

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: 28 October 2019

Time: 11am

Location: Peterborough City Council

Present:

Cllr Andy Coles
Cllr Ed Murphy
Cllr Alex Miscandlon
Cllr Anne Hay
Cllr Patricia Jordan
Cllr Doug Dew
Cllr Grenville Chamberlain
Cllr Peter Fane
Cllr Lorna Dupre
Cllr Alan Sharp
Cllr Kevin Price

Peterborough City Council
Peterborough City Council
Fenland District Council
Fenland District Council
Huntingdonshire District Council
Huntingdonshire District Council
South Cambs District Council
South Cambs District Council
East Cambs District Council
East Cambs District Council
Cambridge City Council

Officers:

John Hill
Dermot Pearson
Katarina O'Dell

Chief Executive
Interim Monitoring Officer
Interim Scrutiny Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies received from: Cllr Connor, Cllr Scutt, Cllr Gehring.
Cllr Fane substituted for Cllr Heylings.

2. Declaration of Interest

None.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 23 September 2019 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4. Public Questions

The Chair confirmed that there had been no questions received from members of the public.

The responses to the questions asked on behalf of the Committee at the Combined Authority Board meeting on 25 September 2019 were noted.

5. Mayor of the Combined Authority

The Mayor for the Combined Authority was welcomed to the Overview and Scrutiny meeting.

In response to a question about the progress of the Mayor's transport plans, the Mayor explained that a survey conducted to look at whether the Metro in Peterborough was feasible, came back as positive. The Mayor noted he had been working hard to find a way to get the Metro beyond the South of Cambridgeshire and noted that he had positive conversations with Homes England and Urban & Civic to explore options of bringing the Metro from St Ives to Alconbury.

The Mayor further explained that he was wishing, through the Combined Authority, to create a better bus service and had been working since the initial Bus Review to improve relationships between the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire's major player – Stagecoach. The Mayor explained the Combined Authority had already seen a positive trial at Addenbrooke's Hospital for a reduced bus rate for NHS staff, and Stagecoach agreed to move that trial to other areas.

Regarding a question about a Metro service in Fenland, the Mayor explained that the extension could only happen through a conversation with Fenland District Council on opportunities. The Mayor confirmed that around £9m was already being spent on stations in Fenland, that he was lobbying heavily to get an improved shuttle from Peterborough to Cambridge and assured that Fenland was not being forgotten.

Responding to a question on whether the Combined Authority would be declaring a Climate Emergency, the Mayor confirmed the Combined Authority would not be declaring a Climate Change Emergency; but that there would be findings presented at the Combined Authority Board of the Independent Environmental Review which would give a clear indication of what best way forward would be to ensure we protect our county in the future and that the right decisions are made.

In a response to a further question regarding the carbon neutral growth, the Mayor noted that policies put forward by the Combined Authority would allow to create carbon neutral growth and further stressed that the plans that he and the Combined Authority advocated, were a significant way forward in creating a new environmental standard not only for Cambridgeshire but for the UK as well.

In response to a question about the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the Mayor acknowledged that the housing solution in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough was not a "one size fits all" solution and that the Combined Authority needed to create a solution to best fit the entirety of the area. The Mayor further explained that traditional ways of developing homes, through Market and Social Housing Associations, had not provided the housing necessary to prevent the housing crisis in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The Mayor further stressed that the Combined Authority needed to create other ways possible to deliver the housing we require and that the Combined Authority was leading the way in trying to bring new models into the market.

Responding to questions on Community Land Trusts (CLTs), the Mayor explained that the Combined Authority would not only be delivering Community Land Trust homes, but also Housing Association homes. The Mayor further stressed that the Combined Authority needed to continue to challenge the market.

In response to a question about the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's (MHCLG) view of the 60/40 split that is in operation, the Mayor confirmed that the Minister was impressed by the scheme and plans and MHCLG seemed to be very supportive of what the Combined Authority was trying to achieve.

In regard to further questions on details of the two East Cambridgeshire loans or grants that are being looked at by MHCLG and the supposed regulation of Community Land Trusts by the Financial Conduct Authority, the Mayor said he would find out the details and forward the information to the Chair.

