. An additional RAG rating system has been introduced to aid interpretation of performance data: metrics are now RAG rated against target (where available) in addition to being RAG rated against direction for improvement.

The Office for Local Government (Oflog) is developing a dashboard that compares performance data across similar local authorities. A beta version of the Local Authority Data Explorer has been launched with a handful of metrics and further metrics will be released in tranches. The Combined Authority has responded to a consultation providing feedback on the draft metrics. The Oflog metrics will inform our further development of the Corporate KPIs.

A 'State of the Region Review' project is being co-produced and co-delivered with constituent authorities, Higher Education (HE) institutions and the ICS. It has entered delivery phase and will create a relevant, reliable and accessible 'State of the Region' review of the current state of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Region. Findings from the review will be presented accessibly in a suite of communications resources including a report, video and an interactive dashboard embedded in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Insight website.

Work has begun to develop quarterly Thematic Performance Reports encompassing Dashboards of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relevant to the remit of the thematic committee. The quarterly Thematic Performance Reports will be scrutinised by our Corporate Management Team (CMT) and the relevant thematic committee (Skills and Employment Committee, Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee, Transport and Infrastructure Committee or Business Board). Whilst this work is in development, progress updates will be reported via Directors' Highlight Reports.

The Combined Authority is developing plans to establish and embed an effective performance management culture for the organisation. This will include training for members and officers, and appointment of data champions. An initial all-staff Introduction to the Performance Management Framework session has been scheduled for 4 December.

Following on from the approval of the Risk Management Framework at the 20th of September Board, we have moved to the implementation stage of the framework. The risk software, (4Risk), is being rolled out to all CPCA directorates so from December all risk reporting will be centralised and be available to all relevant staff. Risk software training has been scheduled with all services this month.

The detailed risk reporting that has been available at a corporate level will now be available at service level. It is expected that all risk reports to each respective board or committee follow an agreed format, (risk register, heat map and risk dashboard). This will allow members and the corporate management team access to the latest risk information and support informed decision making.

A significant amount of preparation work has also been undertaken in November to prepare for the Internal Audit of the Project Plans & Delivery workstream with interviews taking place in early December.

The clearance of the SAF by Government and the development of an implementation plan are significant steps for the Combined Authority. The project team are confident that they are on track to successfully deliver the outstanding actions within the workstream and to successfully embed the three new frameworks. As a result, the RAG rating of GREEN reflects the view that the project team believe the workstream is being delivered in line with the timetable and budget.

Engagement

Single Assurance Framework (SAF)
The focus of engagement work relating to the SAF has been around DLUHC, DfT and DfE engagement in support of the Government clearance process.

Engagement work has been undertaken to continue to develop understanding of the SAF and to develop key templates and guidance that will be produced in support of the SAF. This has involved a workshop with the CPCA Governance Team to discuss how to embed behaviours required by the SAF in alignment with embedding good governance behaviours across the CA.

A workshop was also held with the CPCA PMO to take them through SAF and provide some examples of how certain projects would go through it, this is particularly important as the PMO need to be the guardians of the SAF and play a key enabling role in its future application. This is a key task to ensure the appropriate knowledge transfer is delivered from the Interim who is the Project Manager to the PMO team.

There has also been a PMO session with the Project Manager to initially discuss business case routes through the SAF, this conversation was also undertaken with the Economy & Growth team in the CPCA. In December, another workshop took place to discuss and review the SAF implementation plan.

The Economy & Growth Team have been provided with a SAF overview this month and will be engaged more significantly in the coming months to feed into the development of key templates.

An information session on the SAF took place with the Transport Team to provide an overview of the three key phases within the SAF and how it would impact the Transport Team.

To support the upcoming internal audit of the workstream a chronology of meetings and key data, change requests, key decisions, and an overview of the origins of the workstream and the governance of the workstream have been produced to be provided to the Internal Audit team.

The planned engagement session with Huntingdon Council which was originally scheduled in November took place in early December, the session was extremely positive.

Finally, the Project Manager attended the Combined Authorities Assurance Network at the end of November to set out details of the SAF and answer any questions on its content in relation to EDAF.

