



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Monday, 13 December 2021

Time: 11:00

Location: New Shire Hall, Alconbury, PE

Present:

Cllr D Dew	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr E Butler	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr L Dupre (Chair)	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr A Sharp	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr D Baigent	Cambridge City Council
Cllr M Davey	Cambridge City Council
Cllr M Atkins	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr S Count	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr A Coles	Peterborough City Council
Cllr A Miscandlon	Fenland District Council
Cllr A Hay	Fenland District Council
Cllr J Rippeth	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr A Van de Weyer	South Cambridgeshire District Council

Officers:

Rochelle Tapping	Deputy Monitoring Officer, Combined Authority
Jodie Townsend	Head of Democratic Services, Combined Authority (remote attendance)
Robert Fox	Governance Officer, Combined Authority (remote attendance)

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr M Goldsack, Cambridgeshire County Council, substituted by Cllr S Count; and Cllr S Corney, Huntingdonshire District Council substituted by Cllr E Butler.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 Cllr D Baigent declared an interest as a member of the Cambridgeshire Cycling Campaign.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 22 November were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements

4.1 The Chair invited Jodie Townsend to update the Committee on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee arrangements. Jodie informed the Committee that processes for Officer (ODN) and Mayoral Decision Notices (MDN) have been refined and these notices are now available to view on the Transparency pages on the Combined Authority website. All Committee members will be sent links to MDNs from this point forward. The Transparency pages themselves have also been updated and are viewable from a simple search. There are still improvements to be made going forward, however.

4.2 Jodie highlighted to the Committee that he would be running a session for report authors in January which would outline the expectations of what should be included in Committee reports in the future with an onus on including as much information as possible for Committees to digest in advance of meetings. It is anticipated reports from March 2022 will take account of the expectations. This is dependent upon the governance review, which is ongoing, which will incorporate what type of reports and pre-reports will be received by this Committee and the Combined Authority Board.

4.3 The Committee considered the Conflicts Protocol presented to them. Whilst there was some consensus on the need for such a protocol, there was agreement that, as presented, it should not be approved. Committee comments included:

- The protocol presented seems overly risk-averse
- The protocol limits Members with great experience being actively involved in areas they could bring their experience to bear
- The protocol potentially limits Members with no decision-making powers at constituent authorities being involved in matters of significance for the Combined Authority
- The sections of the protocol which reflect government guidance and the Combined Authority constitution could be retained

4.4 It was agreed that the comments of Members be taken into account and a revised protocol be presented in the new year.

4.4 The action log was noted, and Members were content with progress.

5. Draft Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement and 2022/23 Draft Budget and Medium-term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2022 to 2026

5.1 Cllr Coles and Cllr Davey both declared an interest in this item as Finance lead members at their respective constituent authorities. Jon Alsop, Director of Finance and Paul Raynes, Director of Delivery and Strategy were in attendance for this item.

5.2 The Chair invited Paul Raynes to introduce the Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement. Paul informed the Committee the statement is a policy framework to anchor the budget. The Combined Authority Board has requested the statement to be considered alongside the budget even though there is no statutory requirement to do so. The statement is intended to set out an approach that considers the Devolution Deal objectives to assist the area's economy over the next 25 years.

5.3 The Chair invited Jon Alsop to introduce the budget and MTFP. Jon informed the Committee that as a statutory consultee on the budget it has the opportunity to provide challenge and comment on both the budget and MTFP. The approved timetable and processes for agreeing the statement, budget and MTFP are in accordance with the key dates and statutory deadlines as set out in the Combined Authority Constitution and the Finance Order and Jon referred the Committee to the timetable which is set out in the accompanying report.

5.4 Jon stated the overarching objective is to set an affordable and balanced budget and that the 2022/23 budget is set with a light-touch rolling-forward existing projects and budgets as the Combined Authority is currently reflecting upon its strategies. Funding assumptions and revenue and capital expenditure lines provide an affordable and balanced budget and there are no expectations, at present, of raising the council tax levy.

5.5 The Chair invited the Committee to comment upon both the Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement and the 2022/23 Budget and MTFP. Comments from the Committee and responses on the Statement included:

- There was some concern that Health and Skills are placed together in the Statement, and this was questioned. *Response:* They are placed together reflecting the academic work on human capital. The extent of health inequalities is significant in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. There is likely to be a matrix on all the strategies going forward
- A Member praised the Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement as a significant improvement on what has previously been presented by the Combined Authority; although, there was concern over the drift following the last Mayoral election. *Response:* The Combined Authority Forward Plan includes the future Business Plan of the Combined Authority
- What constitutes an area in the Statement? *Response:* The indicators currently included are a working draft and additional work is being undertaken on the layers. There are striking discrepancies within districts and the January Combined Authority Board will be presented with some additional work that will have been undertaken
- It is difficult to see how the areas in the Statement are going to be measured, and there are key metrics missing currently. How will the KPIs be measured against the HM Treasury Green Book? *Response:* There are conversations with the HM Treasury Green Book Unit. The revised version of the Green Book places a priority on the policy framework and by having the right policy framework the Combined Authority will be complying with the Green Book
- Connectivity is included in the Statement, but should there be a specific reference to mobile telephone connectivity as well as internet connectivity? *Response:* There is a digital strategy being developed and these future documents will include this detail

