



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Monday, 26 October 2020

Time: 11.00 a.m.

Location: Virtual Meeting via the Zoom Platform

Present:

Cllr S Corney	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr P Jordan	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr L Dupre (Chair)	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr A Sharp	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr M Gehring	Cambridge City Council
Cllr M Davey	Cambridge City Council
Cllr A Coles	Peterborough City Council
Cllr E Murphy	Peterborough City Council
Cllr A Miscandlon	Fenland District Council
Cllr A Hay	Fenland District Council
Cllr P Fane	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr G Chamberlain	South Cambridgeshire District Council

Officers:

John T Hill	Director for Business and Skills
Emily Mulvaney	Community Housing Programme Manager.
Noelle Godfrey	Project Lead for Digital Connectivity Infrastructure
Rochelle Tapping	Deputy Legal and Monitoring Officer, Combined Authority
Anne Gardiner	Scrutiny Officer, Combined Authority (Minute Taker)
Robert Fox	Interim Scrutiny Officer, Combined Authority

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from: Cllr David Mason (Fenland District Council) substituted by Cllr Alex Miscandlon, Cllr David Connor (Cambridgeshire County Council)
Cllr Jocelynn Scutt (Cambridgeshire County Council) – joined the meeting at 12:30pm.

The Scrutiny Officer conducted the roll-call of Committee attendees.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 No declarations were received.

3. Election of Vice Chair

3.1 Due to the resignation of a member the Committee were required to elect a new Vice Chair.

3.2 Nominations were received for Cllr Ed Murphy and Cllr Andy Coles.

3.3 With 7 votes FOR Cllr Ed Murphy and 5 votes FOR Cllr Andy Coles the Committee elected Cllr Ed Murphy as the Vice Chair for the remainder of the municipal year.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

4.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday, 28 September were agreed as an accurate record.

4.2 The responses from the CA Board to the Committee's questions were reviewed with the following points raised:-

1) The Committee discussed the response received about representations the Combined Authority had made to central government on the long-standing issue of quoracy and were concerned that the CA Board were not aware of any representations being made to Government in relation to the quoracy of Combined Authority committees as this had been an issue raised on numerous occasions by this committee. The Chair would write to the Board members to express this concern and to ask that any response received from central government in response to the letter recently sent be shared with members.

2) The Committee discussed the response to whether there was a commitment for the Business Board to be more transparent and to hold meetings in public session and were concerned over the response received about the CA Business Board and its level of transparency and agreed that Cllr Mike Davey as a member of the Audit and Governance Committee should raise this concern there for that committee to consider.

3) The Committee discussed the response to the question raised about the CAM SPV and agreed that a report detailing the powers the committee had to scrutinise the SPV be brought to the November meeting.

5. Public Questions

5.1 There were no public questions.

6. The Director of Business and Skills

6.1 The Committee received the report and presentation from the Director for Business and Skills which provided an update on the strategic direction and activities of the Combined Authority around Business and Skills.
(A copy of the Business and Skills presentation received is at Appendix A)

The following points were raised during the discussion:-

6.2 The Business and Skills team were working to ensure there was a balance between creating a supply of appropriate skills and creating jobs that demanded these skills. There was a need to get a balance between investing in high end companies in the south of the region whilst also looking at the additionality when creating higher value jobs in areas such as Peterborough and Fenland; these have a greater impact on the local economies so the team would aim to create jobs in the harder areas of the county such as in the north and east as well as the easy wins in the south of the county.

6.3 In response to a question about apprenticeship uptake around the area, the Director advised that the uptake of apprenticeships was the same across the county and this had been helped by receiving additional funding from the Department for Education, however the general number of apprenticeships starting was low due to companies not wanting to take on apprentices during the pandemic.

The government Kickstart scheme would help to create cohorts of 30 apprenticeships across groups of SMEs, by offering employers grouping together in such a manner, additional funding. The Combined Authority had registered as the main intermediary for DfE, to create these cohorts. The team hoped to increase apprenticeships by at least 180 over the next 6 months in this manner.

6.4 In response to a question about whether the Jones Brothers Company were taking on apprenticeships the officer agreed to check and respond to the member directly.

6.5 The Committee were advised that questions around whether a relief road would be built to the south of Whittlesey to help relieve the pressure of lorries through the village should be directed to the Director for Transport and Infrastructure.

