



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Agenda Item No: 4

Report title: Review of Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements Update

To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date: 13th December 2021

Public report: Yes

From: Anne Gardiner
Governance Manager

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

Recommendations:

- a) Note and comment on the Action Log from officers. (Appendix 1)
- b) Approve the Conflict of Interest Protocol (Appendix 2)

Voting arrangements: Simple majority of all members

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the work being carried out by officers in relation to the actions recommended by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS).

2. Background

- 2.1 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny published their second edition on guidance to overview and scrutiny in Combined Authorities. This second edition reflects upon the past three years of practice since the introduction of CA's. It provides guidance around how scrutiny can best operate in practice.

The guidance may be found here: [Revised guidance: Overview and Scrutiny in Combined Authorities - Centre For Governance and Scrutiny \(cfgs.org.uk\)](https://www.cfgs.org.uk/revised-guidance-overview-and-scrutiny-in-combined-authorities)

- 2.2 Following this guidance being published the CPCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee held an informal workshop with CfGS to discuss some of the points raised within the guidance and requested that a proposal be brought forward from CfGS to carry out a review of the current scrutiny arrangements at the CPCA.
- 2.3 The Committee received the recommendations at their meeting on the 28th June 2021 and a further report detailing the timetable for the actions at their meeting on the 26th July 2021.
- 2.4 The attached Action Log (Appendix 1) details what progress has been made and planned actions over the coming months.

Mayoral Decision Notices & Transparency

- 2.5 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny report and recommendations were taken to the CA Board on 29th September 2021. Report can be found [here](#). The CA Board approved an amendment to the report which stated: 'The CA Board note the importance of Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinising Mayoral Decision Notices, as those Notices bypass the normal checks and balances of the Combined Authority.'
- 2.6 At the meeting in October the Committee requested that officers investigate the process and publishing notification for Mayoral Decision Notices.
- 2.7 Upon review it was discovered that accessing Mayoral Decision Notices via the CPCA webpages was not straight forward and that the web pages were also not fully up to date with all Mayoral Decision Notices.
- 2.8 Subsequent improvements have been made to the Transparency section of the webpages to ensure that:
- mayoral decisions can be searched for via the search box
 - there is a clearly defined area in the Transparency section for Mayoral Decision Notices and Officer Decision Notices
 - Mayoral Decision list and Officer Decision lists have been updated to ensure they are up to date
- 2.9 The process regarding Mayoral Decisions has also been refined to ensure clear lines of responsibility are identified for the necessary steps within the process. Most importantly it has been made clear that Mayoral Decision Notices should be published on the webpages within 3 days and an additional step has been added to ensure that all members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are informed as soon as a Mayoral Decision has been taken and is ready to be published on the webpages.
- 2.10 Informing Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members of decisions once they have been taken is a vital step in delivering an effective call-in process.
- 2.11 The Committee had also raised concerns around the access to background documents prior to the last CA Board meeting, as a result additional guidance will be provided to report authors around report requirements including the need to provide the required background papers.

- 2.12 This guidance will be created as part of the ongoing governance improvements being developed by Governance Services, it will be developed alongside a review of report templates and reporting practices and processes that will also be picked up in the Governance Review.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee Conflict of Interest Protocol

- 2.13 A proposed protocol on Committee Conflicts of Interest (Appendix 2) is presented for approval. This was one of the actions from the CfGS report to align with the Information Sharing protocol agreed at the October meeting of the Committee. The proposed protocol takes the former Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government guidance for Overview & Scrutiny Committees at Councils and Combined Authorities in relation to conflicts of interest as a basis. The Combined Authority's current Constitution's conflicts of interest policy (contained within Chapter 19 of the [CPCA Constitution](#)) is also applied.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 None

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 None.

5. Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – O&S Review Action Log
5.2 Appendix 2 – Conflict of Interest Protocol

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 [O&S March Report](#)
6.2 [O&S March Appendix](#)
6.3 [CA Board Report - March](#)
6.4 [O&S Report – 28th June 2021](#)
6.5 [O&S Report – 26th July 2021](#)
6.6 [O&S Report – 23rd August 2021](#)
6.7 [O&S Report – 27th September 2021](#)
6.8 [O&S Report – 25th October 2021](#)