



Combined Authority Board	Agenda Item
31 January 2024	7

Title:	Combined Authority Chief Executive Highlights Report
Report of:	Rob Bridge, Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Mayor Dr Nik Johnson
Public Report:	Yes
Key Decision:	No
Voting Arrangements:	No vote required

Recommendations:

A	Note the content of this report
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Strategic Objective(s):

The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):

X	Achieving ambitious skills and employment opportunities
X	Achieving good growth
X	Increased connectivity
X	Enabling resilient communities

1. Purpose

1.1	This report provides a general update on the key activities of the Combined Authority and the Mayor since the last Board meeting, which are not covered in other reports to this Meeting. It also provides information on some key developments, risks and opportunities that have emerged.
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2. Funding Activity

2.1	Funds allocated by the CPCA <ul style="list-style-type: none">£1.49m of treasury income to a variety of high priority including local area plans, a demand responsive travel pilot and initiating a Health and Wellbeing strategy£403k of LEVI capability funding to enable Local Authorities to build capacity ahead of capital funding to deliver electric vehicle charging infrastructure£550k allocated to the next stage of business case development for the BP roundabout non-motorised user crossing on the A10
2.2	Funds awarded to the CPCA <ul style="list-style-type: none">£2.9m additional highways capital grants

3. Public Affairs

3.1 UKREiiF

The Combined Authority have booked a pavilion at the UK's Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum (UKREiiF) 21-23rd May 2024. UKREiiF is the largest cross sector property conference in the UK, forecasting 10,000 delegates in 2024. It is an opportunity to showcase Cambridgeshire and Peterborough investment propositions to a national and international audience of developers, investors and occupiers. It will also heighten awareness of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority and build on the "Team Cambridgeshire & Peterborough" approach to attracting investment.

A small multi-disciplinary team continue to work to produce consolidated investment pitch which will form a programme of events and marketing materials for the pavilion as the convenor of this activity. The Combined Authority are working in partnership with our constituent authorities, partners and stakeholders to develop these and our overall approach and presence at the event.

Work is also underway to plan a launch event in February.

3.2 East of England All Party Parliamentary Group

The Combined Authority continues to work closely with the East of England All Party Parliamentary Group. We are part of a key group of partners who are drafting key skills asks and offers to the Government for the East of England. These asks and offers have been drafted and once finalised in a report will be launched in Parliament and championed by the influential members and supporters of the East of England All Party Parliamentary Group.

This work builds on a report which measured confidence in the East of England meeting Government's twelve Levelling Up missions, produced by the APPG last year. Deputy Mayor, Anna Smith represented the Combined Authority as a panellist at the report launch in Parliament in February 2023, where she spoke specifically about the skills need of the area.

4. Economy and Growth

4.1 ARU Peterborough Second Teaching Building

Another high point in the rapid development of the ARU Peterborough university campus was marked with a 'topping out' ceremony of the second teaching building incorporating the 'Living Lab' public science and technology space.

On Tuesday (January 16) representatives of the three project partners, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Peterborough City Council and Anglia Ruskin University, gathered at the building site to mark the completion of the roof structure of the strikingly designed and sustainable building.

This third phase of ARU Peterborough is on the site of the former Regional Pool car park, next to first teaching building, University House. It is planned to open ready for the new academic year in September 2024.

4.2 Peterborough Regeneration Tour

In December, Peterborough City Council leader Mohammed Farooq hosted the Mayor Dr Nik Johnson, on a city centre walkabout tour of key regeneration sites where Combined Authority funding is making a visible difference to the city centre.

Cllr Farooq outlined his priorities to the Mayor – including aspirations for a larger market in the city centre, greater use of the Guildhall in Cathedral Square, tackling homelessness, and developing the city's cultural offering, positioning Peterborough as a place to visit and spend time.

The tour included Bridge Street and Cathedral Square, as well as Broadway and Central Library, where central government Towns Fund money will be used to provide a city centre hub, to be known as The Vine.

The Mayor also visited the regeneration scheme at Northminster, the former market site, where £14m from the Combined Authority has funded redevelopment into more than 350 private affordable homes, and the area known as North Westgate, identified for regeneration.

