

**Thursday, 23 January 2020**

**Democratic and Members' Services**

Fiona McMillan  
Monitoring Officer

**10:00**

Shire Hall  
Castle Hill  
Cambridge  
CB3 0AP

**Kreis Viersen Room  
Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge, CB3 0AP**

## **AGENDA**

**Open to Public and Press**

- |          |   |                  |
|----------|---|------------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Apologies for absence and declarations of interest</b>   |                  |
|          | <i>Guidance on declaring interests is available at</i><br><a href="http://tinyurl.com/ccc-conduct-code">http://tinyurl.com/ccc-conduct-code</a> |                  |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Minutes - 17th December 2019</b>   | <b>5 - 18</b>    |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Petitions and Public Questions</b>   |                  |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Growing Fenland - Town Reports</b>   | <b>19 - 180</b>  |
| <b>5</b> | <b>CUSPE - How to Design the Future of Local Government Today</b>   | <b>181 - 202</b> |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Shared and Integrated Services Update</b>  | <b>203 - 210</b> |
| <b>7</b> | <b>County Council's Approach to Addressing Housing and<br/>Homelessness - Six Months Progress Update</b>  | <b>211 - 222</b> |

<b>8</b>	<b>Innovate and Cultivate Fund - Endorsement of Recommendations</b>	
<b>9</b>	<b>Finance Monitoring Report - November 2019</b>	<b>223 - 256</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Community Champions Oral Updates</b>	
<b>11</b>	<b>Communities and Partnership Committee Agenda Plan</b>	<b>257 - 262</b>

The Communities and Partnership Committee comprises the following members:

Councillor Steve Criswell (Chairman) Councillor Mark Goldsack (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Barbara Ashwood Councillor Adela Costello Councillor Lis Every Councillor Janet French Councillor Lina Nieto Councillor Claire Richards Councillor Amanda Taylor and Councillor Simone Taylor

*For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact*

Clerk Name: Nick Mills

Clerk Telephone: 01223 699763

Clerk Email: [nicholas.mills@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:nicholas.mills@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

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<https://tinyurl.com/CommitteeProcedure>

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**COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE: MINUTES**

**Date:** Tuesday 17th December 2019

**Time:** 2:00pm – 4:10pm

**Venue:** Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall

**Present:** Councillors M Goldsack (Vice-Chairman),  
D Ambrose Smith, L Every, J French, J Gowing, L Nieto, C Richards,  
A Taylor and S Taylor

**Apologies:** Councillors S Criswell (Chairman, substituted by Councillor Ambrose Smith), B Ashwood and A Costello (substituted by J Gowing)

**218. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies were received from Councillors Barbara Ashwood, Adela Costello (substituted by John Gowing) and Steve Criswell (substituted by David Ambrose Smith).

No declarations of interest were made.

**219. MINUTES – 21ST NOVEMBER 2019**

It was resolved unanimously to:

Approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 2019 as a correct record and to note the action log.

**220. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No petitions or public questions were received.

**221. LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITIES**

The Committee received a report on the progress of the Future Libraries Initiative, which included a proposed vision and model as well as a request to consider renaming the service as 'Libraries and Communities'. Introducing the report, the new Interim Head of Service noted that the vision and model were strongly aligned to the Think Communities approach, as laid out in section 2.1.1 of the report. Attention was drawn to the fact that two thirds of library buildings' capacity was currently underused due to current opening hours and Members were informed that this capacity would be unlocked by the extended hours made possible by open access technology. Such factors would be considered when measuring the success of libraries in the future, with more of a focus on how well they connected and supported communities. It was also noted that the Future Libraries Initiative project had successfully obtained funding and was now progressing to a stage that engaged the communities where the seven prototype libraries were located.

While discussing the report, Members:

- Suggested that charities and other community organisations could use library spaces outside normal opening hours to provide activities for young people. Acknowledging the suggestion, Members were assured that young people would be involved throughout the design process in order to develop ownership.
- Considered how businesses might also be able to use library spaces, either for events, meeting rooms or IT facilities. Members were informed that although some multinational companies had expressed an interest in using them to extend their presence to smaller communities, the main objective was to promote local business, although it was acknowledged that the Council should not be seen to be favouring certain businesses. The New Economics Foundation was working with the Council on this issue.
- Sought clarification on whether the Library Plus Open Access Project would involve an individual plan for each library. The Interim Head of Service confirmed that a model would be developed and introduced across the network, although technical solutions would be adapted to fit the requirements of each individual library building. A report detailing the technological aspects of the project was due to be presented to the Committee on 12th March 2020.
- Queried whether the new partners involved in the process included the County's universities, colleges and schools. Members were informed that the University of Cambridge was particularly interested in the role of democracy and a partnership was being developed along such grounds. Anglia Ruskin University was also involved, largely in the area of employability of its students, and would be carrying out a customer perception survey across different parts of the network in early 2020.
- Expressed concern over library provision in smaller towns and villages across the County, where transport issues further complicated access to facilities in nearby towns or villages. The Interim Head of Service informed Members that two mobile libraries were being built to replace those currently in use, which were expected to come in to use in spring 2020. It was also noted that Cambridgeshire had been chosen as an ideal location to develop the service precisely due to its largely rural population. Members discussed ideal locations for popup libraries, such as community halls or private businesses, as was successfully carried out in Lincolnshire, and it was confirmed that the Council would support such efforts.
- Observed that libraries were popular with children and adults but that there was a deficit with the age group in between. One Member suggested that extending the hours via open access technology would address the problem somewhat, although it was acknowledged that different offers were required for the specific age groups.
- Noted that the vision stated that the service would be a catalyst for business without providing further information on which businesses would be attracted and what the offer was. An example given was for people working at home to be able to make use of the IT facilities, and it was suggested that further information should be included on what offers could be made and who might be able to benefit from them.

- Remarked that there was a universal concept of a library and while there was support for expanding and developing the service, renaming it to “Libraries and Communities” might confuse users. It was noted that other places also considered themselves to be at the heart of the community and it would not be practical for each institution to adopt the term into their name. Members were informed that work was currently ongoing on the branding of the service and it was agreed to defer the renaming of the service until further consideration had been given to the issue.
- Enquired what level of library provision the new communities across the County would receive. The Interim Head of Service commented on the high level of success that the library service had experienced in obtaining Section 106 funding compared to other local authorities, which provided opportunities to develop and sustain projects in new communities. It was noted that the library in Northstowe, one of the seven prototype libraries, was being developed as the civic centre of the community.
- Clarified that Council workers would be able to work from libraries in the same way as anybody else, but that the facilities were not being developed as specific places of work for Council workers.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Defer the renaming of the Cambridgeshire Libraries service; and
- b) Agree the new vision and model for the future service.

## **222. THINK COMMUNITIES**

The Committee received a report on the progress being made towards delivery of the Council’s Think Communities approach. It was observed that the inaugural Think Communities Partnership Board meeting had been held on 2nd December 2019 and that it had been well attended by members of the public and voluntary sector, including local authorities and the health, fire and police services. Attention was drawn to the three main themes currently being focussed on: communications and community engagement; data and intelligence; and workforce reform. The Service Director of Community and Safety informed Members that the next stage of establishing the borders of Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) would involve discussions with each individual local Member, given their knowledge of their area and ability to identify potential issues. Such consultations would begin in January with members of the Communities and Partnership Committee before extending to the whole Council, although it was noted that the borders would be constantly evolving once implemented, in order to serve their purpose effectively.

While discussing the report, Members:

- Noted inconsistencies between the SDA maps and ward divisions. The Service Director of Community and Safety acknowledged the discrepancies and informed Members that they were originally based on Primary Care Networks, so as to lock in health partners, and represented initial suggestions produced by officers. The consultations with Local Members were intended to identify and overcome such boundary issues.

- Observed that Fenland involved many communities beyond Wisbech and that attention should not be too focused on one location. The Service Director of Community and Safety acknowledged the concerns and noted that discussions were ongoing with Fenland District Council regarding different areas.
- Suggested greater efforts should be made to engage with community champions and district, parish and town councillors throughout the process, as much of the work was already being carried out by them, as well as other organisations and groups, such as community safety partnerships.
- Noted that a number of venues listed in appendix 7 of the report had vague and misleading titles, although it was acknowledged that such concerns would be addressed during the forthcoming consultations with Local Members.
- Sought clarification over who was on the Think Communities Delivery Board in Huntingdonshire. The Service Director of Community and Safety undertook to establish the membership and inform Members. **Action required**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Note and comment on the progress of the Think Communities approach; and
- b) Make initial comments about the draft service delivery areas.

## 223. CAMBRIDGESHIRE SKILLS

The Committee received a report on progress made by Cambridgeshire Skills in the delivery plan for the 2019/20 academic year. Noting the earlier discussion on extending the use of library provisions, the Head of Service informed Members that a memorandum of understanding had been established to operate in a further fifteen libraries to the five currently in use, with the intention to eventually use them all. Further to the information laid out in section 2.7 of the report, it was noted that the number of venues in Fenland and Huntingdonshire had increased from 3 to 21, while those in East Cambridgeshire, South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City had increased from 2 to 18. Members were also informed that the number of enrolments had increased from 820 to 1053 since the report had been written. The Head of Service noted that the Communications team had assisted in developing a social media presence which enabled the service to proactively target areas where places remained open on courses. Preparations were underway for an Ofsted inspection likely to be carried out prior to May 2020, which was being carried out earlier than usual due to the widespread changes across the service.

While discussing the report, Members:

- Observed that the curriculum only covered level one and sought clarification on how people who wished to continue to higher levels were assisted. The Head of Service informed Members that courses had been extended to level two in some areas and that the hope was to extend them further to level three. For those courses where such an advance was not possible, the service signposted learners to organisations where they would be able to continue.

- Clarified that there was a wide range of courses available in Cambridge City, with English as a second language being particularly popular.
- Established that particular attention had been given to extend involvement with traveller communities through working with smaller local authorities and public health. It was noted that the majority of those coming from traveller communities were male and Members asked whether the reasons for this could be established.

#### **Action required**

- Expressed concern that some courses that were not specifically employment orientated had been removed, noting that there was demand for such courses and that they linked in to the Think Communities approach. Members were informed that the core budget was for education and any further funding secured could be used for additional courses, while there was a suggestion that courses for social purposes should attain alternative funding from the relevant Council department.
- Considered whether people living in more affluent areas had a greater ability to pay for courses, and it was suggested that the ideal situation would be to have a mixture of learners who paid and did not pay. Members were informed that when a real need was identified for a particular course in a certain area, it was introduced.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the progress of the newly designed service operating as Cambridgeshire Skills.

## **224. INNOVATE & CULTIVATE FUND – ENDORSEMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee received a report which contained five recommended applications for funding from the Innovate funding stream of the Innovate and Cultivate Fund. Members were informed that four of the applications had conditions attached in order to cover risk considerations, as laid out in section 2.3 of the report.

While discussing the recommended applications, Members:

- Sought clarification over whether there was a time limit for Switch Now to obtain a premises in St Ives in order to meet the condition for their grant. The Strengthening Communities Service Manager confirmed that it was difficult for Switch Now to put a deadline until the grant and conditions of award had been agreed, whilst noting that their hope was to secure suitable vacant premises by the end of March, or as soon as possible.
- Considered the impact of the Innovate and Cultivate Fund and requested information on the types of target groups that received funding, what outcomes were anticipated, what the geographical spread was and a comparison of the success rates between large and small organisations that had submitted applications, in order to assess whether vulnerable people were unrepresented. The Assistant Director of Housing, Communities and Youth informed Members that such information would be included in the End of Year Evaluation Report which would be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 12th March 2020.

- Welcomed the benefits that had been felt on commissioning as a result of the application process, thanks to the in-depth information that it provided.
- Suggested that a list of all the organisations that had applied, whether successful or not, would prove a valuable resource for Members when asked for signposting by residents, noting that many of the applicants came from relatively unknown organisations. The Strengthening Communities Service Manager informed Members that it would not be possible to provide information on unsuccessful applications, on one hand because of confidentiality reasons, but also because some of them would have ended up unable to provide the proposed services following their unsuccessful application. It was noted that the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation administered the fund and published successful applications and officers agreed to suggest the proposal of a geographically-based list of funded projects. Members were also informed that a directory of community services was currently being developed for the Council's website and that more information would be circulated. **Action required**
- Requested information on the next pre-application drop in session, including the date and location where it would be held. **Action required**

It was resolved unanimously to:

- a) Consider the recommendations of the panel;
- b) Confirm agreement to fund the following application through the Innovate funding stream:
  - Centre 33; and
- c) Confirm agreement to fund the following four applications through the Innovate funding stream, following fulfilment of the conditions listed in Section 2.2 of the report:
  - Switch Now CIC;
  - Red2Green;
  - Ormiston Families; and
  - People Potential Possibilities (P3).