6.6 The figures for project costs and the number of jobs created, that were included within the report, related to the full range of all Local Growth Fund (LGF) applications that had been funded. The job outcome figures were sourced from the information that applicants for the LGF provided within their applications. They provided detail on how they would develop their business, how many jobs it would create and how it would increase their sales. As part of the formal evaluation process for all applications, the forecasts were assessed by an expert panel who scrutinised the applications and deemed the offer for outcomes, credible to receive the funding. Following this there would be a monitoring phase that covered three years, where the team would go back to the applicants to check on what they had achieved against the figures that they provided around growth, sales and job numbers. This would help to create the facts on actual job creation outcomes, that the team would then work from and present going forward.

6.7 The Director confirmed that the Business Board at an extraordinary meeting held last Monday agreed to recommend to the CA Board that the funds for the Peterborough University Phase 2 Manufacturing and Materials Research & Development Centre to complete the design and business case from the Getting Building Funding from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) be released and that this decision would be ratified by Mayoral Decision Notice and debated by Leaders on 28 October followed by a vote to support that Mayoral Decision.

The Director provided some clarification around the dates of completion for the University of Peterborough; part of a new funding pot from central government the 'Get Building Fund' had criteria that meant money had to be spent by the beginning of 2022; the project that the Combined Authority put forward to receive this funding was the University of Peterborough Phase 2 Research Centre. The criteria around this funding had now been relaxed and it looked like completion for the project would be June 2022.

- 6.8 The Director advised that the number of interventions being carried out were complicated and could include many companies but although it was complex it was a diverse portfolio of projects, and the benefit of that meant that there were fewer reliance's or catastrophic reliance's as there was a broad enough portfolio to tolerate single point failures (ie, individual projects not meeting their jobs growth outcome forecasts).

The Director advised that each intervention had a target which was measurable and that officers were accountable for; the team had recently been restructured and five Senior Responsible Officers had been appointed to specific areas with specific targets to achieve.

In response to a question on target setting for upskilling and retraining the Director advised that they monitor these areas using leading indicators. There were currently 1800 apprenticeships and 1700 other skill outcomes. The team would be meeting with the contracted skills brokerage providers every month and measure factors such as how many school children have been engaged, how many further education students have been engaged, what engagement there has been with Job Centre Plus and what pathways have been created for these groups into learning, and how many employers have been engaged. This is monitored monthly and the results are presented to Business Board and the Skills Committee on a bi-monthly basis. The Director recognised that the skills brokerage was the highest risk area at the moment largely due to Covid 19.

- 6.9 In response to a question around working with the local authorities the Director gave as an example the work being done with South Cambridgeshire Council. The business support provided was one brand and customers receive the same service whether they approach the Combined Authority or the district council; officers work with Local Authority partners to target companies and always work together.

Officers used a Customer Relationship Management system that would be shared with local authority partners to ensure the same level of service is provided. In regards to future LGF funding for Local authorities, the Director advised that he meets with the Chief Operating Officer every couple of months to help build the project pipeline so that when funding becomes available the strategy for future projects and their need for funding, for South Cambridgeshire District Council would be fully developed and could be processed as soon as funds were received from government.

- 6.10 In response to a question on how the Covid 19 pandemic had impacted on the work the Director advised that the Combined Authority had a Local Industrial Strategy which had now had a revamp to become the Local Economic Recovery Strategy - this had taken all the interventions which were created in 2019 and had redesigned them to better respond to the economic impacts of Covid 19.

- 6.11 In response to a question on Brexit the Director advised that if there was no deal that officers would talk with the Dept for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) around further funding to give companies specific advice around the deal and the required paperwork.
- 6.12 In response to a question on funding streams the Director advised that the Combined Authority had received £150m to spend from the Local Growth Fund, which had been used; another tranche of Local Growth Fund should be received in 2021. Although the funding that was received via the Get Building Fund was in fact the forecast allocation for 2021 of the Local Growth Fund, the Director believed that there would still be a further top up from government in 2021, despite having already been allocated the 2021 tranche – and having committed it to projects.

In April 2022 the Combined Authority should receive the LGF replacement – the Shared Prosperity Fund, this would combine the old Local Growth Fund, the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Funds which should be between £200-250m but this would depend on how effective the lobbying of the Combined Authority would be.

- 6.13 The Committee thanked the Director for Business and Skills for attending the meeting and answering the members' questions.

