



## Combined Authority Board

**22 January 2025**

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. Key Activities

2.1	<b>Devolution White Paper</b> Following the publication of the English Devolution White Paper on 16 December 2024, Senior Officers at the Combined Authority have spent time reviewing the key elements of the white paper as well as holding discussions with MHCLG and other Mayoral Combined Authorities to fully understand the emerging opportunities and next steps, both short and medium term.
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	<p>We are now planning the next steps for taking on the new responsibilities as this becomes legislation and we are designated as a Mayoral Strategic Authority. We are also working on the pathway to being designated as an 'established' authority as set out in the White Paper. The current established authorities are consistent with what was announced in the Chancellor's budget and clarity on the process is helpful as our role and responsibilities change.</p> <p>As part of our ongoing engagement with the Government, the Combined Authority is currently drafting a response to the publication of the White Paper. Our response will consist of two parts, a joint response with the other MCAs, currently being finalised by Chief Executives, and an individual response on the unique opportunities and challenges for Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough.</p>
2.2	<p><b>Comprehensive Spending Review</b></p> <p>In December, HM Treasury launched Phase 2 of the Spending Review following the Autumn Budget on 30 October 2024.</p> <p>As part of this process, the Combined Authority has been invited to submit feedback on government spending priorities, and to suggest policy ideas that could inform decisions about departmental budgets, and resource allocation over the multi-year Spending Review period. The deadline for submissions is 9 February 2025.</p> <p>The Combined Authority are drafting a submission that will highlight the need to sustainably fund Mayoral Combined Authority's so that we can seize the opportunities as set out in the Devolution White Paper, successfully leveraging additional responsibilities to drive growth and cement the region's position as a net contributor to UK PLC.</p> <p>The submission will also highlight the need for long-term funding to enable the Local Growth Plan to be delivered effectively, removing barriers to growth and unlocking the region's full potential.</p>
2.3	<p><b>Local Growth Plan</b></p> <p>Our emerging Local Growth Plan was discussed at the Government's Growth Mission Board meeting in December 2024 with feedback subsequently received from MHCLG Officials.</p> <p>The Sector Priorities, developed in collaboration with Constituent Councils and partner organisations, were positively received by the Growth Mission Board and these will continue to be taken forward as part of the future development of a National Industrial Strategy.</p> <p>Since December, we have also received further clarity around the timeline and process for developing our Local Growth Plan. Three stages of development have been outlined:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Co-determine shared priorities (by end of Jan) – as set out in previous report</li> <li>2. Consider jointly with HMG how we reflect the priorities in relevant programmes and policies (Jan - July 2025)</li> <li>2. Finalise and publish plans (over Summer 2025).</li> </ol>
2.4	<p><b>Homes England Strategic Place Partnership</b></p> <p>In November, the Combined Authority Board approved the organisation entering a Memorandum of Understanding with Homes England to agree a Strategic Place Partnership (SPP).</p> <p>The Strategic Place Partnership (SPP) is a model developed by Homes England to enable greater collaboration and partnership working at a sub-regional scale, recognising those places with ambitious proposals for place-based growth and regeneration.</p> <p>Homes England have already signed SPPs with Greater Manchester Combined Authority, West Midlands Combined Authority, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, the Association of South Essex Local Authorities, and recently Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and North East Combined Authority.</p> <p>Since the November meeting of the Combined Authority Board, work to shape the plans and commitments within the SPP has continued and a ceremonial signing of the agreement is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 29 January in Huntingdonshire.</p> <p>As outlined in the Devolution White Paper, the SPP will ensure the region, through the CPCA, can influence and shape the investment priorities of Homes England for our area. In addition, this will lead</p>

