



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority: Minutes

Date: Wednesday 24 November 2021

Time: 10.30am – 2.18pm

Venue: Multi-Function Room, New Shire Hall, Alconbury Weald, Huntingdon
PE28 4YE

Present: Mayor Dr Nik Johnson

A Adams - Chair of the Business Board, Councillor A Bailey – East Cambridgeshire District Council, Councillor C Boden – Fenland District Council, Councillor W Fitzgerald – Peterborough City Council, Councillor R Fuller – Huntingdonshire District Council (to 1.52pm), Councillor L Herbert – Cambridge City Council, Councillor L Nethsingha – Cambridgeshire County Council (from 10.22am) and Councillor B Smith – South Cambridgeshire District Council

Co-opted Members:
(Non-voting) J Peach – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (substitute)

Apologies: Councillor E Murphy - Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority and D Preston - Police and Crime Commissioner (substituted by J Peach)

Part 1 – Governance items

114. Announcements, Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

The Mayor placed on record his thanks to Kim Sawyer, former Interim Chief Executive, who was leaving the Combined Authority at the end of November. He wished Ms Sawyer every success for the future. The Mayor also welcomed John Peach to his first meeting since his recent appointment as Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Mayor stated that he had been delighted to be part of the delegation the previous day which had welcomed His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to the AstraZeneca

Research and Design centre in Cambridge. He offered warm wishes to those celebrating Thanksgiving the following day and to all Combined Authority staff for the Christmas season and offered his thanks to Board members for their support.

Apologies for absence were received as recorded above. There were no declarations of interest.

115. Minutes – 27 October 2021 and Action Log

The minutes of the meeting on 27 October 2021 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Mayor.

An updated version of the minutes action log had been published the previous day and circulated electronically to the Board for noting.

116. Petitions

No petitions were received.

117. Public questions

One public question was received from Lara Davenport-Ray, on behalf of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Climate Action Coalition. The question and written response can be viewed here - [Public Question and Written Response](#)

Part 2 - Finance

118. Budget Monitor Report November 2021

The Board was advised that the Budget Monitor Update Report November 2021 was upgraded to a key decision on 16 November 2021 under general exception arrangements.

The Board received an update on the Combined Authority's financial position as of 30 September 2021. In relation to revenue, there was a favourable forecast variance of £35.4m. This was primarily due to underspends on the Adult Education Budget (AEB) due to the impact of the pandemic leading to a national drop in enrolments and on the Energy Hub de-carbonisation programme where the majority of expenditure was now expected to be incurred in the next financial year. An additional £2.8m in grant funding had been received. Two updates to staffing budgets were reported relating to the budget of £772k for Energy Hub staff, which would be met in full by Energy Hub funding streams, and temporary additional resources within the transport, legal, governance and HR teams to support changes across the wider organisation.

In relation to the capital budget, the report set out the updated position in relation to the Affordable Housing Programme following confirmation from Government of £18.7m for 18 schemes to secure the delivery of 1,188 affordable homes in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The Business and Skills Directorate was forecasting an underspend of £38.6m due to delays in two capital programmes. The Green Home Capital Grant

Programme was forecasting an underspend of £6.6m due to supply chain issues and a further report would be brought to the Board requesting a re-profiling of this expenditure. The A10 Dualling project was forecasting a £560k underspend due to slippage and this would be requested as a carry forward. The winding up of the CAM programme would see around £3.25m released back into corporate capital reserves whilst the changes to the Wisbech Access Strategy project previously agreed by the Board had reduced the total project budget by £1.4m. Reported capital spend represented 29% of overall forecast spend for the year with the majority of expenditure being made against grant claims.

The Board was invited to approve the reinstatement of a £750k budget for Cambridge South Station. This had been removed in June 2020 following the Chancellor's announcement that the Department for Transport (DfT) would finance this project. An assumption had been made that Combined Authority funding would no longer be required, but it had subsequently emerged that the £750k previously committed to this project was still required to satisfy outstanding commitments.

Councillor Bailey commented that it was a matter of some concern that the £750k budget for existing contracted expenditure relating to Cambridge South Station had been cancelled. She also sought more information on the delay to the A10 Dualling project and whether it was being re-profiled and expressed concern that this issue was being considered via the County Council's Highways and Transport Committee. The Chief Executive undertook to provide Councillor Bailey with further detail outside of the meeting around the A10 Dualling project and the rationale for this being considered by a County Council committee.

On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Herbert, it was resolved unanimously by those present and voting to:

- a) Note the financial position of the Combined Authority for the year to date.
- b) Approve the reinstatement of the £750k budget for Cambridge South Station.

119. Draft Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement and 2022-23 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022 to 2026

The Board was advised that reporting on the draft Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement and draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022-26 had been combined because of the relationship between the work streams.

