



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY – MAYORAL
DECISION-MAKING MEETING: MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday 25 March 2020

Time: 10.30am – 12.25pm

Venue: Virtual meeting

Present: J Palmer (Mayor)

Councillors A Bailey – East Cambridgeshire District Council, C Boden – Fenland District Council, L Herbert – Cambridge City Council, R Hickford - Cambridgeshire County Council, J Holdich – Peterborough City Council, J Neish – Huntingdonshire District Council and B Smith – South Cambridgeshire District Council

A Adams – Chair of the Business Board

Co-opted Members: Councillor Ray Bisby (Acting Police and Crime Commissioner) and Councillor D Over (Vice Chairman, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority)

492. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor set out the process for the meeting. Due to Government guidance on social distancing the meeting was being held remotely via Zoom. The law as it stood meant that these virtual arrangements could not stand in place of a physical meeting of the Combined Authority Board. In order for decisions to be made via these virtual arrangements they would have to be made by the Mayor using his General Power of Competence. However, in order to ensure that these decisions remained as transparent and accountable as possible, officers would introduce each report in the usual way and the Mayor would invite the views of the members of the Combined Authority Board before taking each decision. Arrangements had been made for the press and public to follow the virtual meeting in real time via the Combined Authority's website. Officers had been asked to advise on which items could be deferred to a future meeting of the Combined Authority Board, in the expectation that the law would be changed fairly soon to allow local government meetings to be held on a virtual basis. The Mayor's decision-making would therefore be restricted to those matters which officers had advised required a decision now rather than anything which could wait. Decision summaries and minutes would be prepared and published in the usual way.

The Interim Monitoring Officer set out the legal issues which arose from having to change how the Combined Authority made its decisions. A summary is attached at Appendix 1.

493. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Count (substituted by R Hickford) and R Fuller (substituted by J Neish) and from J Bawden, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group.

There were no declarations of interest.

494. MINUTES – 29 JANUARY 2019

Consideration of the minutes of the meeting on 29 January 2020 was deferred to the next meeting of the Combined Authority Board.

495. PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

496. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No public questions were received. The Mayor had agreed to accept questions from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for this Mayoral decision-making meeting. A copy of the questions and responses is attached at Appendix 2.

497. FORWARD PLAN – MARCH 2020

The Forward Plan was published on the Combined Authority website and updated regularly. There were no requests to reserve any committee reports to the Board for decision. Councillors Herbert and Smith asked for the opportunity to review the Forward Plan with officers outside of the meeting.

Having taken into account the views of the Combined Authority Board and an indicative vote which showed Board members to be in unanimous support of the recommendation, the Mayor resolved to:

Approve the Forward Plan

498. DESIGNATION OF MONITORING OFFICER AND DIRECTOR OF ANGLE HOLDINGS LTD

Robert Parkin withdrew from the meeting for the duration of this item.

The Interim Monitoring Officer stated that Robert Parkin was admitted as a solicitor in 2008 and had experience in both local government and in a government department. His most recent appointment was as the Monitoring Officer at Guildford Borough Council and he had previously been the Deputy Monitoring Officer at Portsmouth City Council. He had also held appointments at the London Borough of Hounslow, the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs and Bristol City Council. Mr Parkin had experience as a manager of both legal and other corporate services and as a solicitor dealing with planning, procurement, state aid and company law in addition to governance matters in his previous Monitoring Officer role. The Interim Monitoring Officer commended his appointment to the Board.

Councillor Smith expressed her thanks to the Interim Monitoring Officer for his work during his period of office. The Mayor concurred, describing Mr Pearson as an exceptional Monitoring Officer.

Having taken into account the views of the Combined Authority Board and an indicative vote which showed Board members to be in unanimous support of the recommendations, the Mayor resolved to:

- a) Designate Robert Parkin as Monitoring Officer with effect from 26th March 2020;
- b) Consent to the appointment of Robert Parkin as a Director of Angle Holdings Limited.

499. DESIGNATION OF SCRUTINY OFFICER

The Interim Monitoring Officer commended the appointment of Robert Fox to the Board as Interim Scrutiny Officer, until the return of the permanent post holder.

Having taken into account the views of the Combined Authority Board and an indicative vote which showed Board members to be in unanimous support of the recommendation, the Mayor resolved to:

Designate Robert Fox as the Interim Scrutiny Officer until the return of the permanent Scrutiny Officer.