## 225. PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 2 2019-20

The Committee received a performance report which provided information on the status of performance indicators the Committee had selected to monitor in order to understand the performance of services that it oversaw. It was noted that the report now adopted the standard format used by other committees, although the way in which it was produced was still being established, including ensuring suitable explanations for each indicator and setting targets.

While discussing the report, Members:

- Welcomed the adoption of a uniform format across committees.
- Sought clarification over the increase in reported hate crimes. The Assistant Director of Public Protection suggested that it was positive that the number of

reports was going up, although alarming, as it represented an improvement in the reporting process.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note and comment on performance information and take remedial action as necessary.

## **226. FINANCE MONITORING REPORT – OCTOBER 2019**

The Committee received the October 2019 Finance Monitoring Report for People and Communities. It was noted that the Coroners Service was slightly worse than expected, while the Registration & Citizenship Service was slightly better, due to pressures and changes in fees. The Service Director of Community and Safety informed Members that a formal review of the Coroners Service was being undertaken in order to mitigate and manage demand differently.

While discussing the report, Members:

- Considered the extreme cases that the Coroners Service received, including two examples that would cost a total of £1.5m, indicating the vulnerability of the service to overspending. Members established that the responsibility for the costs had been transferred to local authorities and that the Council was also required to fund increasing body storage costs.
- Established that the review was being carried out by a working group of experts, including the Senior Coroner. It was noted that the national Chief Coroner was looking at the national model and funding approach, as there was a recognition that areas suffered from local complexities did not receive higher levels of funding under the current funding formula.

It was resolved unanimously to:

Review and comment on the report.

## **227. COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS ORAL UPDATES**

It was resolved unanimously to:

Defer the Community Champions oral updates to the Committee meeting on 23rd January 2020.

## **228. COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE REVIEW OF DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUSINESS PLANNING PROPOSALS FOR 2020-21 TO 2024-25**

The Committee received a report which contained an overview of the draft Business Plan revenue and capital proposals for services within the remit of the Committee. It was noted that the report was very similar to the previous version seen by the Committee in October 2019, although it brought the position up to date. Attention was drawn to the one saving relevant to the Committee, which was related to the Cambridgeshire Skills service.

It was resolved by majority to:

- a) Note the overview and context provided for the 2020/21 to 2024/25 Business Plan revenue proposals for the Service, updated since the last report to the Committee in October;
- b) Comment on the draft budget and savings proposals that are within the remit of the Communities & Partnership Committee for 2020/21 to 2024/25, and endorse them to the General Purposes Committee as part of consideration for the Council's overall Business Plan; and
- c) Comment on the changes to the capital programme that are within the remit of the Communities & Partnership Committee and endorse them to the General Purposes Committee as part of consideration for the Council's overall Business Plan.

## **229. COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN**

It was resolved unanimously to:

Note the Committee's agenda plan.

Chairman  
23rd January 2020



**COMMUNITIES AND  
PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE****Minutes - Action Log****Appendix 1**

This is the updated minutes action log as of 15th January 2019 and captures the actions arising from the most recent Communities and Partnership Committee meetings and updates Members on the progress on compliance in delivering the necessary actions.

**ACTIONS FROM MINUTES OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2019 COMMITTEE MEETING**

Minute No.	Report Title	Action to be taken by	Action	Comments	Status
146.	<b>DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE (DASV) – REVIEW OF DOMESTIC ABUSE RESOURCE AND OUTREACH PROVISION</b>	<b>Rob Hill</b>	<p>It was suggested that there were too many intended outcomes in the draft list and that having fewer targets would increase the chances of achieving the goals in a more effective way.</p> <p><b>Action: the Assistant Director of Housing, Communities and Youth agreed to take the suggestion in to consideration when finalising the list.</b></p>	<p>Phase one of the review was concluded and ratified by the DASV Delivery Board.</p> <p>The phase two restructure proposal has now been completed and is awaiting internal sign off. A key part of this included a reworking of the partnership strategy, which has been streamlined to ensure the outcomes are achievable and in line with a core offer.</p> <p>A summary of the restructure proposals and the strategy will be presented to the Committee meeting on 12th March 2020.</p>	<b>ACTION ONGOING</b>

**ACTIONS FROM MINUTES OF THE 8TH AUGUST 2019 COMMITTEE MEETING**

Minute No.	Report Title	Action to be taken by	Action	Comments	Status
187.	<b>CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES CAPITAL PROJECTS</b>	<b>Christine May</b>	Members queried which libraries across the County would be offering open access facilities.  <b>Action: the Assistant Director of Cultural and Community Services confirmed that a list would be circulated once a final decision has been made.</b>	Work is underway to assess the feasibility and costs for each site. Details and recommendations will be provided in a report on Open Access at the Committee meeting on 20th May 2020.	<b>ACTION ONGOING</b>

**ACTIONS FROM MINUTES OF THE 10TH OCTOBER 2019 COMMITTEE MEETING**

Minute No.	Report Title	Action to be taken by	Action	Comments	Status
195.	<b>CIVIC/LIBRARIES PARTNERSHIP PROJECT UPDATE</b>	<b>Christine May</b>	While discussing the contribution of library volunteers, the Service Director of Community and Safety proposed an annual event to recognise and celebrate their work. One Member suggested recognition at a community awards ceremony, such as Ely Hero Awards.  <b>Action: the Assistant Director of Cultural and Community Services agreed to consider the proposal.</b>	The Assistant Director is currently investigating what recognition events are already in place, and to identify good practice from elsewhere. She will bring back proposals accordingly and hold a workshop session with Committee Members on 13th February 2020.	<b>ACTION ONGOING</b>
203.	<b>FINANCE MONITORING REPORT – AUGUST 2019</b>		Members expressed concern over the lack of body storage facilities at the County's main hospitals, which was leading to additional financial pressures on the Council.		

		Christine May	a) <b>Action: the Assistant Director of Cultural and Community Services agreed to discuss possible solutions with health partners.</b>	a) The Assistant Director is liaising with the Senior Coroner over this action	<b>ACTION ONGOING</b>
		Adrian Chapman	b) <b>Action: the Service Director of Community and Safety undertook to obtain clarification from the legal team regarding the Council's responsibilities on the issue.</b>	b) The Monitoring Officer is undertaking this work and will report back in due course.	<b>ACTION ONGOING</b>
<b><u>ACTIONS FROM MINUTES OF THE 17TH DECEMBER 2019 COMMITTEE MEETING</u></b>					
222.	<b>THINK COMMUNITIES</b>	Adrian Chapman	Members requested information on the membership of the Huntingdonshire Think Communities Delivery Board.  <b>Action: the Service Director of Community and Safety undertook to provide details to Members.</b>	Awaiting update.	<b>ACTION ONGOING</b>
223.	<b>CAMBRIDGESHIRE SKILLS</b>	Tanya Meadows	While discussing the enrolment of members of traveller communities for courses, Members asked why the majority of applicants were male.  <b>Action: The Head of Service undertook to investigate and inform the Committee.</b>	Following the discussion at the Committee meeting, further enrolments were made from members of traveller communities and the split has now closed to 60% males and 40% males, thus bringing the divide to a level that is not of specific concern.	<b>ACTION COMPLETE</b>
224.	<b>INNOVATE &amp; CULTIVATE FUND – ENDORSEMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	Elaine Matthews	a) Members suggested that a geographically-based directory of successful applicants to the Innovate and Cultivate Fund would provide a useful resource to Councillors when signposting residents.  <b>(i) Action: the Strengthening Communities Service Manager agreed to propose the idea</b>	a) (i) All funded project details are on the website of Cambridgeshire Community Foundation, who provide administration support for the fund.	<b>ACTION COMPLETE</b>

			<p><b>to the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation.</b></p> <p><b>(ii) Action: the Strengthening Communities Service Manager also undertook to provide Members with information regarding the directory of community services being developed for the Council's website.</b></p> <p>b) Members requested information on the next pre-application drop in session, including the date and location.</p> <p><b>Action: the Strengthening Communities Service Manager agreed to circulate the information.</b></p>	<p>Discussions are taking place on how this can be made visually easier to identify geographical areas of delivery, as well as promoting the projects to those who may benefit from them where it makes sense to do so (for example community groups and activities which can be accessed, or supported, by residents).</p> <p>(ii) The Cambridgeshire Online Directory (<a href="https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/cambridgeshire-online-directory">https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/cambridgeshire-online-directory</a>) provides residents and families with information on organisations, services and events across Cambridgeshire.</p> <p>We welcome listings from local providers and organisations including events, activities, clubs, groups and courses that can support or help Cambridgeshire residents lead active, healthy and fulfilling lives and access local community support.</p> <p>Listings include County Council services, our partners and commissioned services alongside community listings. This information also supports the delivery of the Local Offer; Care Act and Childcare Act.</p>	<p><b>ACTION ONGOING</b></p>
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				<p>The listings in the directory are not, however, endorsed or recommended by the Council.</p> <p>The contact for the directory is Jon Anderson (Information Services Advisor / Digital Team)</p> <p>b)</p> <p>Awaiting confirmation of date. Officers have been in touch with Councillor Simone Taylor to discuss suitable venues in the Eynesbury/St Neots area and are following up on suggestions. Councillor Taylor has helpfully offered to promote the scheme on local radio once a date is confirmed.</p>	
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**GROWING FENLAND – TOWN REPORTS**

**To:** Communities and Partnership Committee

**Meeting Date:** 23 January 2020

**From:** Adrian Chapman, Service Director – Communities and Partnerships

**Electoral division(s):** Fenland (Chatteris, March North & Waldersley, March South & Rural, Roman Bank & Peckover, Whittlesey North, Whittlesey South, Wisbech East and Wisbech West)

**Forward Plan ref:** N/A                      **Key decision:** No

**Purpose:** To consider and endorse relevant aspects of the Growing Fenland strategic report and individual town reports.

**Recommendation:** The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Consider and discuss relevant aspects of the strategic report and the individual town reports (for example, those associated with community, social, economic and skills opportunities);
- b) Consider and agree how best it can contribute to the reports' findings and their implementation; and
- c) Endorse those aspects of the reports relevant to the Committee's remit.

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>		<b><i>Member contacts:</i></b>	
Name:	Adrian Chapman	Names:	Councillor Steve Criswell
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Tel:	07920 160441	Tel:	01223 706398

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** Following a successful pilot scheme undertaken in St Neots, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) Board committed to provide funding to create a masterplan for growth for each market town within the CPCA area (as recorded in the actions from the [CPCA Board meeting held on 28.03.18](#)).
- 1.2** With the aim of bringing jobs, infrastructure and growth to the Fenland area, the masterplans would also enable each of our towns to become and remain "vibrant and thriving places" in their own right whilst helping to boost the local and regional economy.
- 1.3** A commitment of £50k was made by the CPCA to produce a masterplan for each town. In Fenland, funding was originally provided for Chatteris, March and Whittlesey only (£150k in total), due to the ongoing Wisbech 2020 Vision work. However, a decision was later made to include Wisbech in the process and a further £50k was committed to the Fenland project.
- 1.4** The master planning project in Fenland was given a working title of 'Growing Fenland' which linked the proposed growth of the local economy to the important agricultural heritage in the area.
- 1.5** In August 2018, a procurement exercise was undertaken to appoint economic specialists to help deliver the Growing Fenland project alongside a team of Fenland District Council officers. Metro Dynamics were appointed, having demonstrated substantial master planning experience. They also had in depth knowledge of the local area having been the lead consultant for producing the [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review \(CPIER\)](#).
- 1.6** The Communities and Partnership Committee is focussed on supporting the Wisbech 2020 programme; the Chairman is a member of the Core Vision Group, and the Service Director is now the co-chair of the Steering Group. Although the Growing Fenland reports largely focus on the capital infrastructure needs of Fenland towns – and will therefore also need to be considered by the appropriate CCC Committee for these elements – it is also vital that the social and economic infrastructure is supported, strengthened and sustained to create more vibrant, integrated communities within which social mobility is improved and opportunities for communities are available. For these reasons, the reports are also presented to Committee today for consideration.
- 1.7** Similarly, although the Committee's specific focus is on Wisbech, the council's role to support community resilience, to address inequality, to support equality of opportunity, and to strengthen opportunity is relevant across the whole of Cambridgeshire, and so all four of the town plans are presented in this report.



## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

### **2.1 Overview of Process**

- 2.1.1** Town Teams were convened for each market town, including representatives from Town, District and County Councils as well as community and business representatives, and students from local high schools.
- 2.1.2** The Town Teams were asked about the strengths in their towns and what improvements could be made. Metro Dynamics also carried out extensive research and data collection in relation to various factors including:
- Population demographics
  - Retail information (including vacancy rates on the High Street)
  - Transport connectivity and commuter information
  - Occupation categories
  - Housing numbers and planned developments
  - Access to the countryside
  - Educational attainment
  - Job opportunities
  - Health stats

The information was collated to produce an interim report for each of the towns (with the exception of Wisbech) which were discussed with each town team.

- 2.1.3** Once the interim reports were agreed and published, public consultation was carried out through face to face interaction at public events and through online surveys with the exception of Wisbech (due to ongoing consultation already being carried out as part of the 'I Love Wisbech' project). Stakeholders were also engaged through themed meetings and telephone interviews. The results of the consultation were used to further tailor the reports to ensure that they reflected the views of the local community.
- 2.1.4** The final reports are attached at **Appendices 2 - 5**. Also attached, at **Appendix 1**, is an overarching strategic report which includes issues and opportunities common to all Fenland Towns.
- 2.1.5** Proposals include large scale projects which are already in train (e.g. Wisbech Garden Town, A47 dualling) along with new ideas such as a Health Action Area. The report also recommends the implementation of a Mayoral Task Force which would have the drive and resources to spearhead the delivery of these large scale and wide reaching projects.

### **2.2 Links to Other Work**

- 2.2.1** The Growing Fenland work links to a number of initiatives being delivered in the Fenland and/or CPCA area. These include:
- CPIER
  - CPCA Skills Strategy

- CPCA Local Industrial Strategy
- CPCA/FDC Wisbech Garden Town proposal
- FDC Economic Growth Agenda
- FDC Culture Strategy
- FDC led Future High Street Fund proposal (March only)
- CCC Think Communities approach
- Town Council projects
- Various community projects

It will be imperative that the Growing Fenland work dovetails and complements the projects outlined above to minimise duplication and to ensure maximum impact in the local community.

### **3. APPENDICES**

- 3.1**    **Appendix 1** – Growing Fenland: Strategy Proposals for the Fenland District  
**Appendix 2** – Chatteris – Growing Fenland  
**Appendix 3** – March – Growing Fenland  
**Appendix 4** – Whittlesey – Growing Fenland  
**Appendix 5** – Wisbech – Growing Fenland

### **4. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

#### **4.1 A good quality of life for everyone**

Delivery of the Growing Fenland reports provides huge opportunities to secure a good quality of life for everyone, regardless of where they live, their background or their circumstances.

#### **4.2 Thriving places for people to live**

Delivery of the Growing Fenland reports provides huge opportunities to create and sustain thriving places for people to live within, where opportunities for work, leisure, learning, and community involvement are the norm.

#### **4.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's Children**

The development of Fenland's towns directly supports the enhancement of opportunities for families, and for ensuring the right opportunities and services are available for everyone.

### **5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

#### **5.1 Resource Implications**

There are no specific resource implications identified at this stage. As summarised in each of the reports, the expectation is that the CPCA will work with FDC and its partners to identify and/or attract the funding required to deliver the aspirations and projects set out in the reports.

## **5.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications**

There are no significant implications in this category.

## **5.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications**

There are no significant implications in this category.

## **5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications**

It is widely understood that there are significant inequalities across parts of Fenland when compared to other parts of the county. The Growing Fenland reports offer a unique opportunity to address many of these issues, creating new opportunities to enhance social mobility, economic prosperity and community integration.

## **5.5 Engagement and Communications Implications**

The reports have already been subject to extensive consultation, as referenced in this committee report.

## **5.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement**

The development of the Growing Fenland reports has been subject to consultation with local communities as well as elected Members. It is vital that this approach is maintained as the report findings are implemented.

## **5.7 Public Health Implications**

Implementation of the findings contained in the reports is expected to bring health and wellbeing benefits for Fenland residents and communities. Alongside physical growth and regeneration for example, socioeconomic improvements will support quality of life issues, opportunities to learn and gain better employment will improve living standards, and provision of community space will enable cultural and physical activities.

<b>Implications</b>	<b>Officer Clearance</b>
<b>Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?</b>	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Emma Jones
<b>Have the procurement/contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Gus de Silva
<b>Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?</b>	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

<b>Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
<b>Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Christine Birchall
<b>Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
<b>Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Val Thomas

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
None	N/A

# Growing Fenland – Strategy Proposals for the Fenland District

*A report from Metro Dynamics to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Fenland District Council*

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# Introduction

Metro Dynamics were commissioned by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority in October 2018 to undertake the preparation of economic and social master plans for four of the main market towns in Fenland: Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech.

The principal means through which this work has been undertaken is a series of research projects gathering data on each of the market towns, consultation with the general public, businesses and with town teams comprising elected members, officers and others. On the basis of this work, reports have been prepared on the issues facing each town. Each report sets out recommendations arising from both the research and consultation and deliberation.

Three of these reports were issued in interim in the early summer of 2019 and were the subject of revision subsequently following a further process of consultation. The exception was with Wisbech, owing to the work already underway through Wisbech 2020 Vision.

Links to the Final Reports are here **[link to be added]**.

The proposals set out in each of these reports have been the subject of development through the preparation of strategic outline business cases for each of the proposals where this is possible at this stage.

It was clear to the Metro Dynamics team at an early stage of the process that, whilst each of the town reports contains valuable and specific proposals, some of the most important issues facing the towns are actually common. In addition, there are issues which lie beyond the scope of town and District councils and in some cases beyond the scope and funding of the County Council and Combined Authority too.

The purpose of the project was to identify important priorities and programmes, the pursuit of which would change the trajectory of the market towns in the short, medium and long term. As we presented our findings to Fenland District Council and the Combined Authority, we made the argument for a second and parallel stream of work which looks at these cross-cutting issues with a view to bringing forward proposals for all the market towns to complement the ideas emerging from the individual town reports.

This report sets out the conclusions of the Growing Fenland project in this area.

The Town Team Reports are very much the reports of the people who worked on them and arise from the process of engagement we undertook. This report is different. It considers issues, most of them applying across larger areas than one time. Several of the issues considered here apply to all four towns. Unlike the Town Team reports these are our proposals to the Councils.

For the most part, this report sets out policy issues and proposed steps to start to tackle them. In some areas the proposals are clear and specific, but in other areas, further work needs to be done to enable the precise policies, programmes and initiatives needed to be developed. They will also need to be integrated into other policy work – such as the new Fenland local plan.

The final proposal considered in this paper is about implementation. The officers of the District Council and partners in Town Councils have worked hard over the process of the Growing Fenland project to devote time and resources to its work. The next stages of the project will require even more effort. This report therefore concludes with a mechanism which we believe will galvanise the efforts of those needed to take the Growing Fenland project forward in the months ahead.

## Summary

This report sets out outline proposals, eleven in total, grouped into themes:

- infrastructure, transport and housing (I)
- people: education and health (P)
- jobs and enterprise (J)

The final proposal sets out a mechanism for taking forward the work of Growing Fenland.

The table below sets out the proposals in summary form.

<b>Growing Fenland: Summary of Strategy Proposals</b>		
I	1. Nene River Barrage	This proposal which will reduce flood risk and stabilise river levels is a gamechanger. It can drive value into proposal 4 and potentially reduce the cost of proposal 3 dramatically.
I, J	2. Opportunity for full bus franchising	The case for rethinking the model of bus delivery in Fenland is compelling. As the Combined Authority considers options to take more control over bus services, Fenland is the natural place to start.
I	3. A47 Dualling	More even than the proposals for connectivity between



		March and Wisbech (and helping the business case for it), this project will rectify poor connectivity across the whole area.
I	4. Wisbech Garden Town	This proposal is sound, but needs to happen in concert with proposals 1, 3, and 5. The Garden Town can play a major role in meeting housing ambitions right across Fenland, but only if developed with excellence at its heart with high quality schools, a regenerated Wisbech Town Centre and improved connectivity.
P	5. A New Deal for Education	The Opportunity Area proposal has made progress but a considerably more developed and better resourced programme is needed to help schools to counter the educational disadvantage facing the area.
P	6. A New Partnership for Skills	One key reason for low incomes in the market towns is poor pay arising from the jobs people do. Improving skill levels more systematically is key to changing that so that the proposals at 9 and 10 can really have the impact needed.
P	7. Early Years Support	A disproportionate number of children in the towns arrive at school without the skills in part because of the lack of home support needed. Improving school attainment in the way envisaged (see 5 above) without further pre-school support will be very challenging.
P	8. A Health Action Area	Breaking the cycle of poor health and low wages is vital to delivering for the Fenland market towns. Getting people into jobs and keeping them there (projects 6, 9 and 10) requires them to be healthy throughout life and able to acquire and use new skills (6).
J	9. The Manufacturing and Agritech Launchpad	Metalcraft are a great story for Fenland and have been working on exciting proposals for developing a launchpad to build a stronger cluster of related companies.
J, P, I	10. Cambridgeshire Jobs Compact	In the short term, bringing good jobs into the market towns will yield some but limited results. The towns need to benefit from the higher levels of income in Cambridge and Peterborough near term. Getting Fenland residents into jobs there is therefore a priority.
Imp	11. A Mayoral Implementation Taskforce	These projects will drive the long term transformation of the Fenland market towns. The challenge will be implementing them with the ambition and drive needed. To deliver this, we are proposing a Mayoral

		Taskforce with the Council to spearhead implementation.
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It is clear from the foregoing that there is no one easy way to grow the Fenland market towns sustainably. Maximising the opportunities and addressing the challenges will take years, and will take a generation to fully have effect. But the work on these and the shorter-term proposals emerging from the individual town reports needs to start now.

The remainder of this paper sets out the analysis underpinning this approach and a section on each of the twelve proposals.

# The Core Argument

## *Market Town Economies*

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) made reference to the Fens as one of three distinct areas of the Combined Authority area. It is true: the areas covered by Cambridgeshire's market towns have much in common. But there were differences in their pasts and will be in their futures too.

Market towns grew and developed over centuries as vital centres for the local and regional economies of their time. For market towns to thrive and flourish in the future, they will need to adapt. They cannot exist as standalone hubs any more – instead they must find a way of becoming attractive places in which employers want to locate businesses, and people choose to live, also effectively linking in to larger conurbations (Cambridge and Peterborough in this case). Each town needs a distinct 'offer'. This could include a specialised type of good (such as Huntingdon's composites sector) or a residential quality of life for the city's workers.

Market towns can also seize upon new opportunities offered by the rise of flexible working and 'lifestyle entrepreneurs' to offer a location for high value employment. Ensuring that the towns and their residents benefit from the huge increase in decentralised employment – much of it in the digital and creative sectors – is essential to ensuring that the towns' geography is the asset it should be. The global economy is undergoing a major shift towards more decentralised ways of working. It is now possible to learn many in-demand skills online for free, and then to use these skills to work for companies around the world. Many of these opportunities are available remotely. Skills and occupations such as programming, web-design, machine learning / AI, and data science fall into this category. Many of these occupations and skills will seem remote to some segments of the population, but the quality and availability of resources and instruction online mean that they are actually very accessible and offer progression and good salaries. Work is needed to help local people feel confident in accessing and pursuing these opportunities.

## *Five Themes and a Long-Term Focus*

However, in order to take these opportunities, the Fenland market towns need to focus on the fundamentals of a well-functioning economy. Through our work on the development of the market town plans we have arrived at five themes that are generic across all market towns which we believe need to be addressed if the actions proposed in the individual town plans are to be implemented with success. At the heart of these issues is the goal of ensuring that there is more income circulating in the towns so that there is a tangible sense of

forward momentum: more people in work and better salaries feeding through into a greater sense of wellbeing.

Creating forward momentum now is eminently achievable. Creating real and deep change is something that can only be delivered over the long term, starting with building communities where people want to live and bring up children, with jobs and industries playing more variable but often low initial role, and rising as places become successful. Here are a series of propositions on five key themes which we believe are fundamentally important.

