

CPCA Business Board review

Final report

February 2023

Purpose of this report

This is the final report of a review into the CPCA Business Board, and it sets out findings and recommendations for consideration and discussion among Business Board and CPCA Board members.

In carrying out this review we have engaged with Business Board members as well as CA Board members and senior officers, reviewed CA strategies and priorities, and looked at experience from other CA areas in England. The findings were discussed and further developed at a Joint CPCA and Business Board meeting in December 2022.

Metro Dynamics was commissioned to undertake this review on behalf of CPCA with the aim of reviewing the role and purpose of the Business Board and to plan for the next phase of its work. We agreed with officers and the Business Board Chair at the outset of this work that the key question to be addressed was what should the public, private, business and economic partnership look like in the CPCA in the context of policy and governance change, and economic uncertainty?

In addressing this question, we have covered the following aspects of the Business Board's role:

- the strategic context – CPCA's improvement agenda and governance reforms, implementation of its economic strategy, and evolving Government policy on LEPs, devolution and local economic strategy
- the purpose and functions of the Business Board in a changing policy and economic environment
- decision making and democratic mandate – how the Board makes decisions with CPCA and on what subjects
- role in shaping and delivering on CA priorities
- relationship with the CA Board
- relationship with CA Executive Committees
- membership of the Business Board
- business and employer engagement
- Government engagement on CA priorities, funding, and further devolution

Key themes

The evidence and analysis we gathered through engagement conversations and reviewing relevant documents has highlighted the following as being core to the future purpose and functions of the Business Board. These points then inform the recommendations we make:

- **Economic strategy and strategic direction.** A core function of the Business Board, working with the CA Board and Committees, is to use its business leadership perspective to advise the CA Board on economic strategy, with clarity over the respective roles of the two Boards – the Business Board shaping and developing, the CA Board owning and deciding.

- **Advisory.** Given that responsibility for funding decisions has been moved away from the Business Board and to the Combined Authority Board, the core purpose of the Business Board should broaden out to providing strategic advice from local the perspective of the local business leadership to CPCA in its delivery of economic growth strategy and interventions. This should include the Business Board taking a day to day overview of delivery of the economic growth strategy on behalf of the CPCA Board, bringing business expertise to unblocking relevant issues and supporting making the case for investment into the Cambridge and Peterborough (see below)
- **Clear business voice.** To strengthen the impact of this advisory role, feedback highlighted that the Business Board could do more to use existing networks and professional bodies to bring a wide range of business insights to the development of ideas and advice to the CA.
- **Business engagement.** Similarly, it was felt that the Business Board could also helpfully be more active in helping the CA engage with businesses, for example to promote relevant interventions or funding programmes to targeted sectors, including the third sector, and creating alignment with other business bodies such as the Chamber of Commerce, Cambridge Ahead and Opportunity Peterborough.
- **Lobbying Government.** By focussing on this advisory role and strengthening the business voice, the Business Board could further leverage the influence of its members to strengthen the region's lobbying work with central government to secure the policy and investment needed to tackle economic growth challenges. This role will also be critical for any future devolution deal.
- **Relationship with the CA Board and ways of working.** The Business Board should aim to provide independent, business-led advice in a form and timely manner that has the greatest value to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and the CA Board. To be effective this needs some changes in ways of working, including ensuring that the Business Board agenda and workplan enables it to consider issues and provide advice in a timely way, including engaging with other CA Committees. Regular engagement between Business Board members and the CA leadership and operational management is also important. There is also a strong case to review the voting rights of the Chair on the CA Board, given the uniqueness of this arrangement compared with other combined authorities.

Summary of recommendations

Role and purpose of the Business Board

- We recommend that the purpose of the CPCA Business Board is recast, to transition from being an executive programme board to one providing:
 - **strategic business advice to CPCA's Board**, Committees and officers across all policy areas.
 - **advice on the development and shaping of economic strategy** and day to day **oversight of progress on implementation**, on behalf of the CPCA Board who decide on and own the strategy.
 - **a business voice** for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- The Chair, Vice Chair and members' roles and responsibilities to the Board should be reviewed accordingly.

