



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Monday, 28 November 2022

Time: 11.00

Location: Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, Huntingdon

Members:

Cllr L Dupre (Chair)	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr A Sharp (Vice-Chair)	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr D Dew	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr M Hassall	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr P Coutts	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr M Goldsack	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr R Robertson	Cambridge City Council
Cllr S Smith	Cambridge City Council
Cllr G Harvey	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr A Van De Weyer	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr A Iqbal	Peterborough City Council
Cllr A Coles	Peterborough City Council
Cllr A Miscandlon	Fenland District Council
Cllr A Hay	Fenland District Council

Officers:

Angela Probert*	Interim Programme Director – Transformation
Edwina Adefehinti*	Interim Monitoring Officer
Jon Alsop*	Chief Finance Officer
Rob Emery*	Business Board S151 & Dept.S73 Combined Authority
Oliver Howarth	Bus Strategy Manager
Adrian Cannard	Strategic Planning Manager
Reena Roojam*	Lawyer, Combined Authority
Anne Gardiner	Governance Manager, Combined Authority
Joanna Morley	Interim Governance Officer, Combined Authority

*denotes attendance via Zoom

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Atkins. Cllr Coutts was in attendance as his substitute

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 No declarations of interest were made.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Action Log

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2022 were approved as a correct record and the Action Log was noted.
- 3.2 The briefing session on the work programme as detailed in the Action Log did not take place due to illness, but this would be rescheduled

ACTION:

Governance Officers to arrange a virtual briefing session on the Work Programme during December, dependant on officer and Member availability.

4. Public Questions

There were no public questions.

5. Improvement Framework

- 5.1 Angela Probert, Interim Programme Director - Transformation, introduced the report which provided the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to undertake pre-scrutiny of the Improvement Framework report going to Board on 30 November 2022.
- 5.2 During discussion the following points were noted:
- a. The report was the first report to Board detailing progress against the actions laid out in the Plan.
 - b. Members were generally in favour of the presentation of the material and the rating system used.
 - c. Workstream E had been flagged as amber as although officers were focused on delivering what had been committed, they were realistic about the timescales involved.
 - d. At the present time it was not intended that further resources, above the £750,000 improvement budget already approved, would be requested.
 - e. Concerns were raised about the lack of an overarching strategy to drive the activities outlined.
 - f. Officers agreed that the vision and priorities would drive activities and behaviours and stressed that a significant amount of work had taken done on this with the Mayor, (prior to his absence), the Members, and with the Chief Executives of constituent councils, prior to a report going to the Board in January

- g. Output from a staff survey and further engagement at an all-staff conference in December would also feed into the values/principles piece of work.
- h. The Independent Improvement Board (IIB) would report to the Board who were the 'owners' of the Improvement Plan but would also give progress updates to stakeholders such as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the Audit and Governance Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Improvement Framework report going to the Combined Authority Board meeting on 30 November be noted.

ACTIONS:

Officers to share with the Committee the following information:

- 1. Membership of the IIB
- 2. Structure and role descriptions for Executive Directors
- 3. The letter sent by the Chief Executive to the external auditor updating him on progress
- 4. An update on Theme E of the Improvement Plan regarding the performance management framework

6 Budget Scrutiny – 2023/24 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan

- 6.1 Jon Alsop, Chief Finance Officer introduced the report which asked the Committee to note the principles and approach behind the development of the draft budget for 2023/24 and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the period 2023/24 to 2026/27.
- 6.2 During discussion the following points were noted:
 - a. Following the budget setting of 22-23, the majority of both the capital and revenue budgets had been allocated out which meant that there was not much capacity for allocation to new projects in this round of budget setting.
 - b. A review of other possible income streams had identified that the increase in interest rates would mean additional revenue from treasury balances.
 - c. Bus services were highlighted as an emerging pressure and the Board would be asked to consider the type of provision of service going forward and how it might address the funding gap between the level of service and the funds available.
 - d. The original budget gap had been identified as £1.7million which would be contained within savings identified for this financial year only. Going forwards officers would be looking at potential costs for several different scenarios; for example, if the existing level of service were maintained the latest estimate for this was £3.5m.
 - e. In addition to the bus services there were other bus related pressures, for example the inflation cost on energy costs relating to the real time passenger information element of bus services.
 - f. The Highways Maintenance Grant was a grant given to the CPCA by central Government which was then passed through to the two highways authorities to deliver works. The grant figure of £27,695,000 was the figure published by the Department for Transport and was cash flat over the next five years. If that figure did not change, there would be significantly lower investment in the road system in real terms because of the effect of inflation on the cost of building materials.

