



Combined Authority Board		Agenda Item
20 March 2024		7
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">£135k approved to support the A505 Royston to Granta Park study£79k to deliver the Peterborough Transport Model
2.2	Funds awarded to the CPCA <ul style="list-style-type: none">£2.9m Skills Bootcamps wave 5

3. Public Affairs

3.1 Spring Statement

The Combined Authority have been looking into the detail of what has been announced in the Chancellor's Spring Statement and what it means for our region. We welcome the news that Wisbech will receive up to £20 million from the Towns Fund for regeneration, we look forward to reviewing further details around taking this much needed investment forward in partnership. We also welcomed an upgraded timetable, with faster and more frequent rail services along the East Coast Mainline. More services from Peterborough to London, Yorkshire and Edinburgh will be most welcome, especially as we continue to work with partners to re-develop Peterborough Station Quarter into the thriving transport and enterprise hub the city deserves. We were disappointed, however, that there was nothing on upgrading Ely Junction, despite the Prime Minister promising the upgrade in his Network North announcement back in October. The Combined Authority will continue to work with partners to make the case for this vital infrastructure project.

3.2 The Case for Cambridge

Within the Spring Statement, Government further announced some further detail around "The Case for Cambridge" or "Cambridge 2040" as also called.

We welcome Government support in unlocking the very real water scarcity issues Cambridge has been facing. Likewise, Government is to provide £7.2 million for the next phase of developing the Cambridge South East Transport (CSET) programme, ensuring the Cambridge Biomedical Campus is connected and accessible as it grows. We further welcome the investment of £3 million for Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to develop their growth plans at the heart of the Campus.

However, all agencies and stakeholders require more clarity on "The Case for Cambridge" and have highlighted concerns that Government could establish another layer of bureaucracy to impose top-down decision making from Whitehall. The Combined Authority will continue to engage with this process, work in partnership and represent the needs of our whole region as "The Case for Cambridge" progresses.

3.3 UKREiiF

The Combined Authority have booked a pavilion at the UK's Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum (UKREiiF) from 21-23 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 and build on the "Team Cambridgeshire & Peterborough" approach to attracting investment.

Consultants, Infrastructure Matters, have been appointed to bolster a small multi-disciplinary team and continue to work to produce a consolidated investment pitch which will form a programme of events and marketing materials for the pavilion as the convenor of this activity.

Planned events at UKREiiF include a debate sustainably growing Cambridge and the potential for an international train station and Peterborough amongst others have now been approved at Leaders Strategy Meeting.

The Combined Authority are working in partnership with our constituent authorities, partners and stakeholders to develop these and our overall approach and presence at the event. Filming is underway for a launch video which will feature leaders and CEX from our region.

3.4 East of England All Party Parliamentary Group

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 have compiled the key skills asks and offers to the Government for the East of England in order to achieve Levelling Up.

The Annual Review of Progress towards Levelling Up in the East of England will be launched in Parliament 18 March 2024, with keynote speeches from Jacob Young MP, Minister for Levelling Up, Jim McMahon MP, Shadow Minister for Levelling Up and Helen Morgan MP, Liberal Democrat Spokesperson on Levelling Up. The Combined Authority will also have panellist representation.

	<p>This work builds on a report which measured confidence in the East of England meeting Government's twelve Levelling Up missions, produced by the APPG last year. Deputy Mayor, Anna Smith, represented the Combined Authority as a panellist at the report launch in Parliament in February 2023, where she spoke specifically about the skills needs of the area.</p>
3.5	<p>Shadow Transport Minister Backs Ely Junction</p> <p>Shadow Transport Minister, Stephen Morgan MP, joined Mayor Dr Nik Johnson and business leaders in Cambridge on Monday 26 February to discuss the urgent need to progress Ely Junction to bolster connectivity across the East and supercharge international trade.</p> <p>Government committed to progressing the necessary upgrades to Ely Junction in a Network North announcement by the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, back in October 2023. But sadly, progress has continued to stall, with leaders receiving no further detail despite repeated letters for clarification.</p> <p>Dr Nik Johnson and Stephen Morgan MP were joined by Naomi Green, Chief Executive of England's Economic Heartland, Steve Beel, Chief Executive Officer of Freeport East, Phil Smart, Assistant Policy Manager at Rail Freight Group, James Bradley, Strategic Planning Leader at Network Rail, and Charles Baker, Senior Public Affairs Manager at Network Rail.</p>
3.6	<p>Shared Ambition Workshop</p> <p>On Wednesday 6 March 2024, the Combined Authority hosted our first Stakeholder Workshop as we continue our work to develop a Shared Ambition for the future of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.</p> <p>The workshop built on the successful session with Members of the Board and Chief Executives in January and was attended by a broad-church of over 80 stakeholders. Colleagues from DLUHC, our Constituent Councils, businesses, community groups and a range of national and regional organisations came together to help shape our collective shared ambitions.</p> <p>Through a series of activities, attendees were given the opportunity to influence the future of the region by thinking about the themes of people & place, economy, environment, movement & infrastructure. Attendees looked at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the region and then set out to identify what we are all proud of and want to see from a shared ambition for the region in the future.</p> <p>By the end of March, we will be launching an online engagement platform which will host a series of online activities that will allow all users to help make a positive contribution to the Shared Ambition development.</p> <p>We will be sharing details of the platform with all Parish and Town Councils via the Association of Local Councils and working with Communications and Engagement colleagues in our Constituent Councils to promote the platform and ensure we engage with as many users as possible.</p>

