

Agenda Item 11	Appendix
Improvement Plan Update	1

Update on Improvement activity to be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee 19 June, 2023

Area of improvement	Governance and decision making
CPCA Progress:	<p>Major governance improvements for Board, thematic committees, other sub committees and Business Board were agreed by CA Board in March and there is a clear plan in place for implementation.</p> <p>Changes to the CA Constitution were also agreed by CA Board in March to strengthen governance.</p> <p>Following elections in some constituent councils in May an induction programme is being developed for new and existing Members involved in the CA's governance structure to help embed effective ways of working and a positive culture of collaboration.</p> <p>Clarification has been provided to the Mayor and constituent councils on political proportionality on committees under the new governance structure and Overview & Scrutiny Committee is being reminded of its facility to co-opt independent councillors to the Committee to improve the spread of representation. This would be in line with several other Combined Authorities.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan was adopted by the Combined Authority Board in January 2023</p> <p>During February and March focus was on developing Directorate Business Plans with clear objectives, milestones and priorities. The Directorate Business Plans were finalised in April and provide the "golden thread" between the adopted Corporate Plan priorities and deliverables and individual objectives. Following on from this work has started on developing an improved Performance Management Framework, including Key Performance Indicators to be reported to the Board and sub-committees.</p> <p>During March and April 2023, 7 training sessions were held for all staff and managers on appraisal training and SMART objective setting. The vast majority of staff had individual objectives set by the target date of the end of April 2023.</p> <p>14 new HR policies were approved by the Employment Committee on 14 March and training for all CA staff has been undertaken.</p>
Area of improvement	Project plans and delivery
CPCA Progress:	<p>A Single Assurance Framework that will govern how we prioritise and agree projects is being developed along with a new Performance Management Framework; which sits with the SAF, to drive delivery and new approaches to strategic and project-based performance risk management. Wider training in project management standards, risk and assurance is scheduled to commence next month.</p> <p>An external working group of officers from across the local authorities has been established to inform and guide the SAF work. It is intended to report progress on delegations and project prioritisation to the Board in July and for the Board to consider the SAF in September. Discussions are being held with DLUHC, DfE</p>

	<p>and DfT. Officers will also engage with O&S and A&G over the next couple of months to clarify their role.</p> <p>In relation to specific concerns relating to an FE provider funded by CPCA, positive steps have been put in place to address concerns about the use of public money:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPCA and DfE colleagues met to discuss mutual concerns in relation to a provider. • An independent Final Audit report was issued on 31st January 2023 expressing serious concerns. • CPCA have issued a 'Breach notice' to the provider and all recruitment was paused with immediate effect, and the contract terminated. <p>Discussions have now taken place with the provider to understand its position and finalise closure.</p>
Area of improvement	Procurement
CPCA Progress:	<p>PWC commenced a review of procurement across CPCA on Monday 3rd April. The review focused on whether and how well CPCA meets best practice and best value in terms of its procurement strategy, regulations, operations and compliance.</p> <p>The draft outcome of the review (subject to clarification on a few points) was received in early May and provided recommendations for improvement. The recommendations covered a number of areas including resourcing, governance, levels of delegation and training.</p> <p>An action plan to implement the recommendations is being produced and will be reported for approval to the Audit and Governance Committee in June and the CA Board in July. A verbal update will be provided to O&S following the A&G meeting.</p>
Area of improvement	Partnership working
CPCA Progress:	<p>The spirit of collaboration and partnership working is now embedding itself more deeply into the operating model of the CPCA. This is expressing itself in how Constituent Member Authorities at both Chief Executive and Leader level are engaging across, and starting to take greater ownership of, the business of the CPCA as well as business leaders as part of the development of the new role of the Business Board, including the appointment of a new Chair of the Business Board.</p> <p>CPCA is now taking steps to review the partnership landscape across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to explore how and where best to engage to leverage most impact as well as receive feedback on stakeholder views of progress within the CPCA and the execution of its responsibilities and accountabilities, so that improvement can be both seen and measured. A project management resource is being identified that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the partnerships that CPCA is engaged in and at what level, against the purpose of the partnership and what CPCA hopes to secure from it in terms of its inputs, outputs and outcomes • Review the wider and emerging partnership landscape across the area, including regional and local collaborations, as well as sub-regional