## **Education and Skills**

In general, the market towns have a level of educational attainment that is lower than is needed to enable residents to fulfil their potential. While there is some good school performance and some strong recent improvement, the overall offer is mixed and patterns of improvement patchy and inconsistent.

Low educational attainment contributes to lower than average wages and weaker prospects, making it less likely that businesses will choose to locate good quality jobs in the towns. This in turn makes it more likely that well qualified people will opt to move away from the market towns to pursue their careers.

Education is important. But so is lifelong learning. There is also the scope to build more viable vocational pathways linking skills acquisition for local people to growth occupations in the regional economy. And (as mentioned above) we can benefit from the increase in availability of online training in new digital skills. It is increasingly easy for people of all ages to learn programming languages and access freelance or distance work online. Ensuring that residents are able to learn these skills will be important to achieving local improvements.

The barriers to further educational and skills attainment here are often transport-related, with young people in particular unable to attain further skills outside of their home town due public transport services that are expensive, poorly coordinated and irregular.

## **Health**

The market towns have poorer health than other areas, in some ways markedly so and in ways that both reduce levels of economic activity overall and the ability of residents to perform jobs at their maximum potential. This reduces the levels of income circulating in the economy compounding the educational issue above and its consequences. The CPIER comments: “there is clear evidence of links between poor health and lower productivity,

damaging workers' lives and reducing output. Employee health is an area which has been neglected by businesses." More importantly still it constitutes a drag on town communities, limiting life chances: unhealthy (and still more, ill) people are less happy and fulfilled and affecting the communities and places in which they live. Transport factors are again a driver here, with heavy town centre traffic making walking and cycling feel, as one resident put to us, "too difficult and dangerous".

## **Jobs**

The sectors on which Fenland market towns depend for work are, by and large, characterised by low skills and low levels of pay. There are exceptions. The area has some indigenous companies which are strong and profitable offering high levels of skill. But this is not the norm. Too few companies that might locate in the Fens choose not to do so for the reasons above, even if those that are located in the area are doing very well. The Agri-food sector is, in general, characterised by lower wages – though this need not always be the case. If the area can develop and/or grow a better qualified and job ready workforce for the parts of the economy that are growing, it will become more attractive to employers who might locate as well as offering more opportunities for the expansion of existing local firms. Successes can be achieved in the short term and every effort must be made to deliver them. But the goals of creating vibrant market town labour markets is a long term aspiration to achieve.

In doing this, we need to help people reach beyond the boundaries of the immediate area and access new opportunities using new skills. Supporting digital learning and employment will help local people achieve a better standard of living without long commutes or needing to move.

The potential here is significant as the four towns offer many of the other factors that appeal to start-up companies and younger households, including affordable housing, access to the countryside, and access to some good schools.

## **Housing**

The demand for housing in any town is derived from the demand in the economy: the requirement for labour and the skills to meet demand and prevailing rates of pay and the proximity to good schools. Viewed in this way it is hard to argue that housing is a driver of the economy of the market towns. It is much more likely to be a lagging indicator of lower economic success. The exception to this might be the Wisbech Garden Town if it can create such a large intervention, along with high quality schools, that it effectively rebases the housing offer encouraging more residents to remain and more in-comers too (though even then this would need to be accompanied by action on education and health).

In this context, it is important that the towns build high-quality and mixed housing developments (including affordable housing for key workers) but not see this as a “silver bullet”. This is happening in some cases, particularly Whittlesey, but is not the case across Fenland as a whole. We have picked up considerable local discontent about the unpredictability and opacity of the local planning system (though evidence from MHCLG suggests that planning is relatively quick, and applications are generally likely to be successful, compared to other areas).

## **Transport**

The Fenland market towns are geographically isolated with limited road connectivity and public transport which is poor (buses) or non-existent (rail in Wisbech and Chatteris). The presence of rail access in March serves to underline that transport isn’t everything. The rail links between March and both Peterborough and Cambridge seem to have had little impact on the housing market and other outcomes. But it is hard to see how the market towns of Fenland will achieve their potential without better roads and public transport. In the longer term it is to be hoped that the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM) will reach into Fenland – but for now the reality in many places is that buses will remain the only form of public transport for at least the medium term. It is essential that the town masterplans bring forward proposals for the short, medium and long term to create and sustain momentum in the connectivity of market towns to the places in which there are jobs for town residents, to encourage them to stay resident in them, and thereby in the long term to encourage others to move their homes as well as employers to locate in the market towns.

Transport may be poor. But digital connectivity is better in Fenland than in many places. Whilst on its own this will not change the fortunes of the market towns, it is an asset and one, which used with other developments, can start to change perceptions and possibilities.

## *Cause and Effect*

Implicit in the analysis above, on occasions explicit is the view that some of these issues matter more than others. Everything considered in this note is important for Fenland. There are causal links between all of these issues which are interconnected in a circular way: think chickens and eggs. But we need to arrive at a settled view as to which factors are more fundamental than others as opposed to those that are more the effect of causation elsewhere. In our view, neither the inadequate transport system nor housing are in essence causal when compared with jobs, whilst education and health are more causal still. That is why we think health and education need to be addressed most seriously. Clearly the benefits of better education and health won’t be felt in the market towns without more and better jobs which in turn require better transport etc.

But too often the education, skills, and health issues faced by communities such as are found in the Fenland market towns are deemed out of scope for this kind of project. They can't be. All the housing capital spend and transport will not fundamentally change the market towns unless the populations are better educated, have higher skills and improved health. More prosaically, it is likely that the business cases for transport and housing investment will fail to reach the reasonable Benefit Cost Ratios without a wider programme of change which includes real momentum on health and education as well as on the kinds of programmes proposed by the interim reports.

The focus on health and education is further reinforced by our view on **what market towns will be for in future**. Given the radical changes to consumer shopping of the last decade or so, the old rationale for *market* towns is fast losing force; hence the national debate about the future of the high street.

To succeed in future, **market towns in the UK will need to offer three things:**

- **The highest quality of life to residents** – including great schools, healthy environments, excellent health services, low crime and high-quality affordable environment.
- **Unique and exciting experiences to visitors** – such as cultural events and venues, a special food or drink offer, or historical / architectural attractions.
- **The infrastructure, education and networks required to help people fully access the opportunities of the new digital economy.**

The proposals in the town team reports can help deliver the second and third of these objectives.

**The delivery of the first of these objectives is made very difficult by the current health and education infrastructure in Fenland.** Hence the need for system-wide changes to address under-performance in parts of the system; better connect the disparate parts of the system; and overall improve capacity.

Using this analysis, the work of the town teams and consultation, we have arrived at the projects which make up the remainder of this report which, we believe, go to the heart of addressing the most important issues facing the Fenland market towns.

# Proposal 1 - Nene River Barrage

Many of the proposals considered here are on issues that clearly emerged from analysis and were always likely to form part of the output of the project in one form or another. The Nene River Barrage is an important exception.

The project was started by Anglian Water as a response to water scarcity (to capture more of the water flowing into the sea from the River Nene) as well as a flood defence. Anglian Water commissioned a study from Dutch experts Royal HaskoningDHV which was completed in May 2019.

Though the discussion we have undertaken in the Growing Fenland project we believe this is a project of catalytic importance to the whole Fenland area but with particular importance for Wisbech.

Royal HaskoningDHV was commissioned by Anglian Water to undertake a high-level review of the potential for a winter storage reservoir within the River Nene catchment, linked to the possible construction of a tidal barrage on the River Nene downstream of Wisbech.

As the Royal HaskoningDHV report stated:

*The concept of a Wisbech Garden Town is being investigated as a vehicle to deliver the aspirations for regeneration of Wisbech. The aspiration for growth and economic development in Wisbech and across the East of England increase demand for water in an area where water resources are already under pressure. In addition, flood risk is a key issue to be resolved to enable the Wisbech Garden Town proposals to be progressed.*

*The Wisbech Garden Town Flood Study investigated the potential for a tidal barrier or barrage located downstream of Wisbech on the River Nene. A tidal barrier or barrage would help to manage long-term flood risk to the proposed Garden Town and deliver additional benefits, including flood risk management for the wider area, amenity and navigation enhancements, and the potential for integrated water resources management.*

In our view the benefits of a storage reservoir and associated barrage are considerably wider than this, catalysing other possibilities. We set these out below.

**Amenity.** The possibility of a storage reservoir, properly planned and integrated into the landscape could offer a new and much needed leisure opportunity for Fenland. As the town team reports note, despite the presence of water throughout the area, there is a real lack of



amenity, leisure and tourism benefit from it. An attractively planned and delivered reservoir could be part of the way of changing that.

Perhaps as significantly, the effect of reducing flood risk and stabilising water levels in Wisbech town centre would have a profound effect on the quality of both the built and natural environment. Some of the town's finest Georgian buildings and vistas have been significantly devalued by necessary but intrusive flood defences. If, as would be intended, the barrier led to the removal of these defences as well as stabilisation of the river level, the river could become a bigger asset to the town than ever, driving the potential for development, increasing property values and footfall, driving business into the town centre.

**Flood Risk.** By reducing the flood risk in the area around Wisbech, it seems highly likely that the barrage would increase land values in the Wisbech area, thereby playing a significant role in overcoming the single biggest impediment to the development of the area, including the Garden Town.

**Road Cost.** Elsewhere in this paper we underline the central importance of improving journey times and reliability through dualling the A47. Our understanding is that the emerging plans for this project require a very significant investment in raising the level of the road to meet flood risk concerns. The presence of the barrage seems likely to obviate the need for such cost (and bring attendant environmental benefits) partly offsetting the cost of the barrage.

## Next Steps

The realisation of these benefits would require the Environment Agency and others to come behind these emerging proposals. This in turn will require the proposals to be more developed. To this end Anglian Water have proposed a further study into the development of the barrage to identify both the strategic opportunity it presents and the next steps towards its development. This should also make sure to consider the impacts of the barrage on port access, recognising the benefits which having an operational port brings to Wisbech – as well as any other impacts on other parts of Fenland which should be considered.

We believe this study is of critical importance and its funding and execution should, alongside the implementation of its recommendations, come under the aegis of the proposed Mayoral Taskforce.

## Proposal 2 - Opportunity for full bus franchising

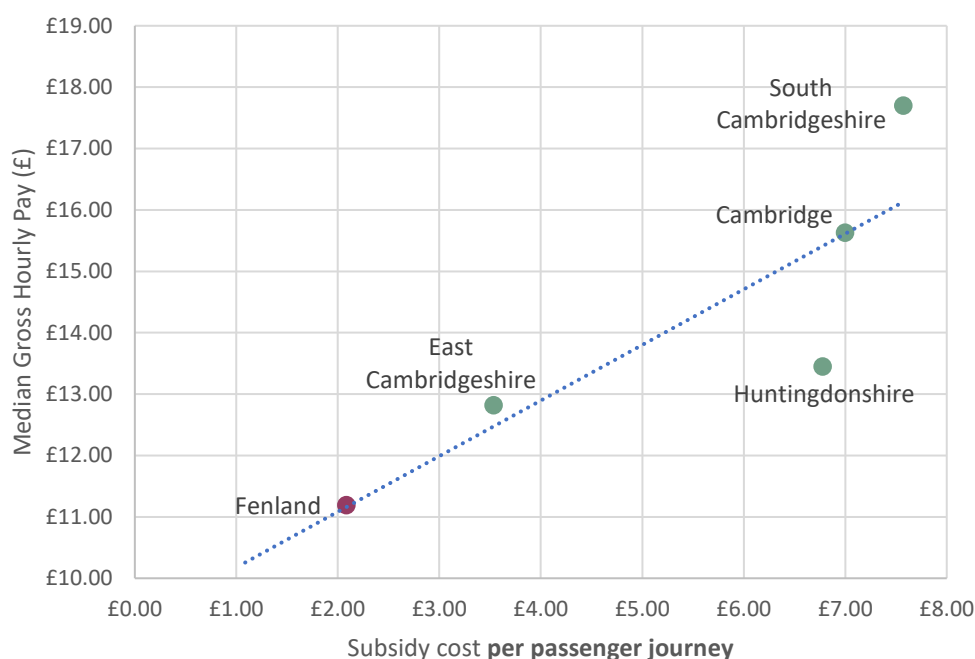
### **The situation now: in decline, unequal, and in need of fresh thinking**

Bus services in Fenland are in serious decline. Routes have been scaled back. With the buyout of Norfolk Green by Stagecoach in 2013, there is now only one serious commercial operator. A big part of the challenge is that buses are, in general, not a feasible mode of transport for working across Fenland, due to the time-consuming nature, and generally poor connections to local cities.

