



COMBINED AUTHORITY BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2024

Venue:	Alconbury Enterprise Campus, Alconbury Weald, PE28 4XA	
Time:	10.15 am – 2.41 pm	
Present:	Dr Nik Johnson Councillor Anna Bailey Councillor Chris Boden Councillor Sarah Conboy Councillor Dennis Jones Councillor Lucy Nethsingha Councillor Anna Smith Councillor Bridget Smith	Mayor East Cambridgeshire District Council Fenland District Council Huntingdonshire District Council Peterborough City Council Cambridgeshire County Council Cambridge City Council South Cambridgeshire District Council
Co-Opted Members:	Al Kingsley Darryl Preston Councillor Edna Murphy	Business Board Police and Crime Commissioner Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority
Apologies	John O'Brien	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board

Minutes

1	Announcements
	The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2	Apologies for Absence
	Apologies were received from John O'Brien, Chair of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board.
3	Declaration of Interests
	There were no declaration of interests made.
4	Minutes of the previous meeting
	<p>The Mayor made a point of clarification regarding the public and member questions at the October meeting. The final question related to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and in his response to Councillor Bailey's question, he mentioned regarding the timing of the LNRS approval that, in June 2023, the target date was March 2025 but should have said that the target date was, at that time, November 2024.</p> <p>A note will be added to the public questions document for the October meeting to clarify that, and that therefore 2025 was not always the target date for completion.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting on 16 October 2024 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Mayor. The action log was noted.</p>

5	<p>Petitions</p>
	<p>No petitions were received.</p>
6	<p>Public Questions</p>
	<p>One public question were received in advance of the meeting. The question and response are published here.</p>
7	<p>Forward Plan</p>
	<p>It was resolved unanimously to: A Approve the Forward Plan for November 2024</p>
8	<p>Combined Authority Chief Executive Highlights Report</p>
	<p>The Chief Executive introduced the report and highlighted key points to members.</p> <p>Members discussed progress on the Local Growth Plan (LGP), with a focus on science, technology, agritech, advanced manufacturing, and digital infrastructure. These priorities align with the national industrial strategy, and while formal approval for the LGP is expected in the summer, the iterative process has involved close collaboration with the government. The main challenges identified include connectivity, utilities, energy, water, and housing, which are seen as essential to support growth in the area. Members thanked everyone for their efforts so far, especially given the resource constraints.</p> <p>Updates were provided on recent budget announcements, including the Levelling Up Fund, the Wisbech town deal, and the East-West Rail (EWR) project. There was a strong emphasis on the need to maximise economic benefits from the EWR and to advocate for environmental and net-gain priorities, especially to prevent any negative environmental impacts. Members were keen to hold infrastructure projects accountable to high environmental standards, and some raised concerns over the potential impact on local biodiversity.</p> <p>The discussion also highlighted long-standing issues around public service funding, especially with rapidly growing populations that outpace current government funding models. Members expressed concerns over the "funding lag" in public services, which leaves local services under-resourced. The need for fairer and faster funding adjustments was emphasised, and suggestions were made to form alliances with other high-growth areas to advocate for quicker data updates from national statistics for funding calculations.</p> <p>Members requested for officers to provide a list highlighting the Combined Authority's achievements. Officers were also asked to whether there is any evidence that level 5 HNDs are being achieved within 16 weeks</p> <p>It was resolved to: A Note the content of the report</p>
9	<p>Homes England Strategic Place Partnership - KD2024/056</p>
	<p>The Chief Executive introduced the report and highlighted key points to members.</p> <p>The discussion emphasised that this initiative would not interfere with existing local planning efforts. There was general support for improving the relationship between regional authorities and Homes England (HE), with hopes for increased influence on HE's investments in local projects and infrastructure. Members expressed a desire to ensure that housing developments are part of sustainable communities with local employment and connectivity.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the impact of this collaboration on existing local plans, with some members wary of the potential overlap or conflict with local planning authorities' established objectives. They stressed the need for this partnership to support, rather than undermine, local plans and priorities, and for the local voice, including business interests, to be represented in decision-making.</p> <p>The potential benefits of the collaboration were also highlighted, with members noting that other regions have used similar partnerships to advocate effectively for local needs. Members requested reassurances on how specific types of housing projects, such as social housing and rent-to-buy schemes, might be prioritised, and how the arrangement could support regional ambitions without compromising local authority autonomy.</p>

