



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

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

## **DRAFT MINUTES**

**Date:** Wednesday, 29 July 2020

**Time:** 11.00 a.m.

**Location:** Virtual Meeting via the Zoom Platform

### **Present:**

Cllr S Corney	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr L Dupre (Chair)	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr A Sharp	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr D Summerbell	Cambridge City Council
Cllr J Scutt	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr A Coles	Peterborough City Council
Cllr E Murphy	Peterborough City Council
Cllr D Mason	Fenland District Council
Cllr P Fane	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr G Chamberlain	South Cambridgeshire District Council

### **Officers:**

Robert Parkin	Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer, Combined Authority
Susan Hall	Governance Assistant, Combined Authority
Kim Cooke	Project Lead for University of Peterborough, Combined Authority
John T Hill	Director of Business and Skills, Combined Authority
Robert Fox	Scrutiny Officer, Combined Authority (Minute taker)

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

- 1.1 Apologies were received from: Cllr P Heylings (substituted by Cllr P Fane); Cllr M Gehring (substituted by Cllr D Summerbell); and Cllr K Price (Cambridge City Council).

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

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

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

- 3.1 Cllr Alex Miscandlon was not in attendance at the meeting.

With the above amendment the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

### **4. Public Questions**

- 4.1 There were no public questions.

### **5. The Mayor of the Combined Authority**

- 5.1 Mayor James Palmer was in attendance and highlighted the Combined Authority had carried on working at the level expected despite the Covid-19 pandemic. The Mayor also highlighted Soham Railway Station had received planning permission and would be open at the end of 2021. stated the Combined Authority. Other work highlighted included the University of Peterborough's Higher Education academic partner was to be Anglia Ruskin University and building work would commence on-site in October; through the intervention of the Combined Authority Wisbech Rail will be transformational for the Fens; and £2.9million of the first tranche of monies from the government to develop cycleways and pathways has been delivered.

- 5.2 The Chair informed the Mayor that questions would be in two parts. Firstly questions related to the correspondence between him and the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), recently reported in the local press; and secondly open questions.

#### MHCLG/Mayoral correspondence

- 5.3 Prior to the questions the Mayor informed the Committee that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is the only Combined Authority that has a separate City Deal (Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)). All other City Deals were absorbed into the Combined Authorities. Working arrangements with the GCP are minimal; however, there was collaboration to successfully bring the former LEP into the Combined Authority. The Mayor stated the Combined Authority would be working alongside the MHCLG to rectify any issues identified.

- 5.4 A question was raised around the timescales for meeting the four conditions the Minister has brought to the Mayor's attention in the correspondence? In response the Mayor stated that one of the conditions had already been dealt with prior to receipt of the correspondence. The Mayor informed the Committee the Combined Authority is compliant with the other conditions raised in the correspondence and will be working with the MHCLG toward a mutual understanding. There is a meeting with the Minister in early August and he will be informed the conditions will all be met and that there will be full compliance.

- 5.5 In response to a question the Mayor informed the Committee that the Chief Executive is working with MHCLG Civil Servants to ensure the Combined Authority is transparent and compliant is delivering all programmes. The Mayor reminded the Committee that the Combined Authority was not confirmed until May

2017 and has kept to its promise of being a lean authority with a lean staffing budget. He acknowledged 'teething problems' which all new organisations face.

- 5.6 The Mayor stated he was surprised the correspondence had referenced an error in the Combined Authority Constitution. However, this had now been amended – and was a minor error. The Mayor stated the Minister had been written to separately on this specific issue.
- 5.7 Following on from this referenced error the Mayor was asked whether the Combined Authority could list the errors? In response the Mayor stated there was just a single error of fact related to The Mayor's statutory authority to appoint staff. The Committee would be informed when the Combined Authority receives further information on any referenced errors.
- 5.8 In response to a question on the CPCA Employment Committee the Mayor confirmed one appointment had not gone through the Committee. All Statutory and Chief Officer appointments are appointed through the Employment Committee.
- 5.9 The Mayor stated that protocols on the appointment of political assistants reflects that proposed by the MHCLG. On all occasions the Combined Authority takes legal advice on the decisions made and is content to abide by all MHCLG protocols. In relation to the legal advice received the Mayor stated the Monitoring Officer would advise if it could be made available to the Committee.
- 5.10 A request to see the letter addressed to the co-Chief Executives on the differing views related to start on-site dates of affordable housing was raised. The Mayor stated the letter was one of a series on the affordable housing programme – the last of which was dated 11 June. The Chief Executive would inform the MHCLG that the letters will be disclosed to the Committee, and then release the correspondence to ensure transparency. The Chair requested this correspondence be released to the Committee as soon as possible. Separately, the Mayor stated the Combined Authority is working with constituent authorities to confirm on-site dates.
- 5.11 The Mayor informed the Committee that in excess of 1,600 affordable homes are already funded so the Combined Authority is on-track to deliver the houses to the timescale it was working to prior to the MHCLG amending the delivery date to March 2021. The Combined Authority is progressing well on all schemes for delivery by March 2022.
- 5.12 A question was raised regarding the Lead Member for Finance abstaining on a vote at Combined Authority Board related to the Covid-19 Capital Grant. The Mayor explained there had been a clerical error on the paper and the Lead Member did not have access to the amended report. The Lead Member was supportive of the action but abstained due to the clerical error.
- 5.13 In response to a question in the MHCLG correspondence related to the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive by May 2021 the Mayor responded that this had always been the intention. The Mayor paid tribute to the co-Chief Executives stating they have been exceptional in bringing forward a staffing structure to deliver major projects and significant savings despite having the leanest staffing structure amongst all Combined Authorities.