This situation becomes self-fulfilling, and leads to a vicious cycle in local transport. Because people feel they can't rely on the buses, they don't use them. Because they don't use them, the bus services become harder to sustain, and therefore to reduce losses services are cut back. This, in turn, reduces the reliability of the service, and so on.

Buses in Fenland also receive less subsidy than those elsewhere in Cambridgeshire. Analysis of data provided by Cambridgeshire County Council reveals that Fenland services are significantly less well funded than other districts – at £2.09 *per passenger journey*, compared to £7.57 in Cambridgeshire.

### **Figure 1. Bus Passenger Subsidy and Median Gross Hourly Pay in Cambridgeshire**



Source: Metro Dynamics analysis of Cambridgeshire County Council data and ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings Data

Setting this alongside the wages of residents reveals that in fact, bus subsidy in Cambridgeshire is *geographically regressive* – areas with lower income per head also receive lower transport subsidy per head. The correlation between pay and subsidy is a very strong, positive one (0.87).

## Conclusions of the bus review

In order to inject fresh thinking into local buses the Combined Authority commissioned an independent bus review. We focus here on the comments made specifically with regard to rural buses. A few important conclusions are put forward:

- Firstly, that there is an obvious need to make public transport work in areas like Fenland for reasons of social justice. The report notes that: “Getting [rural bus services] right matters for the most vulnerable in our community”<sup>1</sup>. As well as those who are unable to travel due to age or impediment, there is also the central concern to widen access to economic opportunity. Bringing better access to centres of well-paying employment will

<sup>1</sup> CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH STRATEGIC BUS REVIEW: OPTIONS REPORT p45

improve standards of living, and deliver economic dividends in areas which are struggling to recruit staff.

- Secondly, that even with extra support, on the current model, decline in bus patronage in rural areas is inevitable. The review notes that “circuitous routes and infrequent timetables coupled with the lack of early morning and evening provision”<sup>2</sup> have caused many to abandon buses altogether.
- Thirdly, that in light of this, a new approach needs to be taken. The review argues that: “A consistent and long-term response is needed, taking account of current needs, but also with a view to the future, to avoid catering only for a declining market”<sup>3</sup>. It will not be enough to continue topping up bus services with subsidy. Instead, a new vision is needed for the bus network.
- Fourthly, that “an effective network is unlikely to emerge if left to multiple agencies with different funding streams”.<sup>4</sup> The review goes on to argue that a centrally planned approach is required. This is in fact likely to *increase* rather than decrease efficiency, as it will deliver network efficiency from a joined-up network. And ambitions to develop new technologies, such as Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and integrated transport offerings, will require this kind of approach.
- **However, the report stops short of recommending full franchising.** It comments that: “the CPCA would need to invest considerable time and budget in justifying this intervention [franchising]. We therefore do not recommend it is treated as the first choice for delivering the recommendations of this report”.

### Proposal – a more radical rethink required

However, this approach does not give due consideration to the importance of these issues in rural areas, particularly more remote areas such as Fenland. While enhanced partnerships may work in areas where bus companies already have strong incentives to vie for the market (such as around Cambridge), there will be little that binds in a much less competitive area, such as Fenland. Indeed, the bus review notes that: “Franchising may be most easily applied to... rural initiatives, and *would probably be critical* to the holistic approach identified as it gives greater control to the CPCA to integrate bus services with wider rural transport initiatives in areas where there are few (if any) commercial bus operators to partner with.”<sup>5</sup> Similarly, a Department for Transport paper notes a key benefit

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p38

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p46

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p46

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p65, emphasis added

of franchising to be: “Creating effective competition to run bus services in areas where there is little on-road competition today.”<sup>6</sup>

It will also be easier to prove the superiority of franchising over an enhanced partnership in the case of more rural areas. For the most part, Stagecoach holds a monopoly over the delivery of bus services in Fenland. Clear evidence can be given of the decline in services and the very dominant market power of one firm is ample evidence of a market failure. It will be seen that Stagecoach has little incentive to collaborate in an enhanced partnership scheme with regard to this part of the Combined Authority.

“[Franchising can create] effective competition to run bus services in areas where there is little on-road competition today.”

– Department for Transport

In addition, this will allow the Combined Authority to dovetail transport with other developments. For a “Cambridgeshire Compact” with employers to develop and flourish, having franchising powers will ensure provision can be made to connect employees to employers.

**Therefore, the Combined Authority should embrace franchising by beginning with the easiest wins – connecting parts of rural Cambridgeshire to the cities of Cambridge and Peterborough.** We also recommend that, in partnership with the County Council, **levels of subsidy per head are brought to equivalent levels** so that more disadvantaged areas aren’t discriminated against in the provision of transport.

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<sup>6</sup> The Bus Services Act 2017: New powers and opportunities

## Proposal 3 - A47 Dualling

*Achieving an East-West economic corridor by full dualling of the A47*

### Why this matters

The A47 is a vital connecting road between Peterborough, Fenland, Norwich, and the Norfolk Coast. The majority of Fenland businesses in manufacturing, food processing, and logistics businesses are dependent on the A47 to bring in exports and move their product around. Particularly in the far north of Fenland, where rail connectivity is non-existent, the A47 plays a vital role.

However, at the moment, the potential from this road is unrealised. Like much of the country, the A47 is an example of poor East-West connectivity. For much of its journey through Fenland the road is single carriageway. This presents serious challenges:

- **It makes commuting challenging**, if not impossible in some cases. We know that cities and their associated travel to work areas generate over 80% of UK output<sup>7</sup>. But many of our residents are denied the opportunities available in our nearest cities due to poor road connectivity.
- **It discourages investment**. Firms want to know that they can reliably move goods and people around. The A47 regularly experiences long tail backs that add to business costs, and make business processes inefficient.
- **It limits the growth potential of our area**. Without improvements to connectivity, construction of substantial numbers of new homes will not be viable.
- **It is unsafe**. According to Highways England, the stretch of A47 between Guyhirn and King's Lynn is one of the most dangerous piece of East Anglia's strategic road network<sup>8</sup>. This is bad for our people, adding further deterrent to using the road at busy times for commuting.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://uk2070.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/76-MARTIN-British-Cities-Economic-Performance.pdf>  
see p3

<sup>8</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/814204/Highways\\_England\\_SRN\\_star\\_rating\\_document\\_v9\\_digital.pdf?\\_ga=2.235007169.1367820300.1566503608-1640730906.1551430283](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814204/Highways_England_SRN_star_rating_document_v9_digital.pdf?_ga=2.235007169.1367820300.1566503608-1640730906.1551430283) – see p6

## How this will transform the Fenland District

A fully dualled A47 will allow communities in Fenland to enjoy the benefits of significantly improved access to Peterborough and Norwich. But the A47 will go further than this creating an East-West economic corridor, bringing new housing, jobs, and higher economic output. It will also help to tackle the economic isolation experienced by Fenland, which is connected to deprivation and a sense that there is a lack of aspiration among some of the district's young people. And finally it may relieve pressure on some of our other congested roads, such as the A605.

## Progress so far

A Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) was produced for the dualling of the A47 in June 2018. This argued that “Without the A47 improvements, much of the [area's] potential economic growth, new homes sites and job creation cannot be unlocked.”<sup>9</sup> It goes on to say that: “Dualling the A47 will improve the economic wellbeing of those communities along the A47 and enable them to enjoy some of the Cambridge centric economic prosperity.”<sup>10</sup> The SOBC presented various possible routes to dual the A47. These have now been presented to Highways England, in a bid to get funding for the full design of the route in Road Investment Strategy period 2 (RIS2 – 2020-2025), followed by construction beginning in RIS3 (2025-2030).

## What is needed to take this forward

At the current time, we are awaiting an update from Highways England, but need to **continue lobbying for acceptance of the route** into the Highways England programme. This will involve bringing together key political figures – including the local MP and Mayor of the Combined Authority plus wider interested parties along the entire A47 corridor – to continue to vocally support the case for the dualling.

This project can also become much more viable following the successful construction of a **tidal barrage in the River Nene**. Current flood conditions, combined with the fact that the road comprises part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) means it is necessary to suspend the road by up to six metres. This adds massively to the costs of the construction. The

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<sup>9</sup> <https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/assets/Combined-Authority/A47-Strategic-Outline-Business-Case-Final-V0.3-002.pdf> see p22

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. see p25

barrage would remove this problem, enabling the road to be built much more affordably (which, in turn, would support a better benefit-cost ratio (BCR) for the project).

There may also be a need for **commitment of funding** to support the plans, as it is unlikely (though not impossible) that Highways England will meet the full funding requirement. The Mayor has committed £200m of Combined Authority money towards the scheme – the District and other partners should also stand ready to give support.

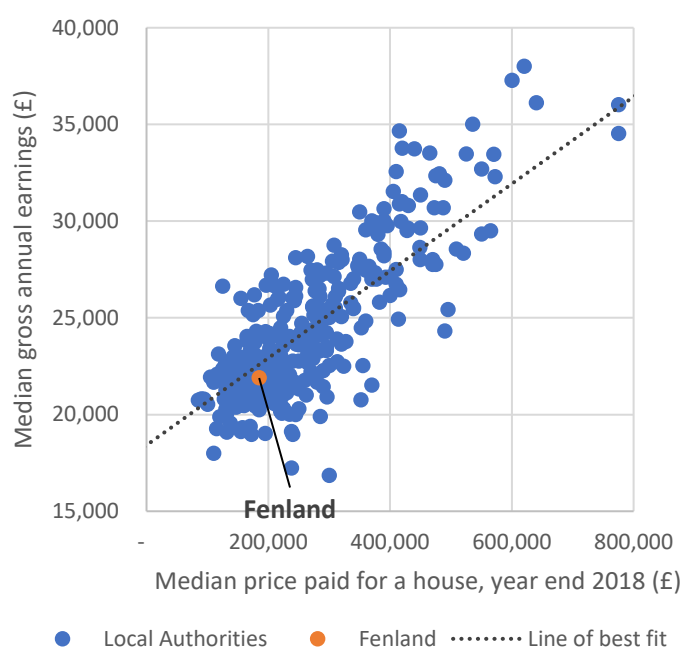


## Proposal 4 - Wisbech Garden Town

### A new approach to housing, developed as part of the Wisbech Garden Town

As we have already argued, housing in and of itself is often just as much *reflective* of wider economic conditions as it is *directive* of them. Figure 2 below shows that, looking at local authorities across England and Wales, there is a very strong, positive, correlation (0.8) between wages and house prices. Fenland is almost on the trendline – if anything the price of houses is slightly *higher* than would be expected, given the median wage. In the long run, to improve the viability of developing houses therefore requires improving wages and the jobs on offer in the local economy (topics picked up elsewhere).

**Figure 2. Median earnings, and median price paid per house for Local Authorities in Great Britain**



Source: Analysis of Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings Table 8, and HPSSA dataset 9. Two LAs excluded for the sake of perspective

However, the Wisbech Garden Town project is a proposal to deliver housing alongside significant improvements in amenity and school provision. With the right combination of support, therefore, housing here *could* become an enabler – by catalysing a transformation of the town that goes far beyond simply increasing the number of dwellings. The plans involve a few key elements:

- A **Country Park** to serve the community and increase green space provision to all Wisbech residents
- New **schooling provision** in a high-quality facility
- **Improved transport connectivity** – which can only be delivered in conjunction with the A47 proposals (and in future, rail links).

Encouragingly, support is building around the idea of the Garden Town, with commitments from local politicians and businesses, as well as interest from Government – the Garden Town featuring in a Department of International Trade (DIT) international investment brochure recently.