Regarding the progress with business services and support in relation to Brexit and the role of recently appointed V4 Services Ltd, the Mayor explained that the Government had given necessary finance to the Combined Authority undertake plans for Brexit and V4 Services Ltd Services had been appointed to work alongside businesses.

Responding to a question on the status of Thomas Cook's former employees, the Mayor informed Members of a meeting he had with Thomas Cook recently and the quick action of the Combined Authority by holding a jobs' fair with over 110 companies.

In response to a question on the review of the departure of the former Chief Executive Officer and its outcome, the Mayor explained he was not aware whether this had been completed but that he would provide his response to the Chair.

The Chair thanked the Mayor for attending the meeting.

6. Update from the Task and Finish Group

As the Chair of the Task & Finish Group, Cllr Price updated Members on the last CAM Metro Task & Finish Group meeting that took place on 11 September 2019 at Cambridgeshire County Council. He noted that both officers who attended the meeting were new in their roles but seemed well prepared.

At the meeting the Group discussed several issues, including:

- The sequencing of the decision-making as the scheme proceeds from Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to Outline Business Case (OBC),
- The role of the Partnership Board and how stakeholders would be selected
- The co-ordination of the CAM Metro project with the Transport Strategy and with other transport issues, including the Bus Review
- Financial viability of the project and how this would be addressed in the OBC
- How the unique circumstances of a mass transit system which extends into rural areas rather than operating within a metropolitan area would be dealt with in the OBC

At the Group meeting it was agreed that engineers and experts from the technology industry would be invited to the next meeting.

Cllr Price also noted that the Group had been waiting for the Task & Finish Group Bus Review to meet, as many themes would be common and he would, therefore, be looking to meet with the Chair of that Task & Finish Group.

Cllr Fane noted that in maps by the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP), different companies were delivering different parts of the scheme and asked whether the Task & Finish group could look at integrating GCP routes and Combined Authority proposals.

Cllr Murphy thanked Cllr Price for the work that Task & Finish Group has been doing. He stressed that this was the right use of the scrutiny role, i.e. to scrutinise at early stages to avoid abortive expenditure and that, hopefully, the Bus Review Task & Finish Group would be able to do the same. Cllr Murphy also welcomed the idea of inviting experts in order to have a constructive conversation.

Cllr Dew noted it would be more productive to challenge engineers and those engaged by the Combined Authority and scrutinise their work.

Cllr Miscandlon stressed that anything was possible, but that it was a question of the cost rather than possibilities, as anything could be done but we should be asking at what cost.

Cllr Price noted that there were outstanding actions and responses to questions to officers from the Group meeting. He further noted that the Group is awaiting the gap analysis from Jacobs on the Strategic Outline Business Case, as well as a list of names of those appointed to CAM Metro sub-committees.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the update from the Chair of the Task & Finish Group for the CAM Metro be noted.
- b) That the outstanding actions, as well as responses to questions, would be followed up with officers and provided to the Chair of the CAM Metro Task & Finish Group.

7. Governance (decision-making) Review

The Interim Monitoring Officer presented the report and outlined key proposed solutions to issues raised at the O&S Committee meeting in September.

Regarding the way that Members can track what is happening at various Committees, it was explained that the Combined Authority monthly published its Forward Plan, which included key and non-key decisions, along with allocating where decisions would be made. In addition to that it was noted that when the CA Board and Executive Committees agendas and papers were published it would be ensured that O&S Committee Members are notified.

At September O&S Committee meeting, a concern was raised about the way of working and timing of meetings. The Interim Monitoring Officer explained that under new arrangements, the O&S Committee would meet every second month and that fallow months would free up time for more strategic work.

In regard to ways to scrutinise effectively, a suggestion was to invite Chairs of Executive Committees to O&S Committee meetings, where there would be an opportunity to identify lines of inquiry.

Given the small time window between the publication of the CA Board agenda and O&S Committee meeting, the Interim Monitoring Officer recommended having lead Members for each Executive Committee (politically balanced and geographically spread to ensure a balanced view), who would look at agendas and reports and, liaising with the Chair, explore

potential questions for O&S Committee to raise. When questions would not be possible to be asked face-to-face, O&S Committee might have to opt for written questions to Executive Committees.

The Chair asked for Members' views on the concept of inviting Executive Committees' Chairs, appointing lead Members and the proposed way of identifying questions.

