



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Monday, 20 March 2023

Time: 11.00

Location: Bourges Viersen Rooms, Town Hall, Peterborough

Members Present:

Cllr L Dupre (Chair)	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr A Sharp (Vice-Chair)	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr J Neish	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr M Hassell	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr M Atkins	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr M Goldsack	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr J Gawthrop Wood	Cambridge City Council
Cllr G Harvey	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr A Coles	Peterborough City Council
Cllr A Hay	Fenland District Council

Officers:

Reena Roojam*	Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Jodie Townsend*	Governance Improvement Lead
Angela Probert*	Interim Programme Director, Transformation
Anne Gardiner	Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Joanna Morley	Interim Governance Officer

*denotes attendance via Zoom

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Miscandlon, Cllr Smith and Cllr Robertson. Cllr Gawthrop Wood attended as Cllr Robertson's substitute.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 No declarations of interest were made.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Action Log

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2023 were approved as a correct record and the Action Log was noted.

4. Public Questions

- 4.1 There were no public questions.

5. Improvement Framework

- 5.1 Angela Probert, Interim Programme Director for Transformation introduced the report which provided the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to undertake pre-scrutiny of the Improvement Highlight report going to Board on the 22 March 2023.

- 5.2 During discussion the following points were noted:

- a. Since the publication of the report Lord Kerslake, Chair of the Independent Improvement Board (IIB) had resigned from his post with immediate effect due to ill health. Julie Spence, Deputy Chair had stepped up and would take the lead until a new Chair was appointed.
- b. The purpose of the informal officer groups referenced in 3.2.3 of the report was initially to create a two-way process between CA officers and CA constituent council officers in order that information could be shared with Members. It was intended that this would include scrutiny committee members as well as those members of the thematic committees but moving forward this could be looked at so that the link with scrutiny was strengthened.
- c. External Auditors had, in their letter to the Chief Executive on 8 February 2023, recognised the pace at which the Authority had acted to get to the position they had with the Improvement Plan. The Auditors felt that it was too early to conclude whether the Improvement Plan would bring about the level of change that was required but that it was clear that a number of the building blocks had firmly been put in place.
- d. Members were disappointed that some material referenced in the report had not been circulated to the whole Committee and also that the listed background papers were not included as hyperlinks.
- e. Members queried whether the green and green/amber ratings assigned to workstreams B and C were premature given that initial completion dates had not been achieved, revised dates had not yet been reached, and two of the critical outcomes, B6 and B8, could not yet be assessed.
- f. Workstream B had been delayed because reports that were scheduled to go to the Board in January were not presented due to the length of the agenda and so were rescheduled for the March meeting.
- g. Government Guidance from the Department for Transport had been continually delayed but the Workstream C Project members had taken the decision to continue the pace of work on the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) to meet the forecasted completion date.
- h. Officers would be reporting to the Department of Housing, Levelling Up and Communities (DHLUC) on the specific key areas of focus identified by the Best Value Notice and as outlined in Paragraph 5.3 of the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the February Improvement Highlight Update to the Combined Authority Board on 22 March 2023 be considered and noted.

ACTIONS:

1. The Governance Officer to circulate to all members of the Committee the letter from Ernst Young sent to the Chief Executive in regard to the Authority's response to the Auditor's identification of a significant weakness in Value for Money arrangements.
2. The Interim Programme Director to send an update to the Committee to address the points raised in the meeting and provide more detail on the following:
 - Transport Schemes
 - IT and software requirements
 - Communications and the building of an effective public relations and influencing delivery operation.