	<p>Cllr Farooq and the Mayor discussed the station quarter redevelopment, which is progressing thanks to £48m Levelling Up Fund support secured by the Combined Authority with Peterborough City Council.</p>
4.3	<p>New Skills Bootcamp to Help People into Careers in Engineering</p> <p>The Combined Authority has worked with two engineering companies in Peterborough and a local college to develop an intensive Skills Bootcamp course giving learners the skills they need for a career in the industry.</p> <p>Working with Howden Turbo and Baker Perkins, a technology brand of Schenck Process Food and Performance Materials, the Introduction to Engineering Course begins on January 8, 2024, covering different topics including technical drawing, computer-aided design, fitting, welding and more.</p> <p>Run by College of West Anglia at their Wisbech campus, it is free for learners and is expected to last about 10 weeks. A further incentive is the opportunity of an interview with Baker Perkins or Howden Turbo for their apprenticeship opportunities in 2024.</p> <p>This new Skills Bootcamps also aligns with the Combined Authority's work to increase apprenticeships in the region and support the engineering sector with skilled people to help it to sustain and grow. Hundreds of people in the region, whether employed, unemployed, self-employed or changing careers, have already benefitted from Skills Bootcamps.</p>
4.4	<p>Peterborough College Centre for Green Technology Ground-Breaking Ceremony</p> <p>In a December, key stakeholders from the city and community gathered to celebrate the ground-breaking of the state-of-the-art Centre for Green Technology, the latest and exciting innovative new development at Inspire Education Groups' Peterborough College campus.</p> <p>The project has been partly funded by Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), providing £2.471 million via the Transforming Cities Fund and £400,000 from the Local Growth Fund, further to the £1.9 million package from Peterborough City Council via the Towns Fund.</p> <p>The innovative curriculum has also been developed in collaboration with local employers, showcasing IEG's proactive approach to bridging the gap between classroom and industry, and being at the forefront of shaping a knowledgeable and skilled workforce adaptable to the dynamic demands of this high-growth industry.</p>
4.5	<p>Inward Investment Service Attracts Health Tech Pioneer to Cambridgeshire</p> <p>An Australian-founded health tech company opened its global HQ in Cambridgeshire due to the support provided by the Combined Authority's dedicated inward investment service branded as Locate Cambridge.</p> <p>Cogniss is now based at the Barclays Eagle Labs incubator in Cambridge. The company plans to create 45 new skilled, high value jobs within the next three years.</p> <p>Cogniss makes it quick, easy and affordable for researchers, clinical entrepreneurs and healthcare workers to build sophisticated patient-facing apps without needing to rely on developers or agencies.</p> <p>The Combined Authority and Business Board established an inward investment team as part of the Growth Works business growth service to promote Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to internationally and nationally expanding businesses.</p> <p>The support provided has also helped the company to quickly build strong collaborations within the local economy, including partnerships with life sciences and healthcare investors Start Codon and Health Innovation Network (HIN) set up by the NHS to turn health innovations into better health services for people.</p>
4.5	<p>FE Cold Spots</p> <p>Cambridgeshire County Council and the Combined Authority have previously highlighted gaps in the region's FE provision, and we are looking to address this in St Neots and East Cambs. Grant Thornton and Turner Townsend are now carrying out a feasibility study which will evidence the learner / employer need and potential market impact on other learning providers. The consultants know that seeking the views of a wide range of stakeholders needs to be a very big part of this work. They plan to complete the study by May, and it is tabled to come back to Skills Committee in June.</p>
4.6	<p>The Adult Education Budget (AEB) Evaluation</p> <p>AEB is the cornerstone of the CPCA's devolved skills funding. We have just received the results of an external evaluation covering the first three years of CPCA managing this money. Overall, we are</p>

	<p>assessed to be using our devolved power effectively, embracing the flexibility we have as a Mayoral Combined Authority to create new and innovation provision. We are making good progress on our journey and continuing to drive further improvement through innovation.</p> <p>Key headlines include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive evidence of ‘buying better’ using our flexibilities - e.g. fully funded ESOL training (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and the Care Leavers’ Bursary • We’ve rationalised an unwieldy 176 AEB learning providers (spread across the UK) to (current) 25 based in the region. • Performance increasing in terms of both volumes and spend, • Learner diversity is strong • Peterborough learner numbers doing well – need more in Fenland, East Cambs, and Hunts • High Growth and some ‘enabling’ Sectors now need more focus.
4.7	<p>Skills Bootcamps</p> <p>Wave Five Skills Bootcamps grant award of £2.899m now agreed with the Department for Education and governance protocols complete with Skills Committee. Funding is for the 2024/25 financial year.</p>

