



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

:

Improvement Plan Update - December 2022

To: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board

Meeting Date: Wednesday 25 January 2023

Public report: Yes

Lead Member: Councillor Anna Smith, Statutory Deputy Mayor

From: Angela Probert: Interim Director of Transformation Programme

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Recommendations: The Combined Authority Board is recommended to:

- a) Note the progress against the Corporate Improvement Plan in December 2022.
- b) Note the outcome from the inaugural meeting of the Independent Improvement Board held on 17 January 2023.
- c) Note the proposals for a three-month assessment of progress against the key deliverables identified in the Chief Executive's assessment.

Voting arrangements: For noting only. No vote required.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to share with the Board an update on the progress made against identified actions set out in the Improvement Plan, during December 2022.
- 1.2 It also updates the Board on the arrangements for the inaugural meeting of the Independent Improvement Board (IIB) to be held on 17 January and the intention to update Board on the outcomes prior to its meeting on 25 January.
- 1.3 Finally, the report sets out the proposals to meet the commitment of the Chief Executive, in his report in October 2022 to carry out a three-month review of progress against the agreed outcomes from the Improvement journey.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Board will recall that it accepted the assessment of the organisation by the Chief Executive and agreed the Improvement Plan to address key issues raised at its meeting in October 2022.
- 2.2 The Improvement Plan set out six key themes:
 - a. Establish clarity on the scale of political ambition and develop an overarching strategy for the remainder of this mayoral term and to chart the next steps on that journey. This needs to include defining the purpose and role of the CPCA and where the CPCA can add value.
 - b. Implement a comprehensive reset of ways of working and align the policy development and pre-Board processes to support this.
 - c. Prioritise work to establish a long-term strategy for transport, an urgent development of a bus strategy and review the role and functioning of the Business Board.
 - d. Undertake a strategic review of income projections, including options, to secure sustainability and the possibility of taking a more strategic approach to the application of funds for identified priorities.
 - e. Design and implement an organisation for today's performance, and with the agility to act on emerging demands and opportunities.
 - f. Map the approach, capacity and arrangements needed to build effective public relations and influencing delivery operation.
- 2.3 The Improvement Plan report also set out the key deliverables - over a three-month period - and what might be different because of the activity undertaken. Set out in paragraph 6 are the outcomes identified and how these will be reviewed.
- 2.4 The establishment of the Independent Improvement Board was also agreed, and this report provides an update on arrangements for the inaugural meeting on 17 January. An update on the outcomes from the meeting will be circulated to Board Members following the meeting and in advance of the Board meeting on 25 January.

3. Improvement Plan progress report December 2022

- 3.1 Attached as Appendix 1 is the highlight report for the overall programme and delivery against agreed outcomes for each theme for December. There are three items of note across all the workstreams.
- As work has progressed on individual themes the dependencies across the identified six themes of the Improvement Programme have become even more important and has resulted in the critical path being reviewed and associated change requests approved.
 - The appointment of an Engagement lead for the Improvement Programme. This is in recognition that for the identified improvements to be embedded in the organisation and across the CPCA, active engagement with partners and stakeholders is key as we move forward over the next 12 months. An Engagement strategy and schedule have been developed and future Board reports will provide detail on our communications and engagement work.
 - There is a recognition that, as we progress and deliver on activities set out in the Improvement Plan, we need to demonstrate progress against the key deliverables identified in the Chief Executive's assessment. The Board may recall a commitment in that report to assess progress at the end of three months against the agreed outcomes. This assessment will be conducted in February 2023 and reported to Board at the March meeting.
- 3.2 **Overall, the programme is RAG rated as Amber.** The individual workstream RAG ratings, key high-level achievements and deliverables across the programme in this period are set out below:
- 3.2.1 **Theme A - Establish clarity on the scale of political ambition and develop an overarching strategy for the remainder of this mayoral term and to chart the next steps on that journey. This needs to include defining the purpose and role of the CPCA and where the CPCA can add value:**
- 3.2.2 Overall, this workstream is RAG rated as **Green**, reflecting that all actions are on track.
- 3.2.3 Following the completion of the mapping exercise to identify all existing Board approved strategies and agreed priorities, a draft Corporate Strategy has been prepared for consideration by the Board at this meeting.
- 3.2.4 Following engagement with the Mayor to outline the mayoral policy agenda, an Ambition Strategy has been drafted and added to the Corporate Strategy.
- 3.2.5 Output from the staff survey on values and behaviours fed into an all-staff workshop in early December. The workshop was well attended, and from its reflections we have drafted a set of core values for the organisation and included in the draft Corporate Strategy that have been tested with the Board and other key members.
- 3.2.6 The staffing structure for Office of Mayor has been agreed and recruitment commenced with the first post, a head of policy, now filled.

