

Agenda Item 11	Appendix
Improvement Plan update	B

Independent Improvement Board for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority: Key Outcomes from January meeting.

The Independent Improvement Board (IIB) met on 16 January. Several constituent council chief executives joined the meeting to share their perspectives on the progress made over the last 18 months and to discuss the required next steps.

The IIB found chief executives' observations considered and helpful. They were reflective of the impact of the positive changes that have flowed from the Combined Authority's focus on the delivery of its Improvement Plan and of the strengthening working relationships at senior officer level. To maximise the benefits of the Combined Authority opportunity, the reach of these relationships needs to be extended throughout each and all of the organisations involved.

The Combined Authority's Chief Executive updated the IIB on progress against the key areas of concern raised by the External Auditor and the Best Value Notice. This covered each element of the Combined Authority's Improvement Plan. The IIB reflected on the RAG rating of one particular workstream, in response to which the Chief Executive has revisited the rating. As on previous occasions, the IIB is encouraged by the progress made. Given this, it does feel appropriate for the Corporate Management Team to consider appropriate transitional arrangements that embed the changes made in working practices, supported by an appropriate emphasis on continuous improvement. This will need to be managed in a way that ensures progress continues to be visible and the IIB has sought confirmation that resources have been secured for the Project Management Office envisaged.

For the full potential of the Combined Authority to be realised, the IIB would encourage the Board and the senior teams in the constituent councils to invest appropriate time and energy in the development of its vision for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, accompanied by an appropriate delivery strategy. The IIB does not underestimate the challenge of dedicating the required time for this, but it is critical and constituent council chief executives have been considering ways in which they might be able to support Leaders in this endeavour. If there are some who are reticent about participating fully at this stage, this should not hold back those who want to expedite this work. But the door should always be left open for others to join when they feel ready too.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's planned presence at UKREIIF has the potential to help bring focus to the work on vision, so that the region is able to present a succinct, distinctive and credible articulation of its potential in a way that will help entice investment. To be impactful, the vision needs to be articulated consistently by the CA Board as a whole. The IIB's March meeting could be an opportunity to 'test' the region's pitch in advance of UKREIIF.

Finally, it has been suggested that it might be helpful for the IIB to remain in place for the next stage in the Combined Authority's improvement journey. The IIB stands ready to assist, if this is judged to be helpful.

Richard Carr

Chair, Independent Improvement Board