500. VARIATION TO THE ORDER OF THE PUBLISHED AGENDA

The Mayor stated the Combined Authority was duty bound to consider its response to Covid-19 as a matter of urgency and to share this with the public and press. He would therefore be making a change to the published agenda to consider an urgent report on this matter as the next item of business.

501. COMBINED AUTHORITY'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Mayor stated that, given the magnitude of the Covid-19 crisis, he had asked officers to bring forward a report to outline the Combined Authority's response. Due to the fast changing nature of the situation it had not been possible for this key decision to be published on the Forward Plan with 28 days clear notice in the usual way. In such circumstances the agreement of both the Mayor and the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was required that the decisions were urgent and could not reasonably be deferred. This had been obtained and the required statutory notice had been published on the Combined Authority website together with the report.

The report noted that the Government response to Covid-19 to date had included a range of economic measures including the new coronavirus job retention scheme, deferred tax and VAT payments, grants and business rate relief to businesses within the retail, leisure and hospitality industries, grants for small businesses that paid little or no business rates and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) for businesses with a turnover of up to £45m. The proposed Combined Authority response had been formulated in terms of an immediate, short-term and medium term response:

- i. Immediate: The Combined Authority remained open for business using virtual meetings and the Mayor's general power of competence. It would work with partners and bus operators regarding transport for key workers and home to school transport for eligible children.
- ii. Short-term: The Business Board would monitor and cascade all relevant Government communications to business and co-ordinate business information, advice, guidance and sign-posting. The Business Board had also recommended interest accruing repayment holidays to companies in receipt of a Local Growth Fund loan and adjustments to the Small Capital Grant Scheme. The Combined Authority would be invited to consider future proposals for loan repayment holidays for all investment funds loans and housing schemes and all current programmes would be reviewed with a view to prioritising the support of business recovery.
- iii. Medium-term: The Business Board to develop ideas for an 18 month Covid-19 Business Recovery Programme comprising four elements: recover, orient, adapt and regrow (ROAR). This could be complemented by a 50% capital re-growth grant of between £25-£250k to help local businesses adapt and develop.

The Mayor invited Councillor Dupré, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to share the Committee's questions on this issue. A copy of the questions and responses are attached at Appendix 2.

Councillor Smith sought clarification of whether the proposed repayment holidays would be offered to all or whether the offer would be filtered so that those who were still in a position to make their repayments would continue to do so. If so, she judged that the filtering process should be balanced with the need to provide a quick response to those requiring support. Normal governance processes might be too slow to accommodate this and she would welcome officers looking into this. Councillor Smith further asked whether any additional money would be coming to the Combined Authority or the Business Board and whether all schemes would be re-profiled and the impact of this on Business Board plans. She suggested that a publicity drive was needed to make business aware of the full range of support available. The Director of Business and Skills stated that he was working with the Chief Finance Officer to develop a test around need and how that would be validated and consideration was being given to changing the criteria around small grants. Only one current Local Growth Fund loan would be affected with one further one at the end of the period. Details of the additional Government funding announced to date were included in the report and it was proposed to begin promoting the support available to business from the Combined Authority as soon as it had been agreed. He clarified that the Combined Authority proposed to offer capital grants and not revenue grants which local authorities were administering. Ms Sawyer, Chief Executive, stated that housing loans was an emerging situation. The Combined Authority was looking at all of its financial obligations and before a decision was made on any repayment holidays a report would be brought to a virtual Board meeting for discussion. The Combined Authority was part of a regional strategic co-ordination group which was establishing an economic sub-group to look at how it could contribute to the area's recovery. It was also part of a Mayoral Combined Authorities group which was in dialogue with Government. Councillor Herbert asked that this further report to the Board should include a risk assessment analysis and set out any areas where the Combined Authority could remove obstructions.

Councillor Hickford commended officers for their hard work and for bringing a report to the Board so quickly. Whilst supportive, he judged that it would be preferable for the proposals to be 'noted' by the Mayor at this stage rather than 'approved' so that the Board could easily return to the proposals and change them as necessary. He further suggested that the wording around the relationship between the Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG) and the Sub-Group should be re-visited and that the terms of reference should be reviewed and signed off by the Sub-Group and the SCG. The Director of Business and Skills confirmed that the intention was for SCG to do some further work on the terms of reference before approving them.

