



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Agenda Item No: 6

Delivering Overview & Scrutiny Function Improvement Framework

To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date: 20 March 2023

Public report: Yes

Lead Member: Councillor Edna Murphy, Lead Member for Governance

From: Jodie Townsend, Improvement Lead

Recommendations: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

a) Agree the format, focus and method for delivering the Overview & Scrutiny function from 2023/24 onwards

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this item is to present Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members with an information pack to help inform the scheduled discussion on how to deliver the function moving forward.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Combined Authority Board agreed an Improvement Plan following the Interim Chief Executive's diagnosis report at its meeting in October 2022. The improvement plan set out 6 key workstreams that would drive improvement outcomes across the Combined Authority to ensure appropriate foundations and fundamentals were in place to address concerns raised in the Interim Chief Executive diagnosis and concerns raised by the external auditors.
- 2.2 The improvement plan also built on the conclusions and recommendations set out in the Review of Governance which was endorsed by Board in July 2022. That review set out conclusions and a number of recommendations that were specific to the Overview and Scrutiny function.

- 2.3 The Overview and Scrutiny function is an integral part of the governance arrangements at the Combined Authority. The Combined Authority wants to ensure that its scrutiny arrangements are effective, impactful and able to support democratic accountability for the region.
- 2.4 CPCA wants its scrutiny structure to create the right framework to maximise its impact moving forward as part of the new proposed governance arrangements coming out of the Improvement Framework.

3. Member Information Pack

- 3.1 Attached at Appendix A is an information pack for members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the pack contains the following:
- I. Understanding the proposed new governance at the Combined Authority
 - II. Core roles for Overview and Scrutiny
 - III. Options for delivering Overview and Scrutiny
- 3.2 The purpose of section 1, understanding the proposed new governance arrangements, is to bring the Overview and Scrutiny Committee up to speed on the governance arrangements proposals that have emerged from the improvement plan and will be considered by the Combined Authority Board on 22 March 2023. These arrangements also provide a response to a number of recommendations from within the Review of Governance report.
- 3.3 Section 2 sets out details of core roles for the Overview and Scrutiny function to deliver at a Combined Authority level that will be enabled through the changes intended to be delivered by the proposed new governance arrangements. These core roles should form the basis of activity for the Overview and Scrutiny function moving forward.
- 3.4 Section 3 of the information pack sets out a number of options for the Overview and Scrutiny structure, supported by key functions and proposed methods for delivery. These options are:
- Option 1: Enhanced Status Quo
 - Option 2: Strategic Focused OSC with Sub-Committee
 - Option 3: Strategic Focused OSC with multiple Deep Dive Reviews
 - Option 4: Multiple OSCs
- 3.5 The information pack should be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members in order to prepare for the discussion on the 20 March. Members are encouraged to contact the Overview and Scrutiny Officer if they have any queries or questions prior to the Committee meeting.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to agree how it wishes to deliver the function moving forward in the context of the overall improvement programme at its March meeting, once a steer has been provided Officers will prepare for implementation.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications anticipated with these proposals.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The importance and legitimacy that scrutiny is afforded by the law should be recognised. Overview and Scrutiny was created to act as a check and balance on the executive and is a statutory requirement for all combined authorities.
- 6.2 Although the existence of the function is set out in legislation, how it operates and how it is structured is left to individual Local Authorities. This provides for a high degree of flexibility and the ability to consider different topics and issues in the most appropriate way.
- 6.3 Where there is a culture of trust and respect between the Scrutiny function and the Executive, the Scrutiny function can attain and deploy a great deal of influence ultimately benefiting both the combined authority and the residents of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Whilst the Committee has a legal duty to provide robust challenge to decision-makers it can also offer support and assistance wherever it can to help the Combined Authority meet these challenges.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A – Member Information Pack

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 July 2022 CA Board - Item 4.1 - Improvement Framework
- 8.2 Independent Review of Governance (presented to CA Board July 2022)
- 8.3 External auditor's letter - 1 June 2022
- 8.4 October 2022 CA Board - Item 2.1 - Chief Executive's diagnosis – Improvement Framework