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the core partnerships for the future, both in terms of strategy development and delivery for the CPCA as a whole • Review the delivery of our existing strategies, including the corporate plan and directorate plans, as well as our core outward facing ones, such as the Economic Growth Strategy, Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, Skills and Employment Strategy, and priority Sectors, given the identification of key partners within them, and assess the scope and scale of their existing and planned collaboration and contribution • Design and embed a partnership theme into any existing survey work across the CPCA area or develop a new survey to benchmark progress. <p>A good example of recent progress in partnership working relates to the Chancellor's Spring Statement. In response, CPCA has taken an active role to engage meaningfully in the implications of the announcements, particularly in relation to deeper devolution and the trailblazer devolution deals. The Mayor, Chief Executive and Executive Director for Economy & Growth, are actively participating in the dialogue and developments with the Secretary of State and senior officials as part of the M10 Group of MCAs and the GLA, as part of the potential 'roll out' of deeper devolution, single settlements, and a new Level 4 to the Devolution Framework. On the 28th April all MCAs agreed informally to move ahead together in seeking to maximise the opportunities for all combined authorities, including Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This is continuing to be taken forward with a strong focus on securing at pace a state of readiness given there will be a need to demonstrate an ability and willingness to deliver a credible stretch on outcomes, and this is being viewed cautiously but as positive by Leaders and CEOs.</p> <p>The new CPCA corporate management team at the time of writing has now met collectively with five of the senior leadership teams of the constituent member authorities and there is a recognition that through mutually reinforcing collaboration there is much to be gained by closer working together more generally as well as moving in tandem through the M10 group.</p> <p>Equally, good progress is continuing to be made in the wider partnership arena, both with constituent member authorities, including reviewing existing professional support groups as well as across the other public, private and third sectors, with key engagement with existing partnerships, as well as key business leaders and networks.</p>
Area of Improvement	Improvement plan progress
CPCA Progress:	<p>A three month stocktake on progress after 3 months, against outcomes set out in the report to Board, October 2022 was presented to Board on 22 March and to Audit and Governance on 24 March.</p> <p>The Chair of the Audit and Governance committee has shared:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"The meeting on 24 March 2023 was the first time that the Audit & Governance (A&G) Committee had been able to form a positive view about improvements in the Combined Authority (CA) since the External Auditor's intervention in June 2022. As we had asked, officers provided a report designed to measure progress in responding to the concerns raised by the External Auditor and the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This approach focused the discussion on outcomes, since the monitoring of the Improvement Plan itself falls to the Independent Improvement Board (IIB).</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The External Auditor felt that the new reporting format provided a clearer trail to monitor progress. The breadth and depth of the actions that the Authority needed to take were significant. He particularly noted that:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Changing the culture and monitoring staff feedback would take time and needed to be sustained.</i> ○ <i>While the Independent Improvement Board (IIB) had been set up it had yet to meet, so it was not yet known how well it would operate.</i> ○ <i>The ongoing whistleblowing and conduct cases need to be concluded.</i> • <i>The A&G noted that the CA would hold quarterly meetings with DLUHC, which would draw on the IIB work. We also asked that officers do their best to align the sequence of DLUHC, IIB and A&G meetings.</i> • <i>Overall, the A&G Committee welcomed the report on the CA's Improvement Framework. It provided assurance that the improvements were going in the right direction; it provided clarity and focus on the purpose of the improvement activity.</i> <p>The key focus for improvement going forward will be focussed on the areas of concern from the External Auditor, Best Value Notice and the Independent Improvement Board. The proposed reframed plan is set out in Appendix 2</p> <p>Observations from the Independent Improvement Board held on 17 April and 22 May have been shared with the O&S Committee as appendix 3 .</p>
Area of Improvement	Independent Improvement Board engagement
CPCA Progress:	<p>The first formal bi-monthly IIB meeting was held on 17 April 2023.</p> <p>The observations from the IIB on assurance and areas for focus will be shared with the CA Board members following the IIB meeting on 22 May, and in advance of the CA Board on 31 May</p> <p>Julie Spence continues to act as Chair of the IIB whilst a permanent replacement is confirmed.</p> <p>Richard Carr has been confirmed as Chair, Independent Improvement Board and his biography is attached as appendix 4</p>
Area of Improvement	Conclusion of investigations and safeguarding of staff
CPCA Progress:	<p>External investigators have been regularly contacted for updates and confirmation of when the investigation would be completed. The last correspondence sent to external investigator of 24 March 2023. A meeting was held with the external investigator and the Monitoring Officer on 27 March 2023. So far, some witnesses have been interviewed, some witnesses will require subsequent interviews. The decision has not been finalised. The External investigator is working through recently received witness statements and responses provided by The Monitoring officer to specific questions. The Independent Investigator estimates the investigation should be concluded by end of May/early June.</p> <p>When the investigators submit their report, the Monitoring officer will consult with the Independent Person on the findings following which there will be hearing by a panel of the Audit and Governance Committee, if there has been a finding of</p>