Risk Management Framework

Engagement this month has concentrated on the implementation of the Risk software and training for nominated officers.
All directorate and service level officers have been included across the Authority.
A further engagement session with the M10 Assurance group is planned for the 23rd of November.

Key Issues:
1.There are no identified key issues at present.

RAG Rating Rationale
The rating of Green is a continuation from the previous Green rating on the previous Highlight Report and a reflection of the confidence within the workstream.

Project Plans and Delivery: Workstream Sponsor Comments:

The approval of the SAF by Government is a significant step not just in delivering this workstream but also in demonstrating the robustness of improvements being delivered through the Improvement Plan. The November Board meeting provided a further opportunity for strategic level discussion of the SAF and agreement on its implementation, all of which was supported unanimous. Focus now means to implementation of SAF and the PMF.

Project Plans and Delivery - Key Milestones/Activities this Period:		Status
1	Complete detailed implementation plan for SAF in alignment with Board approved implementation dates	High level implementation plan agreed by Board on 29 November, subsequently implementation project group established and detailed implementation plan completed. Focus is on ensuring knowledge transfer and handover from Project Manager to PMO during implementation
2	Complete roll out of Risk software to services and supporting training for users.	Ongoing

Project Plans and Delivery - Key Milestones/Activities Planned for Next Period (January 2024):	
1	Set up and operation of SAF Implementation governance arrangements and feed into Project Plans & Delivery workstream
2	Draft Business Case templates & guidance drafted
3	Delivery of January actions detailed in SAF implementation plan

Project Plans and Delivery - Project Risks:		
	Risk Description	**Mitigation**
1	PMO strengthened Mandate – Funding not available	SAF has been developed to be applicable with or without additional PMO resources, however additional resource is required to meet objectives of full SAF delivery, meet Constituent Council asks and develop the PMO centre of excellence approach requested by Board in Improvement Plan.

		Discussions have taken place with Finance to ensure required resource is understood and a further meeting will be arranged to discuss detailed proposals.
2	CPCA staff upskilling and implementation of SAF is not sufficient	Lunch and Learn session already held and staff video released. Further plans to engage and train staff to be set out in Implementation Plan.
3	IT systems not provided to deliver PMF (Performance Management Framework) and SAF	Specification being developed as part of Project Plan requirements, initial discussions regarding procurement have already taken place with Finance.
4	CPCA unable to recruit required Analyst resource	Additional Analyst capacity is required to support full implementation of the Performance Management Framework. Budget and establishment are in place, but the recruitment market for analysts is highly competitive. A shared services model with Cambridgeshire County Council is being explored as an alternative resource.
Project Plans and Delivery Report Completed By:		**Jodie Townsend**
Completion Date:		**21/12/23**

Partnership Working

Project Description: To enhance partnership working within the combined authority, enabling it to function as a bridge between the local area and government. This involves establishing a unified voice and offer through co-ordinated representation, policy alignment, and effective advocacy. The workstream aims to foster strategic partnerships, streamline communication channels, and influence policy development. Additionally, it seeks to secure funding and resources, facilitate joint problem-solving, and empower local governance.

Project Outcomes:

The Combined Authority should be the bridge between the local area, government and all local regional and national partners and stakeholders, providing a single unified voice and offer for the combined authority area.

Workstream Sponsor:	Richard Kenny
Project Manager/s:	Peter Tonks
PMO Support:	Heidi Robinson
Agreed Completion Date:	29/03/2024
Forecast Completion Date:	29/03/2024
Reporting Period:	01/11/2023 – 31/12/2023

Partnership Working Project Status	**This Period:**	Green	Green
	Previous Period:	Amber	Amber

Partnership Working – November / December Project Update:

In the last report we advised that discussions with the constituent councils' Chief Executives indicated that in their view the Combined Authority is working collaboratively across the region and that relationships and partnership working are no longer broken (as was previously suggested back in 2020).
Considering this, the direction of the workstream changed to focus firstly on demonstrating how such collaborations and partnerships have worked to deliver better outcomes for the Region and secondly form a view as to what further lessons and improvements we might propose.

