



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2024

Venue:	CPCA Meeting Room, Pathfinder House, Huntingdon	
Time:	11.00 am	
Present:	Cllr Aidan Ven de Weyer (Chair)	South Cambridgeshire District Council
	Councillor Martin Cahn	South Cambridgeshire District Council
	Cllr Caroline Shepherd	East Cambs District Council
	Councillor Iva Divkovic	Cambridge City Council
	Councillor Anna Bradnam	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Councillor Steve Count	Cambridgeshire County Council
	Councillor Anne Hay	Fenland District Council
	Councillor Nathan Hunt	Huntingdonshire District Council
	Councillor Jon Neish	Huntingdonshire District Council
	Councillor Alison Jones	Peterborough City Council
	Councillor Roger Antunes	Peterborough City Council

Minutes

1	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies received from Cllr Inskip substituted by Cllr Shepherd, Cllr Goldsack substituted by Cllr Count, Cllr Sennitt-Clough, Cllr Vellacott
2	Declaration of Interests
	There were no declaration of interests made.
3	Public Questions
	No public questions were received.
4	Minutes of the previous meeting
	The minutes of the meeting on 11 th July 2024 were approved as an accurate record. The Action Log was noted by the Committee.
5	Improvement Framework - Next Steps

The Committee received the report which provided information on the closure of the best value improvement programme (phase 3) and next steps.

The following points were raised during the discussion:-

- In response to a question about looking to other authorities for lessons learnt the officers advised that they spoke with other Mayoral Combined Authorities and each team were part of a network but it was important to note that each MCA was different.
- MHCLG had recognised the significant progress within the CPCA and there was engagement and a willingness to see how CPCA lessons could be applied elsewhere.
- In response to a query about the end date for the Independent Advisory and Support Group (IASG) the Committee were advised that it would be for the CA Board to decide whether they wished for this to be extended past May. It was a requirement from MHCLG for it to end in January and going forward it would be more informal.
- In response to a question about staff morale and previously reported high turnover numbers the officers advised that engagement with staff was greater; staff survey's were showing improvement and the most recent survey had recently been completed. Recruitment to vacancies had also improved. The wellbeing of staff was key to ensuring retention of staff and the turnover rate of was below the medium for other public sector organisations.
- In response to a query about the embedding of the improvement work and how this would be reported back to members the officers advised that there would be a regular update to Board members as part of the CEO Update which could be shared with O&S members.
- The Committee requested that they receive the report that would be taken to CA Board in May regarding the ongoing role of the IASG.

The Committee RESOLVED to:

A Note the contents of the letter from Max Soule, Deputy Director, Local Government Intervention and Stewardship, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

B Recognise the progress that has been made and the work undertaken by staff, Elected Members, partners and agencies to address the areas of identified improvement.

C Note the wider project plan for activity post the lifting of the Best Value Notice

D Note the close down arrangements for the existing improvement programme (phase 3)

E Note the proposed role for the Independent Advisory and Support Group (formerly the Independent Improvement Board) and the draft Terms of Reference

F Note the current proposed end date for the Independent Advisory and Support Group as end of May 2025 (last working day 30 May 2025).

ACTIONS:

- 1) The CEO update to CA Board be shared with O&S Committee going forward.
- 2) The IASG report in May 2025 would be taken to the following O&S Committee – item to be added to work programme.

6 Corporate Performance Report Q1 and Q2 24/25

The Committee received the report which provided the Committee with the Q1 and Q2 2024/25 Performance Update.

The following points were raised during the discussion:-

- In response to a question about Metric 23 the number of apprenticeships created by CA funded investment and when the new KPI would be available the officers advised more work needed to be done to ensure it was more comprehensive and officers would be providing a workshop on internal metrics.

- The Committee requested that the new metric would have the ability to track the geographical area.
- In response to a question about Metric 27 Forecast vs budget loss/carried forward (current financial year) officers advised that it had taken a long time to develop some business cases which had led to delays but engagement & consultation on the proposals was now being done.
- In response to a query about HUG2 the committee were advised that the CPCA was the accountable body for the Net ZERO Hub which was delivering HUG2 however the CPCA had not opted into the Warmer Homes Local Grant scheme which is the successor scheme due to design issues with the scheme following an assessment by the Hub team and discussion at Board.
- In response to a question about the Tiger passes, the committee were advised that there had been 30k users and that the number of users and analysis was very important but currently they did not have full data. By the start of next year the hope was to have enough data to do some comparative analysis on how effective the scheme had been.
- In response to a question about the level of detail, the committee advised that officers were considering more interactive dashboards that would be visual and provide greater detail for members.

The Committee RESOLVED to note the report.