	<p>to opportunities of finance and resources to help deliver the CPCA Shared Ambition (for which Homes England are a contributor) and the emerging Local Growth Plan.</p> <p>The White Paper also outlined an expectation that all MCAs, including new organisations, will develop SPPs.</p>
2.5	<p><b>Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)</b></p> <p>Encouraging progress has been made on establishing a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (C&amp;P). LVEPs are a key policy tool for Visit England (VE), bringing together public and private sector partners to grow the visitor economy for the benefit of residents, tourists and businesses. The Combined Authority received a mandate from our constituent authorities in the autumn, to convene and drive the development of an LVEP. We are working closely with VE, local authorities, Destination Management Organisations and other partners, to bring a recommendation to Board and submit an expression of interest to VE this financial year. If approved, we will then aim to make a full application this summer, with the goal of accreditation by VE by the end of 2025.</p>
2.6	<p><b>East of England APPG</b></p> <p>The Combined Authority continues to work in partnership with the East of England APPG. Building on the last meeting in November, regarding the Autumn Statement, the APPG have written to Treasury Ministers with key growth requirements and investments for the region. Subsequently, Treasury Ministers have agreed to meet with the APPG ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review. The Combined Authority will be included in those meetings.</p> <p>For a number of months the Combined Authority has been an active member of the APPG Skills working group; the APPG is now in the process of establishing a working group on Investment and the Combined Authority intends to join that group also.</p>
2.7	<p><b>Ely Junction Taskforce</b></p> <p>An established taskforce, organised by England's Economic Heartland, to focus and coordinate partner efforts to progress Ely Area Capacity Enhancements (otherwise known as Ely Junction Upgrade) has stepped up it's meeting cycle ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review. The taskforce is in the process of revisiting key messages and co-ordinating activity.</p>

### 3. Economy and Growth

3.1	<p><b>UKREiiF</b></p> <p>On Wednesday, 4 December, UKREiiF officially announced Team Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough's attendance in 2025. The announcement was made via their LinkedIn platform to over 10,000 followers and press contacts.</p> <p>Our immediate focus is on the Westminster Event, Driving Growth for the UK: Pivotal role for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough which will take place on Monday 27 January.</p> <p>This event will feature a series of panel discussions exploring how our region's strengths and assets can contribute to driving economic growth across the UK. This will include contributions from MPs and Business Leaders, and we anticipate a keynote speech from a Government Minister. The event is also an opportunity to highlight how collectively Team Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough is advancing an equitable, pioneering, connected and resilient region (our Shared Ambition outcomes) and in doing so accelerating growth and opportunities.</p> <p>Over 60 participants have currently responded to say they will be attending, including local business leaders, representatives from Homes England, the region's Universities, business membership organisations and the National Wealth Fund.</p> <p>By the end of January, the Combined Authority will have shared the first high-level for our pavilion events with UKREiiF. Place Directors have a key role in shaping this.</p>
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3.2	<p><b>Construction Hub Visit</b></p> <p>In December, Dr Nik Johnson, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, was given a tour of Cambridge Regional College's (CRC) cutting-edge Construction Hub on its Huntingdon campus, to see how Combined Authority investment was helping new talent get into the sector.</p> <p>The Combined Authority provided a Local Growth Fund grant of £2.5 million to refurbish and kit out part of the campus space with a state-of-the-art range of workshops and equipment to train people in general construction skills and trades including carpentry, electrical, and bricklaying. The aim of the Construction Hub is to help meet the significant skills shortages in the sector, while also setting learners on the path to good careers.</p> <p>Mayor Dr Johnson was joined by Katy Davies, of the Combined Authority Business Board, and who has a specialism in skills. The tour was led by CRC Principal and Chief Executive Mark Robertson and Deputy Principal for Curriculum Development Kate da Costa.</p> <p>During the tour the Mayor spoke to electrical students aged 16 and 17, as well as Level 2 Carpentry students, many of whom were working towards an apprenticeship in the trades. There were a variety of future aspirations ranging from going on to eventually start their own businesses, to working in heritage and building renovation.</p>
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4. Place & Connectivity	
4.1	<p><b>Tiger Bus Pass</b></p> <p>To date, the Tiger £1 Bus Pass campaign has achieved over 35,400 applications and supported an impressive 736,400 journeys. The campaign continues to perform strongly, with a reach of over 52,000, 86,000 impressions and an engagement rate of 2.69%.</p> <p>We are now collaborating with operators to analyse areas for increased usage, focusing on the purpose of journeys. For example, we are identifying opportunities to promote leisure travel during weekends by engaging key leisure stakeholders, such as football stadiums, gyms, and other recreational venues.</p> <p>Additionally, we are maintaining our focus on schools and colleges to raise awareness of the scheme. The Tiger Pass has proven to be a lifeline for students, particularly in areas where local school bus services are no longer available.</p> <p>To enhance storytelling and showcase the scheme's impact, we are working to obtain more video case studies. These will highlight the benefits and real-life usage of the pass.</p> <p>On social media, we continue to target the younger demographic, particularly the 16-25 age group, which has shown strong support for the scheme. Leveraging trending topics to promote the pass has been highly effective, driving significant engagement and reinforcing the campaign's success.</p>
4.2	<p><b>Tiger On Demand</b></p> <p>Since its launch, the Tiger on Demand service has successfully transported 1,767 passengers across 1,364 trips, demonstrating growing engagement with this new and innovative transport solution. The West Huntingdonshire zone launched as planned on 30th November, with the additional zones in Fenland, East Cambridgeshire, and South Cambridgeshire following on 11th January.</p> <p>To support the launch, we have implemented a comprehensive OASIS campaign plan, including distribution of printed materials across libraries, mobile libraries, and key community hubs, as well as targeted digital campaigns on social media.</p> <p>We are working closely with local councils, community groups, and stakeholders to raise awareness and address feedback swiftly, ensuring the service evolves to meet residents' needs effectively. This collaborative approach has been instrumental in achieving positive feedback and steady uptake across the region.</p>