Accordingly, an exercise was completed to collate evidence and case studies across key projects that have been or are currently being undertaken in each Directorate where collaboration, partnership working and building effective relationships have been instrumental in achieving the desired outcomes for the Combined Authority, its partner organisations, and the region.

The evidence base was completed, and a report was presented for consideration to IIB (Independent Improvement Board) for guidance on the next steps to take regarding the workstream overall.

The view of the IIB was that the case studies provided a wealth of evidence of progress in partnership working. However, it concluded that it would be premature to conclude the workstream based upon this evidence. The IIB felt that there was scope in the member arena for further work to build a framework and culture that promoted a consensus-based approach to discussion and decisions.

The next step therefore is to build a revised Improvement Workstream Plan clearly outlining the next stages and expected outcomes. In the meantime, the IIB felt that a RAG rating of Green/Amber would reflect both achievements to date, but a level of confidence in meeting challenges ahead.

Issues

No risks that have crystallised as issues were identified in this month.

RAG Rationale

The RAG Rating for this workstream is Green/ Amber. It is clear from both partner and IIB feedback contained within the evidence collected to date that significant progress has been made and partners believe that the CA commitment to partnership working is good. The next steps are to embed this partnership ethos into the culture and practices, with a particular focus on the CA Board and other member led activities.

Partnership Working: Workstream Sponsor Comments:

The project team's work to date demonstrates that there is confidence that the work being undertaken to evidence our commitment to partnership working will demonstrate that CPCA recognises the value of working with public and private partners to achieve more efficient and effective policy development, economic growth and investment, better services, and customer-focused outcomes.

The reflections of both DLUHC and the IIB remind us that successful partnership working will be central to our ambitions for the CA, devolution and the lifting of the BV notice and I look forward to collaborating with the team to frame the next steps for this workstream.

Partnership Working - Key Milestones/Activities this Period:	Status
1 Complete a workstream plan for the next phase of this workstream	Ongoing

Partnership Working - Key Milestones/Activities Planned for Next Period:
1

Partnership Working - Project Risks:	
Risk Description	**Mitigation**
1 Once the Improvement Plan is complete there is a risk that as focus is removed from partnership working, the partnerships will become ineffective.	Ensure the importance of Partnership Working is embedded in the Single Assurance Framework.

Partnership Working Completed By:	P Tonks
Completion Date:	18/12/2023

Confidence, Culture and Capacity

Project Description: To establish a clear direction for the Combined Authority, foster a positive work culture based on shared values and behaviours, develop effective leadership at all levels and be recognised as a good employer. By focusing on these areas, the project seeks to establish a solid foundation for the Combined Authority to effectively deliver its goals and serve the region within a positive working environment.

Project Outcomes:

Ambition and Priorities:

- We are clear in our ambition and priorities for the combined authority region
- We have a well-established framework to work in partnership with key stakeholders to deliver this ambition

Values and Behaviours:

- Values and behaviours are embedded and owned by everyone (both officers and members) through day-to-day activities
- Values and behaviours are recognised as central to all CPCA practice and processes and there is collective ownership and responsibility for culture- living the values through day to day working activity
- Alignment to the values is recognised and celebrated, whilst non-aligned of 'behaviours' are addressed
- Peer reviews and feedback from partners identify CPCA is 'living its values

Leadership:

- Leadership at all levels of CPCA is seen as high quality, effective and in line with the agreed values and behaviours

Recruitment, Retention, Reward and Resources

- Balanced scorecard in place that reflects job satisfaction, employee turnover, absence etc.
- Workforce strategy agreed (up to 2025) that identifies key resourcing requirements and how they will be delivered.
- CPCA is viewed as a 'good' employer evaluated through staff surveys, exit interviews and external review

Workstream Sponsor:	Kate McFarlane
Project Manager/s:	Peter Tonks
PMO Support:	Heidi Robinson
Agreed Completion Date:	29/03/2024
Forecast Completion Date:	29/03/2024

Reporting Period:		01/11/2023 – 22/12/2023
Confidence, Culture and Capacity Project Status	**This Period:**	Green
	Previous Period:	Green

Confidence, Culture and Capacity – November / December Project Update:

Key Activities undertaken this period include:

Ambition and priorities

- Tenders have been scored for the delivery of State of the Region and a consultancy has been appointed. The consultants met with the State of the Region Partner Technical Group on the 15th

^{of} November to commence work. In terms of the Vision piece of work, tenders have been received and evaluation/interviews completed. Consultants Prior+Partners have been appointed; mobilisation planning is underway.

