



Combined Authority Board		Agenda Item
29 November 2023		8
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
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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. Funding Activity

2.1	Funds allocated by the CPCA <ul style="list-style-type: none">£1.49m of treasury income to a variety of high priority including local area plans, a demand responsive travel pilot and initiating a Health and Wellbeing strategy£403k of LEVI capability funding to enable Local Authorities to build capacity ahead of capital funding to deliver electric vehicle charging infrastructure£550k allocated to the next stage of business case development for the BP roundabout non-motorised user crossing on the A10
2.2	Funds awarded to the CPCA <ul style="list-style-type: none">£2.9m additional highways capital grants

3. Public Affairs

3.1 Network North

During conference season, the Prime Minister announced Network North at Conservative Party Conference. We welcome the inclusion of Ely Area Capacity Enhancements (EACE), A10 and A1139 improvements within the announcements. The Combined Authority have particularly lobbied hard on EACE, using its regional rail summit to springboard a regional campaign, and demonstrating one-voice for the East by including over 50 co-signatories to letters to the Chancellor and Secretary of State for Transport.

The Combined Authority will continue to lobby for clarity over what Network North announcements will mean for the region. We have written to the Secretary of State for Transport and Chancellor to request the further detail required.

£8.3bn of the allocated was also repurposed to tackle what the Prime Minister called the "scourge of potholes". The funding will go to highway authorities across England over the next 11 years for road maintenance and the Combined Authority will receive £4,100,000 to pass through to Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council via an agreed formula.

3.2 Climate Summit

At the beginning of November, the Combined Authority (in partnership with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Climate Partnership) hosted a Climate Summit in the Maltings, Ely. It brought together over 100 delegates and key speakers from across the region to highlight work underway so far, and what is needed to support that work moving forward.

Attendees complimented the range of topics covered:

- Fens adaptation, water security and biodiversity;
- Retrofitting homes, public spaces and the business and skills demand that could be generated;
- Planning for the mass roll out of electric vehicles, the infrastructure required and how to make that accessible to all;
- Sustainable developments in food production.

Feedback from the event has strongly indicated that attendees found it informative and thought provoking. Those who were unable to attend the event, a copy of our prospectus and illustrated notes from each panel are available on the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough website.

3.3 Fit for the future: Growing and sustaining engineering and technology apprenticeships for young people

Engineering UK have published a 5-point plan to grow and sustain engineering and technology apprenticeships for young people. *Fit for the future: Growing and sustaining engineering and technology apprenticeships for young people*, is an inquiry that had been led by Lord Knight and Lord Willetts.

The Combined Authority provided evidence to the inquiry and attended the 5-point plan launch. It is welcome to see much of the Combined Authority's recommendations within the report. The report identifies barriers such as funding disparities, lack of awareness, and application process challenges for young people and businesses, all of which must be addressed to make apprenticeships more accessible. It aligns with the Combined Authority's strategic approach, emphasising the importance of engaging more employers, diversifying job boards, and promoting diversity champions.

3.4 Why hasn't UK regional policy worked?

The Combined Authority has welcomed Harvard University's recent report: *Why hasn't UK regional policy worked?* authored by Dan Turner, Harvard Kennedy School, Nyasha Weinberg, Harvard Kennedy School, Esme Elsdon, University College London and Ed Balls, King's College London & Harvard Kennedy School. The authors interviewed ninety-three top level political and official policymakers across the UK (spanning six decades of experience).

We support the report's findings that the Mayoral Combined Authority model, coupled with sustainable local government funding (for all local authorities), can be the vehicle to form the basis for a cross-party consensus on regional growth. The report also makes a strong case of deeper skills devolution and an acknowledgement that skills policy must align with local business needs and industry strategy.

	The Combined Authority are echoing these recommendations in conversations with the Government, regarding Cambridge 2040, deeper devolution at the Autumn Statement.
3.5	<p>The Combined Authority have booked a pavilion at the UK's Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum (UKREiIF) 21-23rd May 2024. UKREiIF is the largest cross sector property conference in the UK, forecasting 10,000 delegates in 2024. It is an opportunity to showcase Cambridgeshire and Peterborough investment propositions to a national and international audience of developers, investors and occupiers. It will also heighten awareness of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority.</p> <p>A small multi-disciplinary team are working to produce a programme of events and marketing materials for the pavilion, and will be looking to work in partnership with our constituent authorities, partners and stakeholders to develop these in the near future.</p>
3.6	<p>East of England All Party Parliamentary Group</p> <p>The Combined Authority continues to work closely with the East of England All Party Parliamentary Group. We are part of a key group of partners who are drafting key skills asks and offers to the Government for the East of England. Once drafted, these asks and offers will be championed by the influential members and supporters of the East of England All Party Parliamentary Group.</p>