	<p>breach of the members Code of conduct. If there has been no finding of a breach, the Audit and Governance Committee and the CPCA Board will be informed. This is the equivalent of a Standards Committee in local authorities.</p> <p>Standards hearing training has already been given to the Committee in anticipation of the need to fulfil that role.</p> <p>A third staff survey is currently being undertaken. This includes questions relating to staff perceptions of support.</p>
Area of Improvement	Confidence, culture and capacity
CPCA Progress:	<p>The leadership and departmental structure was agreed by Board in October 2022 and Executive Directors and the Head of Policy commenced at the end of February. A permanent appointment to Assistant Directors roles in Finance and Skills have also been made.</p> <p>The newly appointed Chief Executive, Rob Bridge will join in early June 2023.</p> <p>The staff structures for the Chief Executives policy and executive office are in place and recruitment substantially completed. This includes provision of support for the Mayor. The recruitment for two specific posts to support the Mayor is scheduled to commence in May 2023.</p> <p>The Board agreed values 'CIVIL' (collaboration, integrity, vision, innovation, leadership) for both Members and Officers in January 2023. Further work is underway to develop behaviours that reflect the agreed values that are reflected in approved HR policies and will be embedded across the CA.</p> <p>At the end of April a staff workshop was held to further develop our values, the behaviours that we seek within the organisation and how these are embedded. The output from this workshop has been shared with all staff who participated and will feed into the next all staff conference in June 2023. This will give all staff the opportunity to review and refine what is being proposed.</p> <p>The CIVIL values have been built into individual staff appraisals and objective setting for 2023/24, featured prominently in the first corporate induction session in March 2023 and Values based interview questions are being developed to underpin all future recruitment activity.</p> <p>Staff surveys took place in September 2022 and again in January 2023, the latest staff survey is live until the end of May 2023. The key observations by staff and changes over the three-month period to end of January are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most staff have noticed overall improvements and progress since the last survey in September; but not universally. • Staff feel more confident in the direction of the CA but want to see planned improvements being fully embedded. • A varied response on feeling valued by the organisation and that people's opinions count; some teams feeling more connected than others. • Most staff feel the CA is not yet as effective and efficient as it could be. • Despite this, there are more positive feelings about working for the CA and an overall sense of optimism about the future. <p>The findings of the staff survey are informing the development of the next phase of Confidence, culture and capacity activity.</p>