



Combined Authority Board

26 July 2023

Agenda Item

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Title:	Combined Authority Chief Executive Highlights Report
Report of:	Rob Bridge, Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Mayor Dr Nik Johnson
Public Report:	Yes
Key Decision:	No
Voting Arrangements:	No vote required

Recommendations:

- A Note the content of this report

Strategic Objective(s):

The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):

X	Achieving ambitious skills and employment opportunities
X	Achieving good growth
X	Increased connectivity
X	Enabling resilient communities

1. Purpose

1.1	This report provides a general update on the key activities of the Combined Authority and the Mayor since the last Board meeting, which are not covered in other reports to this Meeting. It also provides information on some key developments, risks and opportunities that have emerged.
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2. National Policy Developments

2.1	The Combined Authority remain in discussions with DLUHC as part of the M10, on a devolution framework and core offer for all mayoral combined authorities based on the blueprint of the trailblazer model. This work will continue through the summer into the Autumn and what this could mean and opportunities for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough.
2.2	The East West Rail (EWR) project (connecting Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge) has announced its preferred route between Bedford and Cambridge. This will include new stations at Tempsford and Cambourne and will connect to Cambridge via the South of the city. The Combined Authority remains committed to working with East West Rail to support their delivery ambitions, especially around the electrification of the line.

2.3	Over the last two months the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has made two significant announcements which supports the prioritisation of Biodiversity. Farmers and landowners are now able to bid in for a share of the £15 million Landscape Recovery Scheme with 25 projects being selected on their environmental and social impact, value for money and suitability for the scheme.
2.4	DEFRA have also announced that from August the Sustainable Farming incentive will be delivered through an improved and more streamlined process. This will offer farmers additional actions and flexibility to choose actions they wish to be paid for. Farmers will get paid for taking actions that support food production, farm productivity and resilience, while also protecting and improving the environment.

3. Funding Activity

3.1	£3.5m of devolved AEB funding awarded to tendered training providers for the 2023-24 academic year.
3.2	£1.3m additional funding, matched to £2.6m from the project partners, for Phase 3 of the University of Peterborough.
3.3	£1.1m of devolved AEB funded to innovation fund projects by the Skills and Employment Committee. The flexibility to use Adult Education funding for capacity building and pilots is something only possible due to the funding being devolved to the CA area.
3.4	£421k of capital funding approved to develop the Peterborough transport model as part of the larger programme to update the whole CA area's model.
3.5	£309k over two years to develop the Local Nature Recovery Strategy
3.6	£130k for developing a Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Framework
3.7	£77k of Active Travel funding awarded to continue the Love to Ride initiative and the Walk to School Wow programme.
3.8	£15k awarded to a community homes proposal in Great Staughton

4. Public Affairs

4.1	<p>Ely Area Capacity Enhancements</p> <p>Partnership working to lobby the Government to release funding for Ely Area Capacity Enhancements (EACE) continues to gather pace. Combined Authority representatives, joined Parliamentarians, business leaders and transport providers in Parliament for the launch of England's Economic Heartlands brochure, Keeping Trade on Track. The brochure highlights the importance of delivering EACE, which would support UK economic growth by significantly increase the amount of rail freight heading to the Midlands and north from Felixstowe, alongside improvements to regional passenger services.</p> <p>The parliamentary meeting, convened by East of England All Party Parliamentary Group, included keynote speeches from Shadow Rail Minister, Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP, and Chair of the Commons Transport Select Committee, Iain Stewart MP.</p>
4.2	<p>Rail Summit</p> <p>The Combined Authority's successfully hosted importance of Rail for the South-East and East of England on Friday 7th July at the Novotel Cambridge North. The Summit was Chaired by ex-Transport Minister Rt Hon Norman Baker and Mayor Dr Nik Johnson and built on national developments regarding East-West Rail and Ely Junction, amplifying the regions vision for the future of rail services. Over 70 rail industry experts, business leaders and politicians attended and discussed how rail improvements in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough can unlock good growth for the South-East, East of England and beyond.</p> <p>A rail prospectus for the region was produced to compliment the summit, as well as a social media toolkit that continues to be used by the Combined Authority and partners to further drive home the urgent business need for Ely Area Capacity Enhancements (EACE).</p>