7. Community Land Trusts

- 7.1 The Committee received the presentation from the Community Housing Programme Manager which outlined what Community Land Trusts were, how they worked and how the Combined Authority was supporting them in the region. (The Community Land Trust presentation is at Appendix B)
- 7.2 The Programme Manager advised that one of the benefits of Community Land Trusts was that they generally worked with smaller business and used local builders to complete projects which supported job growth in the area.
- 7.3 Community Land Trusts were community led and could reflect what the local community felt it required from a development. However, there did need to be more work done to get larger developers involved in Community Land Trust projects.
- 7.4 In response to a question about how Community Land Trusts could generate income especially in consideration of the loans that were required to support the projects; the officer advised that any loans would be paid back through the rental incomes and it was predicted that within 10-15 years the loans would be repaid and the income would then become a reliable income stream to be reinvested into the community. There would also be an element of open market housing within each development which would also contribute to the income streams.
- 7.5 In response to a question about neighbourhood plans the officer advised that while the Combined Authority do not get involved with neighbourhood plans that there have been examples where a neighbourhood plan could be a catalyst for new housing groups to come forward.
- 7.6 The Chair raised the point that although Community Land Trust should reflect the local communities needs that not all examples of the projects had had entirely positive responses from local people.

7.7 The Committee thanked the Programme Manager for her informative presentation.

8. Digital Connectivity Update

8.1 The Committee received the report on Digital Connectivity Infrastructure which provided an update to members on the Digital Connectivity Programme run by Cambridgeshire County Council.

8.2 In response to a question around Public Access WIFI in Fenland the officer advised that the public access wifi had been determined to be the optimum solution as it utilised the CCTV network and brought in connectivity to the internet through the county council. Roll out of this solution had to be signed off by the relevant district council and there were ongoing discussions with Fenland District Council.

8.3 WIFI in homes was delivered through Broadband providers and one of the key workstreams was to ensure that people have a choice around their provider. The Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme enables people in rural areas to get better access. There is also the roll out of the Superfast Broadband programme which focuses on the infrastructure elements.

There was a roll out of public access wifi to 40 rural village halls and the team were seeking further funding from government to expand on this.

There is further advice on the Connecting Cambridge website to help people upgrade and also advises on when updated infrastructure may be available and what the options are available.

8.4 In response to a question around wifi in schools and the impact that Covid 19 has had in this area the officer advised that what Covid 19 had highlighted was that having a good internet connection at the schools was not enough; families and children needed it in their homes. Laptops with 4G routers were distributed but not nearly enough for those who needed it. There was ongoing work with social housing providers to ensure that digital infrastructure was made available to everyone. Covid 19 had highlighted how many people are excluded from a good internet connection.

8.5 In response to a question around an individual's ability to solve their own connectivity if they do not fall within an area due to get an upgrade the officer advised there were websites which would advise on best broadband connectivity, however it was a complex matter that was reliant on how the market was responding and was also impacted by an individual's home set up.

The officer agreed that they would liaise with DCMS and research other areas to understand if there was a way that people could be supported to opt for alternative solutions if the mainstream commercial roll out was not available to them.

8.6 In response to a question about the full fibre coverage and the targets due to be revised; the officer advised that the teams original target was 30% by 2030 and they were already at 23% coverage so a more stretched target was required. The team were waiting to hear from government with the national revised targets but as this wasn't likely to happen soon they would create their own revised target.

- 8.7 In response to a question about rogue Openreach teams which were installing without properly notifying the District Council as planning authority the officer advised that they were aware of the issue and it was being investigated.
- 8.8 The Committee thanked the officer for attending the meeting and answering the members' questions.

9. CAM Metro Task and Finish Group Update

- 9.1 The Committee received the report which provided an update from the Cam Task and Finish group's last meeting.
- 9.2 Due to the resignation of one the members the committee were asked to volunteer new members to join the working group.
- 9.3 Cllr Grenville Chamberlain and Cllr Mike Davey volunteered to join the group and the committee AGREED their membership.
- 9.4 The terms of reference for the Task and Finish group states that the Task and Finish group can elect its own Chair; the members agreed they would hold a meeting of the Task and Finish group as soon as possible to elect a new Chair to lead the group and would update the committee of the outcome at the next meeting.

10. Combined Authority Forward Plan

- 10.1 The Chair advised that there was a meeting due to be held next week between herself and the Lead Members for the Executive Committees and Business Board to discuss questions to be put forward.
- 10.2 The Committee noted the forward Plan.

11. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

- 11.1 The Work Programme was received and noted.

It was **agreed** that:

- i) To move the Director for Delivery and Strategy to February 2021.
- ii) To have a report on the CAM SPV Scrutiny options brought to November's meeting.
- iii) The Bus Review Task and Finish Group should have a meeting prior to their report coming to the Committee in February and that this should align with the report going to the CA Board.

The Committee wanted to put on record their sincere thanks to Cllr Kevin Price and his hard work done whilst a member of the Committee and in particular for his work involving the CAM Task and Finish Group.

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

- 12.1 The next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is Monday, 23 November 2020 at 11.00 a.m. This will be a virtual meeting via the Zoom platform.

The meeting closed at 13.07pm.