- g. The impact of inflation had been considered in other areas of the business including staffing costs.
- h. A number of options had been put forward for additional funding to ease the buses pressure including the option of a mayoral precept. Part of the consultation process would be to ask stakeholders what their views of the options were.
- i. At this stage there was no set limit on the amount of mayoral precept but officers had been looking at the quantum of the pressure and what precept levels could raise; for example an annual precept of £15 would raise £4.4m.
- j. There were only two other combined authorities that had set a mayoral precept and these were between £20 and £30.
- k. Central Government had previously said that going forwards they would be looking for local taxation as an element of combined authority funding.
- l. A six-week consultation period would start after the Board meeting on Wednesday 30 November after which the proposed budget would go to the Board meeting at the end of January for a final decision. The Mayoral precept was part of the Mayor's budget and would be carried unless two thirds of the Board, or substitute members present and voting, vetoed it. The Mayor and the Chair of the Business Board could not vote as they were not members of a constituent council.
- m. One of the workstreams of the Improvement Plan was looking at sustainable future funding. Officers were hugely conscious that this was an issue that needed to be addressed and would explore the different financial freedoms that a combined authority had as well as options to bid for available grants.
- n. CPCA was one of the few combined authorities that had the ability to raise an additional business rate supplement of 2p in the pound for current business owners. This had not been included in the budget as it needed a much longer consultation period and it had to set out how it would result in significant economic growth. It was an option that the CA could look at in the longer term but it was not deliverable in the short amount of time from when it was known that the bus services were facing this crisis and the next financial year.
- o. Councillors expressed their wish to formally comment on the budget following further updates and the response to the consultation, and in sufficient time prior to the Board making its decision on 25 January 2023.
- p. The estimated £7m to deliver the existing network for the whole of 2023-24 included provision for TING up until the end of November 2023 when the current contract ended.
- q. There would be a social media campaign to encourage every member of the public within the CA area to feed into the consultation. In the past there had been varying degrees of engagement.
- r. At the end of the consultation, responses would be reviewed and a summary document provided for the Board meeting. Councillors expressed their concern that there was insufficient time to do this but appreciated that the amount of time was weighed against an extended length of time for the consultation.

RESOLVED:

1. That the principles and approach behind the development of the draft budget for 2023/24 and the Medium Term Financial Plan for the period 2023/24 to 2026/27 be noted.
2. That the significant pressure on passenger transport forecast from 2023-24 MTFP be noted
3. That an additional meeting be held in early January to discuss the Committee's formal response to the budget consultation

ACTIONS:

1. The Monitoring Officer to clarify the voting arrangements at Board regarding the mayoral precept, particularly in the event that the Mayor was not present and was substituted by the Deputy Mayor who was a member of a constituent council.

7. Draft Bus Strategy

- 7.1 Oliver Howarth, Bus Strategy Manager, introduced the report which provided the Committee with an opportunity to comment on and ask questions on the draft Bus Strategy. Questions had also been submitted in advance of the meeting and these together with responses to them are appended to the minutes.

- 7.2 During discussion the following points were noted:

- a. The draft strategy was an overarching framework document setting out the CPCA's aspirations for the bus network over the next five years.
- b. Officers were looking at ways in which changes to timetables and routings could help schoolchildren access education.
- c. Implementing the Strategy would require Members to make some difficult choices regarding funding, where investment was made, and how the infrastructure was used.
- d. The CPCA was investigating building a new bus depot in Peterborough to replace the existing one which was over a hundred years old and not fit for electric buses. A new depot would be open to all bus operators so that there could be free competition in a franchise without individual operators incurring additional costs to set up depots.
- e. The CPCA and the Greater Cambridge Partnership had a common aim to improve and increase bus provision.
- f. Councillors raised concerns about social isolation for those living in rural areas with very few bus services.
- g. It was frustrating that bus timetabling did not join up with train timetabling so that buses arrived after trains going onwards to towns and cities had already left.
- h. The Committee wanted to scrutinise the expected roll out costs for Ting (demand responsive transport) and asked that a report on the matter be brought to the additional January meeting.
- i. There was opportunity and the road space available to look at an improved bus service north to south of the region between Peterborough, Huntingdon and Cambridge.
- j. Three demand responsive bus services ran in Peterborough but they operated very differently from the Ting service
- k. The value of public subsidies for transport could be weighed both in economic and social terms.

RESOLVED:

1. That the draft Bus Strategy (Appendix A) and covering report published with the Transport and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee papers, having been reviewed and commented on, be noted.
2. That the timeline provided by officers in the report be noted.

3. That a report on the estimated costs of rolling out Ting to a wider CPCA area be brought to the additional meeting being held in January (date to be confirmed)

ACTIONS:

1. The Bus Strategy Manager to raise the issue of connected bus and rail timetables at the next meeting of the Bus Operators Forum.