The draft Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement was considered first. The Director of Strategy stated that Combined Authority expenditure was made against policy priorities and since 2018 there had been a Growth Ambition Statement in place to reflect this. The current re-refresh re-stated the commitment to doubling GVA as set out in the Devolution Deal whilst recognising that this was a 25-year growth target. It also looked at the quality and sustainability of that growth. This was modelled on the six capitals approach and was compatible with the principles of HM Treasury Green Book. Subject to the Board's approval, the draft Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement would be consulted on alongside the draft Budget and MTFP.

Councillor Boden welcomed the draft Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement but expressed some concern in relation to the reduction of economic, social and health inequalities. The CPIER report stated that the quickest way to increase GVA would be to concentrate on the wealthiest areas within the Combined Authority area. In his view, there was insufficient exploration of the need to balance these priorities. The Mayor endorsed this view.

Councillor Herbert commented that much expenditure to date had targeted at Peterborough and Fenland. He felt that there should be a more holistic approach across the whole of the Combined Authority area, building on the excellent work of the Business Board. He gave as an example the developments at AstraZeneca which would see the benefits extending beyond the City of Cambridge.

Councillor Nethsingha commented that the whole Board was focused on inequality across the county and this included, but was not exclusive to, geographic inequality. In her judgement there had been too much focus in the past in seeking to address this by encouraging people to drive to different parts of the county to access employment or skills opportunities. She believed that working from home should be a practical and positive option across the county and that this would also open up new opportunities for local businesses and services. Councillor Nethsingha noted the references to Further Education cold spots in Ely and St Neots and commented that as Lead Member for Skills it was important to tackle this and to ensure equal access to opportunity.

Mr Adams welcomed the refreshed draft Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement. It was important to ensure that the Board obtained the feedback it needed and careful thought was required on how the questions within the consultation process were posed. He would like to see some focus groups held with various business people to help them understand the process and to get their feedback. He also felt that it was imperative that the consultation process included numbers as well as narrative. The Mayor stated that the business representatives who had taken part so far in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) consultation had encouraged a more ambitious approach and asked that some specific consultation around the draft Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement should be undertaken with business.

In her capacity as Lead Member for the Environment and Climate Change Councillor Smith welcomed the drive to put sustainability at the top of the Combined Authority's agenda which she saw as a significant departure from previous practice. She judged that the inclusion of additional metrics such as health and wellbeing and environmental factors would make the Combined Authority's approach more relevant. She noted that there had been some disappointment expressed at a recent meeting of Cambridge Ahead that not all of the CPIER recommendations had been progressed and encouraged serious engagement with that group if they were considering undertaking a refresh of the CPIER. Councillor Smith commented that she would like to extend the reference to revitalising market towns to reference this happening alongside new towns and new communities. She would also like to see people incentivised to live closer to where they work.

Councillor Bailey commented that she saw the current re-refresh as building on the previous Growth Ambition Statement rather than as a new departure. She expressed

some disappointment that health and environmental implications were still not reflected in reports to the Board. In her judgement, levelling up and supporting health equality would help drive growth in GVA. She also questioned whether the proposed approach represented a retreat from GVA and Green Book commitments and judged that the high-level format did not give the public a sense of what the Combined Authority was seeking to achieve. The Director of Strategy stated that the format was reasonably similar to that adopted by other combined authorities. The Devolution Deal commitments remained alongside thematic and policy statements like the LTCP and the Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement would hold these together.

Turning to the Draft Budget 2022-23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022 to 2026, the Chief Finance Officer stated that the overall objective of the budget-setting process was to set an affordable and balanced budget which supported the objectives and priorities of the Mayor and the Combined Authority. The report before the Board set out both the draft capital and revenue budgets. A light touch approach had been taken to updating existing budgets and known changes as the Board was still in the process of refreshing its strategies and focus. Appendix 4 contained a list of pipeline projects, but these did not form part of the draft budget or consultation process as they were projects identified for future consideration. There was no proposal to precept constituent authorities or raise a council tax levy for the 2022/23 financial year.

Councillor Boden sought and received confirmation that the Board was being asked to approve the draft documents for consultation purposes only at this stage, noting that adjustments might still be made. He welcomed the inclusion of political pipeline projects as a separate appendix in order to be transparent around possible future expenditure. In relation to March light rail, he commented that Fenland District Council (FDC) would be concerned if this was the only option being considered as it might not represent best value for money. He further commented that March to Wisbech was in his opinion second best to the March to Cambridge option. Councillor Boden welcomed the inclusion of the Strategic Outline Business Case for Whittlesey Southern Relief Road within the pipeline of projects, but commented that all four Fenland Market towns were facing transport issues so he was a little surprised that they had not all been included. He further questioned whether future elements of the Wisbech Access Strategy, Fenland Connectivity Study and the A141 Chatteris roundabout should also be included as pipeline projects. The Mayor stated that both he and Councillor Boden wanted to improve connectivity for Fenland. There had been much discussion about improving connectivity between March and Wisbech and he was still open to the idea of a heavy rail option, but that at present he was focused on very light rail as it was more deliverable at this stage. With regard to the other projects mentioned, it was entirely fitting for the Leader of FDC to advocate for his area, but equally it was for the leaders of the other constituent councils to have the opportunity to advocate for their areas too. This would ensure that all options were available for collective consideration, but it must be recognised that decisions would be needed as it would not be possible to deliver all projects. The Mayor wanted the Board to work holistically to make these decisions together to respond to need across the whole of the county. The list of pipeline projects was not definitive and he invited all constituent council leaders to put forward ideas for their areas.