Functions of the Board

- The Business Board should **establish new terms of reference and functions** that reflects its new purpose, Government's expectations for the functions of an integrated LEP and its role in shaping and supporting implementation of economic strategy.
- A **partnership approach and culture** should be established between Boards whereby the Business Board can provide timely advice on decisions to be taken by the CPCA Board.
- Business Board members engage in creating space with the CA Board and officers to have policy and strategy discussions (see recommendation on committee attendance below)

Future decision-making arrangements

- The **Business Board should meet as an advisory Board** with improved sequencing and meeting timetabling aligned to the CPCA Board. The Business Board would meet before the CA Board so that it can make recommendations on decisions to be taken at the CA Board.
- The **Business Board should operate with embedded membership**, where individual Business Board members lead on specific topics and are embedded within thematic CPCA committees (e.g. skills, transport) where they can contribute to decisions with elected members. This will require additional time from Business Board members.
- The **Business Board and CPCA Board should have strategic joint meetings**, with similar decision-making mechanisms to current arrangements, perhaps twice yearly to exercise oversight over the development and implementation of economic strategy.

Business and employer engagement

- **Business Board members individually act as sector champions** for their areas of expertise – leading on engaging with local and national networks, bringing insight into CA

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discussions, and supporting stakeholder engagement with CA officers on specific pieces of work.

- **Recruitment of new members** to fill gaps in Business Board membership should be better informed by the need to represent the breadth of sectors in the CPCA.
- The Business Board works with the Business Advisory Panel to establish an **annual conference for employers and business leaders** across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to develop networks and raise the profile of the CA's work

Government engagement

- The Business Board works with the developing CA public affairs function to identify key opportunities to **engage the business community on influencing priorities with Government** and maintain a role of developing local networks to support this.

Officer level capacity

- **The new director responsible for economic growth** works closely with the Business Board Chair to set strategic direction for the Board along with the Chief Executive and Mayor to align decision-making.
- Officer capacity is invested in to manage streamlined agenda and paper processes for the Business Board, linking into the public affairs function and working with Local Authority partners as part of a wider collaborative approach to economic development and strategy.
- A forum is established for officer scrutiny and management of funding and projects with appropriate member oversight

Strategic context for the Business Board review

CPCA economic strategy

The core purpose of the CPCA is to improve the lives of its residents, including through supporting inclusive growth across its three sub-economies. Economic strategy for the area is underpinned by a clear narrative and spatial story, reflecting the need for all parts of the economy to function effectively and together if the region as a whole is to succeed.

Integrating activity and aims across different policy and spending areas, such as skills and connectivity, for example, is key to creating stronger opportunities for economic inclusion, including through the region's national and global links and wider Government activity such as the OxCam arc and the ambitions for East-West Rail.

A great deal has happened nationally and locally since the CPIER report in 2018 and during the period ahead significant work will be needed to further understand the long-term impacts of Brexit, Covid and more recent global economic pressures. The CPCA has agreed to commission a further review of the region's economy, including looking at what has changed

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since the CPIER report, updating the evidence base and providing a platform for revision of the region's inclusive and sustainable economic objectives. This will also provide an opportunity to further develop and strengthen a collaborative approach across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, with clear CPCA, local authority and Business Board ownership from the start and a process that builds buy in to an engagement with its recommendations, as they are being developed.