Councillor Boden expressed some surprise at the specificity of the medium term response outlined in the report given that there was little idea at present of the likely impact of Covid-19 and how this might vary across different areas. He judged that the medium term response should therefore be kept under review and revised to reflect the emerging situation. Councillor Neish concurred with this view.

Councillor Smith noted that the proposed membership of the Economic Recovery Sub-Group contained no elected members and commented that she would want to see elected members with business and economic skills included. The Mayor concurred, expressing reservations about the accountability of a purely officer-led response. Councillor Bailey stated her wish to place on record that the officer-led response at both East Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council had enabled swift operational decisions to be taken and that senior elected members had been kept closely involved.

Mr Adams expressed his thanks to officers for their hard work in such a short period of time.

Summing up, the Mayor stated that the Combined Authority faced an unprecedented and evolving situation. He thanked officers across all of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's local authorities for their efforts. The region would aim to be as fleet of foot in its response as possible, but it must not lose sight of the ability of the local economy to be able to accelerate quickly when the current situation eased. He had already spoken to the Secretaries of State for Transport and Housing, Communities and Local Government during the week and these discussions would continue.

The Interim Monitoring Officer stated that the request to 'note' rather than 'approve' the recommendations had been raised in the debate on the basis that officers could progress the recommended schemes with a view to reporting back to the Combined Authority Board at a later date. The Mayor agreed to this approach.

Having taken into account the views of the Combined Authority Board and an indicative vote which showed Board members to be in unanimous support of the recommendations, subject to them being noted rather than approved, the Mayor resolved to:

- a) Note the proposed Combined Authority response to COVID-19 set out in this report
- b) Note the development of medium term business recovery support
- c) Note the offer of interest accruing repayment holidays to companies in receipt of a Local Growth Fund loans covering repayments due between 24th March 2020 and 31st August 2020

- d) Note the adjustment of the current Small Capital Grant Scheme criteria on Intervention rates, Jobs output value ratio to grant value, including safeguarded jobs in output measures for grants, subject to consultation with BEIS advice.

502. BUDGET MONITOR UPDATE – MARCH 2020

This report was deferred.

503. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES 2020-21

The Mayor invited Councillor Dupré, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to share the Committee's question on this report. A copy of the question and response is attached at Appendix 2.

The Chief Finance Officer stated that responsibility for the adoption of the Treasury Management Strategies rested with the Combined Authority Board, but it had delegated responsibility for scrutiny and monitoring of the strategies to the Audit and Governance Committee. The appendices to the report had been drafted in conjunction with the new Treasury Management Advisor and set out the capital strategy, the treasury management strategy, the investment strategy and the minimum revenue provision statement. The Mayor, in consultation with the Board, was invited to approve these strategies and the creation of a £40m 'top up' fund from within existing cash balances to extend the availability of recycled funding to bring additional affordable housing to market. Both the Board and the Audit and Governance Committee had asked officers to look at making more creative use of cash balances and the proposed 'top up' fund would operate in a similar way to the £40m revolving fund used to finance affordable homes. The proposals were consistent with the Combined Authority's principles of 'security' as a first priority, then 'liquidity', to ensure funds were available to be drawn down when needed to support the Authority's activities (including its Capital Programme) and then 'yield'.

Councillor Smith asked whether house building would be progressing in the near term and whether the £40m proposed to create the new 'top up' fund should not instead be focused on business resilience and recovery. The Chief Finance Officer stated that there was currently approximately £170m of cash balances available for investment and that Directors were looking at how project funding within the Medium Term Financial Plan could be re-profiled to support recovery. The proposed 'top up' fund would operate in a similar way to the revolving fund being part of the £100m affordable housing capital fund, but would be managed as part of the treasury management strategy. Whilst it was proposed that this should focus on the delivery of additional affordable housing there would be flexibility for it to be used for other purposes. Officers were looking at all possible re-deployment of both capital and revenue funding in the light of the Combined Authority's emerging priorities. Councillor Smith questioned the recommendation to target funds to housing delivery at this juncture as she had doubts that the money could be spent. She would support the proposals, but subject to looking at broadening the 'top up' fund's impact in the current context. The Mayor acknowledged this requested and reiterated that the money did not have to be spent on housing.

Councillor Smith further asked whether Mayors should be speaking collectively to Government about ways to free up capital spend. The Mayor stated that regular online meetings were being held with Government and every avenue was being explored. Government had already put in place a strategy to support business, but if

the Combined Authority was able to do more to place Cambridgeshire and Peterborough at the forefront of the recovery then it would do so. The Chief Finance Officer stated that officers were in discussion with other combined authorities and with constituent council colleagues around making the necessary representations.

