



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Agenda Item No. 1.4

## Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board Wednesday 24 November 2021

### Public questions

No.	Question from:	Question to:	Question:
1.	Lara Davenport-Ray, on behalf of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Climate Action Coalition	Mayor Dr Nik Johnson and Councillor Bridget Smith, Lead Member for the Environment and Climate Change	<p>At the September 2021 meeting of this Board, several members observed the absence of carbon accounting in the proposals put before them. I see that items in the November agenda again ask this Board to make decisions about spending on large projects, without considering carbon implications.</p> <p>Today you have been asked to consider spending on several projects including the St Neots Future High Street Fund (Item 3.3), Market Town Programme Investments in Ely &amp; Soham (Item 3.4), and improvements to a junction of the Nene Parkway (Item 4.2). Spending decisions like these have a significant impact on the environment and ecology of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Environmental Assessments may well have been carried out, but they are not included in the paperwork put before you today. Having an Environmental Assessment is not a tick box exercise. Not only officers, but also Board members, need to assess the environmental impact of a project against each funding proposal. Most of the proposals put before you do, however, contain a section titled "Significant Implications." This currently includes financial and legal</p>

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			<p>consequences and would provide a suitable place for environmental implications to be summarised for your review.</p> <p>My question is this: Are environmental and carbon implications just as significant to this Board's decision-making, if not more so, than financial and legal implications? Shouldn't carbon accounting and environmental impact be provided to this Board with every proposal? How can you make sustainable, forward-thinking and responsible decisions without this information?</p> <p>If growth is the indicator by which this Board plans to measure its success, then spending on growth projects with zero sum carbon or negative carbon implications should be prioritised. Our region needs the leaders in this room to support this approach to responsible decision-making.</p> <p>Supplementary comment:</p> <p>At the first Mayoral question you said challenge me to make me do better. Our group will do that. But you are only one of the decision-makers in the room. I would ask all those present to take this challenge back to your own organisations. That is the only way a true system-change will begin.</p>

No.	Response from:	Response to:	Response:
	<p>Mayor Dr Nik Johnson and Councillor Bridget Smith, Lead Member for the Environment and Climate Change</p>	<p>Lara Davenport-Ray, on behalf of the Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough Climate Action Coalition</p>	<p>The Combined Authority agrees with you that climate and environmental considerations should be taken into account in decisions. It is currently in the process of updating the decision framework to align with this and a new strategic policy approach.</p> <p>Combined Authority decisions on funding must comply with the Authority's Assurance Framework and policies. The Board decided in principle in October to amend the Assurance Framework in order to incorporate climate assessments in all decisions. However, until the Assurance Framework is formally amended the Authority needs to take decisions under the framework currently in place.</p>

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			<p>The Constitution and Assurance Framework also require our funding to be allocated in line with the Combined Authority's strategic policy ambitions. On today's agenda is the Draft Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement. This describes the six themes that will inform the Combined Authority's future investment programme. I'm sure you will be happy to know that climate is one of those themes. The draft Statement will be consulted on alongside the draft budget and if agreed alongside the budget will come into effect in January.</p> <p>The review of the Assurance Framework and project management guidance will take account of the consultation on the Draft Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement. Should potential changes result in significant divergence from the current approved Assurance Framework, those adjustments must be agreed with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities as set out in the National Local Growth Assurance Framework guidance. Both the final version of the Statement and related changes to the Assurance Framework will be presented to the Board for adoption at its next meeting in January, as set out on the published Forward Plan.</p> <p>Response to supplementary comment:</p> <p>I am sure myself and the Board accept the challenge of climate change and I am sure we will all work collaboratively together and with partners and organisations across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on this.</p>