The building blocks for this new approach are being put in place. CPCA's corporate strategic priorities, agreed by the CA Board at the end of 2022, are synthesised into four themes under which specific strategies, plans and programmes sit:

- **Achieving good growth**
- **Increasing connectivity**
- **Ambitious skills and employment opportunities**
- **Enabling resilient communities**

CPCA developed and agreed an Economic Growth Strategy in 2022 that committed to taking a six capitals approach around people, climate and nature, infrastructure, innovation, reducing inequalities and our institutions. The stated aim of this strategy and subsequent implementation plan was to identify the actions that were achievable largely from within existing funding to achieve economic growth and productivity in way that would also creating healthy lives for residents, improving quality of life and the environment, and reducing inequality between Greater Cambridge, the Fens, and Greater Peterborough. It also emphasised the importance of further analysis and evidence, given the uncertain state of the economy. Core to CPCA's future are the strengths of the three different but increasingly interlinked areas of the economy:

- Greater Peterborough – a fast growing centre of green engineering and manufacturing, with close economic links with the midlands
- The Fens – high tech agriculture and innovative environment management
- Greater Cambridge – a global driving force for discovery in human science and digital fields, advanced manufacturing, with strong investment by supply chain firms

CPCA's Employment and Skills Strategy, agreed in 2021, set out ambitions for a local skills system that supports residents through lifelong and life wide learning to access opportunities and drive career progression, employers to create and design good quality jobs and access the right skills and talent, and providers to work collaboratively and responsively to the local economy.

As it moves to an advisory role, the Business Board should also support the implementation of the CPCAs transport strategy to increase sustainable connectivity and modal shift priorities, and regional climate change strategy. Bringing the business voice to how strategies are implemented could significantly increase the impact of the Board.

Implementing these strategies in a way that promotes good growth, wellbeing and the transition to a green low-carbon economy, will require a strong business voice supporting local decision making and collaboration between institutions, businesses and employers, and public and VCSE sector partners across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Further devolution

Further devolution of powers and responsibilities from Whitehall is a key medium-term priority for CPCA, in line with planned further waves of devolution to existing and new combined authorities. Early conversations have indicated that the proposals for further devolution to CPCA could include skills, employment support, business support, innovation and inward investment, all of which rely upon strong local relationships with local employers and businesses to be successful.

Future further devolution will be important for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to have the local levers and influence to support economic growth ambition, and to target resources to ensure good growth for all residents. Governance arrangements and structures, including the way in which the Business Board works in partnership with CA members and officers, should be aligned with the devolution of these economic functions. This will require clarity about the requirement for decision making to sit with the democratically accountable body, i.e. the CPCA Board.

Improvement agenda and CA governance review

CPCA is currently subject to a Government Best Value notice and is implementing Improvement Plan, including with a Panel chaired by Lord Kerslake, and is currently discussing new governance arrangements following a review in 2022.