6. Delivering the Overview and Scrutiny Function

- 6.1 Jodie Townsend, Improvement Lead introduced the report which presented Overview and Scrutiny members with an information pack to help inform the discussion on how to deliver the function moving forwards.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- a. Scrutiny Members already had enhanced access rights to information but it was suggested that an Access to Information Protocol be developed, and included in the Constitution, in order to formalise expectations.
- b. The changes outlined for the CPCA's Business Board (it's version of a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)) was consistent with the Government guidelines which expected that LEPs become more strategic bodies.
- c. Members felt that the processes around the Committee's work, including the access to information, open channels with officers, and the relationship between Scrutiny and the new thematic committees, needed to be strengthened before the Committee could agree a new structure.
- d. Members wanted to explore the different scrutiny arrangements at other Combined Authorities and what the benefits and negatives of each approach were.
- e. Greater Manchester Combined Authority had moved to a single scrutiny committee to enable them to be more flexible and responsive.
- f. Some Combined Authorities had deemed their scrutiny members to be co-opted members in order to pay them an allowance.
- g. To consult further with Members it was suggested that a workshop be held after the new Committee membership had been confirmed but before the first meeting of the new municipal year, scheduled for 19 June, in order that a recommendation for the preferred scrutiny model be put forward to that meeting.

RESOLVED:

The Committee reviewed the options put forward but resolved to defer choosing a preferred option until they had attended a workshop where more information would be provided and they could further discuss and agree the format focus and method for delivering the Overview and Scrutiny function for 2023/24 onwards.

ACTIONS:

1. The Improvement Lead to draft an Access to Information Protocol for consideration by the Committee at their next meeting.
2. The Monitoring Officer to confirm whether membership of sub-committees had to come from the existing committee membership and whether their meetings needed to be held in public.
3. The Improvement Lead and the Scrutiny officer to report on the differing scrutiny arrangements at other combined authorities and assess their pros and cons.
4. The Scrutiny Officer to circulate to the Committee the link to the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CFGs) report into the scrutiny function at Manchester Combined Authority.
5. The Scrutiny Officer to arrange a workshop to further discuss a preferred scrutiny model, having considered the arrangements at other combined authorities and their pros and cons, and reviewed the proposed Access to Information Protocol and other required process improvements. The workshop would be held after the committee membership for the forthcoming year had been confirmed but before the first meeting of the new municipal year.

7. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

- 7.1 The Chair introduced the report which presented a draft of the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2022/23 for review and comment before submission to the Combined Authority Board.

During discussion the following points were noted:

- a. A vacancy for a new Business Board Lead Member had existed since January of this year.

RESOLVED:

That the draft report be approved subject to the agreed changes set out below:

- That it be noted in the report that Cllr Dew had been the Business Board Lead member until he had stepped down from the Committee in January.

8. Combined Authority Forward Plan

- 8.1 Cllr Van de Weyer, as Lead Member for Housing, updated the Committee on the progress of the proposed Task and Finish group to review the governance and decision making in relation to the CPCA Housing Fund. Having learnt that there were internal audit reviews being conducted in this area, the decision was taken to delay the group's work to make sure the scope of work did not overlap and would be complementary where possible. The Committee had now had sight of the draft report on the Community Land Trusts (CLTs) and also the scope of the review on the grants programme. It was also noted that discussion at the Housing Committee meeting last week had initiated the review into the Housing Loans Programme which would complete the Internal Audit's review of the whole housing work. Cllr Van de Weyer suggested that it would benefit Scrutiny's work if the Committee could be consulted on the scope of this last review. A further update on progress would be given at the next meeting.

- 8.2 Cllr Atkins, as Lead Member for Climate, directed the Committee to two items being presented to the Board at their meeting on the 22 March. The first was the Greater South-East Net Zero Hub Local Energy Advice Demonstrator Projects which was seeking final approval of the Memorandum of Understanding, and the second was the Climate Change Annual Report which tracked progress against the Climate Action Strategic Plan. Cllr Atkins advised that although several actions had been launched and the Plan currently appeared on track, many were due to be completed by May/June of this year so Scrutiny would need to continue to oversee their progress.

9. Combined Authority Board Agenda

- 9.1 Members did not put forward any questions to be asked at the CA Board meeting on 22 March 2023

10. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

- 10.1 The Mayor and Chief Executive had been invited to attend the first meeting of the new municipal year to discuss how the Corporate Plan and Business Plans would be delivered. Also on the agenda would be the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the draft work programme as shown at Appendix 1 be noted.

11. Date of next meeting

Monday, 19 June 2023 at 11am.

Meeting Closed: 1.16 pm