

Overview and Scrutiny Questions to the Combined Authority Board: 30 September 2020

Item 1.6: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Constitution

What representations has the Combined Authority made to central government on the long-standing issue of the quoracy of Combined Authority Committees, and what has been the response?

Q: In line with the seven Nolan Principles of Public Life, is there a commitment for the Business Board to be more transparent and to hold meetings in public session?

A: We are not aware of any representations having been made to Government in relation to the quoracy of Combined Authority committees. However, this issue was raised by the Audit and Governance Committee on 24 September 2020 when it met to consider the proposed revisions to the Combined Authority Constitution. The Board will have the opportunity to consider today whether it wishes to make representations on this matter when it considers the Audit and Governance Committee's recommendation on this issue.

The Business Board is committed to transparency and closely complies with the National Assurance Framework, including the requirement for the Business Board Annual General Meeting to be open to the public. For all other meetings, transparency is demonstrated by publication of minutes and meeting papers in line with the Local Government Act 1972. The statutory regime provides for confidential and/or exempt information to be excluded from the public domain. As the majority of items considered at Business Board meetings are exempt and/or confidential, adopting a standard practice of public Business Board meetings would be unworkable, as public exclusion would dominate. Given that the Combined Authority Board ratifies funding decisions made by the Business Board, this aspect of Business Board decision making is de facto handled in public. This also demonstrates due regard to transparency. On this basis, there are no immediate plans to change the current formation of Business Board meetings.

Item 3.1: Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro Special Purpose Vehicle Shareholder Agreement

Q: The Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee would wish to place on record its concerns about the transparency of the CAM Special Purpose Vehicle, and about the lack of timely access to information regarding the CAM scheme in general. Will the Combined Authority give the Committee the assurance that members of the Committee will be provided with information and access to officers in a timely manner, and that the Special Purpose Vehicle will operate openly and transparently? This would include the provision of exempt information to members of the Committee on a 'need-to-know' basis.

A: The setting up of the CAM SPV has been open and transparent. There have been two successive public reports to this Board, asking to set up the company and we are today asking to recruit the highly distinguished and eminent Lord Mair CBE. Scrutiny have a wide range of powers which would allow them to actively engage with the SPV. We would encourage them to consider the powers they already have and make some positive recommendations to the Board about how to engage with the company in a constructive way. That

will help us deliver the very best transport system for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. I would encourage the Monitoring Officer to work with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop their proposals for a positive way of working.

Item 3.2: A10 Junctions and Dualling

Q: If the Department of Transport funding decision on dualling is negative will the whole £2m for the Outline Business Case still be required? And in that situation, would the Combined Authority proceed with a junctions-only option, and in what timescale?

A: It would be inappropriate to predetermine the outcome of the Department for Transport decision. The Combined Authority Board will consider the way forward following that decision and the appropriate share of funding to enable the delivery of either Junctions only, Dualling or a hybrid of the two. Timescales will become clearer following this decision. Whilst we have not carried out a formal consultation there has been a very successful and well-attended virtual consultation. The outcome of this supported the dualling option and showed it is highly favoured by the majority of the electorate.

Item 3.3: Market Towns Programme Investment Prospectus

Q: It appears that there is nothing in the proposals which affect Chatteris. Is this a timing issue and, if so, when is it envisaged that funding applications for Chatteris will be considered?

A: Correct. This was a timing issue and Fenland District Council plan to submit proposals for Chatteris for consideration at CA Board in November.

Q: Have there been any project proposals that when independently appraised did not reach the pass mark, and, if so, what were these proposals? Can the projects be economically justified in the current climate?

A: To date, the Combined Authority has received four proposals, all of which have been independently appraised against the programme assessment criteria and are recommended for approval by the Board today. The assessment process ensures that proposals viably deliver against priorities identified within the masterplans in consideration of the current climate and the need for market towns to play a proactive role in our response to Covid-19 economic recovery.

Q: What is the process for developing these applications? Who is involved and how can residents and local organisations be involved and contribute to the development of proposals?