7 Chair for Transport & Infrastructure Committee

The Committee received a verbal update from the Chair for Transport & Infrastructure Committee.

The Committee members had submitted areas of interest prior to the meeting which the Chair responded to.

Transport programme – are there any delays and actions taken to address cost overruns or slippage

The CPCA has maintained a consistent and proactive approach to collaboration with the Department for Transport (DfT) regarding transport works, including TCF - Transforming Cities Fund. We have held regular update meetings, ensuring clear communication at every stage, and included key delivery partners, such as CCC and PCC.

Through our quarterly reporting templates to DfT and associated meetings, we've been transparent about any delays or overruns, outlining the mitigations and risk management actions we've implemented. Our efforts have been positively acknowledged by the DfT and their independent assessors, who have provided both verbal and written feedback commending our communication and delivery to date.

Two key projects, Fengate and March Area Transport Study construction schemes have been successfully completed. Thanks to an underspend and with the DfT's agreement, we were able to extend the funding deadline, allowing us to take on additional tasks that further enhanced the schemes. This demonstrates our ability to not only meet but exceed expectations, ensuring that we deliver added value wherever possible.

Delays can occur for a variety of reasons and of course in capital programmes in particular. In some cases, this is where a business case has been developed and then used to try to secure funding from Government and this has not been successful or indeed not been resolved. For instance on Ely Junction, we know the business case is well regarded and some indications were given of funding from HS2 cancellation so we do not yet have the money to progress. This is disappointing but we continue to push but it does also have knock on effects on other projects e.g. Snailwell Loop which can't go ahead until the junction is updated. In other cases there are issues where business cases have to be updated for new Government guidance and also that complex business cases do take time to development for multi-million projects. In other cases there can be issues arising on site from

weather, ecology, archaeology and contractor issues and we continue to consider how we can improve our risk management of these issues working with our partner authorities.

New Government policy on transport and how this is having an impact on our programme

The Combined Authority is actively engaging with government transport policies to ensure that our strategies align with national objectives, while addressing local needs. Considering the recent shifts in government policy, particularly regarding sustainability and connectivity, we are continuing to focus on developing initiatives that promote active travel, reduce carbon emissions, and enhance public transport options – in line with our Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.

By closely following government guidelines and funding opportunities, we can better position ourselves to secure resources that will facilitate infrastructure improvements and support economic growth in our communities.

One significant impact of government policy on transport is the emphasis on decarbonisation. The Combined Authority is committed to promoting greener transport solutions, such as electric vehicles, cycling, and walking, in response to national targets. We are investing in the expansion of cycling infrastructure, improved pedestrian pathways, and electric vehicle charging points through the LEVI funding opportunity, all of which contribute to a more sustainable transport network. This not only aligns with government objectives but also enhances the quality of life for residents by providing cleaner and healthier travel options.

Really positive shift in relationship – move to greater equality. Plus positivity of mission-led approach. Additionally, government policies aimed at improving regional connectivity strengthen partnerships with neighbouring local authorities, transport operators and sub-national transport bodies such as Transport East and EEH. By collaborating on integrated transport solutions, we can jointly influence to achieve shared goals and create a more cohesive and efficient network that facilitates seamless travel across the region. This cooperation is essential in addressing congestion and ensuring that our transport system supports economic growth and accessibility for all residents.

A141 update

The A141 project has reached an exciting and pivotal stage, with the first public engagement launched on 16th October. This marks a significant milestone in our efforts to deliver a transformative project for the region.

The A141 and St Ives Improvements Study considers the upgrading of the transport network on the A141 corridor and around Huntingdon and St Ives. Through the improvements outlined within the study, the Combined Authority aim to support local and long-distance travel. Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) has been commissioned to deliver an Outline Business Case (OBC). The Combined Authority is the project sponsor, and the decisions are made through the Transport and Infrastructure Committee.

The CPCA has been working closely and collaboratively with CCC and HDC, ensuring full transparency throughout the process. We have made it a priority to engage key stakeholders, providing them with timely updates and opportunities to contribute to the programme and its outputs. This collaborative approach not only strengthens the project but also ensures that we are aligned with the needs and priorities of the communities we serve.

March – Wisbech Rail update

Network Rail successfully delivered its Strategic Option Appraisal Report, along with cost and economic advice documents, to the CPCA in April/May 2024.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of these important outputs, it was agreed that FDC members and officers would receive a briefing before we formally report back to the Transport and Infrastructure Committee (TIC). Although the FDC briefing was initially delayed due to the general election and FDC availability over the summer, I am pleased to share that the briefing has now taken place.

TiC were unanimous in its continued support for Wisbech Rail. The discussion at TiC agreed that a rescope of the work would be helpful to consider the wider benefits and the connectivity with the Fens Reservoir development, Chatteris and wider growth of the area. Options for this will be brought back to committee in spring. It was noted that the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) is very low as presented for heavy and light rail options and this is a key part of any funding decisions. Plus looking at short term measures.

