



Combined Authority Board	Agenda Item
31 May 2023 – Ordinary Meeting	1

Title:	Combined Authority Chief Executive Highlights Report
Report of:	Gordon Mitchell, 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.

2. Updates	
2.1	National Policy Developments <p>In March the Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt unveiled The Spring Budget. The key themes covered were Childcare, Employment, Enterprise and Levelling up. Among the announcements there was a clear commitment to pursue further devolution in England. Two 'trailblazer' devolution deals were announced with the Mayors of Greater Manchester and the West Midlands and the intention was to explore further expansion of devolution at a faster pace.</p>

Subsequently tentative discussions have been progressing about the possibility of the M10 group of Mayors and CAs moving forward with a form of framework agreement, within which different CA areas might seek and agree different packages of a menu of powers.

What is clear is that devolution to Mayoral Combined Authorities are now firmly part of the local governance and delivery landscape rather than an adjunct. In recent meetings with Ministers and senior officials they refer to the 'achievement' that well over 50% of the population are now covered by directly elected Mayors. This is viewed as a way for government to have more direct conversations with a smaller number of democratically elected leaders. The full repercussions of this structural change on local government, local government associations and MPs is only just beginning to evolve.

DLUHC has identified eight economic areas in England it views as having significant economic potential to host high growth investment zones. Unfortunately, no areas from the East of England (or indeed anywhere south of the Midlands) were included within this policy. The Combined Authority are working with networks to explore opportunities for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to be included in this policy.

DLUHC has published an English Devolution Accountability Framework that applies to all English institutions with devolved powers. This builds on early conversations that indicated that the government was seeking to cut the costs incurred in the assessment of multiple bids and devolve funding with accountability ingrained within the process. Government sees this as a requirement in exchange for the development of further devolution.

The Department for Education (DfE) recently announced that 'local needs funding' is available for schools in priority education investment areas (PEIAs). Of these areas Fenland and East Cambridgeshire has been designated as one single PEIA with a proposed funding allocation of £1.147 million. This funding is awarded to schools and not via the Combined Authority.

2.2 **Funding Activity**

Bidding for funds, often with colleagues in local councils continues to be a regular task, with often uncertain outcomes.

2.2.1 Funding Announcements

- £4.1m Additional Pothole Funding
- £3.2m Rural England Prosperity Funding (DEFRA) – 100% of the amount the Combined Authority submitted plans for
- £2.3m allocation from Department for Transport's Bus Service Improvement Plan
- £1.1m Levelling Up Fund Capacity and Capacity grant
- Up to £158m over 2 years for the Home Upgrade Grant phase 2
- £5.8m Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI)
- £298k 23-24 Growth Hub Core Funding

2.2.2 Funding released by the Combined Authority from the existing MTFP

- £1.7m Local Transport Plan Model
- £2.5m Market Towns phase 2 programme budget
- £802k approved for Huntingdon and St Ives as part of Market Towns phase 1
- £1m Contribution to the redevelopment of Fanshawe Road
- £89k Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure funding to develop proposals for the capital funding
- £2.5m of TCF for the Centre for Green Technology
- £3.4m of TCF to increase the budget for A1260 Junction 32/3
- £100k for a non-motorised user crossing at Lancaster Way

2.2.3 Wholly new funding released by the Combined Authority added to the MTFP

- £4.4m GSEnz Hub Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) Projects programme
- £47.9m LUF2 for Peterborough Station Quarter
- £112k of CPCA revenue funding to match-fund the Careers Hub

Public Affairs

2.3.1 Rail Summit

Work continues, at pace, to deliver a rail summit. The importance of Rail for the South-East and East of England this summer will build the vision for the future of the region's rail services and further make the case for the Ely area capacity enhancements. Chaired by ex-transport minister, Rt Hon Norman Baker, it will be a unique opportunity for rail industry experts, business leaders and politicians to discuss how rail improvements in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough can unlock good growth for the South-East, East of England and beyond.

Held at the Novotel at Cambridge North Station, the conference will include presentations and discussions around Rail as an Engine of Economic Growth and Rail Investment Requirements.

Confirmed speakers currently include: Andrew Summers, Chief Executive Transport East, Beth West, Chief Executive East West Rail Company and Steve Beel, Chief Executive Freeport East.

2.3.2 Spring Statement

The Public Affairs team supported the Mayor and Business Board Chair to develop messaging ahead of the Government's Spring Statement and reactive post-communications. This enabled the Combined Authority to speak with one voice for the region on national policy. This included further making the case for the Ely area capacity enhancements and sharing disappointment that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough had not been included in one of the Government's 12 Growth Clusters.