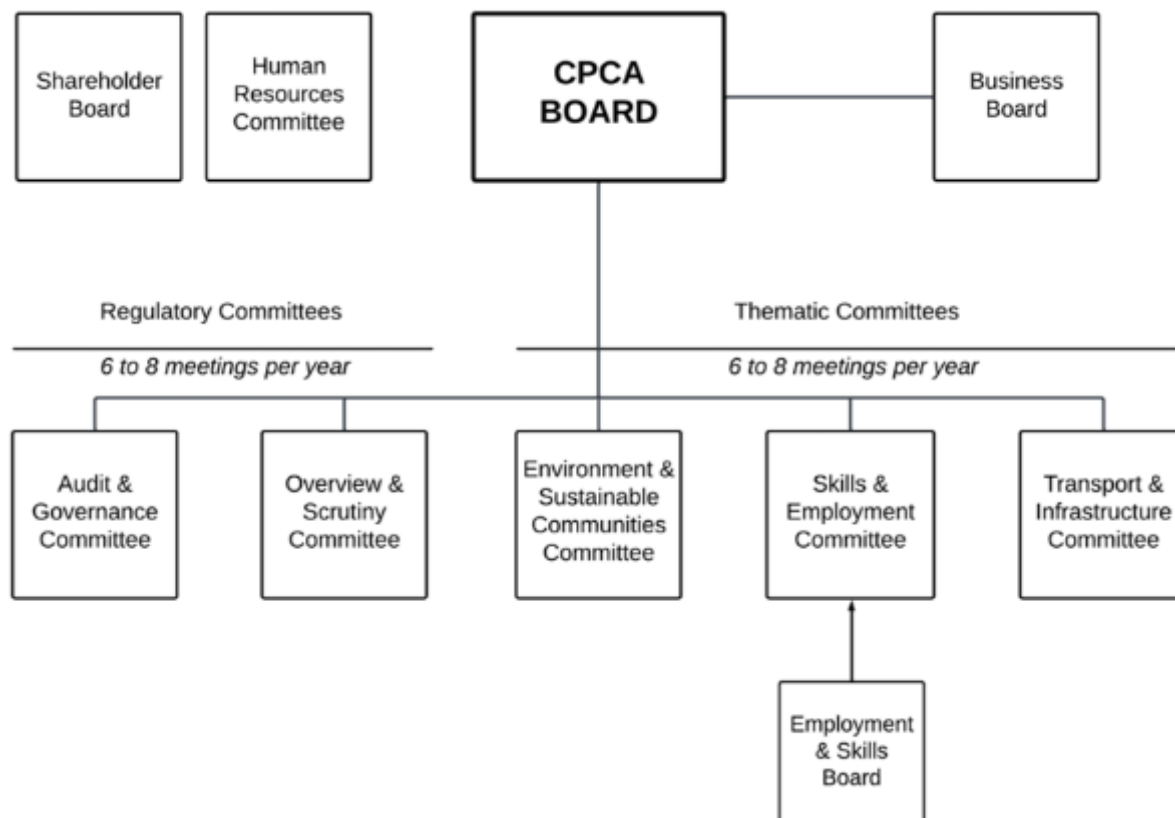
The priorities from this work aim to result in:

- An effective and focused policy development process to respond to new opportunities and challenges and a cohesive approach to strategy
- A collaborative culture, where members feel that debate is productive and discursive
- Wider engagement with business and local partners – co-producing priorities for the local economy
- Engagement with Government ministers to facilitate future investment and a future devolution deal through a public affairs function
- Clarity of purpose – with a strategy for the CA that Board members own and drive forward
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities of the Mayor, Leaders and elected representatives
- Bolstered staffing capacity

The governance review undertaken in 2022 recommended refreshed governance arrangements, currently under consideration by the CA Board. Members are asked to agree a refreshed terms of reference for the CA Board with working arrangements that include more standardised reports and papers submitted to the Board and a forward look cycle to enable more strategic discussion. They are also considering the proposal for renewed thematic Committees with delegation down from the CA Board on environment and sustainability, employment and skills, and transport and infrastructure. The recommendations

in this paper align with proposed CA governance reforms, and these will support the strategic direction for the Business Board we have set out in our review.

Figure 1. Proposed refreshed Committee and governance structure in CPCA governance report to CA Board in January 2023



Evolution of Government policy and LEPs

The Business Board was established in 2018 following the integration of the LEP into the Combined Authority. Since this time, the Board has taken responsibility for specific business-focused programmes. The Board's flagship programme was the Local Growth Fund, which provided government capital funding to be invested in local projects which help overcome strategic barriers to growth – from road improvements and incubator space, through to new skills facilities and space for innovation. To date, over £150m of LGF funding has been invested in local projects.

Funding, including the LGF, has been significantly reduced as a result of changes in Government policy. New and complex challenges now facing the local economy, along with recent leadership incidences and changes within the Business Board together pose an opportunity to rethink the purpose, role and functions of the Board.

National policy changes, local strategic priorities and feedback on strengths and relative weaknesses of the current LEP arrangements together highlight future requirements for the purpose and functions of the Business Board.