4. Economy and Growth

4.1	<p>ARU Peterborough</p> <p>Work has started on XRP eXtended Reality Peterborough, a new Centre of Excellence on the ground floor of the Peterborough Innovation and Research Centre at the ARU Peterborough campus. It will deliver cutting-edge teaching and training facilities for both ARU Peterborough students and local employers, to support them to train Peterborough and the surrounding regions future workforce.</p> <p>Last December it was announced that Anglia Ruskin University had been awarded £5.7 million from the Office for Students, England's independent higher education regulator, to develop three Centres of Excellence, including XRP eXtended Reality Peterborough at ARU Peterborough. The funding was secured through a competitive bidding process.</p> <p>The fit-out of XRP eXtended Reality Peterborough and the other specialist facilities is being delivered by Overbury, a dedicated fit-out company within the Morgan Sindall Group.</p> <p>Social Mobility Award</p> <p>In October, Anglia Ruskin University won University of the Year at the The UK Social Mobility Awards, in recognition of the role ARU Peterborough is playing in advancing social mobility across the city and the wider region.</p> <p>The UK Social Mobility Awards, known as the SOMOs, are organised by the charity Making the Leap, and were created to raise awareness of and celebrate organisations that are committed to bringing about change and advancing the cause of social mobility in this country.</p> <p>The judges selected Anglia Ruskin University as the winner of the University of the Year title from a shortlist that also included the University of Exeter, the University of Warwick, Lancaster University, the University of the West of England (UWE), and the University of Southampton.</p>
4.2	<p>£7.5m Agri-food Business Launchpad</p> <p>A partnership of organisations in the East of England, including the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, have been successful in securing up to £7.5m of new investment to drive local innovation and business growth, building on the region's existing strengths in Agri-Tech, Agri-biotech and food-tech innovation.</p> <p>The funding will be used to establish the Eastern England Agri-Food and Food Tech Launchpad, whereby businesses and researchers can apply for competitive grants, with other support, for innovation projects that focus on driving agricultural productivity, quality food production and novel food production systems. The competition opens on Monday 23rd October, and potential applicants will be able to attend a competition briefing event to find out more. Grant funding available starts from £25,000, with up to £300,000 for projects that provide exceptional impact to the Agri-Tech, Agri-biotech and food-tech innovation cluster.</p>

	<p>The Eastern England Agri-Food and Food Tech Launchpad has been developed jointly by Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, the Greater Lincolnshire and New Anglia LEPs and Innovate UK, and tailored to the region's needs and circumstances.</p>
4.3	<p>Care Leavers Bursary</p> <p>One hundred young people leaving the care system have now benefitted from a bursary set up by the Combined Authority to fund education and training to support their future work ambitions.</p> <p>The Combined Authority has also reaffirmed its support for care leavers during Care Leavers Week. It is a signatory to the Care Leavers Covenant – a pledge to help those who have been through the care system so they can live independently.</p> <p>Care Leavers Week (25th October – 1st November) raises awareness of people who have left the care system, the challenges they face, and ways to improve support. People typically leave care aged 18, although some leave aged 16 or 17 based on their ability to live independently, and they face many challenges, which can impact their ability to access to education and training.</p> <p>Through its devolved control of the adult education budget, the Combined Authority is offering funded opportunities at colleges and training centres for care leavers aged 19 to 22, including a Care Leavers Bursary of up to £1,200 per year, rising to £1,500 in 2023/24. This helps care leavers overcome some of those challenges to accessing education training.</p>
4.4	<p>Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)</p> <p>The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), led by the Chamber of Commerce and supported by the Combined Authority Skills Team, has been awarded a regional allocation of £2.1m capital and £422k revenue to support the delivery of our Local Skills Improvement Plan. This money will focus on building the capacity of green and digital skills in the region and will go direct to providers (our lead provider is Cambridge Regional College).</p>
4.5	<p>Skills Bootcamps</p> <p>An innovative new partnership with Baker Perkins and Howden has allowed the Combined Authority to bring on stream a new “<i>Introduction to Engineering Skills Bootcamp</i>” to be delivered by College of West Anglia, which will form a key part of our employers’ apprentice talent pipeline for 2024 recruitment. The bootcamp will start 8th January 2024 and is now taking applications.</p> <p>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are also now ranked 5th (up from 17th) out of the 21 Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership areas. This ranking is based on learners securing job outcomes after completing one of our Skills Bootcamps.</p>
4.5	<p>Careers Hub</p> <p>The Careers Hub sponsored the East Cambridgeshire Careers Fair at Ely Cathedral on the 7th November which saw over 500 pupils in the area speak with local employers and training providers to support them in their next steps.</p>
4.6	<p>OxCam Pan Regional Partnership (PRP) – Investment Atlas Prospectus</p> <p>Discussions continue with the team at OxCam Pan Regional Partnership who are leading the coordination of the work on the Investment Atlas / Prospectus. This is following a call for capital investment projects OxCam PRP ran through October. A total of 4 expressions of interest have been submitted to the OxCam Atlas for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region, and currently only 1 has been proposed to go forward into the atlas.</p>
4.7	<p>Department for Business and Trade (DBT) – Global Investment Summit call for capital projects.</p> <p>During August and September, Department for Business and Trade (DBT) put out calls for capital projects in preparation which can be profiled at the UK Global Investment Summit end of November. The Combined Authority supported promotion of the call around to local partners, stakeholders and development project leads. DBT received 8 capital project expressions of interest to consider through their two-step Gateway process. At the time of writing this update 2 projects have been selected for the second stage of the Gateway process and will be assigned resources within DBT for possibility of promotional pitch materials to be worked up for the Global Investment Summit.</p>

