



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

# **CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## **DRAFT MINUTES**

**Date:** 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019

**Time:** 2 pm

**Location:** East Cambs District Council

**Present:**

Cllr Joan Whitehead  
Cllr Andy Coles  
Cllr Ed Murphy  
Cllr Alex Miscandlon  
Cllr Douglas Dew  
Cllr Peter Fane  
Cllr Grenville Chamberlain  
Cllr Lorna Dupre  
Cllr Alan Sharp  
Cllr Kevin Price  
Cllr Daniel Summerbell

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

**Officers:**

Kim Sawyer  
Howard Norris  
Jon Alsop  
Kim Cooke  
Paul Raynes  
Emma Powley

Chief Executive Officer  
Interim Monitoring Officer  
Chief Finance Officer  
Skills Strategy Manager  
Strategy and Planning Director  
Interim Scrutiny Officer

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies received from:  
Cllr Gehring, substituted by Summerbell  
Cllr Heylings, substituted by Cllr Fane

The Interim Monitoring Officer opened the meeting and asked for nominations for the Chair.

Councillor Murphy proposed, and Councillor Whitehead seconded that Councillor Price be Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year.

Councillor Fane proposed and Councillor Chamberlain seconded that Councillor Dupre be Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year

Upon a vote, the Committee elected Councillor Dupre as the Chair.

Upon a vote, the Committee elected Councillor Price as Vice-Chair.

In response to a question asked, the Interim Monitoring Officer explained that the membership of the Committee had been a decision taken by the Combined Authority Board having been nominated by the constituent Councils.

The Interim Monitoring Officer explained that a request to speak had been received from the previous Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which had not been received within the timescale stipulated in the Constitution. However, Members could deviate from the Constitution should there be agreement.

**Agreed:** That the former Chair of the Overview and Committee (Councillor Nethsingha) be allowed to address the Committee:

Councillor Nethsingha raised some concerns about the proportionality of the Committee and explained that she considered Committee continuity a necessity. She requested that the Committee continue to scrutinise the activities of the Mayor and urged them to continue in undertaking the work previously started by the Committee.

## **2. Declaration of Interests**

No declarations of interests were made.

## **3. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

## **4. Public Questions**

There were no public questions received.

## **5. University of Peterborough**

The Project Strategy Manager elaborated on her report and explained that it was a key feature of the devolution deal agreed with central Government and as a devolved funded priority, the Combined authority continued to support the establishment of a new University in Peterborough (UoP). It was explained that the University would offer technical qualifications to meet the needs of local business with an emphasis on vocational courses driven by local employer demand for skills in both the public and private sectors.

Concerns were raised about the feasibility of the creation of the University as comparisons were made with former polytechnics and it was suggested that the Authority should be building on the existing Universities within the area.

In response to questions asked, the Project Strategy Manager explained that the Authority was in a good position to progress the University and noted that the Government had very recently reviewed university fees. She agreed that there was a need to build on the good work that was offered from current universities but noted that there was a need to progress the UoP as a technical facility, assisting graduates into suitable employment; there was a need to grow and facilitate engineering and digital skills and provide suitable roles post-graduation that would retain qualified post graduates in the area who would invest and live in the area. Collaboratively working with local businesses had identified the most desirable skills set required for retention and professional qualifications and high-level apprenticeships was also being considered as a viable option. It was further explained that 200 businesses had been surveyed to discover what they would wish to see on the curriculum and the possibility of student sponsorship had also been discussed. However, it was explained that the future -proofing of funding could potentially be problematic but that the development of the University was an exciting and ambitious opportunity.

**RESOLVED:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

## **6. Budget Monitoring Update**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted a report which had been previously requested by the Committee and had been presented to the Board on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2019. It was explained that the report provided a provisional outturn position for the Combined Authority for the year end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

Members questioned how additional costs for the year included subsidies paid by the Mayor to maintain local bus routes when some members commented that they had witnessed cuts to bus subsidies in some constituent council wards.

