



Combined Authority Board

13 November 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. Responding to the new Government

2.1	Local Growth Plan The Combined Authority, in partnership with our Constituent Councils, is working with colleagues from the Department for Business & Trade and the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government to progress the region's Local Growth Plan.
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	<p>Local Growth Plans will be the blueprint for how growth within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will contribute to the delivery of the National Industrial Strategy and the Government’s Missions.</p> <p>At this stage, we are continuing to discuss our five emerging growth priorities with Government. Our proposed priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and intensify our globally significant science and technology cluster, centred around Cambridge but drawing on and developing assets and linkages with the wider region, strengthening the UK’s position as a science and technology superpower • Deliver a leading-edge Advanced Manufacturing and Materials Powerhouse • Leverage our unique position as Britain's leading hub for semiconductor, AI, and supercomputing research and enterprise to drive the UK's advancement in next-generation digital infrastructure and data mining • Address critical gaps in water, energy, connectivity, and transport infrastructure to fuel growth in our three key clusters • Provide new and affordable homes for our communities and retain and attract world class talent and workers in our three key clusters <p>These are the key opportunities / strengthens where we feel the region can best contribute to the National Industrial Strategy.</p> <p>These are currently proposals and have not been agreed with Government; who are undertaking a process to consider the shared sectoral priorities put forward by Mayoral Combined Authorities.</p>
2.2	<p>Autumn Budget 2024</p> <p>On Wednesday 30th October the Chancellor delivered the Autumn Budget.</p> <p>During the Budget, the Government reaffirmed their commitment to the development of Local Growth Plans and further devolution opportunities for Mayoral Combined Authorities.</p> <p>Key announcements for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £10 million of funding to enable the Cambridge Growth Company to develop an ambitious plan for the housing, transport, water, and wider infrastructure Cambridge needs to realise its full potential • Committed to deliver East West Rail (From November 14, 2024 East West Rail will run a 10 week consultation across the route) • Reaffirmation of our Levelling Up Fund money for the regeneration of Peterborough Station Quarter • The continuation of the Wisbech Town Deal with a new prospectus for projects • UK Shared Prosperity Fund will continue at a reduced level in 2025-26 ahead of wider funding reforms. <p>Ahead of the Budget, a £240 million Get Britain Working package was unveiled which includes work, skills and health support for disabled people and long-term sick. Get Britain Working “trailblazers” will bring together and streamline work, health, and skills support to disabled people and those who are long term sick.</p> <p>The government will also work in close partnership with mayors to develop these trailblazers, to ensure these local services are tailored to meet the unique employment and inactivity challenges in different areas.</p> <p>The Budget made it clear that the Government continues to promote greater devolution across the country.</p> <p>From 2025-26 there are integrated settlements for two Mayoral Combined Authorities (early trailblazer authorities of Greater Manchester and West Midlands) with a second tranche planned in 2026-27.</p> <p>The CPCA will be working with Government to be part of the integrated settlement arrangements from 2027-28. In the short-term, we will continue to work closely with MHCLG and HM Treasury to leverage wider funding simplifications which are expected to be rolled out to all MCAs from next year.</p>

	<p>While Ely Junction was not mentioned in the Budget, the Combined Authority and Mayor are continuing to make the case for this much-needed investment; the Mayor raised this with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury shortly after the Budget on a call with other Mayors.</p> <p>The Government also used the Budget to announce their intention to consult on future funding for Pan-Regional Partnerships, including the Oxford to Cambridge PRP.</p>
2.3	<p>East of England APPG</p> <p>On Monday 4th November the East of England All Party Parliamentary Group held a meeting in Parliament to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising the region’s potential for growth through inward investment • Implications of the budget for the East of England • Delivering strong and financially sustainable councils <p>MPs from across the East informed Government’s Growth Mission Champion, Dan Tomlinson MP that it is infrastructure barriers which are blocking growth in the region, explaining that projects like Ely Area Capacity Enhancements will unlock not just local growth, but national growth through international trade. The need to understand that international gateways, such as Freeport East and Stansted Airport as generators for growth in their own right was also discussed.</p> <p>The Combined Authority provided substantial evidence to two briefing papers which were presented to MPs, one on <i>Maximising the region’s potential for growth through inward investment</i> and another on <i>Delivering strong and financially sustainable councils</i>, which will also be shared with relevant Government Ministers.</p>
2.4	<p>Homes England Investment Symposium</p> <p>On Monday 4th November, the Combined Authority held a table at the exclusive Homes England Investment Symposium in London. Joined by representatives from Cambridge City Council and Peterborough City Council, a small group promoted the region to national property developers and investors. Economy and Growth Director, Richard Kenny also spoke on a panel session 'Mayor's and Local Growth: How will the UK's commitment to devolution stimulate investment opportunities in Place', Richard spoke on the economic growth in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and the great potential the region has but acknowledged the infrastructure barriers that can delay that growth.</p>