4. Economy and Growth

4.1	<p>ARU Peterborough Shortlisted in Prestigious Local Government Awards</p> <p>The three partner organisations behind ARU Peterborough, the city's new university, have been shortlisted in the prestigious Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards 2024.</p> <p>The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Peterborough City Council and Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) are in the running for the Public/Public Partnership prize, which recognises where partnership working has been successful.</p> <p>The long-running awards celebrate the best of local government, and organisers say this year's awards have received a record number of entries, making getting a shortlisting tougher than ever.</p> <p>The partnership of the Combined Authority, the City Council and ARU successfully delivered on a decades-long ambition to build a new university in Peterborough, opening on time and on budget in September 2022. The main aims of the project are to tackle a lack of higher education opportunity holding back local people, the economy and businesses, and to support the wider regeneration of the city. The University so far represents around £80 million of investment into Peterborough.</p> <p>The awards night is 12 June at Grosvenor House, London.</p>
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4.2	<p>Mayor and Cambridge City Council Leader tour sites earmarked for funding</p> <p>Dr Nik Johnson, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, visited a number of sites in central Cambridge earmarked to benefit from just over £4.5 million arts and culture funding from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority.</p> <p>Joined by Cllr Mike Davey, Leader of Cambridge City Council, and Cllr Anna Smith, Deputy Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and Cambridge City councillor, the visit was an opportunity for Dr Johnson to see first-hand some of the sites and businesses that will benefit from the additional funding.</p> <p>The visit began at the Cambridge Leisure site, before relocating to the Guildhall in central Cambridge, and talking to market traders and visitors on the Market Square.</p>
4.3	<p>Skills Bootcamps</p> <p>On 27 February, DfE visited CPCA and Tech Educators (the provider who delivers the Full Stack Coding Skills Bootcamp) at The Bradfield Centre in Cambridge. Tech Educators really impressed DfE with their teaching facilities and expertise, and examples of how the programme is making a positive impact for learners.</p> <p>Our new Skills Bootcamp in Sustainability and Environmental Management started on 5 March with PECT and Change Agents UK.</p>
4.4	<p>Careers</p> <p>National Careers Week saw a campaign to raise awareness of regional careers events and promoting careers in the NHS, including the NHS Careers Fair that we are supporting on 12 and 13 March in Peterborough.</p>
4.5	<p>UKSPF Internships</p> <p>We're in the middle of co-creation discussions with e.g. employers, training providers to design and delivery of our UKSPF funded Internship offer which will launch as an informal pilot in April 2024. Delivered under the umbrella of our wider skills brokerage activities, more than 20 partners have fed into the shaping of this offer to ensure it aligns to local needs and best practice.</p>
4.6	<p>Universal Support programme</p> <p>Planning continues for the arrival of the DWP's Universal Support programme. This sees funding allocated to MCA's from Autumn 2024 to support those furthest from the labour market to access and stay in employment.</p>

