



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE-Decision Statement

Meeting: 28th January 2019

Minutes: [Overview and Scrutiny Decision Statement](#)

Chair: Councillor Lucy Nethsingha

Summary of decisions taken at this meeting.

Item	Topic	Decision <i>[None of the decisions below are key decisions]</i>
1.	Apologies	Apologies received from: Cllr Mike Bradley and Cllr Grenville Chamberlain, substituted by Cllr Peter Topping.
2.	Declaration of Interests	There were no declarations of interest.
3.	Minutes	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 26th November 2018 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following addition:-</p> <p>Under item 6 the Affordable Housing Update, Cllr Murphy requested that his point about the issue that only London Authorities and Homes England could finance affordable housing under current legislation be added.</p> <p>Under paragraph 5.2, 4th bullet point Cllr Allen raised an issue around some information that had been released under a Freedom of Information Act about the work carried out by consultants Arup in regard to the location of the route for the</p>

		<p>CAM. The information released under the FOI request suggested that there was little evidence provided for a route change and that officers had been advised to 'pad out' the report.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to express their concern at the Board meeting regarding this report done by Arup and whether there had been sufficient work carried out to warrant the Mayor's decision taken regarding the route options for the CAM.</p>
4.	Public Questions	There were no public questions received.
5.	Budget Report 2019/20 to 2022/23	<p>The Committee received the report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Cllr Count and from the Interim Chief Finance Officer.</p> <p>The following points were raised during the discussion:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Members were advised that only the salaries within the budget were subject to inflation pressure. •The new staffing structure would be taken to an Employment Committee soon; the figures in the budget are the most accurate figures that can be provided at this time. •There was a recruitment process being carried out currently to get in more permanent staff. •The Mayoral Capacity Fund was given to the Combined Authority to help with set up costs during the first two years of operation; there was no requirement to specify to government what the money was spent on and the plan was to spend the money in the third year of operation. • In response to a question regarding the use of the Transforming Cities Fund being used for Soham Station the Committee were advised that the Transforming Cities Fund had as its overarching concept the provision of infrastructure and services to

help alleviate congestion in cities. Central government recognises that the Combined Authority is best placed to make a judgement on how best to spend this funding in its own area and has provided a letter confirming this.

- In response to a question on borrowing; the members were advised that decisions around borrowing would depend on each individual scheme as each scheme would have different funding streams available to it. Best use of borrowing would be determined within each project brought forward.

- There would be monthly monitoring reports against this budget that would be brought to each Board meeting in the future.

- Members advised that it would be helpful if the LEP costs were shown separately to enable a comparison of the costs for the Combined Authority now as opposed to what it was before. However, the Interim Chief Finance Officer advised that one of the advantages of joining with the LEP had been that staffing and administrative costs could be shared and therefore it was difficult to now separate these out.

- Members requested some clarity around the housing loan that was identified within the report as it appeared to compare expenditure with cash flow, officers agreed to look at this.

- The Committee were advised that the CPIER report was being heavily relied upon to inform the decision making at the Combined Authority as it had helped to identify measures for refocusing the ideas on economic growth.

- In regard to CAM the officers and Portfolio Holder advised that the whole plan needed to be considered in stages and that while tunneling through the city would be an integral part of the project there would be a huge amount of work done outside of Cambridge City as well. As the project was progressed each part would be considered and signed off by the Board.

•The funding amount for the CAM project was subject to what each stage of the project required; currently the money outlined was for the stages that were in place.

•In response to a question on the transport levy the committee were informed that the levy had been determined after consultation and in agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council; the figures were based upon the two budgets of these councils.

The Committee agreed to ask the following questions to the Board in reference to the budget items being discussed:-

Item 2.1 Budget Monitor Update

1) The Committee wanted to raise their concerns around the monitoring report as they did not feel that it was a helpful document; the committee would be considering the monitoring report at their April meeting.

2) The Committee wanted to express their concern around the Arup report regarding the CAM and ask for more detail on the brief that was given to Arup to discern whether there had been sufficient work done on that report to justify the change in decision from the Mayor regarding the route options?

Item 2.2 19/20 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2019-2023

1) The Committee were pleased with the positive nature of the budget but felt that there was still some way to go and raised some concerns around the way cash flow and spending was outlined in the report.

2) The Committee expressed some concern around the passporting of funds and asked for there to be greater clarity around this.

		<p>3) The Committee expressed concern around the lack of prioritisation of the schemes.</p> <p><u>Item 2.4 Budget 2019/20 (Mayors Budget)</u></p> <p>1) The Committee wanted to understand the reasons for retaining the Mayor's office in Ely? Why wasn't the office based in Alconbury where the Combined Authority operates from?</p>
6.	Strategic Bus Review	<p>The Committee received the report from the Interim Transport Director which outlined the updated bus review which would be considered by the Combined Authority Board at the meeting due to be held on Wednesday 30th January 2019.</p> <p>The following points were discussed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •This report was a technical review which would build into the bus strategy; the recommendations ask for the Board to instruct that a bus reform task force be set up to consider the issues raised within the report and come up with a bus strategy. The task force would be made up of officers from Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council. •The report was a summary of a much larger, more extensive document that was the first step for determining the future strategy, the new task force would consider all the recommendations and would determine the best way forward. •In terms of timings, some smaller projects that could make improvements could start immediately and work alongside the work being done by the task force. •Developing a business case would take until 2021; two years to develop a brief and a business case was an ambitious timeline. While there was a wish for this to be

done quickly it also needed to be robust as this would put the authority in a good position with their partners.

