



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Monday, 17 October 2022

Time: 10.30

Location: Sand Martin House, Peterborough

Members:

Cllr L Dupre (Chair)	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr A Sharp (Vice-Chair)	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr D Dew	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr M Hassall	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr P Coutts	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr M Goldsack	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr R Robertson	Cambridge City Council
Cllr S Smith	Cambridge City Council
Cllr G Harvey	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr P Fane	South Cambridgeshire District Council

Also Present:

The Mayor, Dr Nik Johnson

Officers:

Gordon Mitchell	Interim Chief Executive Officer
Jodie Townsend*	Interim Head of Democratic Services
Jon Alsop*	Chief Finance Officer
Rob Emery*	Business Board S151 & Dept.S73 Combined Authority
Reena Roojam*	Lawyer, Combined Authority
Anne Gardiner	Governance Manager, Combined Authority
Joanna Morley	Interim Governance Officer, Combined Authority

*denotes attendance via Zoom

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Coles, Cllr Iqbal, Cllr Hay, Cllr Miscandlon, Cllr Atkins, Cllr Baigent and Cllr Van de Weyer. Cllr Coutts, Cllr Smith and Cllr Fane

attended as substitutes for Cllr Atkins, Cllr Baigent and Cllr Van de Weyer respectively.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 No declarations of interest were made.

3. Improvement Framework

- 3.1 Gordon Mitchell, Interim Chief Executive, introduced the report which outlined the next steps of the Improvement Framework and proposed report going to the CPCA Board meeting on 19 October.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- a. The cancellation of the Board meeting in September, due to the official mourning period for her Majesty the Queen, had allowed for more informal discussions and a workshop session with Board members who hopefully would be reassured by the robustness of the improvement work and the next steps set out in the report due to go to the CA Board at their meeting being held on 19 October 2022.
- b. The strategic aims of the Review of Governance, that had been approved at the Board meeting in July, had been fed into the Improvement Plan.
- c. The Chief Executive had regular and open conversations with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Department for Housing, Levelling Up and Communities (DHLUC). The two areas that DHLUC was particularly interested in were how the scale of the issues and interest in moving forward was debated at Board and how progress was made over the next couple of weeks.
- d. The improvement journey was always much better if the Authority itself took responsibility for it.
- e. The organisation used a large number of interims but there had been some progress on the move to more permanent staff with a number of interviews already conducted.
- f. Although the Mayor was the only one directly elected it was the Board that made decisions. Although the Mayor did have power it was a soft power and the balance between the Mayor and the Board needed to be reset.
- g. By developing and strengthening the Overview and Scrutiny function, the Committee could play a significant role in the future improvement of the Combined Authority.
- h. New systems and processes, such as pre-meets before the Board meeting and fewer agenda items, could affect a change in the organisation's culture.
- i. The external auditor saw everything he had expected to see in the Improvement Plan but had said that delivery would be the real test.

RESOLVED:

The Committee:

1. Noted the presentation on the next steps of the Improvement Framework and proposed report going to the 19 October CPCA Board meeting
2. Welcomed the proposal to being an Improvement Framework Highlight Report to future Committee meetings.

3. Agreed that a virtual briefing be held to further discuss the Review of Governance recommendations and the role of the Overview and Scrutiny function, and to consider what needs to be included in the Committee's 2022/23 work programme regarding the improvement framework.