5. Place and Connectivity

5.1	<p>Centre for Green Technology</p> <p>Demonstrating the importance of the link with skills, construction is underway on the £13.5m Centre for Green Technology, a key project for Inspire Education Group (IEG) delivering green skills and student capacity for the future at the Peterborough College campus. A dedicated green curriculum, the only one of its kind within 50 miles, will deliver skills which are sought after by local business across Peterborough and the wider region. It will equip students with cutting-edge knowledge and skills in modern construction methods, emerging technologies, alternative heat sources, and electric vehicle technology, ensuring they are well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities in the ever-evolving construction landscape. The Project consists of a 3-storey new build, totalling 2,435 m². The facility provides a mixture of large and medium workshop space, classrooms, staff room space and a lab. The space will be shared by electrical vehicle and other engineering and new construction technologies. The project will comply with BREEAM, will have several renewable energy initiatives and be gas free supporting the IEG's drive to Net Zero. Due for completion in November 2024.</p>
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5.2	<p>Net Zero Villages Programme</p> <p>The climate allocations include a programme to provide grants to community level net zero projects in villages. The £1m programme is intended to be run as a competitive grant pot, with circa 50 awards between £15k and £30k. Match funding will not be a requirement but will be part of the weighted scoring analysis. The programme will be focused on demonstrating suitable projects in areas that may have more limited options to implement climate focused choices. The urban areas of Peterborough City, Cambridge City, and those towns receiving support through the Market Towns Programme will be excluded from the programme (as other funding routes are available/activities underway). Capacity was not available to launch the programme in 23/24, it is intended to launch the programme after the pre-election period has concluded in May.</p>
5.3	<p>Infrastructure Delivery Framework update</p> <p>The consultants undertaking the Infrastructure Delivery Framework (IDF) have gathered site data from each council. They are undertaking an additional round of discussions with council officers to ensure that the sites, potential areas, and infrastructure barriers are correctly reflected. The first phase of the assessment tool has been developed and discussed at the Steering Group. The next phase is to run all the sites through the tool to test the 'readiness' index that the consultants have developed. This will categorise the individual barriers to delivering sustainable growth and also the cumulative or tipping point barriers. The work remains on track to report to Committee in June 2024.</p>
5.4	<p>Futurebuild Conference</p> <p>The Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENGH) participated in the Futurebuild conference at ExCeL from 5 - 7 March 2024. The exhibition brought together the entire supply chain to showcase, debate and understand the advancements in sustainable construction and the emerging technologies that will make net zero possible. Highlights of the Hub's participation included the Scaling up Retrofit Delivery session where Maxine Narburgh joined a panel discussion on scaling up retrofit delivery, featuring experts from various Net Zero Hub regions, offering valuable lessons for future large-scale government-funded retrofit programs.</p>
5.5	<p>Northminster Topping Out</p> <p>Deputy Mayor of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, Cllr Anna Smith, joined developer Cross Keys Homes to celebrate 'topping out' at the Indigo development of 315 Combined Authority-funded homes at Northminster, in the heart of the city. Key workers, younger professionals and lower income earners are among those who can benefit from this type of housing and the first tenants are expected to start moving into Northminster by the end of the year. The Indigo build-to-rent scheme received more than £12.5 million in funding from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, under the £100 million Affordable Housing Programme. It will provide quality rental dwellings at 80% of market rent prices.</p>

6. Transport

6.1	<p>Electric Vehicle Survey</p> <p>With more and more electric cars on our roads, the Combined Authority is asking people in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough for their views on what has been described as the next transport revolution.</p> <p>Working with Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, the Combined Authority wants local opinions to help plan for more electric vehicle (EV) charging points in the region to help meet demand. The Combined Authority wants to make sure they are planned for in the right way, informed by people's views.</p> <p>Are you thinking of buying an electric car? What might be stopping you? The region is estimated to need up to 10,000 charging points by 2030, but what are the best places for them? What about</p>
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	<p>accessible charging points for people who don't have off-road parking? All views are important, whether people own an EV or not.</p> <p>The survey only takes five minutes and can be found here: https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/ev-charging/. People have until 26 March 2024 to take the survey before it closes.</p>
6.2	<p>Peterborough Station Quarter (PSQ)</p> <p>An updated Outline Business Case (OBC) was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in January. A visit to the site by DfT officials was hosted by Peterborough City Council (PCC) and the Combined Authority in February 2024. On 29 February, the Combined Authority and PCC officers presented at a DfT Investment Committee where central government approved funding to develop a Full Business Case for submission in the autumn. DfT's Centres of Excellence have reviewed the OBC and provided comments to the Combined Authority and PCC. Officers are working with partners to respond to these points which will inform the DfT's Investment Committee paper. The third-party value for money assessment has been completed, in compliance with the Combined Authority processes, and no significant issues raised.</p>
6.3	<p>Active Travel Update</p> <p>DEFRA have awarded the Combined Authority £351,122 for an air quality active travel project. The details of the project were presented and approved by this Committee in November 2023. The objective of the Air Care Project is to reduce NO2 emissions within Cambridge City's AQMA and raise awareness of air quality issues. This will be done by launching an app in schools that provides options for reducing single occupancy journeys, maintaining, and providing refurbished bikes to residents in deprived areas and working with health practitioners to disseminate information about the risks of air pollution and how to avoid it. The three-year project will commence immediately, and the Committee will receive annual updates.</p> <p>The Active Travel Specialist Advisory Board (SAB) met for the second time in February. At this meeting, the Terms of Reference document was reviewed. The design approval process was also discussed. It was agreed that the Board would provide feedback on the positive and negative elements of each project that meet the criteria and recommendations for the future.</p> <p>Following the approval of the MTFP, the Active Travel Team are working towards creating an Active Travel Strategy to complement the work already undertaken by CCC and PCC.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the eCargo bike bids with Sustainable Cities Mobility Challenge and DfT's Transport Decarbonisation Demonstrators were not successful and therefore we did not get the funding to roll out the eCargo bike project. The Combined Authority officers are seeking clarification as to why this bid was unsuccessful to learn lessons for future funding applications.</p>

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
Legal Implications	
9.2	No direct implications.
Public Health Implications	
9.3	None

Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
9.4	None
Other Significant Implications	
9.5	None
Background Papers	
9.6	None