- 5.14 Regarding disagreements between the Combined Authority and the GCP the Mayor stated he was confused as to why the Minister was requesting a letter outlining the next steps on finding compromise as delivery is being hindered as this had already been provided. The Mayor stated he would release this correspondence to the Committee.
- 5.15 The Mayor was asked what he is doing to meet the Minister's request for unity of ambition and shared purpose with the GCP? In response the Mayor stated he had been trying for three years to achieve this – but it is difficult to agree a common purpose with an organisation that has no interest in joint-working arrangements. He stated a joined-up transport policy is essential so as not to perpetuate previous failures, and that there is too much governance on transport in Cambridgeshire, so common ground has to be found otherwise there will be parts of the county that will be disconnected. The absorption of the GCP into the Combined Authority would enable a single vision. The GCP is not a democratically elected body and is controlled by Civil Servants and this is a significant issue. On the other hand, the Mayor has to uphold the manifesto on which they are elected. The Mayor stated he intends to find a resolution as it is difficult to adhere to manifesto pledges if there is an organisation not interested in solving transport issues.
- 5.16 The Mayor stated a letter is being sent to the Minister following the Leader's Strategy Group meeting on 29 July and a copy of this letter will be provided to the Committee.
- 5.17 A question was raised related to recruitment processes not following normal procedures and Ministerial concern around this. The Mayor stated the position referred to was in a statutory post not a political advisory role. The Monitoring Officer confirmed advice had been taken from leading Counsel and the Combined Authority is working to accommodate changes into the process. The Monitoring Officer stated political advisory roles are not Chief Officer positions so would not go through the Employment Committee. The MHCLG correspondence had requested whether full process was followed, and the Combined Authority is working to ensure protocols are met.
- 5.18 A question was asked as to why two constituent authority Leaders had not signed the response to the Minister. The Mayor stated the questions should be directed to the two Leaders in question.

#### Open Questions

- 5.19 A question on contingency plans for the CAM Metro if tunnelling plans do not materialise was raised. In response the Mayor stated there is a clear steer to develop the CAM Metro and it is completely viable and he is more confident than ever that the project will be delivered to timescale. The Cambridge section has two bus routes commencing in September and there is liaison with the County Council to bring-forward bus-lanes at the pinch-points that have been suggested by local Members.
- 5.20 Following a further question on the CAM Metro the Mayor stated the project is the largest ever outside of London. The Combined Authority has consulted with teams that have developed all major infrastructure projects throughout the world. The Combined Authority Board meeting on 5 August will make a decision which will enable the opportunity to raise funds either through government intervention or private finance to deliver the scheme. A full Business Case will be developed to gain the necessary finance to deliver the project.

- 5.21 In relation to a question on the CAM Delivery Company the Mayor stated expert advice has been sought and the establishment of the Delivery Company is a wise spend of money to deliver the world leading technology.
- 5.22 £2.9million of government funding has been received for pathways, bridleways and cycle routes and a question was asked as to who proposes the routes to be upgraded or considered for schemes? In response the Mayor stated the monies come to the Combined Authority and the two Highways Authorities build the schemes. The Mayor stated the government will be approached for more funds as there are a wide-ranging number of schemes across the Combined Authority area.
- 5.23 The Mayor was congratulated by a Member for the implementation of the bus solutions for Cambourne to destinations residents had requested. In relation to the timeframe on an alternative route for longer-term transport from Cambourne to Cambridge the Mayor stated the timetable is 2023-2029 as far as construction is concerned. There will be significantly less impact on the environment during construction and that he will try and work alongside the GCP to find further solutions.
- 5.24 Following a question on the integrated transport system between St. Ives and Haverhill the Mayor confirmed that cross-county boundary collaboration would assist in delivering better public transport solutions.
- 5.25 It was **AGREED:**

The Monitoring Officer would provide legal advice as to whether the following could be made available to the Committee:

- i) The legal advice, including that from James Goudie QC, behind the appointment of a political assistant and subsequent Chief of Staff;
- ii) The letter from MHCLG to the Co-Chief Executives in June 'outlining our differing view on the total additional starts on site delivered to date and confirming that further evidence of progress would be required before the Department could make further funding available';
- iii) The letter being written to The Minister of State at the MHCLG at the end of July/early August.