- Members raised concerns around some of the recommendations as they didn't take into account people travelling to work at different times of day; workplace parking levies would act as a tax on those who could not use public transport and that there was no linkage between housing growth areas. Officers responded to say that these were all issues that would make up the remit of the task force.

- Transportation links for new housing projects would need to be discussed with the relevant planning departments at the local authorities.

- As the task force moved forward with proposals, factors such as reliability, attractiveness of the service to the public and the need to concentrate on rural areas would be work that would be undertaken.

- Of the £150k that had been allocated for the bus review there was approximately £30k left.

- In response to a question regarding concessionary fares the officer advised that part of the work being undertaken was gaining a greater understanding around costs and this would include having conversations with central government on concessionary fares and their implications.

The Committee requested that there be member involvement on the task force for the bus strategy and officers advised this would be considered.

The Committee agreed to ask the following questions to the Board in reference to the Strategic Bus Review items being discussed:-

- 1) The Committee welcomed the report and were pleased that the Combined Authority were taking bus services seriously; the members hoped that the report

		<p>would be approved by the Board to show a commitment to provide a better bus services for the area.</p> <p>2) The Committee had serious concerns around the lack of detail around the availability of bus services for people getting to and from work; and also, around the cost of high bus fares in the area.</p> <p>3) To ensure a decent rural bus service there would be a need for the service to operate with a subsidy and the committee would want further clarity on where this would come from.</p> <p>4) The Committee expressed their concern at the proposed pace for the bus strategy and wanted to highlight to the Board that although it may take a while to get a full business case developed some discussions and work especially with bus operators could start sooner to ensure the services were improved.</p> <p>5) The Committee requested that the task force being set up to develop the bus strategy had member involvement.</p>
7.	Review of the Combined Authority Board Agenda	<p>The Committee reviewed the agenda due to come to the Board on Wednesday 30th January 2019.</p> <p>The following points were discussed:-</p> <p><u>Audit and Governance Committee Recommendations</u></p> <p>The Committee raised some concerns around whether the HR processes had been dealt with since original concerns had been raised around this issue earlier in the year.</p>

The Chair advised that this was an issue that the Audit and Governance Committee were considering and that she would discuss with the Audit and Governance Chairman any feedback they received.

Budget Monitor Update

Cllr Allen raised the issue of the Mayor's Ball which had recently been in the local media and the Monitoring Officer advised that he was not aware of any propriety issues around this but would check and provide a written response to members on this.

The Committee raised a concern around the standard of the monitoring report and agreed they would review this as part of their future work programme.

Transport Delivery – Appointment of Inner Circle

Concerns were raised by the members around the cost and use of interim consultants.

The Committee agreed to raise the following questions to the Board on Wednesday:

Item 2.1 Budget Monitor Update

- 1) The Committee wanted to raise their concerns around the monitoring report as they did not feel that it was a helpful document; the committee would be considering the monitoring report at their April meeting.
- 2) The Committee wanted to express their concern around the Arup report regarding the CAM and ask for more detail on the brief that was given to Arup to discern whether there had been sufficient work done on that report to justify the change in decision from the Mayor regarding the route options?

Item 2.2 19/20 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2019-2023

- 1) The Committee were pleased with the positive nature of the budget but felt that there was still some way to go and raised some concerns around the way cash flow and spending was outlined in the report.
- 2) The Committee expressed some concern around the passporting of funds and asked for there to be greater clarity around this.
- 3) The Committee expressed concern around the lack of prioritisation of the schemes.

Item 2.4 Budget 2019/20 (Mayors Budget)

- 1) The Committee wanted to understand the reasons for retaining the Mayor's office in Ely? Why wasn't the office based in Alconbury where the Combined Authority operates from?

Item 3.1 Strategic Bus Review

- 1) The Committee welcomed the report and were pleased that the Combined Authority were taking bus services seriously; the members hoped that the report would be approved by the Board to show a commitment to provide a better bus services for the area.
- 2) The Committee had serious concerns around the lack of detail around the availability of bus services for people getting to and from work; and also around the cost of high bus fares in the area.
- 3) To ensure a decent rural bus service there would be a need for the service to operate with a subsidy and the committee would want further clarity on where this would come from.

		<p>4) The Committee expressed their concern at the proposed pace for the bus strategy and wanted to highlight to the Board that although it may take a while to get a full business case developed some discussions and work especially with bus operators could start sooner to ensure the services were improved.</p> <p>5) The Committee requested that the task force being set up to develop the bus strategy had member involvement.</p> <p><u>Item 3.2 Transport Delivery – Appointment of Inner Circle</u></p> <p>1) The Committee wanted to express their concern around the use and subsequent costs of consultants being used by the Combined Authority and suggested that this should be managed differently in future.</p>
8.	Member Update on Activity of Combined Authority	<p>Cllr Sargeant the Chair for the Task and Finish Group on the CAM Project advised that the report from CFPS was completed and that they had suggested a range of questions and early engagement with the Director for Transport.</p> <p>The report would come to the O&S meeting in February.</p>
9.	Combined Authority Forward Plan	<p>The Committee received and considered the Combined Authority Forward Plan and had no comments or suggestions at this time.</p>
10.	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Report	<p>The Committee received the report which outlined the work programme for the committee for the municipal year 2018/19.</p> <p>The Committee requested that a briefing on transport arrangements between local authorities and the combined authority be provided at their next meeting.</p> <p>The Committee requested that the Monitoring budget report be considered at their April meeting.</p>

		The Committee requested that the Chair for the Business Board be invited to attend the O&S March meeting to provide an update on how the Business Board was operating.
11.	Date of Next Meeting	The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be held at South Cambs District Council with a start time of 11am and a pre-meeting starting at 10:15am on the 25th February 2019.

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