**The Garden Town need not be only an opportunity for Wisbech, however.** The plans involve two potentially game-changing interventions in the delivery of housing which will have implications across Fenland:

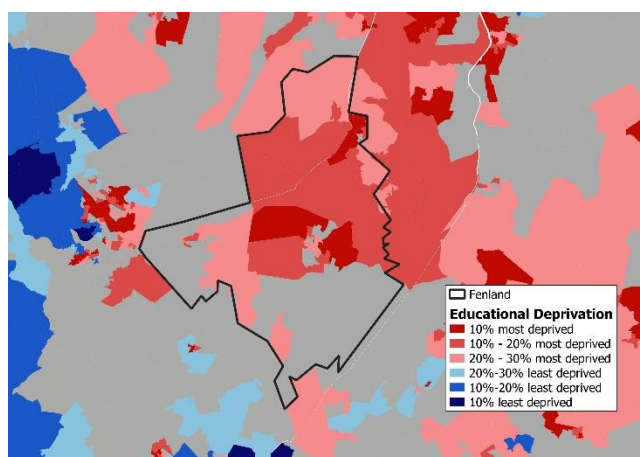
- 1) **A more sophisticated approach to flood-risk modelling**, drawing on techniques currently used in the Netherlands. This looks to persuade the Environment Agency (EA) to move away from a simplistic “zones-based” model, which only looks at probability of flooding, without considering both the flood infrastructure in place, and the implications of flooding were it to happen (e.g. the depth at which the water would reach, which in the case of the Fens, is very low). If this methodology can be accepted and implemented (which is necessary for the Garden Town to move forward) then it will have major implications for all of our Fenland towns, which are each surrounded by flood zone 3 land, restricting development.
- 2) **Modern methods of construction** are a key part of plans for the Garden Town. These methods involve off-site construction (modular build) and moving buildings into place. This method of construction, while facing some delivery challenges, is generally more affordable than traditional methods of housebuilding. As an Urbed report on the Garden Town proposal argues, this therefore “has particular relevance for marginally viable areas such as Wisbech.” We could add that it is also relevant for much of the rest of Fenland. Many of the partners we have spoken to in different towns have complained of permissions which are given and then remain outstanding for a long amount of time, or of developers who refuse to provide support for the infrastructure required around new housing on viability grounds. By using the Wisbech Garden Town to kickstart the construction of modular homes in the Fens, we can start to increase rates of development in our towns.

# Proposal 5 - A New Deal for Education

## Where we are now

The UK has a deep and systemic problem with educational inequality. According to a report by Unicef, the UK's "achievement gap" in education outcomes is among the largest in the EU, and significantly worse than the United States<sup>11</sup>. And a recent study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) found that, within the UK, poorer students fall behind their wealthier peers by almost three years in terms of educational attainment. Commenting on these findings, the OECD's Director of Education and Skills, Andreas Schleicher noted that the UK has "regressive teacher allocation where the schools in greater disadvantage face greater shortage of qualified teachers"<sup>12</sup>.

**Figure 3. Education deprivation in Fenland District**



Source: Analysis of Home Office data. Areas in grey are neither in the top or bottom 30% on this measure.

Fenland District is at the sharp edge of this inequality. As the map, right, shows, much of Fenland is among the most educationally deprived parts of the country – particularly in March and Wisbech. Numerous schools throughout the district – such as the Thomas Clarkson Academy, the Westwood Community Primary School, and Kingsfield Primary school – have been identified by Ofsted as requiring improvement (though note, this is not universally the case). And results in some schools have recently been disappointing – for example, in 2018 only 20% of pupils at the Neale-Wade Academy achieved a Grade 5 or above in English and Maths GCSE compared to a national average of 43.3%.

Many of Fenland's schools are doing the best they can to improve the educational offer. But the environment often further adds to the challenges. Some schools have large migrant populations,

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/RC13\\_eng.pdf](https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/RC13_eng.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/school-students-uk-social-mobility-oecd-andreas-schleicher-study-gcse-a8597951.html>

which mean additional resource needs to be directed to supporting those with English as an Additional Language. Among some Eastern European Communities, the expectation of when a child would begin education is significantly later in life – meaning there can be a lack of engagement of school-readiness. Teachers report that in some schools, children arrive without having basics skills in personal hygiene and attire.

The geographic nature of the district can cause problems as well. Because the District is dominated by a few key market towns at a good distance from one another, there is little competition between schools pushing up standards. The perception of remoteness can be a factor in recruiting teachers – schools report challenges in attracting graduate students who have just been at University in a major city and struggle to adapt to life in a market town. Unlike some other rural places, the distance of much of Fenland from a major city means that some are unwilling to commute (or indeed unable – with rates of car ownership in sharp decline among young people).

Fenland also struggles with a lack of teacher training facilities, and we have heard reports that the University of Cambridge has historically been unwilling to send PGCE students to the district due to concerns about the quality of training they will receive.

The result of all of the foregoing is that **life chances are in general more limited for young people from Fenland**. A study by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2015 found that achieving 5 A\*s – Cs at GCSE (equivalent to a level 4 or above under the new system) added £80,000 to a student's lifetime earnings. Going on to achieve two A-levels added a further £60,000. Many doors, into further/higher education and certain careers remain firmly closed to those who underperformed at critical moments of their teenage years. Therefore, while the relationship between education and social mobility is not completely linear, some of the challenges which Fenland faces around social mobility would seem to be found in its poor educational offer.

### **The Response so far: The Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area**

In recognition of these challenges, the Department for Education has established the Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area, one of twelve areas launched in 2017 across England. The Opportunity Area is a three year programme, which has four key focuses:

- Accelerate the progress of disadvantaged children and young people in the acquisition and development of communication, language and reading
- Strengthen the effectiveness of support for children and young people with mental health concerns and those with Special Educational Needs
- Raise aspiration and increase access for young people to a wide range of career choices and post-16 routes
- Recruit, develop and retain the best leaders and teachers in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire

(In addition to these, there are other key programmes of activity, including the careers hub, the parent ambassador, and the return to learn programme).

The Opportunity Area is now over halfway through its delivery. It is too early to assess thoroughly, but feedback from headteachers has been generally positive, particularly with regard to extra support in recruiting teachers. But what discussions have revealed is that, in and of itself, it falls a long way short of what is required to truly address the issues of long-term social mobility. What is needed is a change in culture: in schools – to set higher expectations of pupil performance; in families – to demand high-quality education from the local schools, and encourage their children to seize their opportunities; and in children themselves – to aspire to a bright future, and therefore work hard to achieve their potential.

But all of this takes time. A three-year programme could never hope to make a serious dent in these issues, many of which have been festering for a long time. There is also a big risk that with political change at the national level will come a dimming of commitment to this area, undoing some of the benefits which have been achieved. What is needed is a comprehensive programme, with support from government over the long-term, to invest in local communities and educational facilities.

### What the new deal needs to look like

At the most basic level, the programme needs to be extended. To withdraw resources at just the point they are starting to make an impact on the district would be to waste the initial investment. But beyond that, the programme should be expanded. It should now include:

- **Support for teaching apprenticeships.** Cambridgeshire is already taking the lead nationally in developing new approaches to teacher development. The Combined Authority is already developing plans to support new apprenticeships, bringing in unused funds from the apprenticeship levy. It should be recognised that teaching apprenticeships can both offer a route into professional employment for local people *and* increase the stock of quality teachers in the district. Meanwhile DfE should actively support Fenland as a trial area for this new type of training. Relatedly, there needs to be new teacher training provision in Fenland schools so that PGCE students can gain experience here – naturally leading to greater job take up.
- To attract new teachers, a “Fenland premium” to the teacher wage, or golden handshake to encourage more teachers to relocate to the District. Alongside this, **finance for promoting the area to trainee teachers** – Fenland offers a combination of a rewarding career teaching some students from disadvantaged backgrounds with a rural lifestyle, and ambitious and effective teachers are likely to progress quickly.
- **Funding for a Fenland-wide careers service**, bringing in employers, schools, and local universities (including the University of Cambridge, UEA, and the new technical university at Peterborough).

## Proposal 6 – A New Partnership for Skills

A common complaint in each of the Fenland towns we have worked on in this project is apathy. This arises from a concern on the part of many residents that it is too difficult if not inconceivable to believe that some of the most important things affecting their lives can change for the better. The public purse has been under acute pressure too.

The proposals in this report seek to act on these issues: improving transport, access to employment, education etc.

But in our view, more will be needed across the towns to create links between communities, education providers both inside and outside the district as well as employees and others who can help.

This task falls to no one agency: responsibility is unclear. For this reason we are proposing the creation of a Fenland Life Long Learning Partnership. With continued budgetary pressures, it is often challenging for schools to invest in improving standards. One possible solution is to bring in other educational organisations within Cambridgeshire to form a compact for education in Fenland. These partners could work together on shared educational experiences, joint training of staff, and other initiatives. Possible partners for inclusion in such a scheme could include:

- The University of Cambridge (which already partners with one of our employers, Stainless Metalcraft, to deliver some training in schools)
- The University of East Anglia (UEA)

### Case Study: The Tutor Trust

The Tutor Trust brings together university students and pupils who could benefit most from tuition. This creates a model where students can gain useful experience, while educational disadvantage can be tackled, even against a background of educational funding cuts. The programme has been independently evaluated by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), who declared it to have a “gold standard evidence of impact”, with pupils in the treatment group advancing three months’ worth of progress beyond the control group.



- The Wisbech Grammar School
- The College of West Anglia
- The iMET College in Alconbury

In particular, by partnering with a University, Fenland could establish a tutoring provision model, where university students could earn money to tutor local children, gaining valuable experience at the same time. Such a scheme could be modelled upon the successful Tutor Trust, which now operates in several Northern cities

This should be a modest initiative preferably funded with private and philanthropic support to enable it to be independent of government and to create a new source of institutional strength in the towns. It could be part of the Manufacturing Launchpad described elsewhere in this paper and would need either expert voluntary support or a very modest budget for a member of staff to fulfil the core roles described below:

These roles might be as follows:

- Providing a cheerleader and support function helping employers to engage with the schools, community facilities and voluntary groups of the area helping people to understand the jobs and training on offer.
- Providing non-governmental support for the towns: countering negative perceptions and emphasising the positive nature of the towns and of the activity underway to improve them.

In addition, this partnership should be able to bid for resources from public authorities. The aim should be to help with specific needs in the community such as:

- support for parents and students in key transitions between schools (primary and secondary) as well as with access to training provision
- helping local people to access enterprise programmes including for community groups wishing to set up businesses including social enterprises.

In addition, we are aware that **for some residents, English is a second or even third language, which fundamentally inhibits them from using their skills**. Many workers in this category have advanced skills in services sectors – yet are currently carrying out manual work. Support for programmes to teach adults English can release extra human potential here.



## Proposal 7 - Early Years Support

Fenland also struggles with early years metrics. The district has been identified as having **low proportions of reception pupils achieving the expected level in all but one of the Early Learning Goals**. Much of the district falls into the bottom quintile of rates of Good Levels of Development. Phonics skills among the young, vital for making progress in reading and comprehension, are amongst the very worst in the country.

This all points to a serious issue for pupils in the very earliest stages of their education. It will be near impossible to move the prospects of individuals on, raise wages, and move into a higher value economy long term without taking action at this fundamental stage.

One of the key recommendations of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) was as follows:

### » KEY RECOMMENDATION #10:

**Further research should be undertaken on the potential impact that increased Surestart-style provision could have, particularly in more deprived communities and with hard-to-reach groups. Similarly, further research on the nature and availability of preschool education is important and we would recommend that a further Commission be undertaken in this area. This Commission should be given a wide brief, and work with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the region to look at:**

- **the steps needed from early years through school to close, and eventually to eliminate educational disadvantage**
- **not just at individual and school performance but at the wider set of conditions and institutions serving the more deprived parts of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.**

The evidence strongly suggests that in Fenland, this type of provision would be invaluable. Particularly among families where parents are both working, sometimes in long shift patterns, children will struggle to develop emotionally and intellectually. Parents in these households are generally unable to fund their children to attend pre-school, so support is needed.

Therefore, we propose that, possibly in conjunction with the education opportunity area, **the government commits to putting serious funding behind early years provision here, targeted especially at those from low income families, or with other characteristics which are likely to lead to educational disadvantage** (such as having English as a second language).



## How this would work

In practise, this would look like something along the lines of previous early intervention programmes which have had to be scaled back. This programme was initially focused solely on more deprived families and areas and then expanded. Multiple studies show that the key benefits accrued to those from poorer backgrounds. The initial government review found that it particularly helped lower income families as the supplement allowing parents to work – finding that “most families moving into work have an income gain of around 20 per cent.”<sup>13</sup> A recent study of this programme by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) finds that the programme had significant health benefits, concluding that: “At least when it comes to health outcomes, our research provides strong evidence that the... model has worked better in poorer neighbourhoods, reducing health inequalities.”<sup>14</sup> The Education and Training Inspectorate find it had significant benefits for speak and language skills<sup>15</sup> – a particular problem in Fenland.

One of the challenges with the government’s previous programme from a fiscal point of view came as it was rolled out across the country, including to less challenged areas. The new programme should focus exclusively on those disadvantaged areas where it can make the biggest difference.

This approach would include aligning work with other public service providers, particularly health. Through Cambridgeshire’s Think Communities programme, approaches are being developed to listen to communities and ensure that service delivery works at the community level. One of the big themes being taken forward is “best start in life” – focusing on the pre-birth to primary school life phase.

Increasingly, policy focus is turning towards areas considered “left behind”, often with a focus on towns. We qualify for this description. But the principle response from central government thus far has been to focus on capital investments, particularly around high streets.

While extra high street funding is welcome, on its own it is not good enough for our towns. The fundamental socioeconomic character of our place will not change by landscaping high streets. It *will* change by giving our young people the opportunities to progress in life. **It is the human capital of our towns, rather than the physical capital, which needs the most attention.** The evidence shows that those who are held back in the early phase of life do not tend to catch up. Therefore, if the government is serious in helping us address our challenges, it needs to put serious investment into early years services.

<sup>13</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/182194/DFE-RR073.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182194/DFE-RR073.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/14160>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/surestart-evaluation-report-may-2018.pdf>

## Proposal 8 - A Health Action Area

*“Fenland is a district with clear health inequalities when compared to the rest of Cambridgeshire. Health issues such as smoking prevalence, excess weight, coronary heart disease and alcohol related issues are worse than the Cambridgeshire average in some of Fenland’s wards.”*

Fenland Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2018 – 2021

*“The health and well-being of individuals, along with their education and skills, are central to a flourishing economy.”*

CPIER

### What is the problem now?

People living in Fenland develop more illnesses over their lives and die at a younger age than people living in other parts of the Combined Authority area and many other parts of England. Fenland residents are more likely to<sup>16</sup> experience mental health problems, suffer from a range of chronic conditions caused by smoking, require hospital treatment as a result of alcohol-specific and related conditions, develop diabetes, with 7.8 per cent of people aged 17 and over in Fenland living with the condition compared to 3.3 per cent of people in Cambridge and be obese, with 72.9% of people in Fenland being obese compared to 46.7% per cent in Cambridge.

On average, men from Fenland die nearly three years younger than counterparts living in Cambridge.<sup>17</sup> Poor health is an economic as well as a social problem. If people are unable to work due to illness, and people in work are taking time off due to sickness, the local economy is less productive. As the CPIER points out:

*“There is clear evidence of links between poor health and lower productivity, damaging workers’ lives and reducing output.” Fenland has the greatest gap, in the CA area, in the employment rate between those with long-term health condition and the overall employment rate. <sup>18</sup> We don’t know the local impact but nationally, the impact of health inequalities is estimated to account for productivity losses of £31-33 billion per year, lost*

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<sup>16</sup> <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/jsna/published-joint-strategic-needs-assessments/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/jsna/published-joint-strategic-needs-assessments/>

<sup>18</sup> ONS Annual Population Summary

*taxes and higher welfare payments in the range of £20-32 billion per year, as well as additional NHS healthcare costs in excess of £5. 5 billion per year.”<sup>19</sup>*

### **Why is this the case?**

The principal reasons for poor health outcomes in Fenland arise from factors such as childhood deprivation, low incomes and isolation as well as environmental factors. There are a range of proposals in the town team reports and elsewhere in this document to tackle these factors.

But part of the challenge arises in the health area, in services, and in particular in Public Health. Public Health resources are limited and messages are not being heard or acted upon.

### **What is happening already?**

The Cambridgeshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy already identifies Fenland as a priority. The District Council’s current Health and Wellbeing Strategy is based on a ‘Wider Determinants of Health’ model and seeks to promote prevention of illness rather than the treatment of disease.

In this context, the strategy sets out three priorities: collaborative working; focussing resources on vulnerable groups and wards in deprivation to tackle lifestyle factors; and mental health - including building community resilience, aspirations and general wellbeing.

The approach is right. But while local partners can point to some positive impacts, existing efforts will not impact sufficiently the fundamental factors that are driving such poor health.

### **Strategy Proposal**

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<sup>19</sup> Frontier Economics (2009) Overall costs of health inequalities. Submission to the Marmot Review. [www. ucl. ac. uk/ghcg/marmotreview/Documents](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ghcg/marmotreview/Documents)

The overarching strategy proposal is for an **Opportunity Area for Health** as recommended by the CPIER. This should be championed by the Mayor, the local health system and Public Health England, and linked to the proposals for the devolution of health and social care. In the long run it should have three goals:

- Growing the size of the health sector in Fenland including its role as an employer;
- Reviewing existing services, integrating services and bringing them closer to people; and
- Educating and supporting people to access those services and make better lifestyle choices.

The first of these is a long term objective that requires dialogue with Cambridge health partners and would be facilitated by progress on the other objectives in the shorter term. The second is central to the work that Andy Wood is undertaking on behalf of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

In our view, the priority for Growing Fenland therefore, should be on public health and the prevention of illness and disease. In fact along with the work that Andy Wood is doing, this could form the basis of a proposal for health devolution for the whole Combined Authority area in due course with Fenland serving as a pilot.

In November 2018, the Health Secretary set out the government's proposals for Public Health in the Green Paper "Prevention is Better than Cure". In July 2019, the government then consulted further via "Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s" and in doing so, agreed to back proposals from the West Midlands Combined Authority for a Radical Prevention agenda. Central to this was the notion of a fund which will "involve a programme of work to explore, test and learn from new opportunities to prevent ill-health using the latest technology – stimulating innovation in ways that can support both health and wealth<sup>20</sup>".

We believe that this is a model Fenland can and should follow as a pilot for the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The convening power of the Mayor alongside what we understand to be the willingness of Public Health England to support Combined Authorities and local areas with this kind of health challenge should be used to craft a new approach. Our proposal, in the first instance, is that a conference should be jointly

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/819766/advancing-our-health-prevention-in-the-2020s-accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/819766/advancing-our-health-prevention-in-the-2020s-accessible.pdf)

hosted by the District Council, County Council, Combined Authority and Public Health England as soon as possible to bring together all interested parties with the aim of crafting a Fenland Radical Prevention agenda and an appropriate funding model.

# Proposal 9 - The Manufacturing and Agritech Launchpad

## Building on Strengths

One of the objectives of the Growing Fenland project has been to identify the assets and strengths of the market towns and to build on them. Among the most remarkable examples of a Fenland company the project has encountered is Stainless Metalcraft based in Chatteris.

Metalcraft has been in Chatteris since at least 1864, on the high street and latterly to the West of the town. Its early origins include manufacturing agricultural equipment, before diversifying into mining equipment, the manufacture of cranes, eventually manufacturing parts for hospital Scanners (MRI) and today makes parts for a diverse range of sectors including for the oil, gas and petrochemical sectors. Metalcraft makes vacuum vessels for research projects including for the Large Hadron Collider at CERN.

The existence and transformation of a specialised and successful company such as Metalcraft is important enough. But the development of the company over recent years and above all its plans for the future are the reason for the focus here.

Perhaps unusually for a Fenland business, the company entered into a project with the Institute for Manufacturing at Cambridge University. The project was a success and the results of the project were implemented. This, it is thought, is an important contributory factor in Metalcraft's outward facing approach and led to the current plans.

Today, Metalcraft is working on proposals for a Chatteris Business Growth Zone: an Advanced Manufacturing & Agri-Tech business park in Chatteris. This park could consist of the following features:-

- Provision of industrial units of varying sizes designed and built to service the needs of the Advanced Manufacturing and Agri-Tech sectors.
- Provision of an 'incubator' to support start-up businesses in the Advanced Manufacturing and Agri-Tech sectors along with other office space provisions.
- Provision of industrial units specifically designed and built for manufacturing research organisations such as NAMRC, TWI, MTC, IfM, etc.

- Provision of vocational training specifically aimed at the Advanced Manufacturing & Agri-Tech sectors which would include appropriate conference and meeting space provision.

The intriguing part of the proposals drawn up for Metalcraft concern the linking of the manufacturing and agritech sectors.

The agriculture sector is central to the Fenland economy. The area has some of the highest quality agricultural land in the country and characterised by a range of excellent producers. But as the recent Food, Farming and Countryside Commission report showed, all is far from well:

*Meanwhile, farmers pay high prices for inputs – seeds, fertiliser, pesticides, herbicides, medicines and machinery – whilst getting paid less for their produce at the farm gate. More intensive farming practices are not necessarily more productive or more profitable. UK farm productivity is falling behind international competitors, at 0.9 percent growth compared to the Netherlands 3.5 percent or the US 3.2 percent. With the further uncertainties caused by Brexit, farmer confidence in the future is shaky. Many small-scale and family farmers have been pushed out of business; local supply chains are struggling, with the loss of small abattoirs, processing facilities, and routes to market<sup>21</sup>.*

The problems described by the Commission are by no means unique to smaller family producers. Larger farming businesses including those that have experienced growth and benefitted from consolidation alongside rising mechanisation and productivity have found themselves squeezed too. Rising costs and aggressive pricing and contractual behaviour by supermarkets has reduced both their ability to innovate or improve wages. Consolidation, rather than diversification or a move up value chains seems to have been the norm for many agriculture businesses in the area.

There would appear to be a clear case for reducing the cost and risk of innovation as well as for working with other companies to secure the skills needed to move to higher value. But there is little evidence of the kinds of collaboration seen in some other areas either on a geographical basis (such as Cambridge or Manchester) or on a sectoral basis (such as the West Sussex Growers Association).

There is already ample public sector activity devoted to improving the productivity of the agricultural economy, not least Eastern Agri-tech Growth Initiative, NIAB and the University of Cambridge. Firms in the economy have expertise in sensors, robotics, genomics and

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/future-land> P10.

communications and are at the forefront of ideas and commercial applications that are shaping the food production in the UK and globally.

The Local Industrial Strategy commits the Combined Authority to develop and fund an innovation Launchpad facility, or facilities, which offer new locations for businesses, research institutes, incubators and other key players to co-locate to support the development of innovation ecosystems. Agri-tech is one of the area's strategic growth sectors which does not yet have central agglomerations which will be a key ingredient in its future success. Fenland is the obvious place to rectify this. The facilities need to be in Fenland and co-developed between the private sector, the District Council and Combined Authority.



# Proposal 10 - Cambridgeshire Jobs Compact

## Why is this needed?

Several of the initiatives in this paper essentially have the aim of getting more people to locate business activity in Fenland and/or to improve the output and productivity of Fenland-based businesses. This is an important objective. But it is one that is likely to have a long term pay-off with limited gains in the short to medium term. In the meanwhile therefore, it is likely that the levels of income in the Fenland markets towns are lower than needed to create more vibrant and successful places. This has a human cost. The skills of Fenland people are being under-deployed in the existing business base, young people and others may feel that Fenland can't fulfil their ambitions and may be more likely to leave as a result while potentially highly skilled inward movers may be put off.

So there is a real need to look at the steps that can be taken in the short to medium term to enable the people of the Fenland towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech to fulfil their potential, bringing income jobs, inclusion and a sustainable future to the towns.

## The Strategy Proposal

Many residents of Fenland already work in neighbouring areas. We believe there is the scope to increase this number. Work is needed to identify who currently makes the journey on a regular basis, how they travel and who pays. Separately we need to have an analysis of the jobs that people are doing, the kinds of roles available and the opportunities that might exist for skills training to better align Fenland people's skills with demand.

It is very much to be hoped that the opening of Cambridge South Station, resolution of the capacity constraints at Ely North Junction and above all the opening of a direct route from Wisbech will all provide longer term rail connectivity. The effects of the bus review and the A47 upgrade are also important. But they all lie in the future. A solution is needed now.

To this end the Growing Fenland project working with CPCA and partners on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and others would like to commission two pieces of work to scope the

issue and provide fundable options to improve transport links over the coming months. This is because the Cambridge Biomedical Campus has already prioritised the development of a more localised labour pool and is in the process of growing, with employment expected to double over the coming years.

### **Project One: Patterns of Commuting and Provision**

This study aims to establish:

- The current levels of commuting
- The potential future commuting needs to fill the potential job opportunities
- The means by which people travel
- The extent of employer and public subsidy into general and bespoke travel
- The possible market for further development of provision
- The barriers currently in place: price, provision quality, times, speed, marketing etc
- The options open in the short to medium term within different funding envelopes

### **Project Two: Jobs and Skills**

This project will look at current job availability and at the likely changes in demand in the future with a particular focus on the jobs likely to be available to Fenland residents (Band 5 nurses and more senior and technical jobs across the employers on the Biomedical Campus).