LEP integration policy

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Current government policy indicates several clear requirements for LEPs in terms of the role they should play in local economic development. The Levelling Up White Paper highlights the need for public-private partnership in delivering the 12 levelling up missions locally and the parameters for business and skills support have been recast with the coming of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Specifically in terms of purpose and functions:

The 2021 LEP integration guidance states the core functions of LEPs should be:

- Engaging business voice in local strategy
- Working with local leaders to carry out strategic economic planning and maintaining a local economic evidence base
- Deliver Growth Hub, trade and investment, Careers Hub, SAP and skills evidence, local Digital Skills Partnership activities
- Support devolution deals

The Skills and Post-16 Education Act placed an emphasis on skills strategy in places being engaged with employers, and a stronger role for employer representative bodies such as Chambers of Commerce including in leading new Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs).

Overall, national policy indicates a need for the purpose of LEPs to be focused on strategic direction, influence and delivery in close partnership or integration with local authorities.

LEP governance in other Combined Authority areas

Among the nine Combined Authorities in England, there are different governance arrangements for corresponding LEPs – how they engage with a Board of business representatives. There is a range of models for LEP arrangements across the nine existing combined authority areas. The below table summarises membership of LEP/Business Board governance structures and Combined Authority Board/Cabinet structures across England's Combined Authorities.

All Combined Authorities across the country have different arrangements in their constitution for membership and voting procedure. All have some arrangement for cross-membership between the Combined Authority board and the Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure co-ordination between the two Boards.

Three examples of different arrangements illustrate the range of options and ways of working possible:

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Uniquely, GMCA was already established when LEPs came into existence, and so LEP governance was designed to be integrated from the start. Coterminous with the city-region, the LEP takes a place-based approach to business engagement, with each of the 10 private sector LEP members leading business engagement in one of the ten GM districts.

The LEP has no employees and shares the legal personality of the Combined Authority; secretariat functions are provided by GMCA through a combined team of policy and research officers. GMCA also has the power to vet LEP members and is the accountable body for the organisation.

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Much of the economic development and business support functions for the Greater Manchester city-region is delivered by the Growth Company, an independent company with GMCA board representation, which also operates outside of the Greater Manchester boundaries.

Tees Valley Combined Authority

The Tees Valley LEP describes itself as the “first fully integrated LEP in England”. The Combined Authority has a unique governance structure; the LEP and the CA Cabinet are the same body, with LEP members attending cabinet as non-voting members, and with each of the five Leaders and the Mayor as full members of the LEP. The Chair of the LEP also holds the business support portfolio, unlike in most Combined Authorities, city-regional policy portfolios are held by local authority leaders.

This closely integrated structure is likely a result of the origins of the Combined Authority with Tees Valley Unlimited, the coterminous LEP that operated in the region before the establishment of TVCA. Staffing support is provided by the Combined Authority. Business engagement is delivered by individual LEP members, who each take a thematic lead.

South Yorkshire Combined Authority

South Yorkshire, formerly the Sheffield City Region CA, was established in 2014, with the LEP preceding the CA in 2012, but initially covering five additional local authorities in Derbyshire. The LEP was reduced in size to be coterminous with the CA and integrated in 2020, with the districts formerly in the LEP still sitting as non-constituent members of the CA.

The CA-LEP relationship has a distinctive model, where policy oversight and agendas are driven by four thematic boards; Business, Recovery and Growth, Housing and Infrastructure, Education, Skills and Employability and Transport and the environment. The boards are drawn from the membership of the LEP, the CA board and additional co-opted members. In turn, the boards supported with policy and research capacity by the SYMCA executive team, and each holds delegated authority for spending decisions of less than £2m.

South Yorkshire CA, which does not automatically confer membership, but has the option to co-opt a representative with 2/3 support from the members of the board.

Uniquely among CA-LEPs, among the traditional mix of private and public sector representatives on the board, the LEP has a dedicated position for a local union representative.