4 Questions to the Mayor from Members of the Committee

- 4.1 Questions from members of the Committee had been sent to the Mayor in advance of the meeting and written responses had been supplied. These were added as a supplementary item to the agenda pack and also appended to the minutes.
- 4.2 During the question and answer session in which the Mayor expanded on his written responses, and supplementary questions were asked, the following points were noted:
 - a. The Ting bus trial had been deemed a success. A new bus operator had been identified and the Authority would be going back to central Government to ask for the scheme to be extended to all areas of the CPCA
 - b. The ambition to deliver on active travel was high on the agenda and the Mayor could see a real avenue for collaborative working with the ICS and HWB boards to improve public health.
 - c. Ultimately, the Mayor believed that franchising of the bus system was the future, but the finances had to be thoroughly explored.
 - d. The Mayor identified three areas he hoped his vision for the Authority would deliver on. These were an improved bus network, an increased sense of place and identity with the region becoming a county of culture, and progression of works that improved public health with better air quality and more active travel.
 - e. In his closing remarks the Mayor wished to put on record his thanks to the Interim Chief Executive for the difference his arrival had made in tackling the challenges that both the organisation and he faced.
 - f. The Chair thanked the Mayor for attending the meeting and answering the Committee's questions.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting and Action Log

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2022 be approved as a correct record and that the Action Log be noted.

6. Budget Scrutiny

- 6.1 Jon Alsop, Chief Finance Officer and Rob Emery, Chief Accountant responded to the Committee's comments and questions following a presentation which provided an update on the budget planning process for the 2023/2.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- a. The transport levy was a charge on Peterborough City Council (PCC) and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) that was paid by them to the Combined Authority (CA), much like the district authorities paid the county council an element of the business rates and council tax that they collected.

- b. The business rate supplement was an extra charge on all rate paying buildings which the companies that owned and worked in those businesses paid for. The Combined Authority had the power to increase the rate by 2p for every pound paid and that would come directly to them.
- c. The Improvement Plan was not looking at large scale changes to the existing portfolio of projects and last year's approved budget, so in the shorter term would affect the core operating costs of the Authority but not the wider project portfolio.
- d. Going forward the MTFP would be developed in accordance with the strategic direction of the Combined Authority. Understanding the overarching strategic direction of the CA would inform the future projects and funding that the Authority pursued. One of the elements of the Improvement Plan was to look at a sustainable future funding model for the Authority and as there was a move away from single pot funding to bidding for funds, this would mean adapting and looking at different financial freedoms, other mechanisms for delivery, and different ways in which Government could be lobbied.
- e. The CA, as the local transport authority, had a few statutory duties relating to passenger transport which were around the national concessionary fares service ie paying for people with concessionary fare passes to travel. There were very few requirements on the CA in terms of supporting the bus network itself as it was predominantly privately operated although this would change if franchising was taken forward. The CA currently had a choice whether to cut services or increase funding.
- f. From September 2022 the CA had the power to increase the transport levy by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) measure of inflation; expected to be circa 10%. This would require the CA board to vote in favour of setting the levy. If the CA wanted to increase the levy by more than the ONS level, specific assent by both councils (PCC and CCC) would be required.
- g. Bid on funds would continue to be the standard operating model from Government.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the update on the budget planning process for the 2023-24 budget and MTFP

7/8 Lead Members' Updates and Combined Authority Forward Plan

- 7.1 Lead members were not present at the meeting so there were no updates given on areas of interest included in the Forward Plan.

9. Combined Authority Board Agenda

- 9.1 Members did not put forward any questions to be asked at the CA Board meeting on 19 October 2022.

10. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

Following a brief discussion, the items for the next meeting were agreed:

RESOLVED:

- 1. That an update on the Improvement Plan would be a standing item going forwards.

2. That the Bus and Transport lead members bring a report on the Bus Review to the next meeting

ACTIONS:

1. Officers to schedule a date for a virtual briefing session to further discuss the Review of Governance recommendations and the role of the Overview and Scrutiny function, *and* to consider what needs to be included in the Committee's 2022/23 work programme regarding the improvement framework.
2. The Chair, Vice-Chair, and the Bus and Transport lead members to meet with officers in preparation for the update report on the Bus Review coming to the November meeting.

11. Date of next meeting

- 11.1 Monday 28 November 2022 at 11am. Venue: Pathfinder House, Huntingdon.

Meeting Closed: 1.00pm