	<p>Further to this, a draft copy of a joint letter to the Chancellor and Transport Minister from Mayor Dr Nik Johnson and Rob Bridge, chief executive will be available to view on the Combined Authority website. It will spell out reasons for why funding for EACE should be released, allowing project supporters, who are cross party and cross sector to add their signature to the letter. After a short period of time, this co-signed letter will be formally delivered to the Chancellor and Transport Minister.</p>
4.3	<p>Cambridge South Ministerial Visit</p> <p>Mayor Dr Nik Johnson joined Combined Authority representatives at the announcement of the new £200 million four-platform Cambridge South railway at Cambridge Biomedical Campus. The announcement, made by Rail Minister Huw Merriman, will see a fully accessible station is due to be completed by 2025.</p> <p>The station is expected to welcome 1.8 million passengers a year and will act as a key transport link between the biomedical campus – home to Addenbrooke's, the Rosie and Royal Papworth hospitals, along with AstraZeneca and Abcam – with the international gateways of Stansted Airport and the Eurostar, boosting the travel network right across the region.</p> <p>While speaking to Huw Merriman, Mayor Johnson pressed the regional and national importance of Ely Area Capacity Enhancements (EACE).</p>
4.4	<p>East of England All Party Parliamentary Group</p> <p>The Combined Authority has been supporting the development of a briefing paper on Levelling Up Skills in the East of England that will be supplied to Parliamentarians by the East of England All Party Parliamentary Group. Deputy Mayor, Cllr Anna Smith has also been invited to speak as a panelist at the Q&A meeting with Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP, Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education in Westminster in July.</p> <p>It is an opportunity to showcase areas where the Combined Authority shows outstanding best practice in skills delivery, and lobby for further devolution requirements.</p>
4.5	<p>Local Government Association Conference 2023</p> <p>The annual Local Government Conference took place in Bournemouth from the 4th to the 6th July and was attended by the Mayor, Chief Executive and constituent council leaders and officers. At the conference the Mayor was part of a panel for a session on 'Devolution Deals: What have we learnt, and where next'. The session was very well attended and as well as the Mayor, the leader of Manchester City Council and Derbyshire County Council were on the panel and talked through their areas experiences and opportunities as well as the emerging new deals in discussion as well as taking questions from the attendees. The conference also had sessions with the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; the Deputy Leader of the Labour Party and Leader of the Liberal Democrats. During the Secretary of State's address to delegates it was reaffirmed of the commitment to a devolution core offer and framework for Mayoral Combined Authorities to access later in the year as highlighted earlier.</p>

5. Economy and Growth

5.1	<p>Inward Investment Results 2022-2023</p> <p>The Department for Business and Trade have published Local Enterprise Partnership's inward investment results for the 2022 - 23 financial year. During the year, the Combined Authority was involved in 15 successful inward investment projects which resulted in the creation of 1,007 new jobs across the region. The 14 successful projects the Combined Authority were not involved in created an additional 354 new jobs. 75 projects landed in whole of the East of England across the region with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough counting for 29 of these, compared with the 24 successful projects in the South East LEP region and with 12 successful projects in the New Anglia LEP region.</p>
5.2	<p>Local Skills Improvement Fund</p> <p>The Local Skills Improvement Fund was launched by the DfE in May. The Combined Authority helped coordinate the coming together of the colleges to enable them to submit an EOI into the first stage of the bidding process to DfE. The bid had to be led by a college; Cambridge Regional College are the lead. The funding ceiling for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is £2.5million. The Fund is for 2023-2025. The submitted bid focuses on enhancing skills provision in both green and digital.</p>