- There are no specific references to Net Zero or low-carbon transport in the Statement

5.6 Comments from the Committee and responses on the 2022/23 Budget and MTFO included:

- With regard to the Adult Education Budget what plans have been made and what are the high value course costs likely to be? *Response:* Assumptions have been made on known agreed positions, and on known income streams. These have not been broken down, as yet. This question will be considered as part of the consultation and a response will be provided to the Committee at the next meeting
- Will staff need to be recruited or redeployed into the health area? *Response:* The outcome of the development of new strategies is not known, as yet, so all known budgets and projects are being rolled-forward and resource activity will be in accordance with any new direction of travel, and there is flexibility in the budget to allow for this. It is a 'live' budget, and any changes will go through the established procedures
- A Member stated the budget is devoid of substance and lacks detail of any projects. Three projects in particular: Ely area enhancement scheme; A10 dualling; and the March area strategy are not included. Staffing costs have increased yet schemes and projects are static or have gone down. *Response:* An attempt has been made in the narrative to make it clear this is a holding budget until full strategies have been developed. As strategies are developing the Combined Authority needs to be able to react to build in the capacity to address the directions determined by them. The correct procedures will be followed as projects are developed and confirmed
- There was consensus that more detail is needed in the budget to enable challenge
- A member stated it is disappointing to go out to public consultation with an incomplete budget and the Mayor should be made aware of the Committee's concern
- The Combined Authority Board agreed the recommendations from the Independent Commission on Climate Change in November, but this is not included in the budget statement. *Response:* The Climate Working Group will be presenting an Action Plan to the Combined Authority Board in March 2022
- There is still £500,000 in the budget for the housing team is this going to take us much of the budget as this? *Response:* When the Combined Authority receives greater clarity it will be looking at resourcing and this will be reflected in the staffing establishment to ensure it aligns with the future of the Authority
- There is a lack of infrastructure projects in the budget in rural areas. *Response:* The Combined Authority is consulting constituent authority members which will be considered when the strategies have been developed. A prioritisation process will then take place on suggested projects
- Could the budget timetable be adapted to enable further consultation? *Response:* The Combined Authority Board needs to agree the budget by the end of January 2022. There will need to be a refreshed budget and MTFP once strategies have been developed and there is more

clarity on the projects taking place within those strategies. A mid-year refresh would be subject to further public consultation in order to ensure rigour in the process.

- 5.7 Following the comments of the Committee the Chair stated she would make representation to the Combined Authority Board on the lack of completeness on the budget as it goes out to public consultation.
- 5.8 Jon Alsop confirmed a formal note of the questions asked by the Committee and its comments would be part of the formal consultation process and that responses would be provided to the Committee at its meeting in January 2022. The Chair thanked Jon Alsop and Paul Raynes for their contribution and invited them to update the Committee at its next meeting. The Committee would ask further questions at that meeting and potentially raise further questions for the Combined Authority Board. The Chair also stated the Committee work programme should reflect the mid-year budget refresh.

6. Devolution Deal

- 6.1 The Chair commenced by stating the report was her own and the protocol moving forward would be that lead members and rapporteurs would be taking responsibility for the work they undertake, with reports headed with Members names. The Chair stated the Devolution Deal should be monitored to ascertain whether the Committee would wish to make recommendations to the Combined Authority Board and how it might wish to scrutinise the deal. The Chair invited Paul Raynes to provide some insight. Paul stated the Chair's report provides a good model for how scrutiny could be done in relation to the Devolution Deal and is particularly helpful in illustrating the devolution commitments.

- 6.2 There was unanimous support from the Committee that it should continue to review the current arrangements for monitoring the initiatives contained in the Devolution Deal agreed by Government and the constituent members of the Combined Authority in 2016 and consider where these might be improved. The Committee also supported the potential for a refreshed Devolution Deal to reflect the changing priorities of the Government, Mayor, member authorities, and the public.

- 6.3 It was agreed to forward the report received by the Committee to the Combined Authority Board in its entirety to provide the Board with the opportunity to consider revisiting the Deal. It was agreed to frame a question on the Devolution Deal for the public Mayor's Question Time in March 2022.

- 6.4 It was agreed to reconsider the Deal at the Committee on a six-monthly basis commencing in June 2022 so that the Committee might make recommendations to inform development.

- 6.5 The Chair was broadly thanked by the Committee for her report.

7. Accommodation Strategy

- 7.1 The Committee received the report from the rapporteur, Cllr Mark Goldsack in his absence.

- 7.2

7.3 The Chair questioned what the climate impact was of the six potential locations being considered and what factors in terms of this are being measured?

7.4 It was questioned what the potential financial implications of the site are?

It was agreed to receive an update at the next meeting of the Committee with responses to these questions as well as receiving any additional information that will be, by then, known.

8. Forward Plan

8.1 The Chair invited comments on the Forward Plan. As Lead Member for Skills Cllr Coles stated that any changes on who will be the lead officer for Skills in the new year will need to be reported to the Committee as soon as known.

9. Work Programme

The Committee noted the work programme.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

10.1 The next meeting of the Committee is on Monday, 24 January 2022 at 11:00 at Fenland Hall, March, PE

10.2 The Chair wished all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The meeting closed at 13:10