



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday 29 January 2024

Venue:	Civic Suite, Huntingdonshire District Council	
Time:	11.00 – 13:25pm	
Present:	Cllr Wayne Fitzgerald Cllr John Fox Cllr David Brown Cllr Charlotte Cane Cllr Anne Hay Cllr Cameron Holloway 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	Cllr Maureen Davis Cllr Tim Griffin	Fenland District Council Cambridge City Council

Minutes:

1	Apologies for Absence
1.1	Apologies received from Cllr Tim Griffin, substituted by Cllr Cameron Holloway and Cllr Maureen Davis.
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 27 th November 2023 and the 9 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 March meeting.
6	Improvement Framework Report

6.1	The Committee received the report which updated them on the progress in November and December 2023 against the key concerns and observations identified by the External Auditor in June and October 2022, the Best Value Notice received in January 2023 and DLUHC in February 2023
6.2	<p>The following points were raised during the discussion:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to a question about whether there was a need for further funds for ongoing improvement work the officers advised that there would be continuous improvement built in and ensure that the lessons learned would be embedded. • The Committee were advised that the Best Value Notice that had been issued had expired but there was no current update; members would be informed when there was an update. • The Best Value Notice did bring some restrictions on certain funding streams; the Mayoral Capacity funding had been paused for 2 years and LEP Core Funding had been held since the notice had been issued. The CEO and Executive Director for Resources and Performance were involved in ongoing discussions. • The Officer agreed to share the deadlines for the actions contained within the report. • In response to a question about partnership working officers advised that this was a key area of the improvement work and now partnership working operated at all levels within the organisation; various different working groups had been formed to help aid the sharing of information and this had now become commonplace.
6.3	<p>RESOLVED</p> <p>a) Note the progress made over November and December against stated areas of improvement identified by the External Auditor in June 2022 and Best Value Notice received in January 2023 as reported to the CA Board on 31 May 2023, set out in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.9</p> <p>b) Note the outcome of the recent Internal Review of the Project planning and delivery improvement programme set out in paragraph 2.10</p> <p>c) Note the proposed transition from the current Improvement plan to transformation activity embedded across and down through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority set out in paragraph 2.8</p> <p>d) Note the intention to review the current role and focus for the Independent Improvement Board following the delivery of stated areas of improvement identified by the External Auditor and the Best Value Notice set out in paragraph 2.9</p>
6.4	<p>ACTION</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Update on the Best Value Notice to be circulated to members when available. 2) Officers would circulate the deadlines for the actions within the report.
7	Bus Reform Review
7.1	The Committee reviewed the report which had been taken to the Transport & Infrastructure Committee on the 17 th January 2024.
7.2	<p>The following points were raised during the discussion:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to a question about rural services the officers advised that the franchising option would provide the ability to define the specific types of services that may be needed across the region. Rural communities would play an important role on either of the models approved. • In response to a question about young people being able to access education and further training the officers advised that the bus strategy was very clear on the importance of rural connectivity

	<p>and access to services and that this was part of the criteria that underpinned the bus network review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to a question about how the two options were different and would affect important routes; officers advised that the Enhanced Partnership option would mean the bus network would remain as it currently was, and the CA would look at services that could be funded by working with the operators through negotiation. Franchising would provide an opportunity to integrate the network more effectively and enable the CA to subsidise routes that were socially effective if not commercially effective. • In response to a question about funding for the buses the officers advised that the Transport Levy or the Mayoral Precept has funded bus services and the pause on the other funding streams as a result of the Best Value Notice had not impacted on the funding for buses. • Until bus franchising was approved and put in place the bus network review carried out had looked at all services currently funded by the CA and had taken into account the social benefit of routes to communities; the review had identified gaps and the CA was engaging with bus operators to help improve the information shared and influence operators where possible. There would be an annual review of the tendered services to identify areas where continuous improvement could be made. • Officers agreed to provide clarity on the Greater Cambridge Travel to Work area and would circulate to members. • Members were advised that the audit report on the two options available would be brought to the OSC Informal meeting on the 14th February and would then be taken to CA Board for approval on the 28th February.
7.3	The Committee noted the report.
7.4	<p>ACTION</p> <p>1) Officers agreed to provide clarity on the Greater Cambridge Travel to Work area and would circulate to members.</p>
8.	Mayor's Budget
8.1	<p>The Committee received the report from the Mayor of the Combined Authority which requested that the CA Board approve the Mayor's Budget proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan period covering 2024-25 to 2027-28, including the proposal to implement an increase in the Mayoral General Precept equivalent to £24 per annum for a Band D property to help fund improvements to the bus network.</p> <p>The Committee were asked to comment and provide any recommendations to the CA Board.</p>
8.2	<p>The following points were raised during the discussion:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee were advised that the £1 fare proposal was being provided through the Combined Authority Budget rather than the Mayor's Budget. • In response to a question about where the figures were to explain the £36 precept the Mayor advised that this figure had been considered by officers on what was required to cover the proposals put forward; exactly how the money would be spent would come through once approved. • The Committee commented that it would have been useful to have had an explanation on how the £36 figure had been calculated. • In response to a question on what metrics had been developed to measure whether the proposals put in place were being effective and whether there would be a plan B if not successful;

the Committee were advised that as part of the Local Transport Connectivity Plan there were KPI's in place to monitor.