In his capacity as the Lead Member for Housing, Councillor Herbert asked all constituent council leaders to look at potential housing schemes in their areas in order

to get as many schemes as possible on the table by March 2022. Homes England wanted to work with the Combined Authority and the Board would be consulted on the Housing Strategy going forward. With regard to the OxCam Arc, Councillor Herbert felt that the Combined Authority had a good case for putting proposals forward for discussion, noting that the Government's focus for the Arc seemed to be on skills and employability.

Mr Adams stated that he was content to move forward as proposed, but recognising that the draft proposals would be further shaped by the outcome of the consultation process. He noted that Government would no longer be supporting the Local Growth Fund and that this would be replaced by other funding vehicles, so there would be a need to reposition in order to take advantage of that. Other combined authorities were continuing to ring-fence funding to support business from within their own funds. Such funding could, for example, be used to encourage local business to capitalise on the products and services needed to support the Combined Authority's environmental ambitions and to create the necessary supply chains. In his judgement, the Board should consider this as it set a budget. The Mayor stated that this was a strong point and asked the Director of Strategy and the Chief Finance Officer to reflect on this.

Councillor Bailey endorsed Mr Adams' comments. She questioned whether the pipeline projects in Appendix 4 should be described as Mayoral priorities rather than Combined Authority priorities and expressed surprise not to see the A10 Crossing included. She had asked for sight of the proposed public consultation materials and had only received them the previous night. Only two questions were proposed and she was concerned that these would not elicit much useful feedback. There was no opportunity for consultation on the Mayoral priorities or on the public's priorities, just a request for comments in a free text box. Councillor Bailey expressed concern that it was proposed to carry forward significant costs associated with the Housing team when the programme had changed and future funding would come through Homes England. She was also concerned that the only support proposed for community-led schemes was due to be looked at by a consultant resource rather than in-house. With regard to housing, the Mayor stated that he was hopeful of a better outcome than had been articulated and that this continued to be discussed with Government. In his capacity as Lead Member for Housing, Councillor Herbert commented that he was optimistic that the Combined Authority would continue to make a contribution on housing beyond March 2022.

Mr Adams commented that the public consultation was not a tick-box exercise and asked in future that more thought should be given to ensure that the consultation was framed in a way to get the information needed and add value to the process. The Mayor stated that he would leave the construction of the consultation to experts, but that he would want to ensure regular engagement with constituent councils and with the public.

Councillor Fitzgerald commented that whilst he would not vote against the recommendations on the basis of the short-comings of the consultation he did feel that this was an issue for officers to consider. His preference would be for the pipeline of project proposals to reflect the Combined Authority's priorities as a whole with all constituent council leaders making a case for projects within their areas. He considered it to be a fluid document at present and suggested that some time should be set aside

for a specific discussion to discuss collectively what the Combined Authority wanted to deliver across the county. The Mayor stated that the current version had been described as Mayoral priorities as he did not want to be presumptive of the Board's wishes, but that by the end of the process they would be Combined Authority priorities.

Councillor Smith commented that the purpose of the Combined Authority was to deliver projects which went beyond what individual districts were able to deliver alone. In her judgement it was projects which offered this added value which the Board should focus on.

For clarity in advance of the vote the Deputy Monitoring Officer re-stated that the pipeline of project proposals at Appendix 4 did not form part of the statutory consultation process on the draft budget for 2022/23 and MTFP for 2022/23 to 2025/26 for which the Board's approval was sought.

On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Nethsingha, it was resolved by a majority of those present and voting to:

- a) Approve the Draft Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement for consultation.
- b) Approve the Draft Budget for 2022/23 and the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26 for consultation.
- c) Approve the timetable for consultation and those to be consulted.

The meeting was adjourned from 11.36 – 11.45am.

Part 3 - Combined Authority Decisions

120. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate Full Report

The Board was invited to consider the second set of recommendations from the Independent Commission on Climate. These focused in particular on supporting a transition as the area moved to a low carbon future. The Commission was clear that its recommendations could not be achieved without significant new resources being available. Appendix 4 set out some of the indicative cost and impact of actions as previously requested by the Board.