Councillor Herbert welcomed the opportunity to discuss the proposals. He noted that the Combined Authority had already made around £40m of housing loans through the £40m revolving fund and judged that a decision now to commit further funds would be hasty. His preference would be to hold onto the £40m proposed for the creation of the new 'top up' fund until the Covid-19 crisis had passed. On that basis he would not be able to support the proposed creation of the £40m 'top up' fund at this point. The Mayor acknowledged this view, but commented that should business be able to get back to work sooner rather than later a decision to shut down investment across the county could be more damaging.

Councillor Boden judged that the Board needed to plan for the future. There was currently no real sense of how long the crisis might last. On that basis a decision now to create the £40m 'top up' fund would mean that the Authority would be well-placed to respond if the crisis passed quickly. Should it become more prolonged the position could be reviewed.

Having taken into account the views of the Combined Authority Board and an indicative vote which showed a majority of Board members to support the recommendations, the Mayor resolved to:

- a) Approve the following Treasury Strategies:
 - i. The Capital Strategy 2020/21
 - ii. The Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21
 - iii. The Investment Strategy 2020/21
 - iv. The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2020/21
- b) Approve the creation of a £40m 'top up' fund to extend the availability of recycled funding to bring additional affordable housing to the market.

504. MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME – APPROVAL OF MASTERPLANS FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Mayor invited Councillor Dupré, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to share the Committee's question on this report. A copy of the question and response is attached at Appendix 2.

The market towns programme for Huntingdonshire formed part of the Prospectus for Growth led by Huntingdonshire District Council and related to the towns of St Ives, Huntingdon and Ramsey. Work had begun in November 2019 with town teams established for each town to ensure that their local character was fully reflected. An extensive programme of consultation had taken place with the Mayor attending the last round of meetings. Each masterplan contained an action plan comprising short, medium and long term objectives focused around delivering jobs, infrastructure and economic growth.

Councillor Neish stated that the masterplans were good documents and that Huntingdonshire District Council welcomed them. St Ives, Huntingdon and Ramsey were very different towns and it was crucial that this had been reflected. Work was continuing on the governance arrangements as these had not yet been fully worked

through and it might be necessary to review the proposed timelines in view of the current situation in relation to Covid-19.

Councillor Smith commended the masterplans as good, clear documents. She noted that officers had stated that the information requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee about local engagement had been collated and asked that this should be shared with the Board now. Officers stated that councillors, local community groups and businesses had been engaged in the masterplan process for each town through a series of three meetings in addition to stakeholder meetings, the last of which was also attended by the Mayor. Details of the attendance at these meetings and the business covered would be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by the end of the week. Councillor Neish stated that there had been wide local representation at these meetings.

The Mayor stated that the masterplans for Huntingdonshire and also those for East Cambridgeshire and Fenland were of great importance. Steps had been taken from the outset to ensure that these were locally led and every town involved would receive some funding to support delivery of its objectives. Additional Government funding would also be available for some of the schemes.

Having taken into account the views of the Combined Authority Board and an indicative vote which showed Board members to be in unanimous support of the recommendations, the Mayor resolved to:

Approve the Huntingdonshire 'Prospectus for Growth' Market Town Masterplans produced for St Ives, Huntingdon and Ramsey.

BY RECOMMENDATION TO THE COMBINED AUTHORITY

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMBINED AUTHORITY

505. LANCASTER WAY A142/A10 ROUNDABOUT IMPROVEMENTS

The Mayor stated that he was advised that this was not an item upon which he could make a decision using his General Power of Competence and he proposed to defer consideration of the report until such time as the Board could reconvene with decision-making powers.

Councillor Bailey expressed concern at the potential delay to a scheme which offered such significant benefits to the residents of East Cambridgeshire. The Interim Monitoring Officer stated that officers would look at every means available to enable the decision to be made as quickly as possible.

The report was deferred.

506. ST NEOTS RIVER GREAT OUSE NORTHERN CROSSING CYCLE BRIDGE

The Mayor stated that this key decision report was added to the Combined Authority Board agenda on the recommendation of the Transport and Infrastructure Committee. This was done under the General Exception arrangements set out in the Constitution as the report had been on the Forward Plan for less than 28 clear days. A copy of the General Exception notice was attached to the public report as Appendix 1. The Mayor had subsequently been advised that this was not an item upon which he could

make a decision using his General Power of Competence. He therefore proposed to defer consideration of the report until such time as the Board could reconvene with decision-making powers.