- Q2 Corporate Performance Report was presented to November Board as planned.

Leadership

- The second development session for members took place on 22nd November with a focus on 'Budget Scrutiny', nine members including the Chair attended the session and it included a wide-ranging discussion, which all Members were engaged in and found helpful.
- This was followed by the third session, 'Code of Conduct' on the evening of 6th December which again was well attended (circa twenty members including some Board members) and well received.
- A further Executive Director Seminar has also taken place, focussing on the Place & Connectivity Directorate.

Values and behaviours

- Feedback from the fourth staff conference and workshops has been reviewed and the information is available for staff on the newly re-launched Central CPCA Hub. The feedback has also been used to inform the development of the next staff survey which was launched on 6th December alongside a video detailing some of the changes made in response to staff feedback. Findings from the survey will be shared at the next staff conference scheduled for the 1^{st of} February. Planning is well under way for this.
- Findings and recommendations from the external review of Communications, Engagement & Public Affairs has been shared with constituent Councils and partners engaged in the review, with an offer for further 1:1 meetings to discuss outcomes and next steps. Phase One of the plan, which was derived from the communications review has been completed and this includes the confirmation of three key posts (Head of Service, Corporate Communications Manager and Public Affairs & Stakeholder Engagement Manager) within a newly integrated Communications, Engagement & Public Affairs Team. Additionally, a new approach to campaigns and engagement is being trialled using the launch of the "Road to Better Buses" campaign at the end of November, and through the Corporate Plan and MTFP consultation.

Recruitment, retention, reward, and resourcing

- New Recruitment and Selection Training has been signed off by CMT on 20th Novembers and communications are due to go out to managers w/c 27th November regarding the commencement of training. The new procedures aim to ensure an efficient, fair, and merit-based approach to hiring, while revising appraisal processes to empower staff to excel in their roles.
- Mid-year reviews with staff have been completed. This provides an opportunity to reinforce our values and behaviours with staff and ensure they are being adhered to and encouraged. We are still collating documentation and feedback but so far, the information is encouraging with 89% of reviews currently confirmed as completed.

Engagement
The above activity demonstrates a range of engagements have taken place with staff, members and external organisations across the Combined Authority and Region.

These include Vision and State of the Region Working Group established, and engagement between consultants and partners via the State of the Region Partner Technical Group underway; Engagement with relevant partners to produce and present the Q2 Performance Report;

Engagement with members through development sessions; and information sharing with constituent councils and partners regarding the communications review.

Several engagement activities have also now shifted from the workstream into business as usual including; Regular updates via the Happenings newsletter and the CEX weekly email 'A View from the Bridge'; The promotion of HR policies and procedures through lunchtime drop-in sessions and virtual and physical 'Ask HR sessions'; and the continuation of wider communications through 'all-staff' meetings and briefings accompanied by vlogs and videos from senior officers to embed our values and behaviours.

Further, work continues the members Hub with a planned launch for January 2024. This is an online area which will be used for information sharing and dissemination. This will be accompanied by a Members' Newsletter, also planned for release in January.

Key Issues
No risks that have crystallised as issues were identified in this month.

RAG Rationale
The workstream is on track to achieve key deliverables on time and budget, therefore the RAG Rating for this period is Green.

