



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday 18 March 2024

Venue:	Civic Suite, Huntingdonshire District Council	
Time:	10.00	
Present:	Cllr Andy Coles Cllr John Fox Cllr Keith Horgan Cllr Charlotte Cane Cllr Anne Hay Cllr Tim Griffin Cllr Martin Smart Cllr Martin Hassall Cllr Peter Fane Cllr Aiden Van de Weyer Cllr Anna Bradnam Cllr Mark Goldsack	Peterborough City Council Peterborough City Council East Cambs District Council East Cambs District Council Fenland District Council Cambridge City Council Cambridge City Council Huntingdonshire District Council South Cambs District Council South Cambs District Council Cambridgeshire County Council Cambridgeshire County Council
Apologies		

Minutes:

1	Apologies for Absence
1.1	Apologies received from Cllr Maureen Davis, Jon Neish and Cllr Fitzgerald substituted by Cllr Andy Coles and Cllr David Brown substituted by Cllr Keith Horgan.
2	Declarations of Interest
2.1	No declarations of interest received.
3	Public Questions
3.1	No public questions received.
4	Minutes of the Previous Meeting & Action Log
4.1	The minutes from the meeting held on the 29 th January 2024 were approved as a correct record and the action log was noted.
5	Appointment of Skills Rapporteur
5.1	The Committee received the report which provided details regarding the Rapporteur Lead Roles and requested that the committee consider nominating another member to cover the Skills and Employment Committee following Cllr Rippeth standing down from the Committee.
5.2	No nominations for the rapporteur role were put forward and the Committee agreed to defer the report to the new municipal year.
6	Improvement Framework Report

6.1	<p>The Committee received the report which provided the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to review the proposed close down of activity across the phase 2 improvement plan to address the key areas of concern identified by the External Auditor in his letter dated June 2022 and February 2023, and the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in its Notice dated January 2023. The key areas of concerns set out in the Best Value Notice dated January 2024 and the proposed approach to the development of the phase 3 improvement plan to be submitted to the CA Board on 20 March 2023 and also the draft revised Terms of Reference for the Independent Improvement Board.</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee also had the opportunity to put questions to officers on the progress made with the Governance & Decision Making workstream.</p>
6.2	<p>The following points were raised during the discussion:-</p> <p>In response to a question about whether DLUHC had agreed the areas of the improvement plan that had been completed the officers advised that no concerns had been raised during the meetings held with DLUHC and nothing on the upcoming meetings agenda suggested any concerns with the approach that had been taken.</p> <p>The Independent Improvement Board (IIB) would remain in place for the next 12 months; the first six months would be to cover the work for DLUHC. If the Best Value Notice was lifted the IIB would remain for a further six months, however the focus may shift from improvement to transformation with the role of the IIB being reviewed at that time.</p> <p>In response to a question about the remuneration for OSC members the committee were advised that the scrutiny protocol recently published by government had stated that O&S members should be remunerated.</p> <p>In response to a question about what the CA Board needed to be doing to meet the requirements of the Best Value Notice the committee were advised that the CA Board needed to work together and become collective in their thinking and in joint endeavors to portray to investors and government the opportunities on a national and regional basis. The LGA had agreed to provide support to the Board members. The Best Value Notice stated that there must be collective working to form a strategic ambition for the region.</p> <p>The new Best Value Notice focused on 3 areas; strategic ambitions, partnerships and the role of the CA Board and culture of officers and members – embedding the changes that had already been made.</p> <p>In response to a question about how confident officers were that the budget for the improvement plan phase 3 would be agreed the committee were advised that officers were confident that they would be able to deliver on the requirements and that there was a shared understanding that actions had to be delivered at pace. The cost for continuing the improvement work would be covered by additional income that had accrued from treasury management loans.</p> <p>In response to a query about what exactly the request was from DLUHC and that it might be helpful to hear from DLUHC directly the committee were advised that the CPCA had requested quarterly meetings where DLUHC would provide their view on any areas where they may feel the organisation was not making progress – this was now a formal item on the agenda. The officer agreed to note the comment and would feed it back at the next DLUHC meeting and circulate the response to the committee.</p> <p>In response to a query about the proactive communications plan and whether there was enough focus on communicating and being more visible to members of the public officers advised that they would feedback the point to the team to ensure that the public were made aware alongside other key stakeholders.</p> <p>In response to a query about what was being done to improve the culture around cross party collaboration the officers advised that workshops had been held and that day to day working within the</p>