The Mayor was thanked by the Chair for his presence at the meeting and answering all questions posed to him.

## **6. University of Peterborough**

- 6.1 Kim Cooke, Project Lead for University of Peterborough and John T. Hill, Director of Business and Skills introduced the report and provided the Committee with a PowerPoint presentation outlining the latest situation regarding the University.
- 6.2 Anglia Ruskin University has recently been confirmed as the academic delivery partner for Phase I of the University. Anglia Ruskin already has presence in the city with 500 Nursing students.

- 6.3 The first phase of building will commence in October 2020. This will be a 5.300m<sup>2</sup> development over three-stories and include a considerable amount of natural light. A ten-year rent-free agreement has been negotiated for the building.
- 6.4 Four faculties will deliver the first phase of academic delivery. These are: Business, Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Professional Services; Agritech; Creative and Digital Arts and Sciences; and Health and Social Care. Other curriculum areas will be added as future phases are developed.
- 6.5 Following a question it was confirmed the university delivery model contains a significant proportion of vocational degrees and degree apprenticeships and that Anglia Ruskin University is the largest provider of these programmes in the country.
- 6.6 Kim Cooke and John T. Hill were thanked, by the Chair, for the report and presentation and the positive approach was commended.

## **7. Lead Member Appointment to the Business Board**

- 7.1 At the last meeting of the Committee it was agreed to appoint a Lead Member to shadow the Business Board. Following the circulation of the Lead Member role description there had been two initial expressions of interest.
- 7.2 Subsequently one of the expressions of interest was withdrawn, Therefore, it was
- AGREED:**
- 7.3 Cllr Ed Murphy would be the Lead Member to shadow the Business Board.
- 7.4 Cllr Jocelynne Scutt would replace Cllr Murphy as the Lead Member for Housing on the Committee.

## **8. Combined Authority Board Agenda for the Meeting on Wednesday, 5 August 2020**

- 8.1 The questions the Committee should ask the Combined Authority Board were agreed as:
- **Item 2.1 Budget Monitor Update:** Building upon cycle schemes he has funded recently is the mayor able to consider reviewing budgets and move funding towards promoting safe walking and particularly cycling?
  - **Item 3.1 £100m Affordable Housing Programme Proposed Variations to Schemes that form investments from the £40m revolving fund:** The report to the Board states that “The lost interest by granting interest free periods will not impact on other areas of the Combined Authority. i.e. the revenue budget does not rely on these funds, but as mentioned earlier in the paper, any interest earned on these loans would be recycled and re-invested into new housing projects. i.e. the loss of interest just impacts on future funds available to support the £100m affordable housing

programme.” What—in financial and housing unit terms—is the opportunity cost of this lost interest?

- **Item 3.2 Proposal for a Corporate Vehicle to bring forward the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro (CAM):** The report to the Board states that “CAM will potentially increase social mobility to Peterborough and the Fens, therefore ‘levelling up’ the region”. Which parts of the Fens will have access to CAM, and when?
- **Item 3.3 A10 Junctions and Dualling:** The report to the Board states that " there was a spread of opinion about the options". Will the Combined Authority publish the public feedback received in response to the virtual public exhibition?
- **Item 3.5 Market Town Masterplans:** A frequent comment during the development of the Market Town Masterplans was that local councillors and communities had not been consulted in their development, or their comments had been ignored. As funds are about to be allocated to the Market Towns to implement the Masterplans, what flexibility will be shown in granting funds to Market Towns for local priorities which are not in the Masterplans created for them, but which have greater local support and in some cases, greater feasibility?
- **Item 5.2 Integrated Economic, Business and Skills Insight Programme:** How is the Combined Authority balancing the need for urgent action this summer and autumn to address the short-term implications of COVID-19 on business and the economy, with the wish to redesign its medium-term Covid-19 recovery focus?

## 9. Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

9.1 The work programme was noted.

## 10. Lead Member Questions to Executive Committees

10.1 Cllr Andy Coles confirmed the answers to the questions he provided the Skills Committee had been answered, including an answer to a question that had been withdrawn from the agenda.

10.2 There were no questions to either the Housing or Transport Committees this round it was confirmed.

## 11. Combined Authority Forward Plan

11.1 The Combined Authority Forward Plan was noted.

**12. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

- 12.1 The next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee is Monday, 28 September 2020 at 11.00 a.m. This will be a virtual meeting via the Zoom platform.
- 12.2 The remaining meetings this municipal year, following the 28 September meeting, will be on:

Monday, 26 October 2020 (fallow month)  
Monday, 23 November 2020  
Monday, 14 December 2020  
Monday, 25 January 2021  
Monday, 22 February 2020 (fallow month)  
Monday, 29 March 2021  
Monday, 26 April 2021 (fallow month)

All meetings to commence at 11.00 a.m.

The meeting closed at 1.00 p.m.