Digital connectivity – does energy hold back the roll out of AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to revolutionise our transport system, enhancing efficiency, improving safety, and providing personalised travel experiences for users. By leveraging data analytics, machine learning, and predictive modelling, AI can optimise traffic management, streamline public transport operations, and facilitate better decision-making in transport planning. These advancements could lead to more responsive and sustainable transport networks that adapt to real-time demand, ultimately improving the overall quality of service for commuters and reducing environmental impacts.

However, the successful rollout of AI in our transport sector may be hindered by the current energy challenges facing the region. As AI technologies require substantial computational power, the availability of reliable energy sources is crucial for supporting their deployment and operation. Limited energy capacity or frequent disruptions could impede the implementation of AI-driven solutions, delaying the enhancements to our transport offerings.

To fully realise the benefits of AI, it is essential for the region to address these energy constraints, ensuring that we can support the technological advancements needed to create an efficient and sustainable transport network. By working in partnership to develop robust energy infrastructure, we can pave the way for innovative transport solutions that benefit all residents and contribute to our wider sustainability goals. Therefore, the Combined Authority will continue to work with its partners to address the energy challenge within the region (as outlined within the recent IDF report and the emerging work on the Local Growth Plan).

Monitoring and evaluation development

The Strategic Transport team is actively collaborating with the Policy, Insight, and Performance team at the Combined Authority to enhance the monitoring and evaluation of both the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and various transport projects. This partnership is focused on ensuring our strategies are data-driven and effective in meeting our objectives.

Key actions currently underway include:

- **Enhanced Resource Allocation:** We have successfully recruited and onboarded additional specialist performance management and evaluation resources within the Chief Executive's Office to bolster our efforts.
- **New Evidence Base Development:** A comprehensive Cambridgeshire and Peterborough State of the Region evidence base was approved by the Combined Authority Board (CAB) for approval on 16th October. This evidence base includes several contextual indicators that will enhance our understanding of transport and connectivity in the region.
- **Framework Refresh:** The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is being refreshed to align with the Single Assurance Framework (SAF), with a plan to present this for CAB approval in March 2025.
- **LTCP Review:** We are reviewing the LTCP monitoring and evaluation plan, aiming to present our findings and recommendations to the January Transport and Infrastructure Committee.
- **TCF Scheme Review:** A thorough review of the monitoring and evaluation of Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) schemes is currently in progress.
- **SAF Implementation:** The SAF implementation includes robust data collection, monitoring, and evaluation planning throughout the project lifecycle, ensuring evaluations are conducted post-completion where appropriate.
- **Business Case Integration:** All transport business cases, whether at the outline or full stage, now include a proposed programme for monitoring and evaluation, linking closely with the refreshed Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and establishing a forward-looking programme of works for 1- and 5-year post-scheme reviews.
- **Coordination with Highway Authorities:** We have begun discussions with Highway Authorities to

	<p>improve data sharing and coordination of monitoring efforts in our role as the Transport Authority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative Evaluation Planning: The Policy, Insight and Performance Team, in partnership with the Public Transport Team, is developing an evaluation plan for the new and improved bus routes funded through the additional precept investment. <p><u>Bus reform</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bus franchising consultation is now past the halfway stage and due to conclude on November 20th, 2024. • Engagement in the region has continued with statutory consultees, protected characteristic groups and drop-in sessions at various locations.
8	<p>Budget Scrutiny Working Group Feedback</p>
	<p>The Committee received the report from the budget working group which provided feedback and advised of the recommendations that had been made.</p> <p>The Committee ratified the recommendations and noted the budget working groups report.</p>
9	<p>Forward Plan</p>
	<p>The Committee received verbal updates from the rapporteurs for the Thematic Committees.</p> <p>The Chair advised that in relation to the Housing Working Group that the Internal Audit is in the final stages of their own review. We would expect that to be complete in the coming days.</p> <p>The working group set up by this committee at the last meeting would meet immediately after this. A provisional date had been set. It was important that our work is informed by that of Internal Audit. We would then be able to determine a very focussed programme of work over the following few weeks.</p> <p>There was a very firm target of bringing a substantive report to the January meeting of Overview and Scrutiny.</p> <p>The Committee RESOLVED to note the Forward Plan.</p>
10	<p>Work Programme</p>
	<p>It was resolved to note the work programme with the addition of the Housing Working Group report to be added to the January agenda.</p>
11	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p>
	<p>The next meeting is scheduled for 16th January. The meeting venue is CPCA Meeting Room, Pathfinder House, Huntingdonshire DC.</p>