



CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY: MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 30 October 2019

Time: 10.30am – 11.13am

Venue: Council Chamber, Peterborough City Council, Peterborough

Present: J Palmer (Mayor)

Councillors A Bailey – East Cambridgeshire District Council, C Boden – Fenland District Council, S Count - Cambridgeshire County Council, R Fuller – Huntingdonshire District Council, J Holdich – Peterborough City Council and B Smith – South Cambridgeshire District Council

A Adams – Interim Chair of the Business Board

Co-opted Members: J Bawden (Clinical Commissioning Group) and Councillor D Over (Vice Chairman, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority)

Also in Attendance: Councillor Kevin Price, Vice Chair, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

427. ANNOUNCEMENTS, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor stated that he was continuing to work alongside the Deputy Mayor to ensure that former employees of Thomas Cook should have the best opportunities to find new jobs.

Apologies were received from Councillor G Bull (Substituted by Councillor R Fuller) and Councillor L Herbert.

There were no declarations of interest.

428. MINUTES – 25 SEPTEMBER 2019

The minutes of the meeting on 25 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

429. PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

430. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions from members of the public, but a number of questions had been received from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These were asked by Councillor Kevin Price, Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

2.1 Budget Monitor Update

The Budget Monitoring report indicated that a lot of projects were slipping. What were the reasons for this?

The Mayor stated that the report indicated there was a limited amount of slippage. Of the £124.44m capital programme budget for 2019/20, which included 47 project lines, the Combined Authority was currently showing a total forecast underspend of £2.43m for the year against five of them. Half of that sum resulted from a decision by the previous Secretary of State for Transport which caused a rescheduling of work on a Network Rail project which the Combined Authority was part funding. The aim was to complete projects as stated and the Mayor monitored this personally.

3.1 100k Homes and Community Land Trusts (CLTs)

With only 935 Community Land Trust homes built so far in the whole country and the 56 affordable homes funded through the £40m revolving fund, was too much emphasis being put on Community Land Trusts rather than the more tried and tested use of housing associations, when there was a crisis of affordable housing in parts of the Combined Authority area?

The Mayor stated that around 130 of the 935 Community Land Trust (CLT) homes built so far were located in Cambridgeshire. He believed that there was a strong basis for using CLTs via the land value capture model to provide social housing at below market rent for those in need. The Combined Authority was working hard to make sure that each constituent area would have the opportunity to engage. There was no 'one size fits all' solution to housing need in Cambridgeshire and traditional schemes and models were not fully meeting that need. The role of the Combined Authority was to bring forward as many options as possible to the market. The CLT model was proving popular as it placed the local community at the heart of the development. The market was not offering £100k homes so there was a significant part of the population who could not currently afford to buy their home freehold. This opportunity should be open to all.

Councillor Price further asked how the Combined Authority intended to encourage Constituent Councils to promote CCLTs. The Mayor stated that CLTs were already in existence in South Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Fenland and Huntingdonshire and were supported by the Combined Authority as part of a multi-faceted approach to meeting housing need.

Transport Plan

What funding options are being looked at as part of the Outline Business Case for the CAM Metro?

The Mayor stated that the Strategic Outline Business Case, which the Board approved in March 2019, set out the financial business case. That included an assessment of a range of funding options. The Outline Business Case would build on that work. He judged that it was right that the Combined Authority looked at

innovative funding ideas like land value capture and the building of garden villages rather than always looking to the Treasury for funding.

Transport levy

Given the financial difficulties both the County Council and Peterborough City Council had been facing, clarification was sought on whether transport levy funding passed to those councils was ring-fenced for transport functions.

The Mayor stated that the Transport Levy funded transport functions only.

Employment and departure of the former CEO and CFO

The Audit and Governance Committee had been asked to carry out a review of the employment and dismissal procedures relating to the departures of the former Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer. Confirmation was sought of what progress had been made or whether this has now been completed.

The Mayor stated that the Audit and Governance Committee undertook its own review of the departure of the former Chief Executive, but this review did not extend to the departure of the Chief Finance Officer. The review was completed on 30 November 2018 when the Committee considered a report on the resignation of the former Chief Executive. As part of that report it was confirmed that the details of the settlement had been considered by the Authority's external auditors and they had not identified any issue which would cause them to issue any adverse report or comment in the Authority's accounts. A representative of the external auditors attended the meeting and confirmed that, based on the information provided, the Combined Authority had acted lawfully and reasonably and that the severance package provided was reasonable.

Climate Emergency

Does the Combined Authority intend to declare a Climate Emergency, given that some constituent councils have already done so?

The Mayor stated that the Combined Authority (CA) had commissioned an independent climate review which it expected to be of the same calibre as the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) report. The findings of that review would be placed at the heart of all CA policies to meet the best interests of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The CA was not a council, which allowed it to look with a wider perspective across the whole of the CA area. Individual councils could feed into this work to inform best practice.