	<p>Officers agreed to feed back to Homes England to include in the MoU the recognition of the sovereignty of constituent authority local plans.</p> <p>Proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bridget Smith, it was resolved unanimously to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Approve the entering of a Memorandum of Understanding with Homes England to agree a Strategic Place Partnership (SPP) and all the outlined governance arrangements associated with the SPP. B Approve the formation of the Strategic Place Partnership Board and the development of a five-year Partnership Business Plan and annual Delivery Plans. C Delegate to the Mayor and Chief Executive to finalise the Memorandum of Understanding with Homes England. D Note the governance arrangements for the Combined Authority to engage constituent councils to inform and contribute to the business and delivery plans.
10	<p>Budget Monitoring Update - KD2024/060</p>
	<p>The Executive Director, Resources, introduced the report and highlighted key points to members.</p> <p>Members sought a clearer picture of whether their own underspend was higher or lower than that of other CAs, given variances across authorities. Specific slippage figures were given from Liverpool City Region's public accounts, referencing underspend/slippage of £191m against a budget of £424m (with transport and housing being the most significant items); compared to CPCA £33m underspend/slippage against £127.3m budget excluding HUG2.</p> <p>Members raised concerns about public transport, particularly around bus services. There were challenges in obtaining bus passenger usage data, with some providers not sharing information, making it difficult to assess route efficiency and subsidy use. The example of the 7a bus route, heavily subsidised per passenger, highlighted concerns over the allocation of resources to underperforming services. A request was made for a review of subsidised routes preventing further passenger drop-off.</p> <p>Members expressed satisfaction at the overspend in the adult education budget, reflecting high demand. Additionally, members acknowledged recent improvements in budgetary processes and transparency in financial reporting.</p> <p>Officers agreed to circulate more information on slippage figures to board members.</p> <p>On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Anna Smith, it was resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Note the financial performance of the Combined Authority with actuals as at 30th September 2024. B Approve that the underspend on transport budgets is set aside to meet future passenger transport related services as set out in paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8. C Note the decisions taken by the Chief Executive and Investment Committee under powers delegated by the Board as set out in section 6 of this report. D Approve the continuation of the Tiger Pass scheme beyond its current end date of May 2025 and approve that the in-year underspend on the scheme is set aside in an earmarked reserve as set out in section 7 of the report in order to fund its extension. E Approve to set aside £225k from the 2024/25 Programme Response Fund to support the continuation of the Changing Futures project over three years from 2025/26. <p>[8 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention]</p>
11	<p>DRAFT 2025/26 Corporate Strategy and Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan - KD2024/005</p>
	<p>The Executive Director, Resources, introduced the report and highlighted key points to members.</p> <p>Key discussions centred on proposed budget items, particularly a potential increase in the Mayoral Precept and funding for public transport improvements. Some members expressed concerns about continually raising council taxes, with emphasis that constant precept increases could become unsustainable for residents. Others voiced reluctance but acknowledged that rising costs and the need for better services, especially in transportation, made it necessary to consider adjustments.</p> <p>The proposed budget included a potential 4.99% precept increase, aiming to support improved public</p>

	<p>transport services, including fare caps and increased accessibility, particularly for younger users. While some members opposed any increase, others highlighted the benefits, noting that investments in transport were positively impacting service levels.</p> <p>On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Anna Smith, it was resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Note the developing draft Corporate Strategy following refresh. B Approve the draft budget for 2025-26 and the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29 as set out in this report and accompanying appendices for consultation. C Note that the budget currently assumes that the Mayoral Precept is maintained at its current Band D equivalent level of £36 and that the Mayor will seek views on whether to maintain the Precept at this level or apply an uplift of 4.99%, resulting in a Band D equivalent of £37.80. This is set out in paragraphs 2.84 and 2.85 of the report and Appendix 1. D Note the further work being undertaken in relation to the bus fare cap and that the revenue funding options will be reviewed with partners to identify potential mitigation opportunities for consideration in the final budget. See also paragraph 2.22 of the report. E Approve the timetable for consultation and those to be consulted. <p>[6 for, 2 against, 1 abstention]</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">---o0o---</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Meeting adjourned from 12:55 to 13:15</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">---o0o---</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Corporate Performance Report, Q1 and Q2 2024/25</p>
	<p>The Performance and Evaluation Manager introduced the report and highlighted key points to members.</p> <p>Members requested an update on initiatives aimed at reducing the number of traffic-related fatalities and injuries, and an action was assigned to the transport team to provide an update in a future highlight report.</p> <p>Concerns were raised over the current use of outdated metrics, especially the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), which is updated infrequently and lacks timely data. Members discussed adopting the Annual Deprivation Index, a more frequently updated metric covering economic, health, and crime data, to better track and address inequalities. The conversation underscored the need for more current and relevant data, and it was agreed that future metrics should include those with more regular updates. Members also emphasised the importance of consistency in data comparisons, ensuring that new metrics provide an accurate and actionable view of the area's social and economic needs.</p> <p>It was resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Note performance information relating to the Combined Authority's Corporate Key Performance Indicators. B Note performance information relating to the Combined Authority's Most Complex Programmes and Projects. C Note performance information relating to the Combined Authority's Headline Priority Activities. D Note progress to evaluate the impact of the Devolution Deal Investment Fund in a Gateway Review. E Note progress to implement the Combined Authority's Performance Management Framework.
<p>13</p>	<p>Corporate Risk Report and Risk Appetite Statement</p>
	<p>The Head of Programme Management Office introduced the report and highlighted key points to members.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about cyber security, with members questioning the relatively low risk rating despite increasing cyber threats. It was noted that a business continuity exercise on cyber security is planned for next month to reassess and potentially update this risk level.</p> <p>Members emphasised the importance of setting and understanding risk appetite across various operational areas, recognising that risk management can also highlight opportunities, not just threats.</p>