3. Economy and Growth

3.1	<p>Skills Bootcamps</p> <p>A further £2.4 million has been secured to support local people in getting good jobs.</p> <p>The funding will be invested in Skills Bootcamps—short, flexible training lasting up to 16 weeks—to help fast-track local people into good jobs. Bootcamps give people the opportunity to develop sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. The technical skills offered are linked to those needed by local employers, increasing the likelihood of participants securing a job or advancing their careers, including progression into apprenticeships.</p> <p>The Combined Authority has been commissioning Skills Bootcamps with various colleges and training providers in partnership with local employers since 2021. This latest adds to an existing £2.54m already invested in Skills Bootcamps by CPCA. For the most recent Skills Bootcamp courses to date, 66% of those taking part have secured a job interview, and 44% have progressed into employment.</p> <p>The latest funding round is set to deliver a broad range of Boot Camps in Green Skills, Finance, and Mental Health. These will supplement the Digital and IT, Construction, Electric Vehicle, and Business and Management boot camps already available. Bootcamps are delivered at Level 2-5, with Level 2 equivalent to GCSE and Level 5 equivalent to a foundation degree or Higher National Diploma (HND).</p> <p>This latest wave of Bootcamps is set to commence in November 2024. Eligibility criteria include having the right to work in the UK, being aged 19 or over, being employed, self-employed, unemployed, or</p>
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	changing or returning to a career. Additionally, Skills Bootcamps may also be open to serving prisoners due to be released within six months of course completion and those on temporary release.
3.2	<p>Internships</p> <p>CPCA offer funding to employers of up to 50% of a paid internship salary for 13 weeks, working between 16 - 30 hours per week.</p> <p>So far, 11 interns have started, two have already finished with a 100% success rate. One finished at 7 weeks and went into an apprenticeship with another employer, the other remained in sustainable employment with their internship employer. Recruitment is ongoing for another 44 internships where employers have signed agreements in place, and we are currently on-boarding new employers.</p> <p>CPCA has received 70 applications from eligible individuals interested in being an Intern. All have been given access to careers/ other support through signposting via the website, have gained a digital badge and access to the skills pass/ digital wallet to be able to collate their badges and create a digital CV.</p> <p>An extended contract with Reed in Partnership to deliver adult careers support for individuals aged 19+ that are currently out of work, will continue delivery in September. This work will be integral to helping individuals overcome structural barriers to work and find sustainable employment.</p> <p>Our Skills Brokers have been prolific in attending events and maximizing opportunities to network across the region as well as hosting our own events including our free webinars for employers.</p>
3.3	<p>Universal Support</p> <p>The Universal Support programme was paused during the pre-election period, and confirmation has now been received that the ethos, demographic and intention remain a key focus of the new government and that the DWP are re-visiting the initial design to allow local areas to own and have a local plan to tackle economic activity that is suitable for their geographies. DWP have been tasked with interrogating the model developed thus far to ensure suitability and wider system cohesion. In September 24 the new Government announced this programme would be called the National Supported Employment Programme, but grant agreements were put on hold until beyond the Budget at the end of October 24. Work has begun to engage colleagues from Public Health and the NHS and a development and implementation plan is now being completed.</p>