Assessment

CPCA is currently implementing recommendations from a recent governance review, and the CPCA Board has agreed the improvement framework drawn up by the Chief Executive, which includes embedding collaboration as a key organising principle for CPCA. An Improvement Panel has been established to be chaired by Lord Kerslake. Both reports recognise the value of reviewing the purpose and role of the Business Board to support collective leadership for the region and support Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's economy. The Business Board has performed its current role well, but in a changing policy

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and economic context, a transitioning role and purpose of the Business Board will be key to CPCA's future.

The Business Board has carried out the role of an executive programme board, established originally as a LEP, and being integrated into CPCA in 2019, in order to oversee the delivery of the Local Growth Fund, EU Structural Funds, and business support including the Growth Hub. Its functions have been dominated by approving funding plans, overseeing delivery and implementation of projects, and monitoring progress on investment outcomes. The Board has also had a role in agreeing, alongside elected members at Committees and the CPCA Board, economic plans and strategies developed by CPCA officers. The Business Board is formed of local business leaders with a business Chair, and the Mayor attends meetings. The Board inputs into CPCA decisions by agreeing strategies and plans and with the Chair having a vote at the CPCA Board.

The Business Board now faces an uncertain future in the context of Government policy that is pursuing LEP integration, the growing economic challenge that the CPCA area will face, and ongoing questions about resource priorities in a period of likely public spending contraction.

- **Strengths** – development of Economic Growth Strategy, maintenance of business and economy evidence base, skills policy and implementation, already part of CPCA therefore limited structural issues to overcome with greater integration.
- **Weaknesses** – not a partnership culture with CPCA (though this is changing), not strategic enough in setting economic and business agenda, too much part of silo culture, related to programme responsibilities, and have too often operated as a separate organisation, too remote from the business community, and part of an MCA that requires improvement.
- **Opportunities** – to develop a more strategic business led approach to the full range of economic, place shaping issues within CPCA's remit, strengthening links with the business community and Government, and articulate a clearer inclusive growth vision that enables each of the three economic sub geographies to maximise their potential, to strengthen links between them: recognising the super strength of Cambridge, strong economic growth potential in Peterborough, and need for economic and environmental transformation in the Fens.
- **Threats** – diminishing funding and programme base, emphasis in Government policy shifting to accountable public bodies, may seem less relevant to future economic governance unless refocused, especially if CPCA improvement agenda doesn't sufficiently change perception of overall efficacy of economic leadership.

Recommendations

Role and purpose of the Business Board

In the context of evolving Government policy, the integration of LEPs across England, and the growth priorities of the region in a turbulent economic context, **we recommend that the purpose of the CPCA Business Board is recast, to transition from being an executive programme board to a strategic business voice** for CPCA's Board, Committees, and officers.

This is a broader remit than currently discharged by the Business Board, and so may require a broader set of functions to be carried out in the future. This will mean that the Business Board works differently in the future, with different expectations and roles for Board members, and different support needs from CPCA officers.

Given Business Board member's positions in non-executive roles, and the requirement to carry out Board functions around other responsibilities **we recommend that the Chair, Vice Chair and members' roles and responsibilities to the Board are agreed and clarified** including:

- time commitments
- frequency of meetings
- and input required on the work of CPCA.

Functions of the Board

We recommend that the Board establishes a set of functions that supports CPCA's strategic priorities, Government's expectations for the functions of an integrated LEP, and local business and economic priorities:

- Strategic business voice to the Mayor and CA committees on economy, business, skills, transport, housing, UKSPF and future devolution deals
- Engagement with Government and national bodies/networks
- Oversight and strategic direction of business support (currently delivered through Growth Works programme), inward investment, R&D and innovation
- Incorporate business advisory panel and better align with other delivery bodies – e.g. Chamber (leading the LSIP), Cambridge Ahead
- Lead partnerships on good business practices and inclusive growth – e.g. a Good Employment Charter, Living Wage commitments for local businesses
- Contribute to and advise on CPCA economic and skills evidence base
- Supporting implementation of CPCA strategies

We recommend establishing a partnership approach and culture between Boards whereby the Business Board advises on decisions to be taken by the CPCA Board, especially relating to business and economic growth. This would include how the Business

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Board's advice is considered at CPCA Board decisions and the role of voting for the Business Board Chair (this was also recommended to be reviewed in the recent CPCA governance review).