431. FORWARD PLAN – SEPTEMBER 2019

The introduction of revised governance arrangements from 1 November 2019 would see some decision-making powers devolved to Executive Committees. In anticipation of this change, the Forward Plan had been expanded to include decisions going to each of those Executive Committees. The front page had also been revised to make the purpose of the Forward Plan more clear.

It was resolved to:

note and approve the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions published on 22 October 2019.

432. DESIGNATION OF SCRUTINY OFFICER

Following the resignation of the previous Interim Scrutiny Officer the Board was invited to designate Katarina O'Dell as Interim Scrutiny Officer for the remainder of the Scrutiny Officer's maternity leave.

On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Boden, it was resolved unanimously to:

Designate Katarina O'Dell as the Combined Authority's Interim Scrutiny Officer for the remainder of the maternity leave of the Scrutiny Officer.

433. APPOINTMENTS TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES AND APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS AND LEAD MEMBERS

Following the Board's decision on 25 September 2019 to approve new executive arrangements it was necessary to appoint Lead Members, Executive Committee members and Executive Committee Chairs. At the September 2019 meeting the Board had amended the recommendations on the adoption of the revised Constitution to state that, in principle, neither the Mayor nor the Board would seek to veto nominations from constituent councils.

On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bailey, it was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note and agree the nominations for membership of the Executive Committees, Chairs and Lead Members for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year, as set out in Appendix 1.
- b) Approve the Monitoring Officer to accept any consequential changes to membership and confirm that on receipt such changes would be immediately in effect.

434. BUDGET MONITOR UPDATE

The revised Medium Term Financial Plan approved by the Board in September 2019 showed total revenue expenditure for the year of around £36.4M against grant income receivable in-year. The Forecast Outturn variance showed an improved revenue position of £829.2k. Within this, Business and Skills showed a £29.2k variance which was largely due to re-profiling of the Work Readiness Programme. The unspent balance would need to be carried forward to 2020/21. Housing was showing £500k slippage in planned spend on Garden Villages in 2019/20 due to a delay in contract negotiation. This expenditure was now expected in early 2020/21. The Combined Authority's external auditors, Ernst and Young LLP, had completed their audit of the 2018/19 accounts and issued an unqualified audit opinion regarding arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources. Work was continuing in relation to the Treasury Management Strategy to explore more creative use of cash balances to support the Combined Authority's aims.

On being proposed by Councillor Count, seconded by Councillor Boden, it was resolved unanimously to:

Note the updated financial position of the Combined Authority for the year.

444. £100K HOMES AND COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS

On 25 September 2019 the Board had approved the inclusion of £100k Homes and Community Land Trusts (CLTs) in the 2019/20 Business Plan with a budget allocation of £250k. Approval was now sought for the immediate expenditure required to develop the formal business case.

Councillor Smith requested regular updates on progress and asked that Leaders should be given early updates on any projects within their areas. The Director of Housing and Development stated that update reports were scheduled to be taken to the Housing and Communities Committee on a bi-meeting basis. If a Board member felt that this report should be considered at every meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee this should be raised with the Chair of the Committee.

Councillor Boden welcomed the proposals, but reiterated his previously expressed view that the title '£100k Homes' was not an inclusive title across the whole of the Combined Authority area. He suggested it might be revised to either '≤£100k Homes' or 'Up to £100k Homes' to better reflect the varying position in different parts of the area. Councillor Count expressed support for Councillor Boden's comments. Ms Sawyer, Joint Chief Executive, stated that the '£100k Homes' title was a brand and suggested that this branding should be reviewed at the same time the business case was brought to the Board. Councillor Boden was content with this approach, but commented that if the '£100k Homes' branding remained unchanged it would exclude much of Fenland.

Councillor Count commented that the discussion did not reflect how exciting the proposals were. There was a gap in provision at the starter point on the housing ladder which delivery of these homes could begin to address. Councillor Bailey endorsed this view, commenting that CLTs in East Cambridgeshire had enabled people to buy homes in areas where they could not otherwise afford to do so and to remain within their local communities.

The Mayor stated that there was a housing crisis both locally and nationally. The role of the Mayor and the Combined Authority was to find solutions that worked locally. CLTs were working in East Cambridgeshire and could in his judgement work throughout the Combined Authority area to create housing in perpetuity. £100k Homes would help meet the same need and would be consistent with the housing policies of all of the constituent councils.

On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bailey, it was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Housing and Communities Committee, authority to draw down the £250,000 allocated from the non-transport feasibility budget for the creation of community land trusts and for the operational costs of delivering the £100k Housing project, subject to the phasing set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP); and
- b) Confirm that the monitoring of spend on the development of the business cases for Community Land Trusts and £100k Homes will be reported to the Housing & Communities Committee; and

- c) Confirm that the business cases for Community Land Trusts and £100k Homes will be reported to the Combined Authority Board for approval in due course, subject to consultation with the Housing & Communities Committee.

(Mayor)