



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Monday, 14 December 2020

Time: 11.00 a.m.

Location: Virtual Meeting via the Zoom Platform

Present:

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 J Scutt	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr A Coles	Peterborough City Council
Cllr E Murphy	Peterborough City Council
Cllr D Mason	Fenland District Council
Cllr A Hay	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
Jon Alsop	Chief Finance Officer (S73 Officer)
Robert Emery	Deputy Chief Finance Officer
Roberta Fulton	Programme Manager, Combined Authority
Anne Gardiner	Scrutiny Officer, Combined Authority
Robert Fox	Interim Scrutiny Officer, Combined Authority

Also in attendance: Mayor James Palmer

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from: Cllr S Corney
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Officer conducted the roll-call of Committee attendees.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 No declarations of interest were made.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 23rd November were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Public Questions

- 4.1 There were no public questions.

5. Mayor for the Combined Authority

- 5.1 The Mayor was attending in his role as Mayor for the Combined Authority and also as the Chair of the Transport and Infrastructure Committee.
- 5.2 The Chair welcomed the Mayor and thanked him for attending to answer the Committee's questions.
- 5.3 The Chair read through the questions received from members prior to the meeting and the responses received (Appendix A) which referred to the role of the Mayor of the Combined Authority
- 5.4 The Chair asked if the Mayor would like to expand on any of the responses and the following points were made:-

In reference to the question on the Chief Executive Officer post at One CAM Ltd the Mayor advised that there had been high level applicants for this role and they were in discussion with other applicants; the role was not being advertised again.

In reference to the question on the resignation of the Finance Portfolio Holder the Mayor stated that the finance role was a much bigger job than at the beginning of the Combined Authority. The organisation was in a good financial position – and it was sensible for the Mayor to take over the role for the remainder of the year and the organisation would look at creating a similar role in the committees to manage this portfolio in future. The Mayor wanted to thank Cllr Count for his hard work over the years managing this portfolio.

In reference to the question on the release of the £45M housing money being held back by the Minister, the Mayor advised that they were still waiting and that the delay was due to the Covid 19 Pandemic and the additional workload ministers had in Whitehall. The Mayor added that the Combined Authority was creating innovation through the housing fund so the money should be forthcoming soon.

In reference to the question on whether clarity had been received for the closing date for the £100M housing programme; the Mayor advised that the closing date was definitely 2022 and there had been an error made by civil servants in London; the issue should be rectified soon.

In reference to the question on the new role of the CAM delivery vehicle in negotiating land options for garden villages along the proposed CAM Metro network avoid conflicting with the right of local authorities to set their own Local Plans, the Mayor added that he had been trying to work with the GCP for 3.5 years and it was important to work closely together as it was the only way that the area could plan appropriately for the future.

The Mayor added that his role was strategic – to put forward options and it was clear that the area needed to accept that as more jobs were being created

especially in South Cambridgeshire then more housing was going to be required but this had to be managed appropriately to ensure that local people would stay in control of where new housing was developed.

It was a difficult path as the district councils were being constricted by local plan systems which were only a five year process and this limited the ability to put in place strategic planning for the whole area.

5.3 The Chair opened up the questioning to the rest of the Committee and the following points were discussed:-

In response to a question on the Mayor's budget; the Mayor advised that he had promised that he would run the Combined Authority for less than £1m and that for the first year of operation this was the case; the Combined Authority then took on the LEP which meant that the budget increased as the organisation grew exponentially. The staffing was then restructured in the last year and significant savings had been made.

5.4 The Chair read through the questions received from members prior to the meeting and the responses received (Appendix A) which referred to the Mayor's role as the Chair for the Transport and Infrastructure Committee