Although the report would not be considered, the Mayor invited Councillor Dupré, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to share the Committee's question on this report. A copy of the question and response is attached at Appendix 2.

Councillor Neish stated that Huntingdonshire District Council was due to submit its business case by 30 June 2020 so any steps which could be taken to expedite decision-making would be appreciated.

The report was deferred.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMBINED AUTHORITY

507. £100M AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME (NON-GRANT) - CAMBRIDGE CITY, HISTON ROAD, DEVELOPMENT LOAN TO LARAGH HOMES

The Mayor reminded the Board that if Members wished to discuss the exempt appendices relating to the project it would be necessary to consider whether to exclude the press and public from that part of the meeting. No Board member expressed the wish to do so.

The Mayor invited Councillor Dupré, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to share the Committee's question on this report. A copy of the question and response is attached at Appendix 2.

The Mayor's approval was sought for the provision of a 30 month repayable loan facility capped at £9.637m to Histon Road Development LLP for the development of a 27 unit housing scheme at 295-301 Histon Road, Cambridge. This would include 10 affordable residential units. The loan would be used to acquire the land and develop the site and the developer advised that without this they would not be able to proceed. The loan would be secured against a first charge over the land and a guarantee of 10% of the development costs from the parent company, Laragh Homes.

Councillor Boden commented that the proposals had been considered by the Housing and Communities Committee on 9 March 2020 where they were endorsed by a majority of those present. In reaching this decision the Committee had taken into account that the proposals would provide additional affordable and shared housing in a key area of Cambridge City. In his capacity as Chair of the Housing and Communities Committee and Lead Member for Housing he had subsequently reviewed the proposal with the Director of Housing and Development in light of the rapidly evolving Covid-19 situation and revisited the risk profile. He remained comfortable to recommend that the Combined Authority should proceed with the proposal.

Councillor Herbert commented that Cambridge City Council supported the inclusion of three £100k Homes as part of this specific proposal and that he understood that the City Council Planning Department had independently endorsed the proposal. With regard to the Combined Authority's wider financial strategies he noted that, if approved, this proposal would represent almost a quarter of the £40m 'top up' fund approved earlier in the meeting (minute 503 refers). Cllr Herbert noted that he had raised before why it seemed that preference was being given to applications by

Laragh Homes, described the delivery cost per £100k Home for this project as high, questioned whether this was good timing in light of the current situation with Covid-19 and asked for the expected build date. He further commented that he did not believe that the Combined Authority would have been attracted to this proposal if it had not included three 100k Homes. The Director of Housing and Delivery stated that a first charge would be taken over the land with an additional guarantee in place from the parent company with respect to development costs. Developers were in some cases choosing to bring forward work on the affordable housing element of their developments which would in turn bring in receipts from those properties earlier than anticipated. Under normal circumstances cashflow would be based on a 19 month period, but this proposal was based on a 30 month period to allow for any Covid-19 related delays. If approved, the developer planned to begin work in two to three weeks.

The Mayor stated that there was a need to be mindful that the housing crisis which existed in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough would not go away due to Covid-19. The level of on-line expressions of interest in £100k Homes was high. Whilst taking account of the need to support business in the short-term there remained a longer term need to continue to support sustained economic growth across the county. The Mayor acknowledged Councillor Herbert's concerns, but remained of the opinion that it remained right to support the economy at this time through the development of this site.

Councillor Boden clarified that the proposed loan facility of £9.637m would support the delivery of 10 affordable housing units, not just the three which would be £100k Homes, and that this cost would be repaid in full.

Having taken into account the views of the Combined Authority Board and an indicative vote which showed Board members to be in unanimous support of the recommendations, the Mayor resolved to:

- a) Approve the provision of a loan facility of £9.637m to Histon Road Developments LLP for a scheme of 27 units based on the heads of terms detailed in exempt Appendix 1.
- b) Delegate authority to the Director of Housing and Development, in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing, the Monitoring Officer and the Lead Member for Investment and Finance, to conclude any necessary legal documentation, including the determination of the interest rate to be charged and the security for the loan by way of a first charge upon the land.