	<p>They noted the trailblazing work being done at the authority that has not been done elsewhere and commended that. They discussed the need for clearer alignment between the authority's stated risk appetite and how it is visually represented on heat maps, suggesting that these maps should better reflect different levels of acceptable risk for various categories. Additionally, it was noted that local government traditionally tends to be cautious with risk, which may not always align with the needs of partnership work or innovation-focused projects. The discussion highlighted a shared interest in refining the risk approach to support balanced, strategic decision-making.</p> <p>On being proposed by Councillor Edna Murphy, seconded by Councillor Nethsingha, it was resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Note the Corporate Risk Register, Dashboard and Heat Map B Approve the Corporate Risk Appetite Statement C Note progress of Audit & Governance Deep Dives <p>[8 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention]</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">---o0o---</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Councillors Anna Bailey and Edna Murphy left the meeting during the next agenda item</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">---o0o---</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>Review of Investment Concept Papers KD2024/042</p>
	<p>The Executive Director, Resources, introduced the report and highlighted key points to members. Concerns were raised about the execution details and measurable impact of the retrofitting project. However, members agreed that the guide created for homeowners, which includes practical information on energy-saving upgrades, is a useful resource despite challenges in directly measuring its impact. Additional information on take up should be added to the business case.</p> <p>The fen roads project was highlighted as essential for regional infrastructure, given the importance of maintaining roads in this area for growth and accessibility. Members noted that collaboration between local authorities and CPCA was crucial in advancing such projects, and CPCA's role as a local funding authority uniquely positioned it to address these needs.</p> <p>Discussion on the HUG2 (Home Upgrade Grant 2) funding, emphasised the need for careful monitoring to ensure continuity of benefits as CPCA prepares to transition into a new funding phase. T</p> <p>There was an acknowledgment that the Investment Committee's early-stage processes will continue to evolve, and members expressed the importance of clear communication and relevant data sharing with other councils to enhance project execution and oversight.</p> <p>On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bridget Smith, it was resolved unanimously to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Approve the concept paper for Extending Retrofitting your Home to be developed as a formal business case. B Approve the concept paper for Fen Roads Trial to be developed as a formal business case. C Approve the concept paper for Domestic Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Heating to be developed as a formal business case.
<p>15</p>	<p>Recommendations from the Skills and Employment Committee</p>
	<p>The Board was advised that the recommendations tabled had been unanimously supported by the Skills and Employment Committee at its meeting on 21 October 2024.</p> <p>Regarding the Adult Skills Fund report, members focused on the need to address the local skills gap, particularly in the Fenland area, which has significant disparities in workforce qualifications. Emphasis was placed on the importance of developing a strong skills base to support regional growth, and it was suggested that the CPCA could prioritise this by including a specific strategic objective targeting the skills gap in underrepresented areas.</p> <p>The potential construction of the Fens reservoir was noted as a major future project, requiring a range of skilled roles, such as HGV drivers and electricians, which presents an opportunity for targeted skills training in the area. Members acknowledged past and ongoing efforts by local authorities to bridge the skills gap, though challenges persist, especially with recruiting in sectors like road haulage, where</p>