8. Climate Action Plan Update

- 8.1 Adrian Cannard, Strategic Planning Manager, introduced the report which had been written to update Members on progress on the Combined Authority's climate-related activity and the Climate Action Plan.
- 8.2 During discussion the following points were noted:
 - a. There were a number of significant transport actions within the Climate Action Plan that were being addressed in the review of the LTCP (Local Transport Connectivity Plan) and would be reported back to the Transport and Infrastructure Committee. Consultants were working on two key items:
 1. how Net Zero targets could be achieved, as Government had indicated that this would be a key determinant in how much transport funding authorities would receive in the future, and
 2. how the carbon accounting was done for individual infrastructure schemes
 - b. The issue of lack of capacity in the private sector of installers to retro fit homes, had been picked up by the Skills team who were encouraging providers to bring forward more skills training in this field.
 - c. There had been a recent announcement from Government that the Sustainable Warmth Grant Scheme was to be extended so officers would be looking to see how this would impact locally.
 - d. The energy network and the challenges around it were very much an issue for the CPCA and had been highlighted in independent reports. The Climate Action Plan included actions to work with constituent councils and take a strategic approach to local energy planning.
 - e. The problems with the energy network had been raised with the National Infrastructure Commission which recognised that it was an issue felt particularly in fast growth areas. This was because the network only delivered capacity to approved growth and quite often, in the CA area, growth was ahead of what had been described as 'approved'.

RESOLVED:

That the Climate Action Plan be noted.

9. Lead Members' Updates and Combined Authority Forward Plan

- 9.1 There were no Lead Member updates
- 9.2 The Committee unanimously approved the appointment of Cllr Goldsack as Lead Member for Transport, following the departure of Cllr Baigent, the former Lead Member for this area.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Goldsack be appointed as Lead Member for Transport

10. Combined Authority Board Agenda: 30 November 2022

- 10.1 Members did not put forward any questions to be asked at the CA Board meeting on 30 November 2022.

11. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

- 11.1 The Chair reminded members that earlier on in the meeting it had been agreed that a new meeting in early January would be scheduled to discuss the Committee's formal response to the budget consultation

RESOLVED:

1. That the new format of the draft Work Programme, as shown at Appendix 1, be noted.

12. Date of next meeting

- 12.1 Monday, 23 January 2022 at 11am.

Meeting Closed: 13.01pm

Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Bus Strategy Questions

	Question	Response
1.	<i>In the report it states " Large scale investment in bus services will be needed in the Greater Cambridge Area, where the aim is to reduce traffic levels in the city by 10-15% on 2011 levels" - where does this leave the rural areas which have been particularly hit recently by Stagecoaches decision to remove a large number of routes - no mention of the level of investment needed in Rural areas.</i>	CPCA has invested heavily in creating 23 new rural bus services, at short notice. We now need to ensure that these services are maintained, whilst looking to develop the overarching bus network to ensure more frequent and reliable services are provided. The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan has a particular focus on social exclusion, equality and connectivity; therefore buses have and will continue to play a significant role in the delivery of a truly integrated transport network thereby addressing the need to reduce car mileage by 15%.
2.	<i>In view of the fact that the bus review began way back in 2018, the pandemic aside, why has it taken over 3 years to prepare a BSIP (Bus service Improvement plan)</i>	BSIP was created in early 2021, we submitted ours in late 2021. We have to produce a new BSIP annually and are soon to publish our second BSIP. This BSIP will be aligned with the emerging Bus Strategy and therefore we have been granted an extension by the DfT to allow this to occur.
3.	<i>Although the CPCA has gone some way to getting alternative bus provision, there are some routes such as between Chatteris-March which appear to have been lost, also not all of the replacement bus services are run at times convenient for school children to get to/from school particularly where they attend a school other than their closest local school. For schoolchildren who qualify for free transport from the education authority CCC (Cambridgeshire County Council) have had to lay on Taxi's / Mini Buses but this does not help those children whose parent have made a conscious decision to send their child to a school other than their local and therefore do not qualify for free transport. I would ask therefore what is the CPCA doing to rectify this problem.</i>	The Combined Authority sought tenders for all the services that were withdrawn by Stagecoach. This resulted in 23 service being delivered in full; however unfortunately on the route between Chatteris and March, no commercial operator tendered for this particular route. The Combined Authority continue to work with potential operators to discuss potential options. Specifically in relation to school children accessing education, we are liaising with operators to understand whether minor changes to the timetabling

		and routeings could be accommodated. In addition, the Combined Authority are liaising with the County Council to see whether it is possible to align services as CCC managed school transport
4.	<i>The Bus Strategy aims are commendable - but where is the money coming from to turn these ambitions into a reality and what timescale are we looking at.</i>	A range of funding options are being considered, for buses, transport, and the Combined Authority as a whole. One of the workstreams for the Combined Authority's Improvement Plan is focused on maximising potential income stream to support and deliver key schemes and services. We continue to lobby government for additional funding to deliver our revised BSIP; whilst exploring other funding options both public and private sector to deliver the revenue and capital support necessary.