In her capacity as the Lead Member for the Environment and Climate Change, Councillor Smith offered her thanks to officers for their significant work on this. The Commission's recommendations had been presented in a way which made clear which recommendations were for the Combined Authority and which were for consideration by other organisations. She welcomed the consideration being given to what could be done by the Combined Authority and commented that she also thought there was a case for some money being passported to constituent councils so that they could build on the work they were already doing. Councillor Smith would also like to see the Combined Authority offering support to local organisations and businesses in addition to supporting its constituent councils and to consider providing core funding to some expert bodies such as Natural Cambridgeshire. She felt that the Combined Authority

should be cautious about setting up new initiatives where existing projects already existed locally. She also saw value in considering a Citizen's Assembly on Climate Change. She would also want to work with business on their journey to carbon zero and suggested a toolkit or business might be considered.

Mr Adams acknowledged that there was already some existing support for business, but that in some businesses there were obligations that were not easy to fix. He welcomed the inclusion of the indicative cost and impacts matrix and felt that it was now for the Board to produce a prioritised list for officers to work to. Mr Adams asked whether it would be possible to produce an outline business case for place-based adaptations by the next meeting. Officers stated that discussions around budget had already begun and that all of the items shown on the matrix would be considered as part of that process.

Councillor Boden expressed his disappointment with this second report by the Commission, commenting that in his judgement it was little better than the first in its failure to put things into context and its lack of prioritisation. He felt that there was a lack of balance in the context of the wider economy and the objective to double GVA. At an internal meeting he had challenged what he deemed to be a failure to state the cost-effectiveness of the proposals and the lack of quantification. He therefore welcomed the indicative cost and impact matrix as the single best page of a report he had seen during his time with the Combined Authority. In his judgement this was a valuable prioritisation tool and he felt there should be a focus on high impact, low cost initiatives.

Councillor Nethsingha agreed that indicative cost and impact matrix was a useful tool but commented that there were additional considerations which would need to be taken into account, such as addressing the biodiversity crisis. Where possible, she would like to see the actions taken to tackle climate change also having a positive impact on other aspects of life. She would welcome a further report fairly soon on the prioritisation of projects.

Councillor Bailey commented that it would be for the working group to get into the detail of the proposals. She had previously suggested a Combined Authority funded resource in each of the constituent councils to make this a reality and in her view this was something which the Combined Authority could do which would make a real difference. The Mayor acknowledged this as something to be considered.

On being proposed by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Nethsingha, it was resolved by a majority of those present and voting to:

- a) Thank the Commissioners for their work in developing the climate recommendations.
- b) Support the Commission's call for more devolved funding to implement the recommendations.
- c) Agree the development of actions to implement the CPCA recommendations in Appendix 2, subject to appropriate funding and business case assessments.

- d) Request the Climate Working Group consider the additional recommendations for other stakeholders in Appendix 3 as part of its work on the action plan due in February 2022.
- e) Note the recommendation on the future of the Commission and invite officers to develop revised terms of reference with the Chair of the Commission.

121. Capability Fund 2021-22 Grant Award

The Board was invited to approve the allocation of Capability Fund grants following the successful bid submitted to the Department for Transport. There had been some discussion earlier in the year about whether the Combined Authority would continue to receive active travel funding so it was encouraging that further funding had been released following meetings between the Minister and the Mayor. There was a lot of work being done on active travel by both Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Peterborough City Council (PCC) and the Combined Authority was actively engaging with them on this.

Councillor Herbert asked about the lower level of funding allocated to Cambridgeshire in comparison to Peterborough and asked whether there was more funding to come. The Head of Transport stated that the submissions made by CCC and PCC were based on the funding criteria and in this instance the PCC submission was of a higher value than CCC.

Councillor Bailey commented that the premise for most highways funding was that existing highways space should be replaced with active transport options. This had not been feasible for East Cambridgeshire District Council and this was a source of real frustration.

Councillor Fitzgerald commented that a small but vocal number of people had complained about previous iterations of the scheme which had created doubt within Government. Reassurances had since been offered and it was great to see the confidence which Government had in the Combined Authority to deliver on this issue.

Councillor Nethsingha welcomed the further grant funding which had been received. There was a certain amount of frustration about how Government had allocated the funding, but she appreciated that quick action was required. In her view there was a need to continue to look at what could be done in towns and she asked how much money was left in Tranche 3. The Head of Transport undertook to provide this figure outside of the meeting.

On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Fitzgerald, it was resolved unanimously by those present and voting to:

Approve the release of the Capability Fund grant from Department for Transport (DfT) to Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, as set out in Paragraph 3.1, to deliver against the bid the Combined Authority submitted in April 2021.