5.3	<p>Market Towns Programme Update</p> <p>Across Phase One of the Market Towns Programme, a total of 26 projects are now completed and formally closed, expending a total of £2,353,538 in CPCA grant funding and £444,000 in match funds. Recent highlights from the first phase of the programme include local councillors joining officers from Fenland District Council, the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council to celebrate breaking ground on the £851,000 construction phase of a project to build a new Pavilion in Wisbech Park. The Combined Authority provided the project with £299,200 of funding in addition to funding from Cambridgeshire County Council's Communities Capital Fund, the Government's Changing Places initiative and Fenland District Council.</p> <p>A new grant scheme designed to improve shop fronts in Huntingdon and St Ives has also been launched by BID Huntingdon First in partnership with Huntingdonshire District Council and the Combined Authority. The scheme, which is backed by £200,000 from the first phase of Market Towns, will provide grants of up to £10,000 with grants covering between 50% and 100% of the cost of improvement works. 100% awards will only be offered in exceptional circumstances.</p>
5.4	<p>Care Leavers Summit</p> <p>Combined Authority has provided a system leadership role in supporting corporate parenting responsibilities. A Summit was held bringing together stakeholders and members (Cllr Goodliffe, Cllr Bradnam, Cllr Bulat), universities and colleges and hearing from young people about their lived experience. The CA introduced a Care Leavers Bursary and enhanced support to enable colleges to ensure care leavers can progress. To date, 80 young people have benefited from the bursary.</p>
5.5	<p>Careers Hub Update</p> <p>The Primary project has commenced training delivery for teachers to explore careers related learning. Over 69 schools signed up to develop their strategic careers plans and embed careers related learning in to the curriculum. This project is part of an additional funding stream secured at the end of 2022 via the Careers and Enterprise Company where the Combined Authority were selected to be one of four trailblazing areas.</p>
5.6	<p>Foundation for Education Development</p> <p>This summit held in Liverpool and the Combined Authority was invited to speak about a place-based approach to education sharing CPCA examples, with a view to influencing future government policy and developing a long-term plan for education.</p>
5.7	<p>Department for Education T Level Conference</p> <p>The DfE's T Level Support Conference for the South held at ARU Peterborough. The Combined Authority was invited to give a keynote speech about the importance of T Levels and technical education in the region.</p>
5.8	<p>Oxford-to-Cambridge (PRP)</p> <p>The Oxford to Cambridge Partnership has announced the appointment of two highly accomplished individuals as Non-Executive Directors.</p> <p>Both Dr Barbara Ghinelli and Professor Lynette Ryals OBE will join the Pan-Regional Partnership from 1st September.</p> <p>Dr Barbara Ghinelli is the Director of Innovation Clusters and Harwell Campus at UKRI-Science and Technologies Facilities Council and Professor Ryals OBE is the Chief Executive Officer of MK:U and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Cranfield University.</p> <p>Mayor Dr Nik Johnson and Chief Executive Rob Bridge have written to the Pan-Regional Partnership's Chair, Dipesh J Shah OBE, to arrange an introductory meeting to discuss how we can continue to work together to champion the wider region as a world leader of innovation and business.</p>