5.5 The Chair asked if the Mayor would like to expand on any of the responses and the following points were made:-

- In reference to the question about the public transport connection to Alconbury Weald which had been claimed would be in place by 2021 the Mayor advised this was a question for Urban and Civic and Homes England as the funding was coming from them.
- The Mayor advised that this project had been part of the Devolution Deal and the understanding was that the finance would come forward and work would begin, unfortunately the ambition to have a railway station at Alconbury was not supported by Network Rail and as a result an alternative solution of expanding the CAM Metro and the Guided Busway out to Alconbury was put forward but no funding had yet to come forward at this time and the Mayor asked the O&S Committee if they would consider taking this up with Urban and Civic and Homes England.
- In reference to the question about the cost of the report into the alternative C2C route and what the next steps would be the Mayor advised that it was clear that there had been a lack of proper consultation with local residents.
- The Mayor would continue to explore why this had been the case and why the options for a Northern route had not been fully considered, the Mayor would be meeting with the Chair of the Liaison Forum later that day to discuss this.
- Basic early work had been done and it was clear that the Northern route would cost more, however the long term impact for residents if the current route was pushed through could be quite negative.
- The correlation between East West rail and the Cambourne to Cambridge route hadn't been properly explored. If the route was to the north with East West Rail the growth of Cambourne would be much easier to deliver in the future whereas if changes were made to C2C in the future the costs would be huge. There was no easy solution but it was vitally important that residents views were considered.

- The Mayor advised that he would not have voted for the current C2C route and was concerned by the lack of democracy within the GCP and how little local residents views were taken into account.

In response to a question about the establishment of a Sub National Transport Body the Mayor advised that there would need to be consultation with the Combined Authority. Economic Heartland had stated that they would like to become a Sub National Transport Body but the Combined Authority had not been consulted on this yet, any decision to set up a body like this would be a discussion for the CA Board and they would need to ensure it was in the best interests for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area.

- 5.6 The Chair opened up the questioning to the rest of the Committee and the following points were discussed:-

In response to a question on the GCP CSET proposals for Park and Ride and whether the Mayor could offer any assurances that alternative options had been considered on this matter, the Mayor advised that he did have concerns about the proposals put forward as they seem to only consider Park and Ride options rather than looking at the wider public transport issues.

In response to a question on whether the Mayor could continue to push the GCP on the northern route for the C2C project the Mayor advised that it was very challenging having conflicting organisations working on transport projects. The GCP was an organisation that was controlled by the civil service without consultation with public and was about to go ahead on a project that would need to be redone in 5 years. It was taking a lot of officer time to try and manage the situation with the GCP.

In response to a question on the amount of money that had been spent on the C2C the Mayor advised that currently this was covered by in house staffing costs, as these were early stages. If an actual budget was to be allocated then this would be taken through the Transport and Infrastructure Committee.

In response to a question on Bus franchising the Mayor advised that the Combined Authority had been working closely with Bus Companies during the Covid -19 Pandemic. A Special Task force had been created and was headed up by Baroness Vere and new routes had been created, however the goal posts have changed due to the current situation. The Combined Authority were working closely with the Department for Transport.

- 5.7 The Committee thanked the Mayor for attending the Committee.

6. CPCA Budget 2021/22 and Medium-Term Financial Plan

- 6.1 The Committee received the report from the Chief Finance Officer which set out the proposed Combined Authority draft Budget for 2021/22 and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Capital Programme for the period 2021/22 to 2024/25, as approved by the Board for consultation purposes on 25th November 2020.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was specifically designated as a consultee on the Combined Authority's draft budget in the Constitution and the report gave the Committee the chance to query Finance officers regarding the budget and

agree if they wished to provide a response to the consultation as a whole Committee.

- 6.2 The Committee were informed that this was the second of three papers coming to the committee to deal with development of budget.

The consultation was underway and the communications team had been working very hard to promote the consultation with 3700 emails sent out; over 1,000 of these had been opened and 125 clicks through to the budget document. There had also been a series of social media posts which were updated every other day during the consultation period.

So far there had been 7 responses which was higher than last year.

- 6.3 At the previous O&S Committee meeting the members had asked about environmental considerations within the budget and the Chief Finance Officer advised that environmental consideration formed part of Assurance Framework and that the Combined Authority used the Treasury Five Case model for the development of projects; all projects would need to demonstrate and align to the strategic goals of the organisation and these included environmental goals as they were set out in the Local Industrial Strategy and the Local Transport Plan. A report from the Commission on Climate Change would be forthcoming in the new year and the outcomes from this would be fed into the Combined Authorities Assurance Framework in the future.