2.3.3 East Region Leaving Care Summit 2023

The Mayor delivered a speech at the East Region Leaving Care Summit 2023. He joined keynote speakers such as, Dame Rachel De Souza, Children's Commissioner for England, Josh MacAllister Executive Chair, What Works for Children's Social Care and author of the care review for England, Mark Riddell MBE, National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers, Department for Education and Claire Miller Chief Executive Officer, Clarion Housing Group. The Mayor discussed how devolution of Adult Education Budgets have allowed the Combined Authority to establish bursaries for care leavers to provide them with necessary support to continue their education and training. This example of best practice is just one of the reasons why Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are bucking the national trend of a national decline in adult education participation. Over the past three years the Combined Authority has seen an increase in Adult Education participation.

2.3.4 Westminster Social Policy Forum keynote seminar

Deputy Mayor, Cllr Anna Smith, delivered a keynote speech at the Westminster Social Policy Forum keynote seminar, Next steps for the Oxford to Cambridge region. She spoke regarding the priorities for a pan-regional economic strategy, promoting the area's unique strengths and the partnership working required to leverage the huge ability and global reach in across the region. She also challenged delegates and seminar attendees to consider the Ox-Camb partnership's offer for areas on the geographical margins, such as Fenland and East Cambridgeshire District Council, which currently have little to no affinity with Ox-Camb. She emphasized that levelling up within the Partnership is just as important as our national levelling up priorities.

2.3.5 Campaign for Better Transport, Better Transport Week

On Thursday 11 May, Mayor Dr Nik Johnson, joined leading industry figures at the Campaign for Better Transport launch of Better Transport Week. The event, hosted by ex-Transport Minister, Rt Hon Norman Baker, included key speeches from guests such as Paul Tuohy, Chief Executive, Campaign for Better Transport, Roundal Round podcast host, Emily Turner, Chris Dixon, Chief Cycling Officer, Pedal Me, Shamit Weinberger Gaiger, Managing Director, West Coast Partnership Development, Catherine Kenyon, Senior Programme Manager, Global Action Plan, Ali Clabburn, Chairman and Founder, Mobilityways, and Go Jauntily CEO, Hana Sutch.

The Mayor delivered a short speech, affirming his commitment to public transport and announcing that he will be supporting Better Transport Week by completing his own Six District Challenge, whereby he aims to travel through all six districts in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in 24 hours using only buses, trains, walking and cycling routes.

2.3.6 Fenland Soil, Future of Lowland Peat Conference Dinner

The Mayor attended and spoke at Fenland Soil's Conference Dinner, Chaired by G's Fresh Chairman, and Climate Commissioner, John Shropshire. The Combined Authority is funding Fenland Soil for £50k per year for two years

The Mayor commended Fenland Soil for taking the initial investment of the Combined Authority and created such an influential organisation, which has gone from strength to strength in such a short time. The Mayor also introduced dinner speaker, Tom Heap (ex-Countryfile presenter and current Sky News Climate presenter).

2.3.7 UKREiIF 2023

The Mayor attended the UKREiIF (The UK's Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum) on 16 May and was a panelist and speaker at one of the discussion sessions, 'Healthy Cities for Healthy Economies: Delivering Critical Infrastructure to Support National Wellbeing and Placemaking'.

The session explored the interconnected relationship between creating positive public health outcomes and regeneration. This session involved delegates from across policy and property development.

2.4

Economy and Growth

2.4.1 Ofsted Inspections

Both Cambridge Regional College (CRC) and Peterborough Regional College, a part of the Inspire Education Group, have celebrated being awarded 'Good' Ofsted ratings following recent respective inspections. Both organisations were also awarded the highest outcome of 'Strong' in meeting skills needs in the region and both inspections were carried out under the new enhanced Ofsted Inspection criteria.

The Combined Authority are delighted to offer our congratulations to both Colleges, and we look forward to continuing our close working relationship in the future.

2.4.2 Adult Education Budget

Our devolved Adult Education Budget allocation has risen to £12,128,459 for 2023/24, an increase of £150,737 (1.25%) from 2022/23. Since 2019/20 our total AEB allocation has risen by over £600K.

The additional funding is made up from two initiatives. An additional £76,639 has been made available to the Combined Authority as a result of the Department for Education's decision to devolve the 19-24 Traineeships Programme.

A further £74,098 has been allocated to enable an expansion of Sector Based Work Academy Programme (SWAP). SWAPS help prepare people receiving unemployment benefits to apply for jobs. The Combined Authority welcome the decision to allocate this funding rather than procure the initiatives nationally.

2.4.3 Rural England Prosperity Fund

The Combined Authority has been awarded £3,200,000 from the Rural England Prosperity Funding via DEFRA. The money received is 100% of what we submitted plans. Officers are currently engaging with the four rural District Councils, within our Constituent Authorities, to confirm the plans and processes they are putting in place to deliver this funding to end beneficiaries.

2.4.4 LEP Future Funding

Following the announcement in the Spring Statement, Mayor Dr Nik Johnson has written to Lee Rowley, Minister for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities about the potential continuation of core funding for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) as their functions are transferred. In his letter the Mayor points out we have already successfully integrated the former LEP into the Combined Authority and as a result have been able to achieve better alignment between the democratic priorities of the area and the priorities of business. In addition, the Mayor highlights how we are now repositioning the Business Board to strengthen the voice of business right across the Combined Authority and that the continuation of core funding is important to continue this success.