Implementing economic strategy

The CPCA Board with the Business Board needs to collectively own the economic strategy for the area. This starts with the work that the Business Board is currently undertaking to support and advise the development of the implementation plan for the new Economic Growth Strategy. Next the Business Board should work with and advise the CPCA,, and its member authorities, in commissioning, developing and managing the CPIER refresh.

We found that Business Board and CA Board members were enthusiastic to make space for this more strategic and policy collaboration. Members were keen to develop conversations around some key economic areas that Board members feel need more attention and collaboration – for example, a broader understanding of the experience of employers, investors and employees in the area beyond priority growth sectors, the interaction of different levers of growth held at local and regional level, and improving implementation of inward investment, skills and employment, and support for SMEs.

We recommend that:

- The Business Board and CA Board jointly own the strategic direction of economic growth for the area
- The Business Board takes an advisory role as the business voice across a range of policy levers
- Business Board members engage in creating space – with the CA Board and officers – to have policy and strategy discussions

Future decision-making arrangements

CPCA has the opportunity to reframe the role and function of its Business Board in a way that creates a stronger partnership between accountable local politicians and local businesses. Moving from a specific programme management role to a broader strategic advisory role for the Business Board, can enable the business voice to be more embedded in the CPCA's strategy, structures and processes.

Most Combined Authorities are moving to a position where their LEP becomes a Business Board, which is advisory. This doesn't have decision making powers, but as a business voice can co-develop economic strategy and make recommendations. The CPCA Board is currently in an unusual position compared to other CAs by including the Business Board Chair as a full voting member alongside the Mayor and Council Leaders.

From our engagement with the Business Board and CA Board, we understand that members want to see smoother, less duplicative, and more collaborative decision making in future. Members also expressed the desire to see more mixed representation in decision making

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forums – for example, in the proposed refreshed structure of thematic committees emerging from the CA governance review. There has been discussion that decision making between the Boards currently appears to take place in parallel but separately, with limited read across discussions.

Achieving this raises questions about the forums in which members meet, how meetings are sequenced and structured, and the papers and issues that are discussed and commented on in different forums. We have heard as part of this review a desire for a more strategic approach to meeting agenda design and sequencing of papers sent to Boards with clarity around who needs to take decisions on which issues. Current arrangements can feel burdensome to members currently with long agendas and papers including a volume of programme updates.

To embed the business voice within more collaborative decision-making, we recommend three related changes to the way in which the Business Board functions within the wider CPCA governance structure:

- **The Business Board should meet as an advisory Board** with improved sequencing and meeting timetabling aligned to the CPCA Board. The Business Board would meet before the CA Board so that it can make recommendations on decisions to be taken at the CA Board. This would be supported by streamlined papers, so that Business Board advice is sought on strategic questions and issues, moving away from long standing item agendas and programme updates
- **The Business Board should operate with embedded membership**, where individual Business Board members lead on specific topics and are embedded within thematic CPCA committees (e.g. skills, transport) where they can make decisions with elected members. As a whole forum, the Business Board would come together to discuss wider business community and economic issues.
- **The Business Board and CPCA Board should have strategic joint meetings**, with similar decision-making mechanisms to current arrangements, perhaps twice yearly to exercise oversight over the development and implementation of economic strategy. Where these are formal meetings, the Business Board Chair could maintain a vote with CA Board members, but with other Business Board members not voting (but all would be involved in taking a position in informal joint meetings). The general direction should be towards collaborative working and consensus, where the need for formal votes would be infrequent.