BUSINESS BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COMBINED AUTHORITY

508. BUSINESS BOARD GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Board considered the preliminary findings of a review of governance arrangements for the Business Board. This had focused on four key areas: Board oversight and assurance; Board membership; Board performance; and effective decision-making. Amongst the changes proposed were revisions to the arrangements relating to the resignation of Business Board members and a process for officer declarations of interest. At present, all Business Board decisions were submitted to the Combined Authority Board for ratification. This was not required within the regulations governing the Business Board's operation and a further report exploring whether this should continue would be brought to a future meeting of the Combined Authority Board for decision.

Councillor Smith asked whether any comparison had been carried out between the composition of the Business Board and that of other local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) to make sure that democratic representation was similar. She acknowledged that the Business Board was already operating effectively, but judged that elected members actively involved in economic issues could add additional value. She would be particularly interested to see comparisons with LEPs in the OxCam Arc and more widely towards the east coast. The Deputy Monitoring Officer stated that membership of the Business Board was prescribed in the Combined Authority's Assurance Framework. However, some work could be done to see how Business Board membership compared to the composition of other LEPs for inclusion in the next report to the Board.

The Mayor stated that the Business Board had been established with the clear intention to put business representation at its heart. This remained the case and he emphasised that the two elected members of the Business Board were not voting members.

Having taken into account the views of the Combined Authority Board and an indicative vote which showed Board members to be in unanimous support of the recommendations, the Mayor resolved to:

- a) Approve the preliminary recommendations and next steps outlined in the Appendix.
- b) Delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to amend the Assurance Framework and Constitution to reflect the recommendations outlined in the Appendix.

509. ENTERPRISE ZONE FUNDING UTILISATION

The Mayor invited Councillor Dupré, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to share the Committee's question on this issue. A copy of the question and response are attached at Appendix 2.

The report provided an update on Combined Authority Enterprise Zone business rates income based on recently updated National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) figures and set out the revised financial commitments and allocations made against Combined Authority Enterprise Zone NNDR income.

Having taken into account an indicative vote which showed Board members to be in unanimous support of the recommendation, the Mayor resolved to:

Approve the reallocation of £306,313 (representing 75% of all eligible costs) from Enterprise Zone National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) income to Local Growth Fund.

510. ADVANCED MATERIALS AND MANUFACTURING SECTOR STRATEGY

This report was deferred at the request of the Business Board. Although the report would not be considered, the Mayor invited Councillor Dupré, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to share the Committee's question on the report. A copy of the question and response is attached at Appendix 2.

511. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Subject to the necessary legislation having been enacted, the Mayor expressed the hope that the Board would be able to convene with full decision-making powers in April 2020 (date to be confirmed).

(Mayor)

Legal basis for the Mayor's Decision-Making meeting 30 March 2020

We are unable to hold a physical meeting of the Combined Authority Board due to the Government's social distancing guidance and the law as it stands does not allow the Combined Authority Board to conduct virtual meetings. This leaves two options for making the decisions which cannot wait for the law on holding virtual local government meetings to be changed. The first is for decisions to be made by the Combined Authority's officers using the powers delegated to them in the Constitution. The second is for decisions to be made by the Mayor using his general power of competence. The Interim Monitoring Officer has advised that, while both options are valid, it would be preferable for decisions to be made by an elected member rather than an unelected officer in order to provide greater accountability for the decision-making. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Order 2017 gave the Combined Authority a General Power of Competence under the Localism Act 2011. This is the same power of competence enjoyed by the constituent authorities. The 2017 Order also provided that the Mayor may do anything that the Combined Authority may do under the General Powers of Authorities section of the Localism Act 2011. The Combined Authority and the Mayor both have the same General Power of Competence. The restrictions on the Mayor's use of his general power are:

- Any decision involving the transfer of property, rights and liabilities of the Combined Authority to or from any of the constituent authorities or any decision relating to the preparation and publication of a non-statutory spatial strategy requires the consent of all members of the Combined Authority appointed by the constituent councils, or their substitute members;
- Any decision which would require two thirds majority voting under the Constitution or the 2017 Order could not be taken by the Mayor using his general power of competence;
- Any decision taken by the Mayor using his general power of competence would be subject to funding being available; and
- General Administrative Law principles would apply to any exercise of the Mayor's General Power.

Section 1(5) of the Localism Act 2011 provides:

(5) The generality of the power conferred by subsection (1) ("the general power") is not limited by the existence of any other power of the authority which (to any extent) overlaps the general power.