2.4.5 Careers Hub Update

The Careers Hub ended the spring term with solid performance; improvements were seen in schools benchmark performance and in line with expected contractual performance. The recruitment phase of our trailblazer primary careers project closed with 65 primary schools moving to the next phase of

accessing careers related learning CPD. Whilst this figure was lower than the targeted 75, we exceeded the average number of recruits within the trailblazer group.

The summer term will see the Careers Hub launch our Apprenticeships and Teacher Encounter programmes, working with industry to increase educators' knowledge of sectors and technical education pathways which can be applied within their subject areas.

2.4.6 ARU Peterborough

In April, ARU Peterborough won a national award as the higher education sector's 'impact initiative' of the year. The University Impact Initiative of the Year title was presented at the Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE) awards. Peterborough's new University saw off competition from 15 shortlisted projects to win the award.

The building works at the Peterborough Innovation & Research Centre – the second building - are now complete. ARU Peterborough plan to occupy the ground floor and the wider building is being marketed for rent by Savills. Interest is increasing for the smaller suite spaces on the second floor and work is underway to determine costs of fit out for potential tenants for the first floor.

The University Partners (Anglia Ruskin University, Combined Authority, Peterborough City Council) are working together to prepare an outline planning application (OPA) to cover the wider expansion of the University.

2.4.7 Qkine Global HQ Opening

The Mayor officially opened Qkine's state-of-the-art biomanufacturing and R&D facility at Murdoch House in Cambridge. The expanded manufacturing capacity will allow Qkine to keep pace with increasing global demand for high-purity bioactive proteins from the stem cell and 3D cell culture sectors, and nascent industries such as cultivated meat. The Mayor was given a tour of the new facility alongside staff, customers, investors, and representatives from the Cambridge ecosystem who have supported Qkine as it has grown.

2.5 Place and Connectivity

2.5.1 Transport

£2 Bus Fares

Recent data from Stagecoach bus company shows 1,354,000 £2 tickets have been sold since the scheme came into effect in January, an uplift of 7% in passengers travelling on buses. Passengers across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will continue to benefit from £2 bus fares, as the Department of Transport has extended the initiative until 30 June 2023.

ZEBRA Buses

Thirty new electric buses costing almost £500,000 each were launched at an event held at IWM Duxford on Friday 12 May. The launch event saw invited guests from across the region come together at the Trumpington Park and Ride to take one of the new buses to the Duxford Imperial War Museum, where they were welcomed at the main hangar where more of the buses were on display.

After short speeches by the Mayor Dr Nik Johnson, Stagecoach Regional Director for the South Rupert Cox and Chair of the GCP's Executive Board Cllr Elisa Meschini, guests were free to view the accompanying exhibition, enjoy a bus tour by Volvo and given the opportunity to drive a mini bus on a specially designed course.

After the launch event, the exhibition remained open to members of the public to find out more about the ZEBRA buses and how they will benefit residents and commuters. A competition to name the buses has also launched, with members of the public asked to take inspiration from people who have made a positive difference to their community.

2.5.2 Housing

A Community-Led Housing initiative at Dovehouse Court in Girton formally completed in March, providing 15 new homes in the form of Almshouses for over 55s who are living in or have a close connection to Girton. The homes have been designed for extended independent living including easy wheelchair access and the project was funded by Girton Town Charity (GTC) and a £675,000 grant from the Combined Authority.

A number of units at Parcel 6 in Alconbury Weald have also now been completed and are already occupied, with the remainder of the site due for completion in December 2023. The site is made up of

	<p>a total of 94 homes, and 44 units have been completed to date. Of these 44, 35 are rented and 9 are shared ownership.</p> <p>2.5.3 Climate and Nature</p> <p>DEFRA have issued the Regulations for preparation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and associated funding of £309k split over two years for its preparation. The Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee will consider the work programme on the 12 June.</p> <p>2.5.4 Coronation and Eurovision Screenings</p> <p>Communities from across the region came together to celebrate the Coronation of Their Majesties The King and The Queen Consort and the Eurovision Song Contest Final. Live screenings were held in Cambridge, Ely, Huntingdon and Peterborough and these events were possible thanks in part to funding from the Combined Authority via a grant from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The Mayor opened a screening of the Eurovision Song Contest Final in Huntingdon on Saturday 13 May which was organised by Huntingdon First in partnership with The Commemoration Hall Charity.</p>
2.6	<p>Resources and Performance</p> <p>2.6.1 Procurement</p> <p>PWC have commenced the review and are in the process of discussions with Members and Officers. It is anticipated that their final report will be ready for late May.</p>

3. Appendices

4.1	None
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4. Implications

Financial Implications	
5.1	None
Legal Implications	
6.1	None
Public Health Implications	
7.1	None
Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
8.1	None
Other Significant Implications	
9.1	None
Background Papers	
10.1	None