



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

# **CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## **DRAFT MINUTES**

**Date: Monday, 23 August 2021**

**Time: 11:00**

**Location: The Engine Room, Sand Martin House, Bittern Way, Peterborough, PE2 8TY**

### **Present:**

Cllr D Dew	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr S Corney	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 Goldsack	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr A Coles	Peterborough City Council
Cllr S Nawaz	Peterborough City Council
Cllr A Miscandlon	Fenland District Council
Cllr A Hay	Fenland District Council
Cllr P Fane	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr A Van de Weyer	South Cambridgeshire District Council

### **Officers:**

Robert Parkin	Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer, Combined Authority
Robert Fox	Governance Officer, Combined Authority
Saffron Bamforth	Governance Assistant, Combined Authority

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr J. Rippeth substituted by Cllr P. Fane; and from Cllr M. Atkins for whom no substitute was present.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

2.1 No declarations of interest were made.

### **3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 26 July 2021 were agreed as an accurate record

#### 4. Public Questions

4.1 There were no public questions.

#### 5. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Arrangements

5.1 Robert Fox introduced the report. Members noted the update and the following points were discussed:

- Other Combined Authorities also seem to have issues related to scrutiny
- By focusing away from the agenda of the Combined Authority decisions made following publication of general exception notices could potentially lack scrutiny; and the Committee should have the right to ask questions of officers if there are a surfeit of general exception notices
- The suggestion to cease scrutinising Mayoral decisions is not in accordance with the Committee's legislative rights
- The recommendations in the report are there for the Committee to consider, and it is up to the Committee whether to implement them or not.

5.2 The Committee **agreed** that the milestones on new approaches to sharing information with scrutiny members be amended from September 2021 to December 2021 to enable greater clarity around lead members and rapporteurs.

5.3 The Committee **agreed** that the Chair and Vice-Chair work with officers to find a suitable way forward for dealing with general exception notices.

5.4 The Committee **agreed** it would wish to put its own commentary on the report of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny review being presented to the Combined Authority Board in September 2021.

5.5 The Committee **agreed** to hold an informal workshop in the autumn on the role of scrutiny relating to the Combined Authority trading companies.

#### 6. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

6.1 Robert Fox introduced the report and referenced the meeting held between the Chair and Vice-Chair and the Mayor in early August which had the purpose of getting a sense of the Mayor's emerging priorities. The Mayor had highlighted four themes at that meeting and it was requested the Committee consider these when considering the work programme. These themes were:

- Climate change
- Public health
- Financial fairness in the distribution of funds across the Combined Authority area
- The measure of compassion in the Mayor's policies

Whilst some indication of the Mayor's emerging priorities was welcomed the discussion around the report provided, and the work programme and prioritisation led to the following points being raised:

6.2

- More clarity is required around the Mayor's emerging priorities, as well as some further information around each shared with the Chair and Vice-Chair
- Further information on the Local Transport Plan would be welcomed as a report is being taken to the September Combined Authority Board
- The delivery methods for each of the priorities needs to be known
- The Committee would wish to know the metrics for measuring compassion

6.3 It was suggested the Mayor be approached to provide the Committee with an explanatory paragraph on each of the four themes he had highlighted in his meeting with the Chair and Vice-Chair; and consideration of his response be included in the work programme item at the next meeting of the Committee. The Chair **agreed** to contact the Mayor's office to request this.

6.4 The Chair stated there is a remit for the Mayor to consider climate change and the final recommendations from the Independent Commission on Climate Change are to be considered by the Combined Authority Board in November 2021. The Committee **agreed** it would need to consider the climate contribution of the Combined Authority.

6.5 The first Mayoral Question Time scheduled for November 2021 might be an opportune time to raise the Public Service Reform Commission it was **agreed**.