	<p>retirements outpace new training.</p> <p>There was support for exploring innovative approaches to encourage skill development in hard-to-reach groups within the region. Additionally, recent collaborative efforts to provide local training, including HGV driver programs, were commended, though concerns about the long-term sustainability of such initiatives were raised.</p> <p>On being proposed by Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, seconded Mayor, it was resolved to approve the recommendations as set out below:</p> <p>[7 for, 0 against, 1 abstention]</p>
15a	<p>Bootcamps Update - KD2024/051</p> <p>Subject to confirmation of grant funding of £3,511,946 from Department for Education (DfE):</p> <p>A Accept the grant funding to deliver Wave 6 Skills Bootcamp for FY 2025/2026</p> <p>B Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Skills and Employment, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter into, sign and award grant agreements; • Enter into, sign and award contracts and extend contracts with existing providers where appropriate; <p>C Carry out a relevant procurement exercise, for the delivery of wave 6 Skills Bootcamps funding and award and sign contracts with successful providers.</p>
15b	<p>Adult Skills Fund - KD2024/061</p> <p>A Approve the transitional commissioning plan for private and third-sector providers for delivery from 1.8.25 and beyond as set out in section 3.6 of this report.</p> <p>B Agree to the development of an Adult Skills Commissioning Strategy 2025 - 2028</p>
16	<p>Recommendations from the Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee</p> <p>The Board was advised that the recommendations tabled had been unanimously supported by the Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee at its meeting on 25 October 2024.</p> <p>Discussing the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUG2) and the potential expression of interest in the upcoming Warmer Homes Local Grant Scheme, concerns were raised about ongoing challenges within HUG2, specifically regarding restrictive income caps, low funding limits, and significant administrative costs. These issues create financial risks and could hinder effective fund utilization, potentially leaving the Combined Authority (CA) financially exposed.</p> <p>Due to the programme's design limitations, which cannot be adjusted locally, members noted that many regional authorities face similar issues and may opt out of the scheme. Given this, the recommendation was not to submit an expression of interest at this time but instead to communicate with DESNEZ (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero) to address these concerns and potentially improve future schemes. Members suggested pursuing further dialogue with government officials to seek modifications and address the administrative burdens posed by the program's current structure.</p> <p>On being proposed by Councillor Bridget Smith, seconded by Mayor, it was resolved to approve the recommendations as set out below:</p> <p>[7 for, 0 against, 1 abstention]</p>
16a	<p>Infrastructure Delivery Framework - Final Draft KD2024/049</p> <p>A Approve the final report of the Infrastructure Delivery Framework</p> <p>B Approve the next steps of the CPCA working with Place Directors across the constituent authorities to develop project concepts and an action plan to address infrastructure issues</p>
16b	<p>GSENZH delivery of Warmer Homes – Local Grant Scheme</p> <p>A Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place and Connectivity to work with the Chair of ESC to evaluate the engagement evidence and outcome of the risk assessment and to conclude whether to submit an Expression of Interest as the application timeline requires decision</p>

	<p>between committee dates</p> <p>B Approve for 'the GSEnz Hub to apply on behalf of local authorities in the GSEnz Hub consortia to deliver the Warm Homes: Local Grant scheme'.</p>
17	<p>Recommendations from the Transport and Infrastructure Committee</p> <p>The Board was advised that the recommendations tabled had been unanimously supported by the Transport and Infrastructure Committee at its meeting on 4 November 2024.</p> <p>On being proposed by Councillor Anna Smith, seconded by Councillor Dennis Jones , it was resolved to approve the recommendations as set out below:</p> <p>[7 for, 0 against, 1 abstention]</p>
17a	<p>Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy – Update</p> <p>A Delegate authority to the Assistant Director - Transport in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer to enter into one or more contracts or Grant Funding Agreements with the relevant delivery body (consultancy or Cambridgeshire County Council), as needed to continue the development of the GCTS.</p>
18	<p>Recommendations from the Investment Committee</p> <p>The Board was advised that the recommendations tabled had been unanimously supported by the Investment Committee at its meeting on 21 October 2024.</p> <p>On being proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Dennis Jones, it was resolved to approve the recommendations as set out below:</p> <p>[7 for, 0 against, 1 abstention]</p>
18a	<p>Peterborough R&D Property Company Limited (PropCo2) - KD2024/050</p> <p>A Approve that the CPCA complete a shareholder's agreement with PropCo2 and ARU including the issuance of 3 million shares to the Combined Authority and up to 1.5 million shares to ARU in return for cash or an in-kind investment of up to £1.5m, subject to the final version of the shareholder agreement being approved by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Executive Director Economy and Growth</p> <p>B Approve that the CPCA agree to provide shareholder approval for PropCo2 to enter into an agreement to lease the whole of the Phase 2 building to Anglia Ruskin Enterprise Limited subject to the final version of the lease being approved by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Executive Director Economy and Growth</p>

Chairman at the meeting on
Wednesday, 13 November 2024