Business and employer engagement

Deeper and wider engagement with local businesses needs to support a stronger business voice for the region. A strong business voice can help businesses to thrive and grow by getting support at the local and national level. There is a lot of potential for a strong business voice to support the implementation of the economic strategies and priorities identified in the Economic Growth Strategy and Employment and Skills Strategy. This would help to develop a stronger understanding between employers and providers of the skills needed for economic growth and recovery.

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Business engagement should also support improving implementation of CA and constituent LA programmes – by leading a strong advisory function drawing on local networks, the Business Board can provide intelligence and advice to CA members and officers on challenges and barriers businesses are facing and what they need not only from business and skills programmes but also from functions such as transport infrastructure delivery.

Greater Manchester has demonstrated this through partnering with the public and private sector to develop a shared vision for delivering the Bee Network – GMCA and TfGM’s plan for a fully integrated London-style transport network.

Without proposing to expand the Business Board itself into a larger forum, members have expressed interest in considering how more employers and partners can be engaged and involved. Making more joined up use of the Business Advisory Panel could support this.

We recommend that:

- **Business Board members individually act as sector champions** for their areas of expertise – leading on engaging with local and national networks, bringing insight into CA discussions, and supporting stakeholder engagement with CA officers on specific pieces of work.
- **Recruitment of new members** to fill gaps in Business Board membership should be better informed by the need to represent the breadth of sectors in the CPCA.
- The Business Board works with the Business Advisory Panel to establish an **annual conference for employers and business leaders** across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to develop networks and raise the profile of the CA’s work

Government engagement on CPCA priorities, funding, and further devolution

A strong business voice that can engage with central government will be vital in supporting the CA’s ambitions. current strategies and priorities. Greater Manchester’s business engagement has meant the business voice is heard in tandem with the CA, and has helped achieve further devolution and levers such as business rates retention. This will be particularly helpful for supporting CPCA’s priority of supporting the growth of the priority sectors in agri-tech, digital, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing. These are innovative sectors that need the right regulatory environment, access to talent, employment space, and national industrial expertise to grow.

Building engagement between businesses in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and the Government will support future devolution discussions with the CA to enable the CA to achieve its inclusive growth potential.

We recommend that:

- The Business Board works with the developing CA public affairs function to identify key opportunities to **engage the business community on influencing priorities with Government** and maintain a role of developing local networks to support this.

Required officer-level support for the Board's functions and staff capacity

In order for the Business Board to transition into an advisory business voice support for the CA, and to transition decision-making arrangements, the right officer support will be needed.

The officer group as a whole takes responsibility for implementing an inclusive growth economic strategy, working with Chief Executives and officers of constituent authorities.

It will be important to have aligned officer capacity at a strategic leadership level – holding the relationship with the Business Board Chair and the Mayor to support planning how members advise on priorities in a forward plan. Capacity should also be bolstered at management level in order to ensure officers have time to agree and set Business Board meeting agendas and commission papers in conjunction with discussions happening at CA Board and Committees, to ensure coherence.

As the Business Board transitions away from acting as an executive programme board, members will receive fewer programme monitoring updates. With funding responsibility shifting from what was the LEP to the CA, there will need to be an enhanced oversight function within the CA, with officers providing legal, financial and project management expertise for proper scrutiny of investment and projects. Government will be looking for appropriate assurance in relation to this. Support arrangements for both the Business Board and the CPCA board will need to both enable them to operate more strategically and to provide the right level of assurance in relation to investment decision making.

We recommend that:

- **A new director responsible for economic growth** works closely with the Business Board Chair to set strategic direction for the Board along with the Chief Executive and Mayor to align decision-making
- **Officer capacity is invested in** to manage streamlined agenda and paper processes for the Business Board, linking into the public affairs function
- **A forum is established for officer scrutiny** and management of funding and projects, with appropriate member oversight

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