



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: 24 February 2020

Time: 11.00 a.m.

Location: Cambridge City Council

Present:

Cllr S Corney	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr P Jordan	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr L Dupre (Chair)	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr A Sharp	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr K Price	Cambridge City Council
Cllr D Summerbell	Cambridge City Council
Cllr A Coles	Peterborough City Council
Cllr E Murphy	Peterborough City Council
Cllr A Hay	Fenland District Council
Cllr A Miscandlon	Fenland District Council
Cllr D Connor	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr J Scutt	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr G Chamberlain	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr P Fane	South Cambridgeshire District Council

Officers:

Rochelle White	Deputy Monitoring Officer, Combined Authority
Susan Hall	Governance Assistant, Combined Authority
Kim Sawyer	Joint Chief Executive, Combined Authority
Robert Fox	Scrutiny Officer, Combined Authority (Minute taker)
Azma Ahmad-Pearce	Housing Programme Manager, Combined Authority

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from: Cllr D Dew (substituted by Cllr S Corney); Cllr P Heylings (substituted by Cllr P Fane); and Cllr M Gehring (substituted by Cllr D Summerbell).

2. Declaration of Interests

- 2.1 The following declaration of interest was noted:

- Cllr Fane is a Director of Shire Homes, an arm of South Cambridgeshire District Council, which is relevant to the item on Accessible Housing.

3. Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Meeting of 27 January 2020

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
- 3.2 Page 5: the Chairman confirmed she had written to John Hill on quoracy and substitutes for the Committee; but, that, as yet, no response had been received. Kim Sawyer, Joint Chief Executive informed the Committee quorums are set by statute. An approach via the governance group of the Centre for Public Scrutiny to potentially lobby government will be made. Further discussion would take place outside the meeting. Following a question it was confirmed that the Local Government Act, 2000 states members need to be actually present at public meetings rather than attend remotely.

With regard to substitute members changes can be made through constitutional amendment which would need to be agreed by the Combined Authority Board. It was agreed that the Chairman request this change at the March meeting of the Board.

- 3.3 Page 7: the Chairman confirmed an explanation had been received related to the Enterprise Zone figures.

AGREED:

- a) That the Chairman would request a change to the current substitute members specification in the Constitution of the Combined Authority.

4. Written Responses: Combined Authority Board to Overview & Scrutiny Questions on 29 January 2020

- 4.1 Item 1.1: There continues to be a delay to the appointment of a Chairman of the Independent Commission on Climate Change which is scheduled to report its findings 12 months following its establishment in November 2019. Several Members of the Committee expressed their concerns over the delay.
- 4.2 Kim Sawyer, Joint Chief Executive stated appointments to Commissions are set out in the Constitution. A recruitment panel Chaired by the Mayor would make the appointment. A further report on the appointments process would be brought to the March meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee regarding progress in appointing a suitable Chairman to the Independent Commission.

AGREED:

- a) A report be brought to the March meeting of the committee outlining the criteria for appointment of a Chairman of the Commission; candidates that have been approached; any issues there might be in finding a suitable candidate for the role; and the impact on the November 2020 deadline for the report of the Commission.

5. Public Questions

- 5.1 There were no public questions received.

6. Trading Companies: Scrutiny of Trading Companies Report

- 6.1 Rochelle White, Deputy Monitoring Officer, introduced the report and explained to the Committee that shareholder agreements for both Angle Holdings and Angle Development East Ltd. were agreed on 5 September 2019. The Combined Authority is the only shareholder in the companies.
- 6.2 The powers the Overview & Scrutiny Committee has with regard to Trading Companies were outlined in the report provided; and the decision-making processes are no different than they are currently. Any subsequent changes notified to the Committee prior to being taken to the Combined Authority Board for ratification.
- 6.3 The fair tax mark for traded companies was requested, which covers businesses, NGOs and government associations be considered. It was agreed to provide the Committee with a briefing note at its next meeting.
- 6.4 The Chairman put to the Committee whether it would wish to schedule in representatives of the Trading Companies to attend scrutiny. There was some desire for such but no agreed decision to request these.
- 6.5 Kim Sawyer, Joint Chief Executive explained O&S Committee Members can have access to Trading Companies meeting minutes with a caveat that exempt papers and items, which may be commercially sensitive, would have to clear the normal processes to be made available.
- 6.6 It was clarified that the Trading Companies develop policy rather than take decisions.

AGREED:

- a) A briefing note on the fair tax mark be prepared for the next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

7. Combined Authority Forward Plan: February 2020

- 7.1 The Chairman explained that, as yet, no papers had been published with regard to Executive Decisions of the Combined Authority.
- 7.2 The Committee had its attention drawn to Decision 20: Community Land Trusts. Following discussion it was agreed a progress report be requested for the next meeting of the committee.
- 7.3 Regarding Decision 21: Market Towns a future briefing note to the committee will be needed on the Masterplans for Huntingdonshire.
- 7.4 It was agreed that a report on Decisions 1 and 24: Wisbech Rail be prepared for the next meeting, in particular with regard to the feasibility and the timescale of the scheme.