Confidence, Culture and Capacity: Workstream Sponsor Comments:

Work on this improvement theme remains on track with procurement of consultants for two key pieces of work State of the Region and development of a Shared Vision completed. The Q2 performance report has been considered at scrutiny and the Board. The recruitment of two senior roles has concluded, with the role of Executive Director for Place & Connectivity confirmed. There has been an excellent completion rate of Mid-Year Reviews (LEAPs), the first time these have been completed and a range of training underway for staff including for new line managers. The findings of the external communications review have been shared with constituent Councils and partner organisations who fed into the review. The focus is now on implementing the recommendations and key actions. Implementing those actions requires a clear internal focus and accordingly Phase 1 staffing changes have now been made but also working differently and collaboratively with a broad range of partners on agreed communication, engagement & lobbying priorities.

Confidence, Culture and Capacity - Key Milestones/Activities this Period:		**Status**
1	Executive Director Seminars	Place & Connectivity - Complete
2	2nd & 3rd Member Development Session	Complete
3	Communication plan continued development and implementation	Phase One Complete
4	Staff survey development/readiness for launch	Survey launched
5	Staff conference planning	In progress – set for 1st February
6	Recruitment and Selection Training	Training approved
7	Recruitment and Selection communications	Complete
7	Commence enrolment onto Leadership Development Courses in collaboration with Cambridgeshire County Council	In progress
8	Commence delivery stage of State of the Region and Vision	Delivery stage commenced

Confidence, Culture and Capacity - Key Milestones/Activities Planned for Next Period:	
1	Executive Director Seminars to continue
2	Staff survey analysis
3	Planning for February staff conference
4	Recruitment and Selection training commences
5	Fourth member training session (Effective Committee Membership)
6	Continue delivery of communications, engagement & public affairs implementation plan, especially Phase 2 recruitment
7	Continue delivery of State of the Region and Vision

Confidence, Culture and Capacity - Project Risks:

	Risk Description	Mitigation
1	The workstream encompasses many facets of the organisation and is intertwined with BAU (Business as Usual) activities. This means there is a risk of scope creep which could shift focus to tasks and activities that are not a priority and do not directly impact upon tangible outcomes for the Improvement Plan. There could also be an impact upon capacity whereby project staff/other CPCA project resources are not used as intended.	Clearly define what is in and out of scope. Do not add tasks or actions to the project plan without a whole project team review. CMT have agreed to review items classed as BAU to ensure focus is maintained within the IP timetable.
2	Members can be perceived as the 'face' of the CA given their public profiles/roles. If they are unwilling or unable to engage properly in developmental activities, they may not demonstrate that change has happened/been effective (even if change has been a success for officers and staff).	Continue to plan and support Board Activities/Member Development. Seek formal feedback. Encourage and track attendance at staff and member development sessions.
3	The Confidence, Capacity and Culture Workstream relies on acceptance of change across staff and members. Whilst, training sessions, process, workshops, and internal communications will drive and encourage this, the change must be accepted. Some staff and members may not accept the changes. Depending upon several factors (i.e., which staff or members do not accept, how their rejection of change is voiced/heard, how many staff/members do not accept change) the effect can be significant and can undermine the outcomes for the workstream.	Continue to outline the benefits of the changes via staff forums, conferences etc.

Confidence, Culture and Capacity Completed By:	P Tonks, K McFarlane
Completion Date:	18/12/2023

The Independent Improvement Board have requested implementation of 'Rag Rating' to report progress against identified areas of activity. It is proposed that this will be used from now on for Improvement reports to all Boards and Committees to ensure a consistent approach. We have used our learning from the first phase of improvement and sought best practice to inform our future approach.

Set out below is the methodology adopted.

Green	Successful delivery of the improvement theme to time, cost and quality appears to be highly likely.
Green / Amber	Successful delivery of the improvement theme within timescale appears probable. However, constant attention will be needed to ensure risks do not materialise into issues threatening delivery.
Amber	Successful delivery of the improvement theme appears feasible, but issues exist requiring attention. These appear resolvable at this stage, and if addressed properly, should not represent a schedule overrun.
Amber / Red	Successful delivery of the improvement theme is in doubt with major risks or issues apparent some key areas. Action is underway to ensure these are addressed and establish whether resolution is feasible.
Red	Successful delivery of the improvement theme withing the agreed timescale and/or budget is unachievable as issues have been identified which officers conclude are at present not manageable or resolvable. The theme will therefore need re-profiling.