6.6 It was **agreed** that whilst more information on the Mayor's priorities is awaited the Committee should move forward with its own agenda setting. With this in mind the Committee was reminded it is in control of its own agenda and the items which come forward. Therefore, the following items were proposed for future Committee meetings:

- Affordable housing
- The active travel agenda
- The devolution deal
- The CAM (particularly in relation to the financial implications of the cessation of the programme)
- E-scooters

6.7 It was **agreed** that the theme for the Committee meeting in September 2021 be transport. As Chair of the Transport & Infrastructure Committee the Mayor should be invited to attend the meeting, in that capacity, to answer questions. The key areas the Committee **agreed** should be considered to enable it to reflect on what it should focus on moving forward are:

- Active travel
- The Local Transport Plan
- The key route network
- Buses and Railways
- E-scooters
- Road changes
- CAM

6.8 As interim lead member for Transport Cllr Baigent presented the Committee with a paper highlighting all the transport items in the Combined Authority Forward Plan

between September 2021 - March 2022 and invited any members of the Committee to contact him on any of these items.

6.9 It was **agreed** that the members of the Committee leading on any transport related areas: Cllr's Baigent, Davey and Hay could consider pertinent questions for the next meeting. The Chair requested Committee members to provide the lead members with any questions 10 days prior to the meeting on 27 September and these in turn can be provided to the Mayor and officers in advance of the meeting.

6.10 In relation to future work programme items Robert Fox stated the next meeting of the Committee would receive a template to be used to potentially scope future items to consider the key lines of enquiry; resources required; any legal, financial or equalities issues; and success indicators. An item on affordable housing will be used as the prototype for this document prior to it being brought to the Committee.

## 7. Mayor's Question Time – Format Proposals

7.1 The Committee had been provided with the proposed format for the Mayor's Question Time session scheduled for November 2021.

7.2 Members raised the following points in discussion:

- The proposed format does not provide enough time for open dialogue as it only allows one follow-up question per pre-planned question. The committee raised a concern as to whether this would prevent further dialogue within the session
- The proposed frequency of the Mayoral Question Time in Overview and Scrutiny meetings is currently once a year, the members were of unanimous opinion that this is not sufficient and would recommend meeting four times a year as per the expectation of the previous Mayor
- There would be benefits to having structure to the question time, focused themes for each of the four sessions would be an efficient way of adding structure
- There should be further explanation around the differences between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Mayor's Question Time and the public Mayor's Question Time proposed

7.3 Members **agreed** to recommend a non-time limited quarterly meeting, allowing further follow up questions to create more of an open discussion, and a possible theme of each Question Time session.

## 8. Combined Authority Board Agenda

8.1 The Chair stated she was concerned that an item on the Combined Authority Board agenda was on the option to dispose of a building to an outside body or acquire the freehold for the use of the Combined Authority under a general exception notice. It was **agreed** to put a general question to the Combined Authority Board, thus:

The Committee is concerned that three of the four substantive items on the agenda for the Board have been placed on the agenda by way of general

exception notice. What plans does the CA have to ensure that adequate notice is given for significant decisions in future?

8.2 It was **agreed** that the Committee put the following questions to the Combined Authority Board in relation to agenda item 2.4:

1. Does the Combined Authority have an accommodation strategy; and if not, why not and what plans are there to develop one? If it does have an accommodation strategy how does the suggestion of purchasing a freehold for a premises at Alconbury align with this strategy?
2. The Combined Authority surrendered the lease on the previous accommodation at Alconbury due to public transport access. Therefore, what has happened in the interim to change that view?
3. What analysis has been done to suggest Alconbury is a suitable venue for the Combined Authority?
4. What are the overall costs for surrendering the lease of the previous premises at Alconbury?

## **9. Combined Authority Forward Plan**

9.1 The Forward Plan was noted.

## **10. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

10.1 The next meeting of the Committee would be on Monday, 27 September 2021 at 11:00. There would be a pre-meeting for members only at 10:00. The venue for the meeting is Fenland District Council.

10.2 The Committee agreed that the reserve date set aside for Monday, 25 October 2021 would be utilised as a public meeting.

10.3 There was some discussion about future meeting venues and the proximity of these for public transport. There was consensus within the Committee that the meetings alternate venue across the Combined Authority area, but public transport accessibility would be a consideration.

10.4 Officers were tasked with finding suitable venues across the area for the remainder of the municipal year.

The meeting closed at 12:50.