The vote in favour included at least two thirds of all Members appointed by the Constituent Councils present and voting, including the Members appointed by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council.

122. St Neots Future High Streets Fund Scheme - Combined Authority Co-Funding Business Case

The Board was invited to accept the business case produced by Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) for a Combined Authority match funding contribution towards the St Neots Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) Scheme. The sum of £3.1m had been approved for this purpose by the Board in April 2020 following a decision not to progress the Huntingdon Third River Crossing project. Unfortunately, due to the impact of the pandemic and some delays by MHCLG in announcing approved FHSF schemes the latest information had only been received in July 2021 when the Board had agreed a project change request to re-profile the project funding. Combined Authority funding related to three of the six key schemes which had been identified to revitalise and regenerate St Neots town centre. A project board had been established which included both Combined Authority and HDC officers and the project was scheduled for completion by March 2025.

Councillor Fuller voiced his support for the recommendations. However, he felt there were some important points of clarification which needed to be made, including the fact that this was not new money. There had been some debate about whether this report needed to be included on the agenda and HDC had been advised that this was because the funding had not yet been agreed. He welcomed the clarification which had now been made around the Board's previous decision in relation to this funding. Unfortunately, the presentation of information in the report had led to confusion about the situation locally as evidenced by a report in the Hunts Post which stated that work on St Neots town centre was moving a step closer, whereas discussions were already taking place with the county council with these transport schemes already being actively designed and planned. Unfortunately, there were also significant factual errors in the report. Paragraph 2.5 stated that the total cost of the Scheme was £8.5m, with £929k of funding secured from the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) under the FHSF Programme, just under £1m from HDC and £3.5m from Highways England. In fact, it was a £12.8m scheme and HDC had just secured a further £3.5m from Highways England making it a £16.3m scheme. HDC had put £5.9m into the scheme and the Government had contributed £3.75m. In Councillor Fuller's view these errors undermined the work done over the past few years in socialising this scheme locally and he emphasised the need to do better. Officers apologised for the error and explained that paragraph 2.5 should have included the words 'the total cost of the CPCA funded elements of the scheme' as clarified later in the report. The Mayor offered his apologies to Councillor Fuller and to Huntingdonshire residents for any confusion which had been caused and stated that the correct position would be recorded for the public record.

Councillor Fitzgerald suggested that a press release might be issued to clarify the position. The Mayor stated that the Combined Authority would want to work with all Members to ensure clarity on the points raised.

Councillor Nethsingha welcomed the proposals as an excellent project for St Neots.

On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Fuller, it was resolved unanimously by those present and voting to:

- a) Accept the Business Case produced for Combined Authority match funding towards the St Neots Future High Streets Fund Scheme.
- b) Authorise the Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer to complete the funding agreement with the grant recipient.

123. Market Towns Programme Investment Prospectus – Approval of recommended projects - November 2021

The Board was advised that the project proposals relating to Soham would now be brought before the Board at a later date, so approval was currently being sought solely for the project proposals relating to Ely. The proposals had been subject to a fully independent appraisal process and two further funding rounds were planned to allocate the remaining £2.6m of funding within the current financial year.

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

Approve project proposals received under the Market Towns Programme received from East Cambridgeshire District Council for the town of Ely to the sum of £344,000.

124. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Business Growth Company Limited - Appointment of new Director

The Board was reminded that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Business Growth Company Limited (Growth Co) was a wholly owned subsidiary of the Combined Authority. The Growth Co business plan required that the Deputy Chief Officer of the Business Board should be appointed as a director of the company. Following the recent appointment of Alan Downton to this position he had also been appointed as a director of Growth Co. In accordance with the shareholder agreement this appointment required the ratification of the Board.

Mr Adams commented that many directors were appointed without having the appropriate training needed to enable them to discharge their duties and asked that steps be taken to ensure that Mr Downton undertook all relevant training. The Deputy Monitoring Officer stated that a training programme was being devised for all Combined Authority officers who were appointed as directors of the Combined Authority's subsidiary companies.

Councillor Nethsingha asked for more information around the recruitment process for the Deputy Chief Officer of the Business Board. The Director of Business and Skills stated that this was recruitment to the Combined Authority establishment. As a result of Mr Downton's appointment as the Deputy Chief Officer of the Business Board he also

became the Senior Responsible Officer for Growth Co at the Combined Authority and as such was appointed as a director of Growth Co. Officers were sometimes placed on the boards of the Combined Authority's subsidiary companies in this *ex officio* capacity.