5. Place and Connectivity	
5.1	<p>Infrastructure Delivery Framework update</p> <p>The Combined Authority have commissioned Stantec Ltd to take forward the Infrastructure Delivery Framework project. Data on development sites is being sourced from councils and utility stakeholders contacted. During February the Stantec will be testing their multi-criteria analysis with the Steering Group and the Place Directors Group. This work will identify the major barriers to delivering sustainable growth as set out in Local Plans. Stantec are aware of the other work underway both by the Combined Authority on the State of the Region Review and the government’s Cambridge 2040 initiative. The outputs will raise awareness of the extent of investment and sustainable growth being held back due to infrastructure constraints or costs linked to specific sites, or the cumulative impact of growth on strategic issues, such as water and energy supply. A further update will be provided to Committee in March.</p>
5.2	<p>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy</p> <p>We are continue to progress our ambitious commitment to “Doubling Nature” through the development of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). With an ambitious economic growth agenda, the strategy aims to place nature at the forefront, addressing the existing deficit of rich wildlife areas across the region and national biodiversity decline.</p> <p>Recently key contracts have been awarded to progress this work, including to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Capital Solutions: Providing expert GIS support for the data and evidence workstream. A leading environmental consultancy specialising in revealing and enhancing the benefits of the natural environment, contributing to addressing biodiversity and climate emergencies. Natural Capital Solutions will provide mapping support, identifying opportunities to enhance nature across the region, and presenting final maps through a publicly accessible web-based interactive map. • Land Use Consultants: Playing an authorship role and writing the final strategy. Land Use Consultants are an award-winning environmental consultancy with nearly 60 years of experience, operating with an employee-owned model. LUC will be collaborating with the Steering Group and Development Team, and bringing extensive experience in landscape-scale nature recovery to inform the production of the Strategy. • Natural Cambridgeshire: Supporting stakeholder engagement and communication workstream. Actively engaging with diverse stakeholders, including local communities, businesses, and government entities, the organisation is committed to fostering collaboration and implementing strategies for biodiversity conservation. Natural Cambridgeshire will engage with landowners and farmers in recognition of the importance of agriculture to our economy, and the role that farmers

	<p>can play in building a more resilient county via adopting more regenerative farming practices and creating space for nature on their land.</p> <p>For more information on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy and its progress, please visit https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/biodiversity-and-greenspaces/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-local-nature-recovery-strategy</p>
5.3	<p>Housing site completions</p> <p>MAN GPM site in Alconbury Weald, Huntingdonshire completed 94 units, with a mixture of affordable rented and shared ownership homes, and held a celebratory completion on 1 December 2023.</p> <p>Eight new homes were handed over by Vistry to CKH at the British Sugar Way site on the 4 Jan 2024. Contractual disputes with Vistry are still pending, however the handover matters have been agreed, and the whole site should eventually be delivered at the end of January 2024.</p> <p>Cross Keys Homes Construction on Northminster is progressing well. The roof is now complete on Block A, and Blocks C and B are due to finish soon.</p> <p>Sage Construction of 118 homes at Wisbech Road, March, has near 70 units built with a further 50+ to start from foundation level.</p> <p>Cross Keys Homes The Perkins site has issues with a road audit, and this is now with PCC to come to a reasonable conclusion. Until the road audit issue has been determined the site cannot be completed.</p>
5.4	<p>Care Homes Retrofit</p> <p>Following the November Committee cycle additional work has been undertaken to promote the scheme. There are now 4 applications received, 1 imminent and other active enquiries made. Peterborough Council are also testing if local networks (not local authority) might overcome some of the perceived barriers to engagement. If all the current applications were to proceed then approximately £500k of investment (£250k of CPCA grant) would be deployed, with further if the additional contacts turn into applications. A deadline of end of January has been set for current applications. The review of the scheme will be brought to the March Committee.</p>

6. Transport

6.1	<p>Electric Vehicle Infrastructure and Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Capability Fund</p> <p>A draft Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy was considered by the Combined Authority Board for comment in March 2023. Since then, this strategy has been worked on and an updated draft document is now being shared for comment with all constituent Councils. A final collaborative and agreed document is planned to be tabled at the March 2024 Transport and Infrastructure Committee and subsequently considered for approval at the Combined Authority Board.</p>
6.2	<p>Chris Boardman visit to Cambridge</p> <p>Olympic gold medallist turned England's active travel Commissioner, Chris Boardman, praised the active travel work that Cambridgeshire & Peterborough is doing as he joined Mayor Dr Nik Johnson for a walking, e-biking, and public transport tour in and around Cambridge.</p> <p>The visit was very successful and attracted significant media coverage across TV, radio, print and digital channels. On the day of the visit, the delegation started at Cambridge Station and cycled, using Voi bikes, along the Chisholm Trail to Cambridge North station. This was followed by a trip on the guided bus way and had a walking tour around Northstowe.</p> <p>Speaking after the visit Chris Boardman said: "I've come to what is arguably the home of cycling in the whole country – where half the journeys are already cycled or walked – to see how they are investing in embedding active travel in all of their future plans to help people get around under their own steam, now and long into the future."</p>
6.3	<p>Active Travel</p> <p>Active Travel England's Self-Assessment was submitted on the 22 December. The Self-Assessment allows the Combined Authority to provide evidence of our capability and ambition for active travel schemes. Using our evidence Active Travel England provide the Combined Authority with a rating. This</p>

