



Combined Authority Board

4 September 2024

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">£1.2m approved for Active Travel projects to improve active travel facilities between Duxford & Whittlesford, Brampton & Hinchingsbrooke, and Alconbury & Huntingdon Station.£7m approved to progress works in March on Twenty Foot Road and St Peter's Road.
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3. Responding to the new Government

3.1 Local Growth Plan

The Combined Authority has set up a cross-constituent council working group to develop the Local Growth Plan for the region, one of the asks from the new Government to the Mayors and Combined Authorities. This has included producing a summary of the strengths of the region along with the challenges and opportunities that will inform the regional priorities for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, being discussed in a workshop in early September.

The plan is being developed with stakeholders as well as constituent councils, using evidence, data and documents already produced and published for the region. Over the coming weeks and months, the 10-year plan will be developed and, in turn feed into the National Industrial Strategy.

4. Economy and Growth

4.1 ARU Peterborough

Construction of ARU Peterborough's new £32 million Lab building, which incorporates a Living Lab to be used by the community as well as students, has been completed.

The Lab, which is situated adjacent to the existing University House building on Bishop's Road in the city, will support students and apprentices studying primarily STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) fields. This will help to further increase higher skills in the city and region, supporting local growth and investment.

The on-time delivery has been thanks to partnership working between project partners and funders Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), the Combined Authority and Peterborough City Council and represents another milestone in the development of the campus.

On Saturday 17th August ARU Peterborough hosted its annual Community Day, when the city's University opened its doors and put on a range of fun activities for all ages. Visitors were given the opportunity to explore the night skies and planetary system in the Wonderdome planetarium plus attend events in XRP eXtended Reality Peterborough. Free activities also included archery, mini golf, circus skills, a racing simulator, face painting, and a climbing wall, while a giant dinosaur could be found roaming the campus, accompanied by a trusty ranger!

4.2 Adult Education Budget

The Combined Authority's Learning & Skills Fund, managed by Cambridgeshire Community Foundation, has awarded over £280,000 in grants to support the lifelong learning and skills offer for adults in Cambridgeshire, including Peterborough. The fund hopes to reduce inequalities in access to adult education. The Learning & Skills Fund has awarded 14 grants to local community and charitable organisations and will re-open for applications later in the year, following the completion of the funded pilot projects, which will inform how the fund supports projects in the second round of funding.

4.3 Skills Bootcamps

The Combined Authority has worked with Anglian Water's @one Alliance and ARU Peterborough, the city's new university, to set up an innovative Skills Bootcamp for new employees to quickly gain the skills they need for their roles.

When Anglian Water's @one Alliance recently recruited 17 employees, it wanted to provide them with an initial 12-week programme of tailored training which would allow them to hit the ground running in their new roles.

Working with the Combined Authority and ARU Peterborough, a Skills Bootcamp focused on project delivery was established, offering the opportunity to learn about project planning, project management,

	<p>CAD, commercial awareness, and the different roles available within project delivery. As well as the 17 new hires, one existing staff member was also enrolled on the Skills Bootcamp.</p> <p>ARU Peterborough delivered theory-based skills, while the Anglian Water @one Alliance learning and development team and staff delivered practical elements to put into practice the theory. The @one Alliance is a partnership of eight companies, including in construction and engineering, set up to deliver major capital projects for Anglian Water.</p> <p>The group had the opportunity to shadow existing staff during the 12 weeks, and on completion, Anglian Water's @one Alliance will offer a permanent contract within two project-based roles in the business, project coordinator and trainee planner.</p>
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5. Place & Connectivity

5.1	<p>National Infrastructure Commission Roundtable</p> <p>Infrastructure in and around Cambridge was on the agenda for a roundtable with a key body advising the Government on the country's infrastructure challenges.</p> <p>Mayor Dr Nik Johnson was among attendees at a meeting in Cambridge on the 1st August with the National Infrastructure Commission, the body which carries out in-depth studies into the UK's major infrastructure needs and makes recommendations to the Government.</p> <p>The roundtable covered a range of topics linked to infrastructure challenges for Cambridge and the surrounding area to 2050. Key issues covered included the key challenges facing Cambridge and its surrounding region as it continues to grow rapidly, with electricity distribution infrastructure a particular focus of the roundtable. It discussed how to enable the local electricity network can keep pace to meet growing demand and what could be learned from past infrastructure developments.</p> <p>Attendees included representatives from local councils, Anglian Water and UK Power Networks, business and academic member organisation Cambridge Ahead, business networking group Cambridge Network, sub-national transport body England's Economic Heartland, and Innovation Corridor which focuses on growth between London and Cambridge.</p>
5.2	<p>Community Transport Service Support</p> <p>The Combined Authority and Cambridge City Council have stepped in with funding to help a Cambridge community transport service keep running and develop a plan for future sustainability.</p> <p>The not-for-profit Cambridge Dial-a-Ride provides accessible minibus services in Cambridge and some surrounding villages via a membership scheme for people and community groups who have difficulty in accessing regular public transport.</p> <p>But an increase in costs and a dip in passenger numbers meant the service found itself with a funding gap for the 2024/25 financial year. The Combined Authority and City Council have each contributed £22,000, totalling £44,000, to ensure Cambridge Dial-a-Ride continues operating while working with the service on a long-term viability plan.</p> <p>Cambridge Dial-a-Ride already receives grant funding to support its services from the Combined Authority, City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.</p>
5.3	<p>Bus Franchising Consultation</p> <p>The Combined Authority is asking for views on the future of the region's buses. On Wednesday 14th August a 14-week consultation on bus franchising was launched and we are encouraging everyone to take part, either online, via a series of face-to-face events, or by post.</p> <p>The consultation will inform a decision by the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on how to reform buses across the area.</p> <p>The consultation web page hosts all the relevant consultation documents, together with a questionnaire. There are two versions of the questionnaire – a short version comprising 10 questions and a long version</p>

	<p>comprising 31 questions- and people can choose which one they want to complete, in line with practice elsewhere in the country on this consultation.</p> <p>Details of drop-in events at locations around the region will be listed on the web page during the consultation. The site can be found by visiting https://cpca-yourvoice.co.uk/bus-franchising-consultation/.</p>
5.4	<p>Tiger Card</p> <p>The Tiger £1 Bus Pass campaign has made significant strides since its launch on 28th May 2024. We have exceeded our application target with 20,195 applications received as of Thursday 22nd August , achieving over 200% of our goal. Awareness efforts have reached over 40,000 social media impressions and click-throughs to the application page have more than doubled our target, demonstrating strong public interest. While we are still in the process of gathering user feedback and journey statistics, the campaign's impact is already evident, particularly through the high engagement levels seen in our content tied to the Euros and Olympics.</p> <p>In response to the lower application rates among the 21-25 age demographic, we collaborated with a local fitness influencer on the "20,000 challenge," successfully boosting our reach within this audience. Additionally, we produced a light-hearted FAQ video that has been well received and is helping to clarify key details about the scheme. Looking ahead, we are gearing up for a "Back to School" campaign, partnering with local schools and colleges to promote the pass to new students, ensuring continued growth and engagement with the Tiger Pass.</p>

6. Appendices

6.1	None
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7. Implications

Financial Implications	
7.1	None other than those contained in the body of the report
Legal Implications	
7.2	None
Public Health Implications	
7.3	None
Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
7.4	None
Other Significant Implications	
7.5	None
Background Papers	
7.6	None