On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Mr Adams, it was resolved unanimously by those present and voting to:

Consent to the appointment of Alan Downton, Deputy Chief Officer of the Business Board at the Cambridgeshire Peterborough Combined Authority, as a director of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Business Growth Company Limited (Growth Co)

125. Community Renewal Fund Award

The Board was advised that the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) Award report had been added to the Forward Plan on 12 November 2021 under general exception arrangements. This followed the announcement by Government on 3 November 2021 of the results of the CRF application process. The Combined Authority had received approval for two of the seven project proposals which it had submitted as the Lead Authority for the CRF. These were Start and Grow, which was awarded £2,480k and Turning Point, which was awarded £847k. The project delivery window had been extended to 30 June 2022 to accommodate the late announcement of the successful projects by Government. It was understood that funding would be awarded as a revenue grant paid in two tranches with the final payment being made retrospectively against successful delivery.

Councillor Smith asked how the Combined Authority's success in this application process compared to other combined authorities. The Director of Business and Skills stated that the Combined Authority had received 0.02% above what it would have expected to receive and that this included approval of the largest single project in the country.

Councillor Herbert commented that it would be useful to know of any feedback received so that lessons could be learned for the future. The Director of Business and Skills stated that detailed feedback was awaited on those projects which had been unsuccessful and that this would be discussed with project leads when it was received.

On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Mr Adams, it was resolved unanimously by those present and voting to:

- a) Note the award of £3,393,851 from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) jointly with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in relation to the Community Renewal Fund
- b) Following acceptance of the grant, delegate authority to the Director of Business and Skills in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer to enter into grant funding agreements on behalf of the Combined Authority with the two approved providers.

By recommendation to the Combined Authority Board

Part 4 - Recommendations from the Transport and Infrastructure Committee

126. March Area Transport Study Outline Business Case

The Board was advised that the drawdown figure which the Transport and Infrastructure Committee had recommended to the Board for approval was £1.51 million, and not £1.5 million as shown in the published report.

The March Area Transport Study had first been approved for inclusion in the Transport programme in March 2018. The recommended package of schemes was commercially viable, deliverable and offered high value for money with a benefit cost ration (BCR) of 2.9. The Outline Business Case had been subject to independent review and had been signed off in accordance with Combined Authority's assurance process.

The Mayor stated that there had been a good debate of this item at the Transport and Infrastructure Committee meeting on 8 November and that the Committee had endorsed the recommendations unanimously.

Councillor Smith commented that she would like to see a full impact assessment of the carbon impact of projects of this type carried out in future. Officers stated that the full business case would pick up environmental issues.

Councillor Boden commented that the project would involve a lengthy and quite disruptive process, but that it would have a positive impact on March town centre once completed.

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

Approve the drawdown of £1.51 million for production of the Full Business Case and detailed design.

The vote in favour included at least two thirds of all Members appointed by the Constituent Councils present and voting, including the Members appointed by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council.

127. A1260 Nene Parkway Junction 15

The Board was advised that the report recommendations had been endorsed unanimously by the Transport and Infrastructure Committee on 8 November 2021. The Committee had noted that the scheme set a standard for including environmental and sustainable issues.

Councillor Smith welcomed the environmental enhancements and focus on green travel. However, she felt unable to support the recommendations as they would in her

view include and encourage car use. The Head of Transport stated that officers took that challenge seriously. The Local Transport Plan included a commitment to reduce car use across the region. However, there was still a need to address some of the travel challenges which currently existed. The proposals before the Board related to one of only three river crossings in the Peterborough area. In his judgement it was vital to look at improvements like this to manage the flow of through-traffic rather than seeing it moving onto the local road network. Officers had worked closely with Peterborough City Council (PCC) on the proposals and the project also included enhancements to local active transport options.

Councillor Fitzgerald commented that this was a much-needed project for Peterborough and that he believed that the proposals would result in less congestion and less pollution at a busy junction. He did not believe that it would increase or encourage more road users.

Mr Adams commented that he was wary of approving construction projects as they had a tendency to be over-spent and to over-run. He asked officers for their level of confidence in the proposals before the Board. The Head of Transport stated that this scheme had been subject to quite significant scrutiny and that he had high confidence in the proposals. PCC had a history of delivering transport projects to time and on budget in the majority of cases, except where external factors beyond its control occurred such as issues with utilities. Councillor Fitzgerald stated that PCC had an award-winning highways team.

On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Fitzgerald, it was resolved by a majority of those present and voting to:

- a) Approve the Full Business Case
- b) Approve an allocation of £3.014m from its capital reserves to increase the current subject to approval budget from £5m to the forecast construction cost of £8.014m
- c) Approve the total £8.014m for the construction phase of the project including the re-profiling of the project budget

The vote in favour included at least two thirds of all Members appointed by the Constituent Councils present and voting, including the Members appointed by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council.

Part 5 - Recommendations from the Skills Committee

128. Adult Education Budget Commissioning Approach and Statement for 2022-23 onwards

The recommendations before the Board were considered by the Skills Committee on 10 November 2021 where they had been endorsed unanimously.