Cllr Price welcomed the idea of lead Members, as many Members are in various roles in Constituent Councils and struggle with the work load. Lead Members identifying potential questions would, therefore, be efficient.

Cllr Miscandlon's view was that the suggested process is too lengthy. He explained that the aim was to use a very limited time between publication and Committee meeting and a two-stage process of the lead Member formulating questions and liaising with the Chair, would be efficient. Cllr Murphy agreed with this view and added that lead Members ought to find an officer in the Combined Authority to work and regularly communicate with.

In response, the Chair explained that Members would often have early warning as items would be on the CA Forward Plan and these lead Members would in-between meetings be forming a relationship with relevant officer(s).

Cllr Dew suggested that Committee Members are at any time welcome to contribute to ideas for questions to Chairs of Executive Committees by contacting (e.g. by email) the lead Member.

Councillors volunteered to be lead Members as below:

Cllr Coles – Skills Executive Committee lead Member, Cllr Miscandlon to shadow Cllr Coles
Cllr Murphy – Housing and Communities Executive Committee lead Member
Cllr Sharp – Transport and Infrastructure Executive Committee lead Member

RESOLVED:

- a) That the recommendations in the Governance Review Report be accepted, with the number of lead Members for each Executive Committee be reduced to one, instead of two.
- b) That the Committee would invite the Chairs of the Executive Committees to attend meetings of the Committee on a rotation basis.
- c) That the lead Members for Executive Committees are to be: Cllr Coles – Skills Executive Committee, shadowed by Cllr Miscandlon; Cllr Murphy – Housing and Communities Executive Committee; Cllr Sharp – Transport and Infrastructure Executive Committee.

8. Review of Combined Authority Board Agenda

The Committee reviewed the agenda for the Combined Authority Board meeting on Wednesday 30 October 2019 and identified questions to the Board as below:

2.1 Budget Monitor Update

Q: In light of the Budget Monitoring Report indicating that a lot of projects are slipping, what are the reasons for this?

3.1 100k Homes and Community Land Trusts (CLTs)

Q: With only 935 Community Land Trust homes built so far in the whole country and the 56 affordable homes funded through the £40m revolving fund, is too much emphasis being put on Community Land Trusts rather than the more tried and tested use of housing associations, when there is a crisis for affordable housing in parts of the Combined Authority area?

How does the Combined Authority intend to encourage the Constituent Councils to promote CLTs?

Transport Plan

Q: What funding options are being looked at as part of the Outline Business Case for the CAM Metro?

Transport levy

Q: Given the financial difficulties both the County Council and the Peterborough City Council have been facing, please can you clarify whether transport levy funding passed back to those councils is ringfenced for transport functions?

Employment and departure of the former CEO and CFO

Q: Audit and Governance Committee had been asked to carry out a review of the employment and dismissal procedures relating to the departures of the former Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer. Can there be a confirmation of what progress has been made or if this has now been completed?

Climate Emergency

Q: Does the Combined Authority intend to declare a Climate Emergency?

RESOLVED:

- a) That the CA Board agenda be noted.
- b) That the questions be submitted to the Combined Authority Board at its meeting on 30 October 2019.

9. Combined Authority Forward Plan

The Committee considered the Combined Authority Forward Plan.

The Chair identified the following items for the Committee's consideration:

7 November – Transport Bus Review

11 November – Budget

9 January – Transport Plan

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Combined Authority Forward Plan be noted.
- b) That the Transport and Infrastructure Executive Committee Chair and lead officer be invited to the Committee meeting in December.

- c) That the Budget Item be allocated as a new Standing Item for the next three Committee meetings.

10. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Committee received the report which outlined the Work Programme for the Committee for the municipal year 2019/20.

The Committee asked for the following items to be added to the Work Programme:

- i) Budget (November, December and January)
- ii) Transport – Chair and officer to attend the Committee meeting in November
- iii) Housing (November)
- iv) Programme Development – Cohesion issues and tackling inequality
- v) Climate Change

RESOLVED:

That additional items identified be added to the Committee Work Programme.

11. Date and Location of the next Committee meeting:

The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be held on 25 November 2019 at 11:00am, at Huntingdonshire District Council with a pre-meeting at 10am

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm.