



Combined Authority Board

16 October 2024

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| 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:

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| 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):

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

1. Purpose

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| 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. Responding to the new Government

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| 2.1 | Local Growth Plan Since last Board, the Government has continued to work with Mayoral Combined Authorities in producing Local Growth Plans as part of embedding Mayoral Combined Authorities into the delivery system for its mission for Kickstarting Economic Growth. |
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| | <p>Local Growth Plans are required to be locally led, ten-year strategic plans for Mayoral Combined Authorities with an opportunity to feed into the Comprehensive Spending Review in Spring 2025. They are pitched by Government as the 'guiding star' of all future plans for the area.</p> <p>A key focus has been an ask from Government to set 3 to 5 key priorities for a region which could feed into the National Industrial Strategy.</p> <p>These priorities are required to feature in the Local Growth Plan and will be the basis for potentially securing funding linked to single integrated settlements and other funding opportunities.</p> <p>The priorities are based on expanding key tradeable sectors and clusters that demonstrate comparative economic advantage and contribute to national productivity and economic growth or are based on unlocking binding constraints on productivity and national economic growth.</p> <p>At the time of writing work is in progress to finalise the 3-5 priorities for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough through joint workshops with Government Officials for submission at the end of October. Once agreed locally, and then agreed centrally, a 'Remit Letter' will be issued by Government setting out the importance of the priorities as pillars of the Local Growth Plan. This will then lead into further work into next Spring and Summer to identify interventions and investments and finalise the Local Growth Plan for each region.</p> |
| 2.2 | <p>Devolution</p> <p>In the King's Speech, the Government committed to bringing forward a white paper on further devolution opportunities for the sector and Mayoral Combined Authorities. Following this announcement the Combined Authority, and Mayor of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, have been engaging with Ministers, Senior Civil Servants and other Mayoral Combined Authorities to learn more about what these emerging opportunities could be and contributing to the development of the English Devolution White Paper. This is likely to lead to a new Devolution Framework to be developed as part of this process and the UK Mayors network is being used as a forum for Mayoral Combined Authorities to support the development of this. An internal Devolution Working Group has been established to support this work and we are utilising the Local Growth Plan Working Group (including Officers from Constituent Councils) to not only update on ongoing conversations but also to consider how we respond to opportunities and position for the future.</p> |

| 3. Economy and Growth | |
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| 3.1 | <p>Business Growth and Social Impact Investment Fund</p> <p>On Thursday 19th September, business leaders, social enterprises, and Third Sector organisations from across the region gathered in Peterborough to hear about two new Combined Authority initiatives worth nearly £9.5 million, aimed at supporting growth, innovation and regional economic and social prosperity.</p> <p>The launch event for the Business Growth and Social Impact Investment Fund was led by Dr Nik Johnson, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and Cllr Anna Smith, Deputy Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.</p> <p>The event provided an opportunity for attendees to explore how they can access loans, digital resources, and strategic support funded by the Combined Authority and the UK Government.</p> <p>Small-to-medium sized businesses within the region who successfully apply for the programme will be able to access loans between £100,000 and £500,000 over the next three years, with a focus on key sectors such as IT, Life Sciences, Agri-Tech, Advanced Manufacturing, and Green-Tech.</p> <p>Third sector, community interest and social enterprise organisations who are eligible for the programme will be able to access up to £100,000, with funding aimed at helping to create or safeguard eighty-five jobs, while delivering wider benefits for local communities through enhanced social impact and sustainability.</p> |
| 3.2 | <p>National Manufacturing Day</p> <p>The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority actively collaborated with local employers and schools to promote National Manufacturing Day on Thursday 26th September.</p> |

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| | <p>Our objective was to showcase the wealth of career opportunities within the manufacturing sector for residents and highlight the skills essential for driving sustained growth within this thriving sector.</p> <p>Mayor Dr Nik Johnson marked National Manufacturing Day by visiting the North Cambridgeshire Training Centre, with Business Board Chair Al Kingsley, to spotlight the wealth of opportunities available for young people in the thriving manufacturing sector. The Mayor also visited Domino Printing Sciences alongside partners from MAKE UK.</p> <p>A concurrent communications campaign which sought to position Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as the destination for manufacturers to do business was also run on LinkedIn. The social media platform was specifically chosen for its targeted reach within business and professional sectors. The campaign included 5 posts, 3 of which were videos. Post content featured the Mayor, Business Board member Katy Davis and North Cambridgeshire Training Centre amongst others and reached a total of 4,986 individual users with a click through rate of between 5-7% (a good click through rate on LinkedIn is typically considered to be between 2-4%). These statistics indicate that the campaign reached new businesses, who received and engaged with the message that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is a destination for manufacturers to do business. This chimes with anecdotal officer feedback, where they saw an increase of new business connections following the campaign.</p> |
| 3.3 | <p>Agri-tech and Food Technology in Eastern England Launchpad</p> <p>Businesses in the agri-tech, agri-biotech and food-tech sectors in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough can now bid for innovation funding as part of a Combined Authority partnership with councils in the east and Government body Innovate UK. Building on the region’s existing strengths and ambitions to be a global hub of innovation in the sector, up to £2.5 million of Launchpad funding will be split into two competitions, with grant packages ranging from £25,000 to £300,000. The fund launched on September 23 with applications taken until November 6.</p> <p>The aim will be to break down barriers to innovation-led growth, supporting jobs and growing the local economy. Grants could be given to, for example, innovation projects which focus on driving agricultural productivity, quality food production and novel food production systems.</p> |
| 3.4 | <p>Fenland Sector Team Tour</p> <p>The Assistant Director of Business Trade and Investment, David Moore together with Nykki Rogers, International Trade Investment and Innovation Manager and Economic Growth Champions for Life Sciences, Advanced Materials and Manufacturing and Energy & Clean Tech visited major sites and two important businesses PCML and FreshCut Del Monte in Fenland to gain a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the area and those businesses.</p> <p>Site visits on the tour included the North Cambridgeshire Technical College and planned Advanced Manufacturing Park and the Peterborough Science Park.</p> <p>The team were hosted by Councillor Ian Benney, Portfolio Holder, Economic Growth and Skills together with members of the Fenland Economic Development and Business Engagement Team, Simon Jackson and Ann Wardle.</p> |
| 3.5 | <p>Skills Update</p> <p>The Combined Authority’s Skills Directorate has been continuing to engage with the Department for Education and other Mayoral Combined Authorities on behalf of the region to support the development of Skills England and further skills devolution.</p> <p>On September 23rd we hosted a discussion with Adult Skills and Bootcamps providers. The meeting was with providers who we have previously contracted with or have the potential to collaborate with in the future. Wave 5 of Skills Bootcamps are still to be awarded and procurement for the 2025 Adult Skills Fund is set to begin this month.</p> <p>The Careers Hub has expanded its offer by launching new support targeted at the region’s most vulnerable students. An “enhanced” offer from the team will see SEND and Alternative Provision schools, as well as those with high numbers of pupil premium-eligible students, provided with tailored support from the Hub, including enterprise workshops, referrals and signposting and guidance for parental engagement.</p> |

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| | <p>The Hub has also rolled out a new suite of Green Careers resources for teachers across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in response to growing demand for Green Skills in the future workforce</p> <p>The UKSPF team and All-Age Careers Lead are delighted to be working with Reed in Partnership to provide employability workshops and resources to individuals currently not in employment, supporting them to move closer to the labour market, increase their confidence and provide opportunities for work.</p> <p>Through Growth Works with Skills, 19 interns have started their placements as part of the UKSPF-funded scheme, with 6 recruited and awaiting their start date and another 40 formally agreed with employers and currently being recruited for. Of the 6 leavers so far, 2 stayed with their current employer, 1 went on to an apprenticeship and one went into other full-time education after not being in any mainstream education for around 10 years.</p> <p>Within the four years of apprenticeship data we have available, the starts, participation and achievements of 'Minority Ethnic Groups' has increased almost year on year. Outside of London, the Combined Authority had the highest percentage of starts on Higher apprenticeships (in 23/24) compared to any other combined authority, including those funded nationally by the ESFA (summarized as one region).</p> |
| 3.6 | <p>Unlocking cinematic potential</p> <p>The UK film and television industry is worth an estimated £12.6 billion to the UK economy and is expected to grow by 4% by 2026. Our aim is ensure our region benefits from that growth and provide residents with associated job opportunities.</p> <p>Productions can spend around £100,000 a day in local neighbourhoods, on accommodation, transport, catering, and renting homes and businesses as locations. Moreover, a requirement to locally recruit skilled professions, such as hair and make-up artistry, can drive economic growth for even more local businesses.</p> <p>By leveraging the support of key partners including Filming in England, the region can capitalise on its rich cultural and natural assets, attract productions, create jobs, and drive economic growth.</p> <p>Working with the Culture and Creativity Forum, constituent councils and local stakeholders, the Combined Authority will be curating photography and a film reel of the region which can be shared with location scouts to pitch the region as a location for production. Some of this work already exists in pockets of the region, this piece of work is designed to compliment what already exists.</p> |
| 3.7 | <p>Oxford to Cambridge Pan-Regional Partnership update</p> <p>The Government's forthcoming Devolution White Paper is expected to outline its vision for devolution, including the future of pan-regional partnerships. In addition, there is growing anticipation around the details of the new Industrial Strategy and updates to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which will significantly impact cross-boundary and pan-regional collaboration.</p> <p>The Oxford to Cambridge Pan-Regional Partnership current funding agreement is due to end in March 2025, and the PRP continue their conversations with Government on this.</p> <p>The Combined Authority are actively working in close partnership, aligning our efforts, and seeking every opportunity to join forces. By doing so, we can maximize the benefits and opportunities available through this collective approach.</p> |

4. Place & Connectivity

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| 4.1 | <p>Active Travel Update</p> <p>In Active Travel England's (ATE) revised Local Authority Active Travel Capability Ratings 2024, the Combined Authority is one of only six Local Authorities to achieve a Level 3 Rating (80 Local Authorities in total nationwide). Ratings are an assessment of how effective Authorities currently are at planning, designing, and delivering the type of schemes that will support the objectives set out in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. The Combined Authority is the only Local Authority to have moved into Level 3 rating this year and reflects our ongoing commitment to active travel.</p> |
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| | <p>The concept of the Walking, Wheeling, and Cycling Commissioner (formally known as Cycling Tsar or Active Travel Ambassador) was taken to the Combined Authority's Corporate Management Team this month to discuss the finer details of the role and progress has been made in relation to the requirements for the role. The goal is to make a key appointment in 2025, following a dynamic and forward-thinking campaign driven by the updated Active Travel Strategy. This proactive approach will ensure that the selection process aligns with the latest priorities in sustainable transport and mobility, setting the stage for a more connected and accessible future. By leveraging the insights and initiatives outlined in the refreshed Strategy, the campaign will aim to attract visionary leadership capable of steering the program toward long-term success.</p> <p>At ATE's request the Combined Authority have created a Design Review Panel. The panel, which has representatives from Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), PCC, ATE and the Combined Authority, will review infrastructure schemes to ensure they consider all users' needs and meet the criteria set out in ATE funding.</p> <p>The Combined Authority are investing in the Walking and Cycling Index. Currently this survey data is only collected within the Greater Cambridge area, however the Combined Authority are looking to expand this sample to incorporate the whole region, allowing for a wider understanding of residents needs in relation to active travel.</p> <p>In conjunction with CCC, the Combined Authority submitted a bid to the A428 National Highways Social Value Fund. The scheme will provide a bridge and ramps over Hail Wester Ford which would allow a safer and more accessible crossing over the ford. Finalists in the bidding process will be asked to present their bid at the end of September.</p> |
| 4.2 | <p>Peterborough Station Quarter (PSQ) Update & Public Engagement</p> <p>Since the Outline Business Case was approved by the Department for Transport in March 2024, work with the project partners and designers ARUP has focused on developing and optimising the Outline Business Case designs for the Full Business Case. This work is seeking to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better integrate public realm and access to and from the city centre through the creation of a new boulevard between Queensgate roundabout and the station; • Improve the prominence of the new eastern station square; • Consolidate surface car parking to unlock land for alternative uses; and • Give more prominence of active travel routes. <p>Further design work is required before the Full Business Case will be submitted to DfT early in the next calendar year. Engaging the public at this stage was an opportunity to update the public on progress since the Outline Business Case was submitted and creates an opportunity to understand the public's priorities for the scheme before the design is finalised. This engagement was not a statutory requirement as the scheme is expected to be covered by existing highway powers and rail industry permitted development powers.</p> <p>As the project lead for PSQ, the public engagement was led by Peterborough City Council (PCC) and covers the entire Government funded scheme.</p> <p>The public engagement period started on 20 August 2024 and closed on 27 September 2024. Engagement activities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of pop-up events in the community at locations such as the train station and city centre to publicise the proposals, drive engagement and gather views. • Group Stakeholder meetings and workshops with thematically linked groups of stakeholders to outline plans and receive feedback. The number of these required will vary according to the level and type of stakeholder interest. • A survey in paper form and online (Peterborough Station Quarter Peterborough City Council) <p>The initial phase of the Peterborough Station Quarter project, which forms the foundation of the current public engagement, will serve as a crucial catalyst for future development stages: by unlocking key parcels of land, this phase will pave the way for significant private investment, enabling the realisation of a comprehensive mixed-use masterplan. This broader vision includes the creation of new commercial</p> |