The original procurement for the devolved Adult Education Budget had taken place in 2019 and a contract had been awarded on a three-year basis. It was proposed to

launch the next open procurement round in January 2022 with a focus on the youth offer for 18-24 year olds, skills support for the unemployed aged 24+, Level 2 and 3 qualifications, employer responsive provision in growth and priority sectors and a place-based focus on Fenland and Peterborough to address identified skills gaps. Officers were looking to establish a more transformative than transactional relationship with providers in delivery of the new Employment and Skills Strategy.

In her capacity as Lead Member for Skills and Chair of the Skills Committee, Councillor Nethsingha commented that this approach was thoroughly supported by the Skills Committee. She described the skills budget as quite small and expressed some frustration at the limited flexibility on its use. She would like to see the Board taking account of this. The Chief Executive welcomed the Board's passion in this area, commenting that she would want to see more work going forward with colleges and other providers.

Councillor Smith described the proposals as encouraging and asked when the outcome of mapping work on skills cold spots would be available. Officers stated that the first draft had been completed and that this would be available for the January meeting of the Skills Committee.

Councillor Boden observed that there was no significant mention of e-learning in the report and asked whether there should be more emphasis on this given the difficulties experienced by some residents in travelling to training venues. Officers stated that e-learning was already included in the provision in place.

Councillor Bailey commented that East Cambridgeshire as a whole was a cold spot for further education and skills provision.

On being proposed by Councillor Nethsingha, seconded by Councillor Bailey, it was resolved unanimously by those present and voting to:

- a) Approve the proposed commissioning approach for the devolved Adult Education Budget from 2022-23 academic year onwards, to procure Independent Training Providers under contracts for services for up to £3m per year, subject to Department for Education (DfE) awarding the funding.
- b) Approve the implementation of three-year Plan-Led Funding, for the commissioning of Further Education Colleges and Local Authorities, operating under grant funding, from 2022-23 academic year onwards, subject to DfE funding awards.
- c) Delegate authority to the Director of Business and Skills in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer, to enter into multi-year grant funding agreements with providers on behalf of the Combined Authority, following approval of three-year Plans
- d) Delegate authority to the Director of Business and Skills in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer, to enter into contracts for services with Independent Training Providers on behalf of the Combined Authority, following conclusion of the commissioning process outlined in this report.

Part 6 - Recommendations from the Business Board

The Mayor reminded the Board that when the Combined Authority took decisions as Accountable Body for the Business Board it was committed to acting in line with the Combined Authority Assurance Framework in the interests of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area as a whole, and to take decisions based on the recommendations of the Business Board.

129. Strategic Funding Management Review November 2021 and Project Change Request

The Board was advised that recommendation b) had been amended by the Business Board to recommend that the Monitoring Officer should be authorised to make any relevant changes to the Local Assurance Framework, rather than 'officers' as stated in the report.

Approval was recommended for a project change request for the University of Peterborough Phase 2 Car Park infrastructure project. This related to a decrease in match funding from Peterborough City Council (PCC) due to a reduction in the size of the planned car park. Approval was also sought for the proposed strategy for investing Business Board recycled funds.

Mr Adams stated that the proposals relating to the proposed strategy for investing recycled funds had received unanimous support when it was discussed by the Business Board on 8 November 2021. This would see it used as seed funding to leverage larger opportunities and to capitalise on larger opportunities via the Government's Levelling-Up Fund. A joined-up approach to large projects was needed and the support of local leaders to coral those opportunities would be vital.

Councillor Boden welcomed the proposals, noting that one possible use might be the Fenland Levelling-Up bid. The majority of monies making up the recycled funding had been re-allocated from the Wisbech Access Strategy so he felt that it would be appropriate for some of that funding to be returned to the area.

Councillor Smith asked what engagement had taken place between the Business Board and local councils on the options for the use of recycled funds and whether there was an over-arching strategy for pipeline projects. Officers stated that discussions had taken place with each of the constituent council's economic development managers. However, there was now £350m of pipeline projects identified so it would not be possible to deliver them all. Mr Adams stated that the pipeline represented opportunities remaining from previous project calls. The pipeline was based on the assumption of continued Local Growth Fund funding, but Government had decided instead to proceed with the Levelling-Up Fund. It was therefore appropriate for the Business Board to debate what shape the allocations of funds should take going forward. The proposals which the Business Board had put before the Board would create the leverage to draw in funding for large projects with a small residual amount held in reserve.

On being proposed by Mr Adams, seconded by Councillor Boden, it was resolved unanimously by those present and voting to:

- a) Approve the project change request for the University of Peterborough Phase 2 Car Park infrastructure project.
- b) Approve the proposed strategy for investing Business Board recycled funds, and for the Monitoring Officer to make any relevant changes to the Local Assurance Framework.

Councillor Fuller left the meeting at 1.52pm.