- 3.2.7 The Executive Team senior structure has been agreed, descriptions finalised and recruitment has commenced for two Executive Director roles.
- 3.2.8 **Theme B - Implement a comprehensive reset of ways of working and align the policy development and pre-Board processes to support this:**
- 3.2.9 Overall, this workstream is RAG rated as **Amber** reflecting that whilst most actions are on track no work has yet started on the wider partnership engagement elements. A revised timetable of 1 March 2023 has been proposed for this will allow the workstream RAG rating to be green.
- 3.2.10 Proposals received positive support at the Leaders Strategy Meeting, and agreed amendments to proposals are being presented to the Board in a separate report at this meeting.
- 3.2.11 We have progressed the development of new organisational values following the staff survey, pre-session activity and the all-staff workshop in December. The draft values have received positive feedback in sessions with CEOs, Board and other members and are contained with the draft corporate strategy presented to the CA Board in January.
- 3.2.12 We progressed the arrangements for the inaugural meeting of the Independent Improvement Board (IIB) on 17 January and agreed the agenda with the chair.
- 3.2.13 **Theme C - Prioritise work to establish a long-term strategy for transport, an urgent development of a bus strategy and review the role and functioning of the Business Board:**
- 3.2.14 The RAG rating continues to be **Amber**, due to uncertainty around Government's transport and connectivity guidance.
- 3.2.15 The workshop with Business Board and CA Board members to discuss the future role of the Business Board was held on 7 December. The outputs from the workshop are being considered and will be consolidated into an Options Paper for consideration by the CA Board.
- 3.2.16 The Draft Bus Strategy is prepared and consultation begins week commencing 9 January 2023. The consultation will run for just over a month and at the end of this period, the Strategy will be amended considering relevant feedback.
- 3.2.17 The longer-term strategy for transport finds focus in the draft Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP). This has been drafted; however, we still await Government's revised guidance on such plan's preparation. This is now promised for the end of the calendar year. Accordingly, the project has been reprofiled and sign off is now planned for June 2023.
- 3.2.18 This reprofiling is based upon us receiving the revised guidance by the year-end and changes to the draft strategy being proportionate.

- 3.2.19 **Theme D - Undertake a strategic review of income projections, including options, to secure sustainability and the possibility of taking a more strategic approach to the application of funds for identified priorities:**
- 3.2.20 The RAG rating for this workstream is **Amber**, as the current target completion date of 31 January will not be met, particularly in relation to the Bid Function. A Change Request has been submitted and once approved will allow this workstream to be RAG rated as green.
- 3.2.21 The drafting of the strategic review that has identified the funding streams is now complete and the workstream moves onto the need for modelling what a new Bid Function for the CA and its partners could look like. This needs to be an inclusive proposal that adds value to the bid functions of partner councils and potentially wider and there is a recognition that an additional specialist resource will be needed for this work.
- 3.2.22 A partnership workshop to consider current processes and options for a co-ordinated Bid Function takes place on 16 January. This will help the CA to understand best practice and begin to develop principles and processes behind the Bid Function.
- 3.2.23 **Theme E - Design and implement an organisation for today's performance, and with the agility to act on emerging demands and opportunities:**
- 3.2.24 The RAG for this workstream is **Amber**, to reflect a revised timeline, the heavy reliance upon workstream A and the need to undertake extensive partner engagement.
- 3.2.25 As we have moved into this workstream, its key role in underpinning the CA's improvement journey has become more apparent, as has the need for this workstream to be completed in close partnership with the CA's constituent councils. Accordingly, and following discussion with the lead CEO, Paul Medd, we have refocussed and reprofiled the workstream.
- 3.2.26 This reprofiling places the development of a single Assurance Framework at the heart of the workstream. From this, once approved, a related Performance Management Framework that demonstrates how the CA assesses, prioritises, and manages projects will be developed.
- 3.2.27 The reprofiling recognises that much of this workstream will need to follow the agreement of a clear set of strategic priorities for the CA, an outcome in workstream A.
- 3.2.28 Once we have a clear understanding of the vital role that project and programme management will have in driving the authority's ambitions, work can commence on understanding what resources, both in a central PMO team and amongst the delivery partners are required and how the partners will work closely together to measure and drive delivery of the agreed strategic priorities.
- 3.2.29 **Theme F - Map the approach, capacity and arrangements needed to build effective public relations and influencing delivery operation.**
- 3.2.30 This workstream is RAG rated **Amber**, reflecting that whilst actions are in progress it is not believed that a draft Strategy for review will be ready by the due date. Instead it is agreed with the lead VCEO that a revised date of 31 March 2023 is more appropriate. In addition, there have been capacity issues which have delayed the gap analysis work slightly. Any further delays will push back completion beyond the agreed date.