4. Place & Connectivity

4.1	<p>Active Travel Ambition Series</p> <p>The Active Travel Ambition Series on the 9 October was a great success. The event, that was funded by Active Travel England and organised by the Combined Authority, brought together sustainable transport professionals from the region and beyond to share ambition and showcase the great work being done in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The conference, that was held in Whittlesford, saw over 100 officers attend from the active travel teams, public health, accessibility groups, consultants and developers. By strengthening our convening power, enhancing our technical expertise, and fostering trust with Active Travel England, the Combined Authority continue to solidify our leadership in active travel. Mayor Dr Nik Johnson warmly welcomed the attendees, while Cllr Anna Smith provided a thoughtful close to the day. The event clearly showcased our ability to offer strong and supportive leadership in walking, wheeling, and cycling, further positioning us as a driving force in this critical area. A wide range of presentations provided details on the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and how active travel continues to play a fundamental role in the Combined Authority meeting it's overarching aims and objectives, as well as updates on Cambridgeshire's Active Travel Team's overall ambition, School Street management with cameras in Peterborough and Love to Ride's progress in our region.</p>
4.2	<p>Peterborough Station Quarter</p> <p>The public engagement period for the Peterborough Station Quarter (PSQ) concluded on 27 September, and we are pleased to report a very positive response from the community. The level of public participation has been commendable, reflecting strong interest and support for the project. A comprehensive report is currently being developed to analyse and evaluate the feedback received. This</p>

	<p>report will play a crucial role in informing the final stages of the scheme's design and will be included in our documentation for the Full Business Case submission scheduled for early next year. In parallel, significant progress has been made on the design aspects of the project. The process to select the preferred options for the station buildings is nearing completion. Preliminary modelling suggests that these selected options will effectively alleviate forecasted passenger congestion during peak hours, enhancing the overall passenger experience at the station. Furthermore, ground investigations and surveys are planned for the coming months. These activities are essential for informing the cost plan for the Full Business Case, ensuring that we have a thorough understanding of the site conditions and potential challenges ahead. The PSQ project represents the critical initial phase that will enable the successful delivery of the wider masterplan for the city. This comprehensive masterplan is important in ensuring that Peterborough reaches its full potential, providing a strategic blueprint for sustainable growth, improved connectivity, and economic vitality. This holistic approach will guide development, infrastructure investment, and public realm enhancements, ensuring long-term benefits for residents, businesses, and visitors.</p>
4.3	<p>Love to Ride – Cycle September</p> <p>Love to Ride is a behaviour change programme which uses web and app-based platform to encourage cycling through challenges and incentives. The Combined Authority is funding the 2024/25 programme through the Capability and Ambition fund and is available across the area. Cycle September, a work-based challenge, took place and resulted in: • 1,610 people registered for the challenge • 233 workplaces participating • 1,151 riders participating • 390 new users signed up for the challenge (51 of these were new riders!) • 165,644 miles logged • 60% of trips logged were for transport • 26,647 lbs of CO2 saved from entering the atmosphere The Love to Ride campaigns continue to see more people and workplaces participating. Compared to Cycle September 2023 there has been an overall increase in figures with an additional 162 people registered for the challenge, 12 additional workplaces and 2,113 additional lbs of CO2 saved. The Active Travel Team work closely with Love to Ride to ensure the campaigns are reaching more people across the region and we are building on our success year after year.</p>
4.4	<p>Mayor’s Tiger £1 Bus Pass</p> <p>As of October, the Tiger £1 Bus Pass has achieved substantial success with 30,467 applications, far surpassing the initial target of 10,000 applications by over 300%. This widespread uptake demonstrates strong interest and engagement from residents across the Combined Authority region. Application data shows a consistent reach across urban centres and more rural areas, indicating that our targeted outreach strategies are effectively engaging diverse communities. Notably, most applications fall within the 11-20 age bracket, confirming that our campaign successfully connected with the target demographic most likely to benefit from the pass.</p> <p>The Tiger £1 Bus Pass campaign has exceeded multiple objectives since its launch in May 2024. The campaign aimed to raise awareness, increase applications, gather feedback, and monitor pass usage. So far, we have achieved over 61,887 social media impressions, with click-through rates reaching over 62,000—more than three times our initial target. With a significant total of 199,383 journeys made using the pass, we are seeing consistent usage, far exceeding our six-month journey target of 50,000. This high engagement reflects the strong value the Tiger Pass offers students and young people, and it showcases our success in delivering an affordable transportation option that’s making a difference in daily commuting.</p>

5. Appendices	
5.1	None

6. Implications	
Financial Implications	

6.1	None other than those contained in the body of the report
Legal Implications	
6.2	None
Public Health Implications	
6.3	None
Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
6.4	None
Other Significant Implications	
6.5	None
Background Papers	
6.6	None