- 6.4 In response to a question about the timescales for the draft strategy capital programme 21/22 the committee were advised that many of the items were a continuation of existing programmes and therefore they would be part of an existing timetable. All items within the draft strategy capital programme would be subject to approval by the CA Board as would any changes to the budget currently forecast.

- 6.5 In response to a question about the amount of £7m subject to approval for the CAM Special Purpose Vehicle Programme and whether this funding would be spent before CAM had been approved by the Department for Transport the Chief Finance Officer advised that £2m would be spent on setting up the One CAM Ltd and would include staffing costs. £5m would be allocated for developing the delivery strategy and business cases. This would include developing funding and financing strategies which would help to inform future funding options and financing that the CAM may require due to timing difference between costs incurred and funding received.

Work on the CAM was currently being undertaken by Deloitte and this was provided for in the existing Combined Authority budget.

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group requested that some greater clarity be provided around the work being done by the numerous consultants for the CAM and where the funding for these sat within the existing budget and the budget for next year.

The Chief Finance Officer AGREED to have a conversation with the Chair for the Task and Finish Group and that a note would be provided for members.

- 6.6 In response to a question about the possible savings from accommodation for the Combined Authority the members were advised that the total amount of savings was as yet unknown as although there was work being done around

accommodation it was unclear how much of a saving it would be as it would depend on working conditions for staff going forward.

- 6.7 The Committee were advised that the budget assumed that from May 2021 there would be one Chief Executive Officer in post for the Combined Authority.
- 6.8 In response to a question about what would happen to the funding of £13m when the Combined Authority takes on the role of Transport Authority in April the committee were advised that the funding was currently used for 15 staff members and concessionary fares.
- 6.9 The Committee noted the report and that the Chief Finance Officer would return to the Committee meeting in January 2021 with a further budget update.

7. CAM Metro Task and Finish Group

- 7.1 The Committee received the report from the Chair of the Task and Finish Group which updated the Committee on subsequent work that had been undertaken in the six months following the May 2020 report and asked members for comments on the work undertaken and going forward.
- 7.2 The Task and Finish Group Chair advised that he would like to add budgets and financing of the CAM to the future work programme and also that the group consider the decision-making process going forward.
- 7.3 Committee noted the report.

8. CPCA Project Register

- 8.1 The Committee received the report from the Programme Manager which provided the Committee with an overview of the Combined Authority projects.
- 8.2 The Chair queried why the RAG rating and milestones which were requested at the previous meeting were not included within the report.

The Committee felt that these were needed to enable members to choose which projects were in need of further scrutiny, without the information requested it would be difficult for the committee to be involved.

- 8.3 The Committee requested that changes in the RAG rating of projects be included in the report to highlight how projects are faring.

The Committee Agreed that the Monitoring Officer would work with the relevant Director and the Chair on how the Project Register was reported to the Committee in future.

- 8.4 Cllr Sharp requested that some clarity around how the project register linked up to items on the budget and in particular the Ely Capacity Enhancements project which was not included within the budget. The Programme manager agreed to provide the information to Cllr Sharp.

Cllr Sharp requested that a meeting be arranged between himself as the Transport Lead Member and the Project Officer in the new year.

8.5 The Committee noted the report.

9. Horizon Scanning

9.1 The Committee received the report from the Scrutiny Officer which asked the Committee to consider the items for review to commence within the next twelve months taking into account the current Forward Plan of the Combined Authority and the work programme of the committee.

9.2 The Committee requested that an update on how the Combined Authority was managing Brexit be included in the report from the Director for Business and Skills in the new year.

9.3 The Committee thanked officers for the briefing notes included in the report which they had found helpful.

9.4 The Committee noted the report.

10. Combined Authority Forward Plan

10.1 The Committee noted the Combined Authority Forward Plan.

11. Work Programme Report

11.1 The Committee received the report which asked the Committee to discuss and agree items that they would like to be added to the work programme for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the 2020/21 municipal year.

11.2 The Committee Agreed:

i) that the Director for Business and Skills include an update on Brexit in his report due to come to the Committee in January

ii) that the Chairman and Chief Executive of One CAM Limited be invited to attend a meeting of the Committee in March.

12. Date of Next Meeting

12.1 The next meeting will be held on Monday, 25th January 2021 at 11.00 a.m. with a pre-meeting for Members at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting closed at 12:35pm.