- 3.2.31 Work continues to identify and document best practice and the key elements, tasks and outputs associated with an effective Public Affairs (PA) and Communications and Engagement Function. This is being undertaken alongside a gap analysis methodology to understand the key skills, capacity and processes needed to achieve the identified outputs against the skills. The mitigating actions for both risks is for stated progress to be achieved against the Improvement Plan.
- 3.2.32 The findings of this gap analysis will now be reviewed and collated, and the project will begin to develop an outline Strategy and Action Plan so that we have the basis to enable the creation of a dynamic, robust, and effective PA, Communications and Engagement Function.

4. Key risks and dependencies

- 4.1 The External Auditor and DLUHC have set out clearly the expected focus for improvement. It is important therefore that the CA can demonstrate its commitment to improve and the progress it is making on this journey so more formal interventions are not put in place; the unfreezing of future funding is dependent on this.
- 4.2 There is a related risk that the constituent parts of the Improvement Plan may not lead to the outcomes required by DLUHC without the consequent organisational cultural change. Tracking this will be a focus of the Independent Improvement Board which meets for the first time in January.
- 4.3 The mitigating actions for both risks is for stated progress to be achieved against the Improvement Plan.
- 4.4 There is also a related programme wide risk, raised by CEOs that the proposed changes to senior management structures and personnel within CPCA could have the impact of slowing or altering the direction or consistency of the improvement journey. Ensuring a continued clarity of purpose and journey will be key to the success of the Improvement Plan.
- 4.5 Specific workstream risks and issues are set out in the highlight report attached. All risks and issues are both monitored and managed in accordance with CA policy and practice and significant issues reported appropriately. The key risks associated with each workstream are as follows:

Work-Stream A	Not reaching consensus on overarching vision. Mitigation: Ensure communication and engagement plan is in place.
Work-stream B	That the actions once completed do not sufficiently encourage or drive the cultural improvements required. Mitigation: will be the ownership of these by the Chief Executive's group and Board which will then flow down through the organisation(s). Also, the challenge of the IIB.
Work-stream C	There is a risk that the LTCP will not align with the Department for Transport's (DfT) final guidance and will therefore not be fit for purpose. Mitigation: reprofile the workstream and continue to monitor the release of DfT's final guidance along with any other key messages that are available from the DfT and other relevant partners/organisations.
Work-stream D	The income workstream has significant interdependencies and impacts with other workstreams. There is a risk that a lack of transparency and communication across

	the workstreams will negatively impact the efficacy of the outcomes related to income. Mitigation: Ensure continued and reliable communication between workstreams and wider CA and partners via effective Engagement Planning.
Work-stream E	There is a risk that due to the amount of consultation required, and dependencies involved, that the Performance Management Framework and Assurance Framework are not delivered to the agreed timescales. Mitigation: Reprofile the workstream.
Work-stream F	There is a risk that even with an effective Communications and Engagement Function, the outcome of performing a demonstrable role in advocacy for the region will not be met if the overarching strategy coming out of Workstream A is not fit for purpose i.e. the underlying key messages are not appealing/influential enough to support the function. Mitigation: Work closely with Workstream A representatives to ensure key messages can support an effective PA/Communications and Engagement Function. To support this and allow for the appropriate cross referencing the timeline for this workstream is proposed to be adjusted to March 2023

4.6 Also, to note:

4.6.1 Chief Executives from constituent authorities are now providing effective support and challenge to the improvement activity through active engagement as a group and as individual theme links, and their comments are included in the highlight report attached as Appendix 1.

4.6.2 The Local Government Association, Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy, and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities continue to be updated on progress on a regular basis.

4.6.3 Briefings to staff on progress are undertaken on a weekly basis through verbal updates on specific themes at the weekly 'All staff meeting' where a particular workstream is reported upon by the Lead, and through the digital weekly newsletter 'Happenings'. A SharePoint site has also been developed for staff to provide regular updates on progress and a similar site is being developed for the Independent Improvement Board.