The Chief Finance Officer reported that a number of the variances between the predicted revenue outturn position and the annual budget could be attributed to the uncertainty of expenditure profiles that delivery partners had provided the Authority which formed the basis for the original budget. It was explained that the Authority had a balanced budget and that approval by the Board had been sought for the current year to carry forward underspends to the new financial year to support ongoing planned delivery. Revised budget profiles would be reflected in the mid-year review.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee noted the updates contained within the report.

## **7. Mayor for the Combined Authority**

The Mayor for the Combined Authority was welcomed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In response to a question from the Vice Chair with regards to employment practices, the Mayor confirmed that a member of the Board had resigned from their position but that had been offered a significant role on the Board but that this had not been accepted. He confirmed that the positions of the Chief Executives of the Combined Authority were sound and that the working partnership worked extremely well and noted that both Mr Hill and Ms Sawyer were fulfilling their roles exceptionally well.

Responding to further questions asked regarding a perceived bias in favour of East Cambs Council, the Mayor commented that the Combined Authority utilised staff from across all of the constituent Councils and that there was no bias or preference of one Council over another. He further explained that the work of the current Chief Executives had proved to be a success; a re-structure of the organisation had been successfully undertaken with a £1.8 million saving.

The Mayor further confirmed that the Combined Authority relied upon housing programme requests received from constituent Councils and were considered equally when in receipt of them.

The Mayor also confirmed that consideration had been given to modular homes but that there had been instances where modular home providers and manufacturers had an expectation that the Authority would provide the land for free for them to develop. Without this, modular homes had not proven to be a viable alternative to more traditional housing.

In response to further questions, the Mayor stated that he supported, in principle, the planning application for an Agri-tech site in Cambridge as it would serve the rural farming area well.

In reference to the CAM, he reported that a significant amount of partnership working had been undertaken, specifically with bus and rail companies and noted that the expense of bringing forward a CAM was significantly more affordable than improving the road system and therefore was a good short term investment which would decrease the number of cars on the road. This would subsequently decrease pollution and improve air quality around the significant areas affected.

The Chair thanked the Mayor for attending the meeting

## **8. Project Register**

The Director of Delivery and Strategy introduced his report and noted that the Committee had previously agreed to receive updates quarterly, but it had also been requested that officers' monthly project highlight reports be presented to every Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was reported that the information contained within the Board performance report would be published prior to the publication of the Overview and Scrutiny agenda and noted that due to high levels of commercially sensitive information contained within officers' monthly highlight reports, Board members did not consider it appropriate for the Committee to receive such detailed and sensitive information in its public reports.

In response to questions asked, the Director of Delivery and Strategy explained there were some projects that were shown as closed which represented a stage of a larger project and that subsequent stages would be reported in future updates.

He confirmed that if required updates requested by Committee members on Councils on projects in their ward could be provided.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee noted the performance reporting process proposed for future meetings.

**9. Combined Authority Forward Plan**

The Committee considered the Combined Authority Forward Plan and discussed items that they may choose to scrutinise further. The Committee discussed their role and noted the distinction between reviewing and scrutinising decisions of the Combined Authority and making reports or recommendations to the Board or the Mayor including through forming working groups.

**10. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Report**

The Committee received the report which outlined the work programme for the committee for the municipal year 2019/20.

Members were asked to consider their role, specifically with regards to the proposed changes in the Governance Review which could see the delegation of authority to Executive Committees. The Committee were requested to pay due regard to the resources available to them.

In their discussion of the role of the Committee questions were raised about whether a 'light touch' approach was an appropriate description of their role. It was explained that the Committee needed to consider the best way to add value to the delivery of decisions and noted that the Authority was a strategic organisation and unlike constituent council, they did not have responsibility to deliver services. The Committee agreed to receive a report at their next meeting on the role of Scrutiny within a Combined Authority.

The Committee agreed that the agenda include the following items:

- Transport brief
- Affordable housing update

**11. Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be held at Cambridge City Council with a start time of 11am and a pre-meeting starting at 10am on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

Meeting Closed: 4.41pm