



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: 12th February 2018

Time: 11am

Location: East Cambridgeshire District Council

Present:

Cllr Robin Carter
Cllr Terry Hayward
Cllr Mike Bradley
Cllr Alan Sharp
Cllr John Batchelor (Chair)
Cllr Alex Riley
Cllr Dave Baigent
Cllr Rod Cantrill
Cllr Lucy Nethsingha
Cllr Janet French
Cllr David Over

Huntingdonshire District Council
Huntingdonshire District Council
East Cambs District Council
East Cambs District Council
South Cambs District Council
South Cambs District Council
Cambridge City Council
Cambridge City Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Peterborough City Council

Officers:

Rachel Musson
Jon Alsop
Debbie Forde
Anne Gardiner

Interim Chief Finance Officer
Interim Project Accountant
Governance Advisor
Scrutiny Officer

1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies received from Cllr Yeulett, Cllr Murphy and Cllr Mason.

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1 No declarations of interests were made.

3. Budget Consultation

3.1 The Committee considered the budget report that would be discussed at the Combined Authority Board meeting on Wednesday 14th February.

3.2 The Chair invited the Interim Chief Finance Officer and the Financial Project Officer to answer the committees questions; the following point were made during the discussion:-

- The budget that the Committee had to consider was the draft budget report that had been approved by the Board at their December meeting but had taken into account some of the consultation responses received.
- The members noted that the responses that had been received from some constituent councils were more of a plea for funding rather than an actual comment on the budget and that there were no responses from the business sector, despite request being sent to the Chamber of Commerce and others through other routes.
- The budget setting process and consultation was fairly consistent with other combined authority processes, however, next year the finance team would aim to change the timings of the consultation to allow for the Christmas break, as it was felt this may have had an impact on the number of responses received.
- The Chair commented to the committee that the public had not been involved in the list of consultees for the budget and this may want to be reconsidered for next year.
- Members felt that this budget was a historical budget rather than a forward-looking budget as it outlined figures that had already been approved by the Board.
- Members felt it would be useful to see the budget for future years to be able to get a good understanding of the costs around individual projects.
- Members were advised that the Combined Authority were working on and would be providing a Medium Term Financial Strategy in due course, which would provide the information for the budgets for future years.
- The LEP budget was still to be brought to the Board for approval, it was envisioned that this would be brought back in March. There was a legal requirement for the Combined Authority to approve a balanced budget before the beginning of March which was why the two budgets had to be considered separately.

- Members felt that some information regarding the LEP budget should have been included with the budget.
- The estimated figures for the Local Transport Plan had been taken from the budgets which were held by the existing transport teams at Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Councils. The funding had been delegated down from the Mayor to the two councils for the existing teams to deliver the transport plans.
- Members raised concern around the documentation and presentation of the budget report and felt the budget should have a more granular process to enable members to have a better understanding. The Chief Finance Officer advised that she would be happy to work with the scrutiny committee to provide more detailed information, and that the Medium Term Financial Strategy would provide further detail.
- The committee raised concern around the visibility of the income streams and where money was currently being held by the Combined Authority. The officers advised that there is a current Treasury Management Strategy which was considered by the Audit and Governance Committee at their December meeting, and plans to develop this further as the current strategy is based on the Peterborough City Council model. Audit and Governance Committee had asked for this to be reconsidered and a paper would be brought back to the next Audit and Governance Committee meeting in March.
- Cllr Baigent asked a question around the allocation of housing funds to Cambridge City Council and whether approval for funding had to go through the Mayor and where the money was held – officers advised that it was the Board that agreed the allocation in line with the Monitoring & Evaluating and an Assurance Frameworks. The officers would contact the Senior Manager responsible for Housing for a written response to this question.
- Members asked if the changing portfolio holders within the Combined Authority had affected the finance officers, officers confirmed that as they mainly work with the Portfolio Holder for Fiscal Strategy, who has not changed, and with the directors for the other work streams, this was not an issue.
- Members queried the £175m reserves figure for 2018/19 financial year, as it was felt that this did not reflect the available funding by identifying any ringfenced projects, and therefore that money was not freely available to spend on other projects. It was agreed that the report could be clearer and the MTFP would address this.
- Cllr Nethsingha raised a concern about the mayors increasing expenses and asked for more detail to be provided around this. Officers advised this was only a notional figure.

3.3 The Chair-person outlined three areas he felt had been raised during the meeting for him to take forward to the Board meeting on Wednesday.

1) Incompleteness of the budget due to the LEP not being included.

2) Consultation responses were disappointing but understandable due to lack of details in budget.

3) the Committee expected to see a forward budget of three years, reserves analysed in terms of commitments and uncommitted without these it was difficult to make an informed decision.

- 3.4 Cllr Nethsingha proposed, seconded by Cllr Baigent that the committee recommend the following to the Board meeting on Wednesday 14th February 2018.

‘The O&S Committee express their concern at the lack of detail made available in the budget papers as they are presented. The Committee expresses particular concern that the budget papers do not reflect the money committed to projects in future years, for example commitments made to Peterborough University. We welcome the commitment to produce a medium term financial plan and ask that this be produced as a matter of serious urgency.’

The Committee unanimously agreed.

4. Mass Rapid Transport Review – Terms of Reference

- 4.1 The Committee received the report which outlined the points needed to consider the terms of reference for the Mass Rapid Transport review group.

- 4.2 The Committee resolved to appoint the following membership for the task and finish group:

Cllr Cantrill
Cllr French,
Cllr Carter,
Cllr Baigent
Cllr Riley (until May 2018).

The Committee agreed to appoint Cllr Cantrill as Chairman for the Task and Finish Group.

- 4.3 It was agreed that the Task and Finish Group should meet following the conclusion of the O&S Committee on the 26th February at Huntingdonshire District Council.

- 4.4 The Chair-person advised that there were no items of business for the 26th February and asked the members if they would still like to meet.

The members asked that the Mayor and the Chief executive be invited to attend the O&S Committee meeting on the 26th February to answer some question around the concerns the committee had about the changing Portfolio Holders of the Combined Authority.

Officers to confirm if this would be possible and advise the Chair-person.

5. Date of Next Meeting

- 5.1 The next meeting would be held on the 26th February 2018 at 11am at Huntingdonshire District Council

Meeting Closed: 12:25pm.