5. Independent Improvement Board (IIB)

5.1 Following the establishment of the Independent Improvement Board (IIB) Lord Kerslake continues to meet with key stakeholders in advance of the induction day in Peterborough on 17 January.

5.2 The arrangements for the induction have been finalised to deliver the outcomes set out below:

For IIB Board members to:

- Have built a relationship with their peers and CPCA Board members
- Understand the key challenges to be addressed
- Have worked through the input needed and how the IIB will operate
- Recognise and have shared (within the IIB) the contribution they can make
- Be clear on what will be different and how this will be recognised

For CPCA Board members to:

- Have met the IIB Board members and understand their purpose and way of working
- Have shared their insight and perspective

- Understand the focus for the IIB and how it will engage with the CPCA Board

5.3 Following the induction day on 17 January, a briefing will be shared with CPCA Board Members in advance of the meeting to be held on 25 January.

6. Three-month assessment of progress:

6.1 The Chief Executive's report to Board in October 2022 set out key areas of focus for the following three months arising from the self-assessment exercise. The report also set out what would feel different across the key dimensions identified as set out below:

- A huge reduction in tension and frustration in Board, and in dynamics and focus.
- Members feeling time is spent on worthwhile debate and activity.
- Members and officers believing that the MCA can genuinely expect to secure greater investment and improved reputation.
- Individual Board members spend more of their time on informal discussions finding issues of agreement, speaking up for the needs of the region, and its priorities.
- Recognition that the Mayor has secured greater attention from ministers and influential stakeholders for the region's needs.
- An absence of political point scoring in Board noticed by all interested parties.
- That staff in CPCA and the local authorities view Board members as role models for good behaviour, collaboration and working towards consensus.
- CPCA staff recruitment and retention improves.
- A Devo Deal 2 looks possible, even likely.
- Staff expect to work in 'virtual teams' on policy development and programme delivery.
- The CPCA operation has matured, supports the Mayor and Board with a feel of 'one CPCA'.

6.3 The return on investment was also set out:

- Shift to a transitional arrangement of Board cycles, adjusted focus, more strategic content.
- A draft 'overarching strategy' document.
- A draft Medium Term Financial Strategy which reflects the overarching strategy.
- A worked-up transport strategy and bus strategy.
- Proposals for the next phase of development of the Business Board.
- Resolution to the current investigations.

And in the operation:

- A senior staffing structure and plan for recruitment.
- A period of stability in the workforce.
- Improved collaborative processes between CPCA and constituent authority officers.

6.4 It is proposed that an assessment of progress against the elements set out in paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3 will take place in February 2023. The structure for the review will be agreed with the Chair of the Independent Improvement Board.

6.5 It is envisaged that focus groups or meetings will be held with all key stakeholder groups set out below and evidence of progress provided where relevant:

- External Auditor
- CPCA Board Members

- Other relevant CPCA Committees including Overview and Scrutiny, Audit and Governance, etc
- Constituent authority Chief Executives
- Business Board members
- Department for Education
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

6.6 The outcome of the assessment will be shared with the IB and reported to the CA Board in March 2023.

6.7 A staff survey is to be conducted in January 2023 to measure progress against the outcomes from staff survey in September 2022. The results of this survey will inform the assessment of progress as set out in paragraph 6.4.

7. Significant Implications

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The Board approved funding of up to £750k in July 2022 from the Programme Response Fund with delegated authority to the Interim CEO to support the scope, development and delivery of work relating to improvement activity. This budget is monitored by the Improvement Group at its monthly meetings and reported by exception to the Board as appropriate.

9. Legal Implications

9.1 An Action Plan in response to the recommendations of the external auditor, was agreed by the Board following the report of the Interim CEO. At the time of drafting this report, all the relevant recommendations of EY are being responded to and regular updates are provided to this Board to provide a progress report as to delivery. This will assist the Authority to comply with its best value considerations.

10. Public Health Implications

10.1 None.

11. Environmental and Climate Change Implications

11.1 None

12. Other Significant Implications

12.1 None

13. Appendices

13.1 Appendix 1: Independent Improvement Board (IIB) Highlight report

14. Background Papers

14.1 [Interim Chief Executive's Diagnosis - Improvement Framework](#)

14.2 [Appendix 1 - Chief Executive's Assessment \(based on the self-assessment exercise\)](#)

14.3 [Appendix 2 - Outline Improvement Plan](#)

14.4 [Appendix 3 - Proposed terms of reference CPCA Improvement Board](#)

Final draft

Final draft