This means that the Mayor's General Power of Competence is not limited by the existence of any other power of the Combined Authority which (to any extent) overlaps the general power.

Questions from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Item 1.1 Announcements, Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Question: Will the Mayor make a statement at this meeting on the Covid-19 pandemic and the Combined Authority, including

- The Combined Authority's own preparations for the pandemic
- Combined Authority support for any other agencies in the front line of the crisis
- Any updates on support being provided to business
- Transport plans to enable key workers to get to work and to childcare provision
- What plans the Combined Authority has to divert staff and resources away from the non-urgent and into present resilience?

Response:

Since the Overview and Scrutiny Committee submitted these questions officers had brought forward an urgent report setting out the Combined Authority's response to Covid-19 for consideration at the informal Combined Authority Board meeting on 25 March 2020. It is hoped that this will address those questions.

Item 2.2 [Treasury Management Strategies 2020-21](#)

Question: How will these treasury management strategies be reviewed in the light of the economic effects of Covid-19, given that the severe shocks to the economy might require more frequent and more in-depth review than previously envisaged?

Response:

The Board has delegated scrutiny of the Combined Authority's Treasury Management Strategy to the Audit and Governance Committee. The Committee receives a minimum of three treasury reports a year which includes performance updates against

prudential indicators which are set, taking advice from our external Treasury advisors, to protect the resources of the Combined Authority. The vast majority of the Combined Authority's cash balances are currently held with Local Authorities, which are considered to be low risk. The Finance team will continue to take advice from our advisors and monitor the current and future situation of the economy under the scrutiny of the Audit and Governance Committee and take appropriate action where necessary.

Item 3.1 [Market Towns Programme - Approval of Masterplans for Huntingdonshire](#)

Question: The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is still awaiting the information requested at its meeting on 27 January 2020 about how councillors and communities are engaged in these masterplan exercises. When will this be provided?

Response:

A written response will be provided by the end of this week.

Item 4.2 [St Neots River Great Ouse Northern Crossing Cycle Bridge](#)

Question: Which projects within the St Neots Masterplan would be eligible to benefit from this funding, and which particular ones does the Mayor have in mind?

Response:

The £3.1m of Gainshare funding, if approved by the Board, will be available to be allocated to any projects against priorities within the approved St Neots Market Town Masterplan. A call for proposals will be launched under the Market Towns Programmes to administer Combined Authority funding across all towns in delivery of each Masterplan. The application process will be open and transparent, and proposals will be independently appraised. It is up to St Neots to decide what projects its residents would want to benefit from the available funding and will be approved by the CA Board.

Item 5.1 [£100m Affordable Housing Programme \(Non-Grant\) - Cambridge City, Histon Road, Development Loan to Laragh Homes](#)

Question: What form of tenure will the affordable homes be, and to what accessibility standards will they be constructed?

Response:

The affordable housing was set to be 60% (affordable rent) 40% (shared/ownership) but Cross Keys have had an initial discussion with Cambridge City Council who are happy in principal for this to be 70% (affordable rent) and 30% (shared ownership). There are 10 affordable units.

They will be built to minimum space standards and include the provision of a lift to comply with life time homes policy, M4 part 2 of the building regulations regarding acceptable and adaptable dwellings.

Item 6.2 [Enterprise Zone Funding Utilisation](#)

Question: Which assumptions in this report are likely to be affected by Government financial announcements relating to Covid-19?

Response:

The Government support for business that relate to business rates are as follows:

- 1.Grants for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses consisting of a £25k grant for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses operating from smaller premises with a rateable value between £15 and £51k. This will be administered through Local Authorities.
- 2.Grants for small businesses that pay little or no business rates businesses consisting of a £10k for firms currently eligible for small business rate relief (SBRR) or rural rate relief, to help meet their ongoing business costs. This will be administered through Local Authorities.
- 3.Business Rate relief allowing for a 100% business rates discount for all retail, leisure and hospitality venues with no limit to Rateable Values. This will be administered through Local Authorities.

Whilst the third measure has the potential to impact business rate revenue receipts, there are relatively few tenants on the Enterprise Zones in these categories of business.

Item 6.3 [Advanced Materials and Manufacturing Sector Strategy](#)

Question: When and how will this strategy be reviewed in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic?

Response:

All Combined Authority business support strategies are currently being reviewed in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic. An economic survey will be carried out in the summer to measure the medium-term impacts of the pandemic. This will be used to inform a medium-term review.