	organisation had changed with various groups meeting regularly made up of officers from CPCA and constituent councils. However, there was still a lot of work to be done.
6.3	<p>RESOLVED</p> <p>a) Note the identified areas of ongoing concern set out in the Best Value Notice received in January 2024 attached as Appendix 1.</p> <p>b) Note the closedown of activity in the current improvement plan (phase 2).</p> <p>c) Note the draft phase 3 improvement plan to reflect the ongoing concerns set out in the Best Value Notice received in January 2024 to be submitted to the CA Board on 20 March 2024 for agreement.</p> <p>d) Note the draft revised terms of reference for the Independent Improvement Board going forward, to reflect the delivery of stated areas of improvement identified by the Best Value Notice received in January 2024.</p> <p>e) Note the progress on the 'Governance and decisioning making' improvement workstream</p>
6.4	<p>ACTION</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Officers agreed to note the comment from members about clarity being needed on what was required and would feed it back at the next DLUCH meeting and circulate the response to the committee. 2) Officers to feedback the comment on including members of the public in the proactive communication plan.
7	Corporate Performance Report – Quarter3
7.1	The Committee received the report which provided the corporate performance report for quarter 3 for the year.
7.2	<p>The following points were raised during the discussion:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to a question about the performance of metric 9 concerning a downward trend on 19+ education and whether this was a national trend and the need to understand what the underlying causes were officers advised that part of the CPCA's role was to consider national data and trends and see how these translated regionally. • Members commented that there appeared to be three different RAG rating systems which were confusing and officers agreed that this would be looked into. • In response to a comment that there was not enough analysis provided the committee were advised that there would be an overlap between these reports and the work being done for the State of the Region which would provide the further analysis members were interested in. • In response to a question about the complex programmes and that it appeared that there had been little change officers advised that they were undertaking a piece of work to review all projects and that there would be better reflection on the state of projects in the next report presented to committee. • In response to a question about the BSIP under the Bus reform matrix officers were advised that the Department for Transport had requested a further BSIP be submitted by the 12th June. • In response to a question about the retrofitting of homes project the officers advised they were working within a restrictive scheme; a further update on this could be brought to committee once discussion had been held with government on possible policy changes. • In response to a question on metric 14 and KSI casualties the officers advised that money had been put aside from the transforming cities funds to put into safer streets and road reduction measures – the CPCA were looking to do a road harm scheme – work would be done to understand why there has been an increase in the numbers.

7.3	<p>The Committee scrutinised the performance information relating to the Combined Authority’s Corporate Key Performance Indicators and performance information relating to the Combined Authority’s Most Complex Programmes and Projects and performance information relating to the Combined Authority’s Headline Priority Activities.</p> <p>The Committee noted progress to evaluate the impact of the Devolution Deal Investment Fund in a Gateway Review.</p>
	<p>The Committee agreed to discuss item 9 - Employment & Skills - Performance Review of Skills Provision report before the State of the Region to allow officers to attend before reverting back to the original agenda order.</p>
9.	Employment & Skills - Performance Review of Skills Provision
9.1	<p>The Committee received the report which provided the Annual Performance Report which was tabled at Skills Committee in November 2023.</p>
9.2	<p>The following points were raised during the discussion:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While the figures show that further education numbers were on a downwards trend the adult education budget workstream was bucking that trend and was indicating a good direction of travel. • In response to a question about the number of further education learners the officers clarified that this did not include the university students. The numbers for further education were likely low as many went to higher education or into employment. The concern was that there was little support for future skills. • In response to a question about rural connectivity having an impact on young people accessing further education the officers confirmed that it was an issue – Cambridge Skills was making efforts to provide a wider range of places to make it easier for people to access and also schemes where training went to the young people. • There was a piece of work being done by Grant Thornton which was considering the further education cold spots; this would consider housing issues and transport. • In response to a question about underspend the officers advised that the figures were good but they could be better. However, the budget for Adult Education was a flat budget that had not been increased for years and rolled over. It was important to ensure that the money being allocated was adding value to individuals and communities and were linked to strategic priorities. • The Committee requested that a written briefing be provided with analysis behind the trends in regard to the downturn in further education numbers, with more detail on national figures and for the CPCA region. The briefing should also provide some clarity about how the budget for this area was used and how officers were ensuring good outcomes were coming from the funding.
9.3	<p>The Committee RESOLVED to:</p> <p>a) Note the report.</p>
9.4	<p>ACTION</p> <p>1) A written briefing be provided with analysis behind the trends in regard to the downturn in further education, with more detail on national figures and for the CPCA region. The briefing should also provide some clarity about how the budget for this area was used and how officers were ensuring good outcomes were coming from the funding.</p>
8.	State of the Region