AGREED:

- a) A progress report be prepared on Community Land Trusts and be presented to the next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

- b) A report be prepared on the feasibility and timescale of the Wisbech Rail project and be presented to the next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

8. Accessible Housing Presentation

- 8.1 Azma Ahmad-Pearce, Housing Programme Manager (Residential), conducted a presentation updating the Committee on developments within accessible housing. Lifetime home standards within local plans fall within three categories:

1. Visitable (mainly public buildings) units
2. Residential dwellings
3. Wheelchair adaptable dwellings

For category two and three dwellings there has to be a minimum of 5% which are wheelchair accessible within the plans. Wheelchair accessible housing also requires adequate car-parking facilities.

- 8.2 Some local authorities have recently adopted local plans which are for the next 20 years with certain standards of housing to be adhered to through a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It was noted that Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils have adopted and there is a joint-plan for the two Authorities.
- 8.3 The affordable housing programme in the Combined Authority area has seen 1,167 grant-funded schemes agreed with 259 new units acquired since November 2019 and currently 68 completions. The Housing and Communities Committee has an aspiration that all housing is suitably built to greener and more efficient standards, utilising renewable energy sources. These units are provided across the Combined Authority area, and all are additional units over and above local authority s.106 schemes. There will be in excess of 500 units developed in Cambridge by 2022; however, land prices are an issue regarding affordability.
- 8.4 A question was raised as to how many of the 1,167 homes being built would be accessible? It was also suggested a housing needs analysis be conducted by the CPCA on accessible homes and how it might tackle any shortage. In response it was stated that a good number of properties have been given planning consent and accessibility is a planning rather than housing issue. It was also confirmed that the 259 acquired homes are already established dwellings which have come through the Housing and Communities Committee. These are grant-funded additional units.
- 8.5 A question was raised on whether demand for accessible housing is compared with Disabled Facilities Grant applications? In response it was stated DFGs are looked at for retro-fitting properties, which might involve Occupational Therapists and developers. Lifetime properties are much easier to adapt.
- 8.6 A further question was asked on why it is not mandatory that all new homes built are not lifetime standard upon completion; given that it is more expensive to retro-fit houses to be accessible? In some cases, developers are reluctant to build as lifetime standard partly due to the expense it was stated in response.

- 8.7 The Committee noted following an intervention that some developers are already completing dwellings to lifetime accessible standards and that the additional costs is only around £1,500 per unit. It was suggested each Local Authority Building Control would have access to the number of accessible dwellings.
- 8.8 Kim Sawyer, Joint Chief Executive stated the Combined Authority does not have a lot of room to influence Local Authorities on local plans beyond lobbying to influence government level discussions and decisions. The Combined Authority has a 'pot' to provide the 2,000 homes plus the 500 additional dwellings in Cambridge. These are additional to any homes being built as a part of local plans.
- 8.9 As the lead member of the Committee on Housing Cllr Murphy summarised his view that the Combined Authority should only fund lifetime standard and carbon neutral homes – at least starting with a stated percentage of funded homes meeting these criteria. He stated the more accessible homes the area has the better for the future. In future space standards should also be discussed he argued.
- 8.10 A concern was raised that there did not seem to be a plan that links with the carbon neutral targets for housing stock by 2050. An assessment in conjunction with the Commission on Climate Change was suggested.
- 8.11 The Committee agreed that a recommendation to the Housing and Communities Committee in March 2020 will be circulated for approval to Members worded as follows:

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee heard evidence that developers routinely complete dwellings which are of lifetime standards even though the additional costs for an accessible dwelling is around £1,500 per unit. Given the CPCA invests significant funds into additional new homes, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommend that the Housing and Communities Committee:

- a) Consider whether the Combined Authority should only fund developments that include homes that meet the criteria of creating a lifetime accessible home and minimise CO² emissions; or whether the Combined Authority adopt an approach whereby a percentage of investment funding for additional new homes is allocated to lifetime accessible and CO² reduction homes.
- b) Collate data on the number of dwellings which the Combined Authority has invested in and plans to invest in, which: a) are accessible dwellings; and b) contribute to CO² emission reduction including quantifiable analysis of the annual direct (gas) and indirect (electricity) emissions from housing in which the combined authority had invested, with an indication of how this fits into local and national 2050 decarbonisation targets.

9. Committee Meetings: Lead Member Questions and Answers

- 9.1 No comments were forthcoming.

10. Work Programme Report

- 10.1 The Committee received the report which outlined the work programme for the committee.
- Page 41: the additional items on Community Land Trusts and Wisbech Rail were confirmed for the March meeting

- Page 42: the Chairman suggested that similar to the Audit and Governance Committee this Committee should produce an Annual Report that be presented to the April meeting prior to being forwarded to the Combined Authority Board. The Chairman would discuss with officers
- Page 43: Constituent authorities will nominate representatives to this Committee in May 2020 so there is potential for a hiatus. Therefore, a potential induction and training date with the Audit and Governance Committee on the date provided. This would mean the University of Peterborough Outline Business Case item would need to be rescheduled to either April or June 2020
- Page 44: the Horizon Scanning item in June 2020 will be a six-monthly strategic look at the forward plan for discussion on issues that are coming forward and the establishment of Task and Finish Groups

10.2 A proposal to invite the Chairman of the Climate Change Commission, if appointed, to the March meeting was put to the vote and was defeated by seven votes to five.

11. Date of Next Meeting

11.1 The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be held on Monday, 23 March 2020 at 11:00 (pre-meeting 10:00) at Fenland District Council. Cllr Dupre encouraged all Members of the Committee to ensure their own, or their substitutes attendance at the meeting.

11.2 It was confirmed that the venue for the May meeting is Peterborough City Council.

The meeting closed at 12:52