	<p>rating determines how much funding we receive in future funding rounds. We are currently at a Level 2 and are aiming to achieve a Level 3.</p> <p>The Active Travel Specialist Advisory Board (SAB) (formally known as the Scrutiny Group) met for the first time in November and again in December to discuss the requirements for a Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling Commissioner. Work is underway to create a job description for this role.</p>
6.4	<p>Cambridgeshire County Council Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) works</p> <p>A proportion of the Transforming Cities Fund is allocated towards implementing 20mph zones in locations around the County. This has proved popular with schemes planned for completion in Cambourne, Ely, Histon and Impington, Huntingdon, Ramsey and Bury, St Ives and St Neots before the end of the financial year. Installation of the first of these schemes is expected to commence this month.</p> <p>Further engagement is planned for the 20mph schemes proposed in Soham and Cambridge before an application for a Traffic Regulation Order is made, with programme for delivery of these schemes to be confirmed subject to the outcome of consultation.</p>
6.5	<p>Climate-KIC's Cargo Bike Try-Before-You-Buy Scheme Bid</p> <p>On 13 September 2023, the Climate-KIC advertised the Sustainable Cities Mobility Challenge 2024 fund. Applications for grants up to 90,000 EUR (£78,000) were requested with a maximum of five projects funded. Cities and towns, with a population of at least 25,000, in the EU Member States, Horizon Europe Associated Countries¹ (including the United Kingdom) and Switzerland were eligible to apply.</p> <p>The challenge called on cities to present bold and impactful projects that seek to decarbonise transport, improve local air quality and accelerate the take-up of active, shared, collective and/or electric mobility. The projects would support the transition to cleaner, greener, and more inclusive transport.</p> <p>The cargo bike try-before-you-buy model has been piloted by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) since July 2021. This scheme has been very popular and there is currently a four-week waiting list to borrow an electric cargo (e-cargo) bike. The scheme has eight bikes; four bikes in two styles for families to borrow, and four different styles for businesses to trial. To date there have been over 160 trials of cargo bike and over 65% of participants have decided to purchase a cargo bike after the trial period.</p> <p>However, despite the popularity of the cargo bikes, the scheme only had funding for three years and so will come to an end in spring 2024. Therefore, this project was selected as a basis for this bid.</p> <p>The bid proposed a scheme that will build on Cambridgeshire's success by adding eight additional bikes and expand the geographical reach to Cambridgeshire market towns and Peterborough city. Three additional family cargo bikes will be added to the Cambridgeshire scheme and four family bikes and one business bike will be available in Peterborough.</p> <p>The intention is that the scheme will be provided by a local company who can offer the benefit of local knowledge. The organisation that delivers the project will be selected in line with the Combined Authority's procurement process. The procurement process will commence mid-January to ensure the provider is in place and bikes purchased by April 2024. The project will continue until July 2025.</p>
6.6	<p>Transport Decarbonisation Demonstrators Bid</p> <p>The Combined Authority are looking to support a bid into the Transport Decarbonisation Demonstrators. Competition overview - Transport Decarbonisation Demonstrators - Innovation Funding Service (apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk). The bid allows UK registered businesses to apply for a share of up to £2 million to work with Local Authorities to develop place-based solutions to transport decarbonisation. This funding is from the Department for Transport (DfT).</p> <p>The first bid is with Modular Clinton Global (MCG) Ltd (other stakeholders include Nottingham University, Cater and Merger Consult and New Climate Solutions Ltd). The projects looks to create a place-based demonstrator that will support collaborative energy-efficient transport management to track, connect and assets towards net zero transportation. It thus empowers transport operators and policy makers at local authorities with enhanced transparency of carbon emissions as well as costs, to strategically adapt decarbonised operations, secure energy provision (renewable/hydrogen), and unlock the potential to deliver benefits and incentives to travellers. If successful in the bid and If all the data requested is available, the project is targeting to deliver a simplified tool for the Combined Authority to measure the impact, which could be aid further the decarbonisation roadmap and implementing the net-zero transition.</p>

	<p>The second bid is with Outspoken Cycles. Their bid is to run an eCargo bike library for residents and create an on-street hire scheme for eCargo bike. This scheme will deploy ecargo bikes to key locations across both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. A Bluetooth-based app system will allow members of the public to rent eCargo bikes on short journeys. In addition, there will also be a fleet of bikes that are available to rent for one or two months from a selection of eCargo bikes. Both parts of this scheme will encourage users to participate in active travel as well as increase the number of shorts duration trips made by eCargo bikes.</p> <p>The bids were submitted 8th January 2024 and the successful bidders will be informed in February 2024.</p>
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7. Appendices

8.1	None
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8. Implications

Financial Implications	
9.1	None other than those contained in the body of the report
Legal Implications	
9.2	No direct implications.
Public Health Implications	
9.3	None
Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
9.4	None
Other Significant Implications	
9.5	None
Background Papers	
9.6	None