8.1	The Committee received the report which provided an update on the progress to develop the 2024 State of the Region review and the proposed further development in future years.
8.2	Members were advised that a workshop providing more detailed information on the State of the Region would be set up for the Committee.
8.3	The Committee RESOLVED to: a) Note the report.
8.4	ACTION 1) Members requested that an executive summary be provided with background and relevant data in preparation for the workshop.
10.	Climate Change
10.1	The Committee received the report which provided an update on the activity on tackling the causes and impact of climate change.
10.2	The following points were raised during the discussion:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to a question about the impact of emissions due to major roads that ran through the region officers advised that as part of the LTCP a CPCA-wide transport model is being developed that could assess local vs regional traffic flows.. • Members raised a concern around the underspend reflected in the year end budget position and were advised that there were challenges around government set criteria which made certain projects ineligible. • Officers were looking at the budget and working together to ensure that public money was spent well to deliver outcomes – this had been a commitment to the Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee.
10.3	Cllr Hassall proposed, seconded by Cllr Goldsack that the committee recommended to the Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee that they require better evidence of likely project success before allocating funds and that officers recognise that reallocating underspent funds diminishes their value; it is important to strengthen project evaluation processes to ensure effective utilisation of allocated funds. On being put to the vote the Committee unanimously agreed to submit the recommendation to the Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee.
10.4	The Committee RESOLVED to:- The Committee scrutinised the activity on tackling the causes and impacts of climate change and agreed to recommend to the Environmental & Sustainable Communities Committee that the CPCA requires better evidence of likely project success before allocating funds and that officers recognise that reallocating underspent funds diminishes their value, especially in times of high inflation; it is important to strengthen project evaluation processes to ensure effective utilisation of allocated funds.
11.	Bus Reform Update
11.1	The Committee received the report which was being taken to the CA Board on 20 th March 2024 and were asked to comment and feedback.
11.2	The following points were raised during the discussion:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to a question on the background to the current situation the committee were advised that the CPCA were following the guidance provided within the 2017 Bus Service Act which required authorities to undertake an audit on the Outline Business Case for a move to

	<p>franchising; the audit was currently being undertaken by Grant Thornton with five key areas still being worked on, strategic, economic, management, commercial and financial. This was taking longer than expected and officers were working with the auditors to provide the further evidence that was required on economy and finance areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced partnerships would act as a stepping stone by delivering the benefits earlier as franchising would take a long time to implement. • The agreement to do enhanced partnerships in the interim would also help support the BSIP being submitted as the Department for Transport would require some clarity on what progress was being made in this area. • Members were advised that the funding provided from the Mayoral precept could not be used on bus reform • The Committee requested a written response on how to improve bus stops for the region and whether an accessible database of the entities that owned the bus shelters could be created.
11.3	<p>The Chair proposed seconded by Cllr Bradnam that the Committee form a working group to engage with officers on the work being carried out on the bus reform.</p> <p>The membership was agreed as:- Cllr Charlotte Cane (Chair) Cllr John Fox (Vice Chair) Cllr Anna Bradnam Cllr Martin Hassal Cllr Anne Hay</p> <p>On being put to a vote the Committee Unanimously Agreed and requested that the terms of reference be circulated to members.</p>
11.4	<p>The Committee RESOLVED to:</p> <p>a) Note the report.</p>
11.5	<p>ACTION</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Committee requested a written response on how to improve bus stops for the region and whether an accessible database of the entities that owned the bus shelters could be created. 2) The Scrutiny Officer work to provide a terms of reference for the agreed working group and circulate to members.
12.	OSC Draft Annual Report
12.1	The Committee received the draft annual report for comment and approval to CA Board on the 5 th June 2024.
12.2	<p>The Committee RESOLVED to:-</p> <p>a) Approve the draft report for recommendation to the CA Board.</p>
13.	CA Forward Plan
13.1	No comments were raised on the CA Forward Plan.
14.	OSC Work Programme
14.1	The Committee received the draft work programme for 24/25 and were asked to provide comment and approve.

14.2	The Committee requested that an item on the Improvement Plan which provided greater clarity on the issues came to their next meeting.
14.3	The Committee RESOLVED to:- a) Approve the draft work programme for the municipal year 24/25.
15.	Date of Next Meeting
15.1	Strategic Scrutiny Training/Induction – 17 th June Informal OSC/Workshop – 18 th June Public Meeting – 1 st July.

Chair