



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Max Soule

*Deputy Director, Local
Government Stewardship and
Intervention*

**Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government**

4th Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

www.gov.uk/mhclg

Rob Bridge
Chief Executive
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

9 September 2024

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Best Value Notice expired 30 July 2024

Dear Rob,

As you know, the department issued a revised Best Value Notice (“Notice”) to CPCA on 30 January 2024 as a formal notification that the department had ongoing concerns regarding the authority and requesting that the authority engages with the department to provide further assurance of improvement.

We recognise the progress made by CPCA since then, including continuing to deliver and update its improvement plan, making further permanent appointments to bolster the senior leadership team, embedding positive changes relating to culture and governance across the organisation and starting to monitor the longer-term impacts of those changes. We welcome comments from the independent Improvement Board that it is “encouraged by the increasing engagement of the constituent authorities and partners” in ongoing work to develop a set of strategic ambitions for the region and a plan to deliver them. We also recognise the authority’s constructive engagement with both the Improvement Board and the department throughout the process of the Notices.

In light of the above, based on the available evidence ministers are reassured as to CPCA’s capacity to comply with its Best Value Duty under the Local Government Act 1999 and the Notice will not be reissued at this time.

We expect CPCA to sustain its improvement journey, further embedding change and continuing to strive for strong partnership working across all levels of the combined authority and its constituent authorities. As the Improvement Board notes, refining the strategic ambitions for the region and an associated delivery plan remains an important area of work to enable the area to achieve its full potential for the benefit of residents, and effective partnership working is key to this. We look forward to seeing further progress on this in the coming months.

The department will continue to review CPCA’s progress and, as part of this, I ask that you continue to engage at officer level with the department over at least the next six months. During this time, we will provide further updates to Ministers on your progress. I am pleased that you have agreed to maintain the Improvement Board until January and we will look to the Board’s upcoming reports, as well as those of your external auditor, for updates. I also encourage you to keep using the support available from the Local Government Association.

Should the Department deem it necessary to seek further assurance through a Best Value Notice in future, based on the available evidence, a further Notice will be issued. The Secretary of State also holds statutory powers under the Local Government Act 1999 to inspect or intervene in local authorities where there is evidence of Best Value failure and, separately, under section 230 of the Local Government Act 1972 to request information from local authorities. A failure to demonstrate continuous improvement may be judged to contribute to best value failure and the Secretary of State will consider using these powers as appropriate.

It is important to ensure transparency in relation to the challenges faced by local authorities and the department's engagement on these. A copy of this letter will therefore be published on GOV.UK, in line with the Best Value Notices previously issued to the authority. I encourage you to make a copy of this letter available on the authority's website, and to share it with the Improvement Board, the Combined Authority Board and the Audit and Governance Committee. We will notify your external auditor of our decision.

A member of my team will be in touch with you to discuss future engagement. I look forward to receiving updates on your continued progress.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Max Soule', written in a cursive style.

Max Soule

Deputy Director, Local Government Stewardship and Intervention