6. Place and Connectivity

6.1	Six District Challenge On Monday 12th June 2023, Mayor Nik Johnson took part in the Six District Challenge, which involved getting around each of the six districts in Cambridgeshire, within 24 hours, using only public transport and active travel routes. With no prior plan on which routes to take, the Challenge was a unique opportunity to celebrate the progress made in delivering good public transport and identify challenges remaining in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The Challenge was in support of Better Transport Week, which this year takes place between 12th – 18th June 2023 and is a week-long celebration of sustainable transport. Pioneered by Campaign for Better Transport, it brings together industry partners, national and local government, sub-national transport authorities and NGO partners to highlight positive, innovative work being done across the transport sector. Starting in Wisbech at 10am, the Mayor's journey ended back in the town at 8.30pm. You can find the full route and more details on the Combined Authority website. The Six District Challenge - Completed! - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
6.2	Active Travel England visit to Cambridgeshire & Peterborough On Wednesday 21st June, Mayor Dr Nik Johnson hosted a fact-finding visit by Active Travel England's CEO, Danny Williams and his colleagues. The delegation was met at Peterborough Station by the Combined Authority team and shown actual and planned active travel infrastructure in the Peterborough Station Quarter. Fenland District Council, CamCycle, Healthwatch, the Greater Cambridge Partnership, and the two Highways Authorities, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council were among those represented at the meeting, as well as the Combined Authority's transport and active travel teams. Active Travel England recently awarded the Combined Authority almost a million pounds over the region's draft allocation. This first visit paves the way for the Mayor to host later in the year Active Travel England's national commissioner, the Olympic gold medallist and all-round cycling superstar and champion, Chris Boardman.
6.3	Transport Accessibility Roundtable In June Mayor Dr Nik Johnson hosted a roundtable to enable accessibility champions, with first-hand experience of using public transport and active travel routes, to help shape the Combined Authority's work on inclusive transport. The event brought together local experts and advocates to map out with the Combined Authority's transport team how an inclusive public transport network for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough should evolve. Among the groups invited were the Royal National Institute of Blind People, Camsight, Cambridge Dial-a-Ride, Healthwatch and the Papworth Trust. Feedback from the roundtable will help ensure our developing plans match the needs and aspirations of people of every age and ability across the region.
6.4	Meeting with National Highways Chief Executive The Mayor and senior CPCoA officers met with National Highways (NH) Chief Executive, Neil Harris on Wednesday 19th July at 9am. The Mayor discussed the CPCoA's transport priorities for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, reflected on the importance of the LTCP in shaping strategic direction and securing future funding, and sought reassurance that action will be taken on littering along the A14 and wider NH network. The Mayor also pressed National Highways on their plans to replant 160,000 trees on the A14 in response to the concerns expressed by many residents and councillors about the high failure rate of initial planting.
6.5	Withdrawal of Bus Routes The transport team has been working hard to consider all options for how communities can continue to be supported by bus services following the recent withdrawal of services by operators. A range of options have been explored and tested to ensure important services between Eye and Thorney remain in place following the withdrawal of service 36 by Stagecoach. A retender process is

	<p>now underway. A retendering process is also close to completion to enable the important 50, 56, and 66 services to continue to serve our communities in and around Wisbech.</p> <p>The team are also continuing their in-depth work to review the subsidised bus network, including recent meetings with Leaders, ahead of bringing proposals forward to the Board in September and November. Further meetings with Leaders are planned in August.</p>
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7. Resources and Performance

7.1	<p>Gateway Review</p> <p>All Combined Authorities are mandated to undergo a five yearly review of effectiveness for DLUHC, this process is known as a Gateway Review and consultancy firm SQW have been appointed to lead this process nationally. The first stage of the Gateway Review is the development of a Local Evaluation Framework (LEF), the Combined Authority submitted the final version of our LEF to SQW for DLUHC signoff the commencing Monday 26th June.</p> <p>The next phase of the Gateway Review is a Mid-Term Report, which is due by the end of February 2024 and will include a series of impact evaluations for completed projects and progress evaluations for those still in delivery. The Final Report and Contextual Report and due to be published at the end of October 2025.</p>
7.2	<p>Independent Improvement Board</p> <p>Richard Carr has been confirmed as Chair of the Independent Improvement Board (IIB) for the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority. Richard is an experienced leader across the public sector, delivering significant transformation, improvement and best value in a range of roles. He is currently the Managing Director of the East Midlands Development Company and is also a Non-Executive Director of the East London NHS Foundation Trust.</p>

8. Appendices

8.1	<p>Appendix 1 - Combined Authority Annual Report 2022/23</p> <p>The aim of this annual report is to demonstrate the impact of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority on workers, learners, businesses and communities right throughout 2022/23.</p> <p>The report reflects the Combined Authority's focus on driving real outcomes for people and business across the whole region and ensuring we are working in partnership to support the development of a prosperous and sustainable Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.</p> <p>The Annual Report is a real showcase for what we can do. We have shared this report with a wide range of local and national stakeholders, and with both existing and future potential partners, to highlight our continued progress.</p>
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9. Implications

	Financial Implications
9.1	The report outlines a number of successful funding bids and allocations since the last Highlight Report.
	Legal Implications
9.2	The Combined Authority Board has collective responsibility for decision-making, acting in the best interests of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough under the constitution. Whilst the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Combined Authority Board to delegate its functions to officers, it is good practice for Officers to regularly update the Combined Authority Board when those functions have been exercised.
	Public Health Implications
9.3	None

Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
9.4	None
Other Significant Implications	
9.5	None
Background Papers	
9.6	None