- The Committee were advised that if the precept was approved then further assessments would be carried out on routes applying the same criteria as had been done for the bus network review. The results of these assessments would be taken to the Transport & Infrastructure Committee on the 13th March and brought to O&S Committee on the 18th March.
- The Mayor stated that there had been a good level of engagement with members of the Transport Committee and with members of the public as part of the consultation, however there was always a challenge to do better.
- In response to a question on DRT and whether services would be more aligned to the TING or the Zipper going forward; the Mayor advised that the Zipper was a good service and that there were new expertise coming into the CA which may create opportunities to develop a hybrid of the two services.
- In response to a question about other modes of public transport other than buses the Mayor stated that it was within the gift of the CA to focus on buses and had been one of his key commitments but light rail and integrations with national rail would also be looked at.
- In response to a question about receiving government funding the Mayor stated that it was important to work collaboratively with central government and there had been some disappointments with BSIP funding, however further funding had been sourced since then.
- The Mayor advised that there may be more routes than those proposed in the report; the ones currently listed were the best fit for the money that could be raised and fairly distributed. The current proposals were a good start and the CA would always use criteria approved by the relevant committees and leaders to decide on possible routes.
- In response to a question about whether there was headroom in the budget, officer advised that following further assessments there would be a better understanding around the costings however, they were confident that the routes proposed could be covered by the Mayor's budget.
- In response to a question about specific funding for Caster, Wittering and Clinton areas the Mayor advised that the CA Board had agreed to fund some routes on the BSIP funding. Other routes had been brought forward by local communities getting in touch and working with the Mayor's Office and officers and this had been a great help.
- In response to a question about whether the precept would provide services which otherwise would fail the Mayor advised that this precept was about expanding and having the ambition to make improvements.

8.3 Cllr Fitzgerald proposed the motion that the Mayor reconsider putting forward a precept for the CA Board to consider and that the Mayor should instead go back to central government to investigate other funds that may be available to the CA.

The motion was seconded by Cllr Hay who stated that the level of the precept proposed was concerning for residents and that to explore other options with central government was a good idea keeping in mind that following the improvement work done and feedback from the Improvement Board the funding currently paused may get released and this could be utilised rather than a precept being proposed.

Other members of the Committee commented that there was a concern that going back to central government would delay things further while the use of the precept would move things forward.

The Mayor assured the Committee that the CA were in regular contact with central government and were mindful of any opportunities that could be offered.

	<p>On being proposed by Cllr Fitzgerald and seconded by Cllr Hay the motion failed.</p> <p>(4 in favour, 8 against)</p>
8.4	<p>The Chair thanked the Mayor for attending the meeting and summarised that the discussion had highlighted the key points that the CA continue to consult with local communities on routes; that a set of KPI's be created; and that details of the bus routes, with costings, be provided; also that it was recognised that while buses were important and did need to be improved that other forms of public transport be considered.</p>
9.	Mayor Mid-Year Update
9.1	<p>Mayor Nik Johnson was in attendance to answer questions from the Committee.</p>
9.2	<p>The following points were raised during the discussion:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to a question about what else the Mayor was focusing on apart from buses; the Mayor advised that while the CA was pro-bus they were also a major advocate for the rail network; a rail summit had been held and had contributed to the decision making around the Ely Junction network – this was a good example of how working together could lead to positive outcomes. The Mayor also highlighted the work he had been involved in with the ticket office closures with the other Metro Mayor's. There had been other work around the Peterborough Station Quarter, Fenland Station Car Park and plans to move forward in connecting Alconbury with the rail network. • The Mayor highlighted his work on Active Travel which was important to him in his role as a doctor; he wanted to see a major drive for change with people being able to make safe healthy choices around cycling and walking – the Mayor felt it was all interlinked and recognised the ambition in this but felt it was important. • In response to a question on car sharing the officers advised that this had played a part in the LTCP to help improve connectivity. The officers agreed to provide more detail to members on this.
9.3	<p>The Mayor thanked the Committee for inviting him to attend and committed to ensuring that all O&S Committee dates would be in his diary going forward so he could attend any future meetings when requested.</p>
9.4	<p>The Chair thanked the Mayor for attending and answering the Committee's questions.</p>
9.5	<p>ACTION</p> <p>1) Officers to provide detail around car sharing included in the LTCP.</p>
10.	Combined Authority MTFP & Corporate Strategy Refresh
10.1	<p>The Committee received the report which sets out the draft Corporate Strategy following refresh and consultation with Overview & Scrutiny and the Business Board as well as the proposed Combined Authority draft Budget for 2024-25 and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Capital Programme for the period 2024-25 to 2027-28.</p>
10.2	<p>In response to a question on ringfenced money the committee were advised that funds previously received by the CA had been un-ringfenced and that they were now being allocated locally. The CA Board would have the power to review and respond to any further funding coming through from government.</p>
10.3	<p>RESOLVED to note the report.</p>
11.	Combined Authority Forward Plan

11.1	Cllr Hassall advised he had attended the Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee and that the rapporteurs had attended a meeting with the Chair and that there might be some work for the committee to carry out and they would report further on this at the next meeting.
12.	Combined Authority Board Agenda
12.1	There were no questions submitted to the CA Board meeting on the 31 st January 2024.
13.	O&S Committee Draft Work Programme
13.1	The Committee received the report which requested them to note the draft work programme for the municipal year 2023/24 as shown at Appendix 1 and discuss items for the work programme.
13.2	The Committee requested that an online session to discuss how the new ways of working were operating be arranged and that how the agenda was presented to the Committee be looked into by officers.
13.3	RESOLVED: a) To note the work programme
14.	Date of Next Meeting
14.1	Informal meeting – 14 th February 2024 Public meeting – 18 th March 2024

Chair