4.3	<p><b>Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy</b></p> <p>Preliminary work on the Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy is in progress, focusing on building a strong foundation through comprehensive evidence gathering, and rigorous assessment. This phase aims to establish a clear understanding of transport challenges, opportunities, and future needs across the region, acknowledging the importance of the strategy for the Local Plan.</p> <p>Simultaneously, efforts are being made to design an inclusive and robust approach to stakeholder engagement and options assessment. This approach will ensure that the strategy is informed by different perspectives, balancing technical expertise with the insights and priorities of partners. By combining thorough analysis with collaborative input, the Greater Cambridge Transport Strategy is being positioned to deliver effective transport solutions.</p> <p>A member steering group is considering this progress and has oversight of the programme plan and engagement strategy development.</p>
4.4	<p><b>Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) update</b></p> <p>The updated business case for the LEVI bid was successfully submitted on 15th November.</p> <p>With this milestone completed, the next phase of the project is now underway. This includes advancing the engagement plan, refining the commercial and procurement strategies, and working through how fund will be equitably distributed across the Combined Authority area to ensure fair access to charge points. Additionally, efforts will focus on maximising private sector leverage to optimise the impact of the funding.</p> <p>As the work progresses, further updates will be provided to the Transport and Infrastructure Committee, including insights from the feedback received on the LEVI bid and ongoing developments in the project.</p>
4.5	<p><b>Active Travel</b></p> <p>To enhance safety and accessibility in rural areas, Brampton Road has been selected by Cambridgeshire County Council with support from Sustrans, as the location for a trial of the Quietway initiative.</p> <p>Quietways are designed to reduce vehicle speeds and improve road conditions, creating safer and more pleasant routes for walking, wheeling, and cycling. Sustrans has been spearheading the public engagement process, ensuring community input and support. Two resident meetings were held in late November 2024 to gather feedback, provide information, and discuss the benefits of this project, which aims to foster safer and more sustainable travel options in rural communities. For further information on the pilot study please see: <a href="#">Grafham to Brampton Quietway Pilot Project   Cambridgeshire County Council</a></p> <p>In addition, the County Council has been appointed to lead the development of the Combined Authority's Active Travel Strategy, with valuable input from Peterborough City Council officers, the Combined Authority, and a range of key partners. The inception meeting for this important strategy was held in November 2024, marking the start of a collaborative process aimed at shaping the future of active travel across the region. A draft of the strategy is expected to be presented to the Committee in summer 2025, offering a comprehensive vision that integrates local insights and aligns with regional priorities to promote sustainable, safe, and accessible travel options for all.</p> <p>A walking competition, similar to Love to Ride, is being launched shortly in the region. Street Tag is an online platform that rewards residents for being physically active in their community, parks, and greenspaces. Residents collect virtual tags during an eight-week challenge to earn points. The community or family group with the most points at the end of the challenge receive gift vouchers as a prize.</p>

5. Appendices	
5.1	None

## 6. Implications

### Financial Implications

6.1	None other than those contained in the body of the report
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### Legal Implications

6.2	None
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### Public Health Implications

6.3	None
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### Environmental & Climate Change Implications

6.4	None
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### Other Significant Implications

6.5	None
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### Background Papers

6.6	None
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