A: Market Town masterplans were consulted upon as part of their production to ensure local residents and organisations were able to contribute to their development. This is reflected within the agreed sets of priorities & interventions. District authorities have been asked to lead on and to continue working with local stakeholders in the development of proposals.

Item 4.3: Bus Reform

As with our question for Item 3.1, will the Combined Authority Board give an assurance of transparency to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as this programme continues? The Committee has a Task and Finish Group which provided a series of recommendations last year and is committed to reporting back to the Committee at the end of this municipal year.

A: The Bus Reform Project is being run in line with a published programme plan, and its activities and progress updates are transparently reported. The project reports formally to the Mayoral Bus Reform Task Force six times a year. All the City & District Councils nominate a member of the Mayoral Bus Reform Task Force, other stakeholders are included in meetings, and the minutes of these meetings are published. There was a widespread public consultation event, reaching around 5000 residents late last year, to inform the project's work.

Officers have attended both meetings of the Oversight & Scrutiny Committee's Task & Finish Group to which they have been invited, and made presentations at each, which were circulated. The last of these meetings was in February 2020 and officers would be delighted to attend any further meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Task and Finish Group which the Committee wishes to schedule.

Items 5.1: Sector-Based Work Academy and High Value Courses and 5.2: Business Growth Service Full Business Case

Q: How can it be ensured that there will be no duplication of work with that being undertaken by the Greater Cambridge Partnership on these measures?

With that in mind will the Board commit to ensuring the most productive use of collaboration between the Combined Authority, the GCP, Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils, and district councils?

A: The Combined Authority and the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) are actively working together to ensure that there will be no duplication of work between the two organisations, in regard to the commissioning and delivery of the two programmes described by items 5.1 and 5.2. On all business support and skills interventions both organisations consult each other on their plans for the development and commissioning of new interventions.

For instance, GCP officers have been involved in the development of proposals for Business Growth Service over the last 12 months and with colleagues in South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City on developing an implementation plan for the Business Growth Service. This can be found as the sub-economy delivery plan for Greater Cambridge within Appendix 3 of the Full Business Case. All six constituent councils have been involved in the development of local implementation plans.

Further adaptations to the Business Growth Service that are included in the Full Business Case, to adapt it for COVID recovery, have also been developed in partnership with the GCP, and other colleagues from each of the six constituent councils, within the COVID Economic Recovery Sub-Group.

The GCP have also been proactive in consultation and partnership to develop complementary interventions between the GCP and the CPCA around the Business Growth Service. Officers from the CPCA are currently offering comments and suggestions on the GCPs plans for skills and employment interventions to address the anticipated impact of COVID-19. This involves a potential contract for skills support in Greater Cambridge that would complement that provided by the CPCA's Skills Brokerage. This would provide a complementary and coordinated set of services from the CPCA and the GCP to deliver exceptionally high standards of skills support in Greater Cambridge.

This partnering activity and consultation between the CPCA, the GCP and all the six constituent councils, demonstrates both the Combined Authority Board and Business Board commitment to ensuring the most productive use of collaboration between the Combined Authority, the GCP, Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City Councils, and district councils.

Q: Can the Combined Authority update the committee on the virement of resources to Covid-19 and its effectiveness?

A: *The Combined Authority is using £6million of its available resources has delivered the following support to businesses in response to the impact of COVID 19:*

- The COVID19 Capital Grant Scheme: £5.5million approved by the Business Board from the Local Growth Fund, awarded to 132 companies and forecasted to create or safeguard 809 jobs.*
- The Micro Business Capital Grant Scheme: £500,000 approved by the Combined Authority Board from Gainshare. Awarded to 128 companies and forecasted to create or safeguard 278 jobs.*

A virement of £2.5m was made from the Small Capital Growth Grant Scheme to the COVID-19 Capital Grant Scheme as it was unlikely that this funding would have been claimed for growth projects. The remaining £3m was a new allocation from the Local Growth Fund award. The Micro Grant Scheme funding was previously unallocated Capital Gainshare.

The Mayor has been privileged to visit some of the companies which have benefitted from Combined Authority interventions to support local business in its response to COVID-19 and he welcomes this very valid question from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.