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| | and residential spaces, along with substantial enhancements to public transport links and active travel infrastructure. |
| 4.3 | <p>Bus Franchising Consultation</p> <p>The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority’s bus franchising consultation reached its halfway mark on September 26th.</p> <p>Taking place both face-to-face and digitally, the 14-week consultation will close on 20 November. It will inform a decision by the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on how to reform buses in the area.</p> <p>Since the consultation launched in August, the Combined Authority has sought to engage with families, students, older people, statutory consultees and other stakeholders in various ways including via in-person events.</p> <p>Everyone is welcome to take part and the Combined Authority is especially keen to hear from young people who either rely on the bus or who could benefit from the bus in the future.</p> <p>The consultation is being promoted across the region in several ways including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social media • media (local, regional, national and trade) • online and out of home advertising • radio • posters and leaflets (displayed in a range of busy community and transport locations such as libraries and bus stations) |
| 4.4 | <p>Tiger Bus Pass</p> <p>The Tiger £1 Bus Pass campaign continues to build momentum, with over 27,000 applications received to date. The success of the scheme is evident, with the number of journeys having more than doubled from last month—increasing from 61,000 to 113,000. This highlights the growing impact of the pass on students and young people across the region.</p> <p>We are actively engaging with stakeholders in areas with lower uptake, such as East Cambridgeshire, to ensure the pass is accessible and well-promoted across the entire region. Our focus remains on targeting the right demographic through schools, colleges, and community outreach, ensuring we maintain strong application and usage numbers.</p> <p>As we move forward, we are turning our attention to the upcoming precept route launches, planning how we can integrate our Tiger Pass narrative with these new routes. We aim to highlight how the pass can be used on routes linking schools, colleges, universities, and key community hubs like sports facilities, leisure venues, and cultural spots, providing value not only to students but also to families.</p> |

| 5. Appendices | |
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| 5.1 | None |

| 6. Implications | |
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| Financial Implications | |
| 6.1 | None other than those contained in the body of the report |
| Legal Implications | |
| 6.2 | None |

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| Public Health Implications | |
| 6.3 | None |
| Environmental & Climate Change Implications | |
| 6.4 | None |
| Other Significant Implications | |
| 6.5 | None |
| Background Papers | |
| 6.6 | None |