4.8	<p>Business Support – Closing of Growth Works and developing Team Cambridgeshire approach.</p> <p>A Growth Works Exit Plan has been agreed to ensure a smooth project closure and transition of certain service elements into the Combined Authority. During their quarterly report to the Business Board (13th November), Growth Works provided an update on the Exit Plan.</p> <p>The Growth Hub operations which were embedded into the Growth Works programme have now transitioned back to the Combined Authority as of 1st November.</p> <p>Officers continue to develop plans for a ‘Team Cambridgeshire’ approach to Business Support arrangements with the Local Authorities and wider partners. It will be based upon an expanded Growth Hub provision from April 2024 onwards.</p> <p>Officers are also planning an updated Growth Hub website, purchase of a new CRM to use across both business and skills engagement, new business diagnostic and plan of outreach marketing activities.</p>
4.9	<p>Social Enterprise</p> <p>Delivery of the Market Towns Programme (Phase 2 - Gainshare) is progressing well and generating plenty of momentum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stream 1 Community Owned Businesses Formally launched on 22nd September with the delivery partner (Plunkett). A £800k grant pot is now available to rural communities - to date, Plunkett have awarded 2 local community groups (in Wilburton and Haddenham) time with advisors and are currently working with another 2 groups in Pampisford and Horningsea. • Stream 2 Social Enterprise Hubs Following the launch of £130k pilot support programme for Social Enterprises, collaborative engagement around strategy development is underway. A total of £1,175,800 grant funding has been awarded in support of 3 Social Enterprise Hubs. A further £24,200 is committed to evaluate the Social Enterprise Hub programme upon completion by March 2025. • Stream 3 STEM roadshow The first two STEM events in Ramsey and Chatteris have been completed with over 7,000 visits and participants engaged. The next roadshow launched in Wisbech and was attended by the Mayor and ARU. Preparations continue for the next roadshow in March which launches in early January 2024.
4.10	<p>Business Board New Members</p> <p>The Business Board has been strengthened with the appointment of five private sector members with a wide range of experience and expertise.</p> <p>After the appointment in the summer of Al Kingsley as the new Chair of the Board, a recruitment process began to fill the member vacancies. Private sector members of the Business Board sit in an independent capacity.</p> <p>The five appointees are: Katy Davies, Sam Bakri, Charlotte Horobin, Barnaby Perks and Andy Williams. A short biography for each member can be found on the Combined Authority website via this link Combined Authority Business Board appoints five members - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)</p>

5. Place and Connectivity

5.1	<p>Housing site completions</p> <p>The Girton site was completed in late September 2023 providing 15 new units for those aged 55+.</p> <p>Alconbury Weald Site completion, by developers MAN GPN, celebration will be held on 1st December 2023. The site will provide 94 units, with a mixture of affordable rented and shared ownership homes in Alconbury Weald.</p> <p>Completion of the Perkins site, Peterborough, with Cross Keys Homes is expected in the New Year. It will provide 96 units on the old Frank Perkins site. Completion of Heylo units on the Keepmoat site is also anticipated. All 30 units will be sold through shared ownership, in Paston, Peterborough.</p>
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6. Transport

6.1	Railway ticket office closures Following around 750,000 responses to the national consultation on plans to close rail ticket offices nationwide, the Secretary of State for Transport, Mark Harper, has asked train operators to drop their proposals. Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, along with many other groups and Combined Authority's, opposed the proposals to close rail ticket offices. The Combined Authority had voiced 'deep concerns' about the proposals in a consultation response it provided which focused on the impact to station users, especially vulnerable travellers.
6.2	Cycle September Cycle September 2023 saw over 1000 people riding with a total of 165,000 miles travelled including nearly 33,000 commuter miles in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Cycle September is a global workplace challenge encouraging people to ride their bikes more often and for transport purposes. Cycle September 2023 was a great success in gaining over 500 new users to the platform, Love to Ride. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough had one of the highest participation rates in the UK. Love to Ride, funded by the Combined Authority, have built relationships with District Councils before and during the campaign. The next campaign, Winter Wheelers, will highlight the importance of being seen and safe cycling during the winter months.
6.3	Electric Vehicle Infrastructure In October, the Combined Authority, alongside Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, met more than 20 electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure suppliers to seek their thoughts and views on the region's EV infrastructure requirements. The meeting was hosted by Mayor Dr Nik Johnson and Deputy Mayor Cllr Anna Smith, and discussed four key areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technological solutions;• Adaptability and futureproofing;• Business and commercial models;• Capacity for swift delivery at scale and;• Ability to offer value for the community. Following the event, further feedback is being sought from attendees to ensure their insights inform the procurement process.

7. Appendices

8.1	None
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8. Implications

Financial Implications

9.1	None other than those contained in the body of the report
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Legal Implications

9.2	None
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Public Health Implications

9.3	None
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Environmental & Climate Change Implications

9.4	None
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Other Significant Implications	
9.5	None
Background Papers	
9.6	None