130. Agri-Tech Sector Strategy

The Board was reminded that agri-tech represented a key aspect of the Local Industrial Strategy. The Business Board had concluded that Promar International Ltd's report had provided a helpful starting point, but that a more focused piece of work was needed. Agri-TechE had been commissioned to carry out this further work and the resulting report had identified 14 possible interventions based around five key themes. The Combined Authority's geography was becoming world renowned for its agri-tech so it was vital to build on that. The resulting business cases would go to the Business Board for consideration and on to the Combined Authority Board for approval in the usual way.

Mr Adams commented that this work had taken some time to complete and was in his view long overdue. The Business Board now had a prioritised list of actions to draw on as it looked at potential funding sources and opportunities for the agri-tech sector.

Councillor Bailey commented that agri-tech was a sector of untapped potential within the region and she felt that its capacity should be promoted. She further commented that she would like to have a better understanding of the conversation around land use and would welcome the opportunity for the Board to learn more about this. Councillor Nethsingha agreed that this was something which might usefully be covered through a future workshop.

Councillor Boden noted that recommendation 4 of the Agri-TechE report referenced agriculture in Fenland. He felt it was important to recognise that Fenland was not an area of uniformly high-quality peat soil and that in some areas this had been partially or completely denuded. He asked what engagement had taken place with Fenland's farmers to understand the granularity of the circumstances which they faced. Officers stated that Agri-TechE had access to key farmers and growers in the Combined Authority area.

The Mayor welcomed this as an excellent report and emphasised the absolute expectation of lots of collaboration.

On being proposed by Mr Adams, seconded by Councillor Bailey, it was resolved unanimously by those present and voting to:

Approve the adoption of the Agri-Tech Sector Strategy/ Action Plan.

131. Business Board Annual Report 2020-21

The Combined Authority Board was invited to note the Business Board's Annual Report 2020/21 and the intention to request a virement from the forecast underspend on the Business Board Effectiveness Review to develop the Business Board microsite.

It was proposed to publish the annual report on the Combined Authority website to demonstrate the Business Board's achievements. An online dashboard would also be created for the business community in the new year as part of the proposed Business Board microsite.

Mr Adams commented that the Business Board had been in operation now for two years and the annual report summarised a number of its main achievements. Investments during this period were ten times more successful than had been the case under the previous local enterprise partnership (LEP). Based on this performance the Business Board was now seen as being in the top quartile and possibly within the top three LEPs in the country. The issues which had existed under the previous LEP had been fixed and it was important going forward to use this as evidence to Government to demonstrate that robust processes were in place and that the Business Board would deliver on any investment which it attracted. Mr Adams expressed his thanks to the Director of Business and Skills and his team for their hard work during this period. The Mayor echoed these sentiments.

Councillor Fitzgerald commended the role which Mr Adams had played in this process and described the work he had done in steering the team as remarkable. These comments were unanimously endorsed by the Board.

It was resolved to:

- a) Note the Business Board Annual Report 2020-2021.
- b) Note the need for further funding beyond the current allocation for the Annual Report to develop the Business Board microsite, and the intention to request a virement from the forecast underspend on the Business Board Effectiveness Review to meet this need.

Part 7 - Governance Reports

132. Combined Authority Committee Membership Changes and Business Board Substitutes November 2021

The Board was advised of changes to the membership of the Transport and Infrastructure Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to the substitute membership of the Housing and Communities Committee. The Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that Councillor Bailey should not vote on recommendation

c) as this related to her proposed re-appointment as the nominated substitute member for the Mayor and the Lead Member for Economic Growth on the Business Board.

On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Fitzgerald, it was resolved unanimously by those present and voting to:

- a) Ratify the appointment by Fenland District Council of Councillor Samantha Hoy as its substitute member on the Housing and Communities Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2021/2022.
- b) Ratify the appointment by East Cambridgeshire District Council of Councillor Ian Bovingdon as its member on the Transport and Infrastructure Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2021/2022.
- c) Approve the reappointment of the nominated substitute member for the Mayor and Lead Member for Economic Growth for the Business Board (Councillor Anna Bailey)
- d) Note the appointment by Peterborough City Council of Councillor Amjad Iqbal as one of its members on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2021/2022.

133. Annotated Forward Plan

On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Nethsingha, it was resolved unanimously by those present and voting to:

Approve the Forward Plan.

134. Performance Report

The Board was advised that the version of the report which was initially published with the agenda was an early version, but that the correct version was published on 17 November 2021 and a copy sent electronically to all members of the Board.

The Board's attention was drawn to the CAM project which was currently showing as amber, but which was due to close later in the month following the Board's decision in October 2021 to end the project. The fundamentals of the local economy remained strong despite the Covid shock. The format of the performance report was currently being revised and the outcome of this work would be brought to the Board in January.

It was resolved to:

Note the latest Performance Dashboard

(Mayor)