

Notes of Informal Consultative Meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 21 January 2022

Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

Attendees (14): Councillors Carol Thirkill, Geoff Winnard, Mike Barnes, George Robinson, Megan Swift, Andrew Cooper, Harpreet Uppal (substituting for Cllr Davies), Mel Stephen, Jane Dowson, Peter Harrand, Tony Homewood, David Jones, Betty Rhodes, Rachel Melly.

Apologies (2): Councillors Paul Davies, Jeanette Sunderland.

In attendance: Ben Still, Angela Taylor, Khaled Berroum, Hannah Scales.

Item 2 – Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None.

Item 3 – Possible exclusion of the press and public

None.

Item 4 – Minutes of meeting held on 19 November 2021.

Members clarified the process for accepting and formalising minutes when Committees were held informally; any recommendations and minutes must be approved by the next formal committee meeting.

Members requested that the possibility of hybrid meetings should be explored for members who cannot attend in-person meetings for health reasons.

Item 5 – Chairs comments and updates

The Chair expressed hope that this committee meeting would be the last on Zoom and that committees would be in person by the next meeting in March.

Item 6 – Assurance Framework

Members were provided with an update on progress relating to the changes proposed to the Leeds City Region Local Assurance Framework arising from the 2022 annual review.

Members discussed how overspends were addressed through the flexibility in the Assurance Framework within tolerances set out for each project individually by the CA. If a project overspend is 5% over the tolerance set, the decision would go back to the decision making committee for reassessment but if it's under 5% it would go to the Managing Director – and these are reported in public. The complexity, size and value of each project determined which criteria it was subject to and which decision points it would go through and where the decision would be made. Ultimately decisions are made by political leaders – officers only analyse and advise.

In practice, no projects which have undergone the rigour of the early stages of the assurance process have had to be cancelled down the line – this occurred once on a broadband scheme as a national scheme superseded it. Usually officers help promoters rescope schemes so they fit objectives or are within spending tolerances, rather than cancel them. It

was also noted that the Combined Authority was the accountable body for the LEP and the LEP is subject to the same scrutiny, assurances and standards as the Combined Authority.

It was reported that the Carbon Impact Assessment Tool was due to come into place on 28 February 2022 it was suggested that the Tool was sent to members when available. It was also suggested that the capital programmes update report to be presented to the Committee on a semi-regular basis for oversight, in future.

Item 7 – Integrated Corporate Systems

Members were provided with initial information on Integrated Corporate System project which aims to upgrade current HR, finance and monitoring systems with a new ‘off the shelf’ – which could also be customised if necessary. Members discussed the challenges installing the system, other than the cost of extra staff, and how robust the plan was in place to monitor progress and how future proof the system’s cloud-based infrastructure was. Members requested a further update report on this in future.

Item 8 – Budget and business planning

Members were provided with further information on the budget position for the Combined Authority for 2022/23 was provided. Members received a brief overview of the Budget Workshop held in December.

The awaited levelling up white paper would outline government’s vision for Mayoral Combined Authorities and funding long term. Members discussed the £2 million funding gap in a previous report and it was confirmed that since the last meeting that gap had been closed to zero after confirmation of further capacity funding from the government, updated interest information and some further redeployments of operating costs. Members also discussed Gainshare and the £14 million committed spend (formally approved to date) from the wider allocation. A paper was being produced to determine how to allocate remaining funds to the local authorities within pre-agreed investment priorities and principles.

Item 9 – Corporate Scrutiny Work Programme

That an update on the integrated corporate systems project be provided in future and an update on business planning and the budget be provided at the next meeting.

Next meeting date – March 2022 , venue to be confirmed