The study will focus on the education and skills needs of these roles, the qualifications profile and education and training offer to residents of the Fenland market towns and a series of proposals (within different possible funding envelopes) for gearing providers in the area to secure a greater number of suitably qualified people over the short to medium term.

The outcome of these studies should be used to establish a business case for private and public sector funding for new transport provision. Without prejudice to the outcomes of these studies the options should include bus and minibuss services to Cambridge and Peterborough, shuttle buses to transport interchanges and access to existing rail services as well as heavily discounted or free travel.

# Proposal 11 - A Mayoral Implementation Taskforce

The proposals set out in this report are at an early stage of development. Even if they are intended to have an impact over the long term (with some of the proposals in the town reports providing shorter term momentum), their development and implementation needs to start as quickly as possible once the proposals here have been considered and agreed or amended.

The ambition of the proposals here is high. The kinds of initiative described here are characteristic of the most developed Mayoral Combined Authorities in the country. Indeed some of the proposals here draw on the work Metro Dynamics has been undertaking in other parts of the country. We therefore know that what is proposed here is capable of being delivered. But the context in Cambridgeshire is different to metropolitan areas. The Combined Authority is relatively new and Fenland District Council is a relatively small authority. Implementing the ideas set out here is beyond the ability of any one organisation. It will require an effective partnership between both, alongside the town councils, County Council and others.

Taking forward the proposals set out here requires effective partnership. But it also needs strong leadership. In our view this needs to come from the most senior and public figure in the area – the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, working with the leader of Fenland District Council. For this reason we propose that following the adoption of this report, a Growing Fenland Mayoral Taskforce is established. Its objective should be to secure the implementation of the proposals set out in this paper.

Our consultation on this proposal has raised concerns that the Taskforce would be a talking shop. This must not be allowed to happen. The ideas here will need a great deal of working up and brokering within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Several of the proposals here might be suitable candidates for submission by the Combined Authority to the Government for consideration in the Budget or Comprehensive Spending Review. They require the support of central Government and need to be developed before being submitted. The purpose of the Taskforce will be to hold partners to account for doing so, taking the steps needed to clear bureaucratic and other obstacles, offering a conduit and clearing point for decisions needed by Councils whose services and budgets are at issue in developing proposals.

The Government, at both Ministerial and officer level, has shown real interest in Fenland and the issues faced by the market towns. There is a case for capitalising on this by seeking formal Government involvement in the Taskforce, perhaps through joint chairing arrangements with a suitably senior Minister, or via official involvement in the work of the Taskforce.

It follows from the foregoing that developing and implementing these ideas will take resource. Some of that is available in the staff of the District Council, Combined Authority and others. But it is unrealistic to assume that the work needed to take forward this report can be provided from within the existing staff and financial capacity. Additional capacity needs to be identified.

An important principle in a project like Growing Fenland, as it reaches the implementation phase, is that the partners are aligned in commitment as well as purpose. The proposal is therefore that a dedicated capacity is funded and created jointly between (at a minimum) the Combined Authority and Fenland District Council. The purpose of this would be to provide additional officer or advisory support as well as to commission any technical studies needed to bring forward proposals. The scope of this capacity should be the subject of further discussion as part of the consultation on this report, but it might be wise to consider the scale of the challenge as being the equivalent of creating the need for a new Project Director supported by a Project Officer.

The Taskforce should have a time limited existence. A period of two years should enable the proposals considered in this report to be taken to the point of implementation and as a consequence be the responsibility of a Council or Government Department. It is therefore proposed that the terms of reference of the Taskforce include a sunset clause to this effect.





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# Chatteris:

## An Aspirational Community

### Final Report



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## Introduction

### What is Growing Fenland?

The recently published Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) identified that within the Combined Authority there are three distinct sub-economies. There is the Greater Cambridge economy, which includes the many towns where people commute from into Cambridge. There is the Greater Peterborough economy, and its surroundings. But in an important classification, there is also the fen economy, which includes much of our district of Fenland, as well as parts of East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

A lot of strategy has historically focused on making cities work well, and assuming the rest will follow. But because our economy is separate, and in some ways quite isolated with sub-standard transport links, this approach won't work for us. We need a strategy for each of our towns, which helps them prosper, and delivers best quality of life for people who live here. This must acknowledge where we have links to other towns or cities, while seeking to build strength in our places. The Combined Authority is committed to doubling economic output across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by 2040 – to do this, all areas are going to have to succeed, not just the Cambridge economy.

To make this happen, following the CPIER analysis, the Combined Authority has decided to support a process of creating market town plans for each town in our district – Chatteris, March, Whittlesey, and Wisbech. These plans will be used to bid for funding from the Combined Authority and other funding providers, based on the vision for the town.

To develop these plans, each town has established a town team, consisting of representatives from business, local government, schools, and others. The town team has looked at life in the town from every angle, and has developed a vision for each town. They have also worked on ideas which could make a real difference.

The Growing Fenland project tries to capture a balance. On the one hand, each of these towns is unique, with its own particular opportunities, as well as challenges. On the other hand, there are some areas where, by working together, we can have more of an impact. Therefore, we are publishing four separate reports for each of the towns, but under the same banner – and if you read all four, you will see some crossover.

### The Overall Strategy for Fenland

Because some of the challenges we face are common across all four towns, we have published alongside this a Fenland-wide strategy to set out what some of the real “game changers” will be for our district. They key ideas coming forward from this are:

1. Nene River Barrier
2. Opportunity for full bus franchising



3. A47 Dualling
4. Wisbech Garden Town
5. A New Deal for Education
6. A New Partnership for Skills
7. Early Years Support
8. A Health Action Area
9. An Advanced Manufacturing Launchpad
10. Cambridgeshire Jobs Compact
11. A Mayoral Implementation Taskforce

It is at this level that we hope to tackle challenges around some of the bigger, people-based factors, such as health and education, where the opportunities from acting at a district level are much greater.

## The process to produce this report

To produce this report, we have gone through several stages of information gathering to ensure our recommendations will work for Chatteris. These are:

- 1) Data collection, using a variety of sources.
- 2) Meetings with the Chatteris town team, which has had representation from the town and district councils, businesses, and educational establishments.
- 3) Public meetings to allow residents to express views on the town, and ideas as they have developed
- 4) Interim reports, which set out a summary of key ideas for the town
- 5) Continued consultation and an online survey to refine and develop ideas, and
- 6) Production of final reports, to generate support for our plans and leverage in funding from the Combined Authority and other funding providers.

## Chatteris – an overview of the town

### A Committed Community

A strong sense of community spirit is a defining feature of Chatteris. This can be seen most obviously at some of the bigger community events – like the Christmas light switch on, the midsummer festival, or last year’s Remembrance Parade – but also in the many interest groups and clubs we have in our town. Our local businesses are also very committed to our community – with two business groupings (Chatteris in Business, and the Chatteris Business Cluster).

Our population is growing – having increased by 5.4% (566 people) since 2012<sup>1</sup> – with some new developments around the fringes of our town. This is forecast to continue, though our population will continue to age – while over-65s are 20% of the population now, this is expected to rise to 25% in 2036<sup>2</sup>.

***“We’ve learned to stand on our own two feet” – Chatteris resident***

### A Struggling High Street

However, the High Street at the heart of our town has seen a decline in recent years. Local retailers have noticed a big decline in footfall, particularly since Budgens left the town. The weekly markets have become smaller, though committed traders remain. Banks have also moved away, now only visiting with temporary pop-up shop style provision. As the two major supermarkets in the town (Aldi and Jack’s) are out of the centre of the town, people use these more often, and don’t come into the town – we have also seen (like much of the UK) some of the damaging effects of increased online shopping.

***“The High Street is dying off” – Chatteris Business***

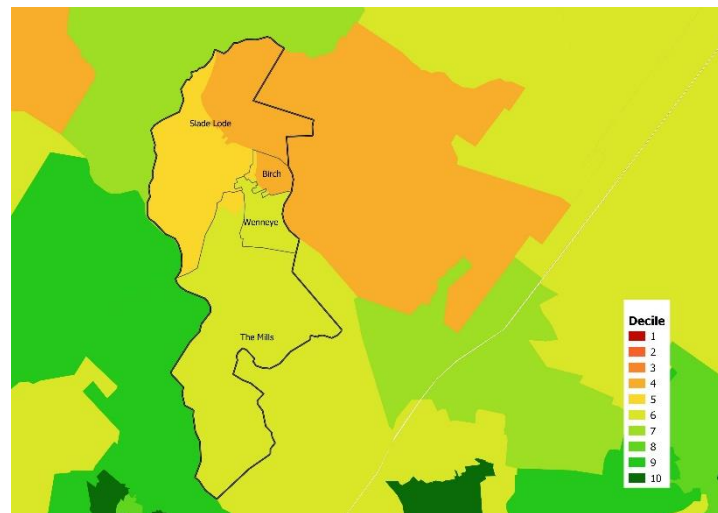
Some residents have perceived these changes to the High Street to reflect increasing levels of deprivation in the town. This is not necessarily correct, however – the evidence shows Chatteris is about average for a town in terms of levels of deprivation.

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<sup>1</sup> ONS population estimates

<sup>2</sup> Cambridgeshire County Council Population Forecasts

### Chatteris – Index of Multiple Deprivation



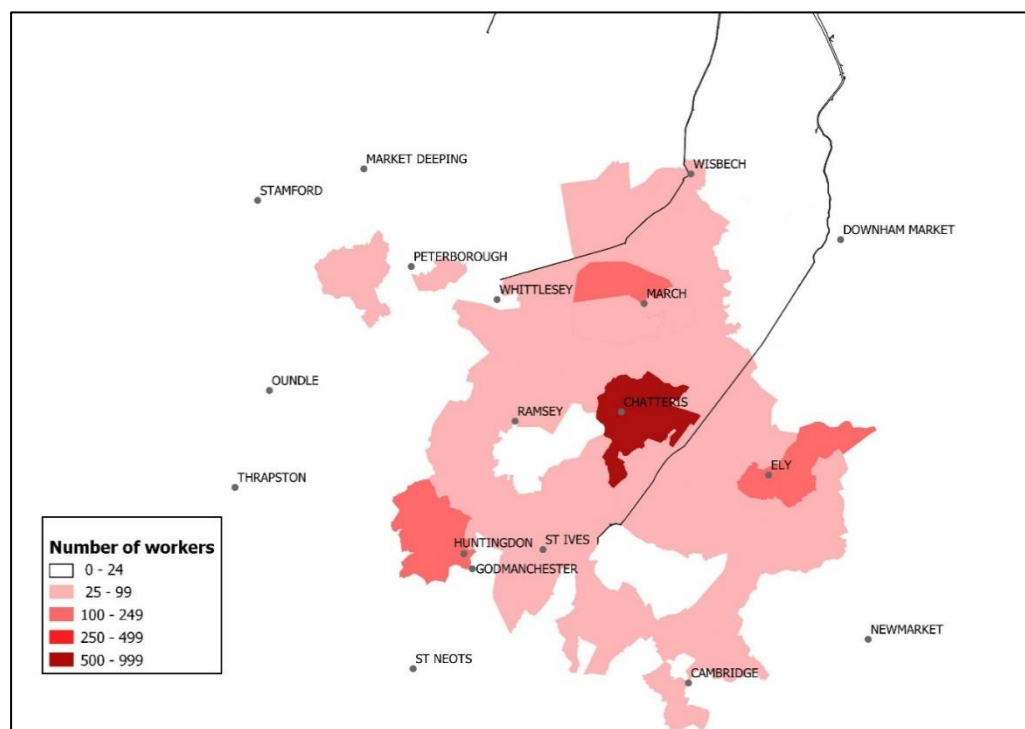
Source: Analysis of Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government Data (2015).

While the proportion of households in poverty (20.3% after housing costs) is above Cambridgeshire levels, it is about average for England and Wales.

### A central location, but poor transport connectivity

Chatteris “looks in all directions” – with workers commuting to March, Ely, Huntingdon, and to a lesser extent, Cambridge and Peterborough.

Where Chatteris Residents Work (Census 2011)



Source: Analysis of Census 2011 data

This central location is a real strength for the town, but currently public transport options let Chatteris down. Buses are infrequent, and some key destinations (such as Peterborough) require changing, leading to lengthy journeys (over two hours). This makes commuting via public transport an impossibility in many ways. As a result, Chatteris is very car dependent – 74.7% of Chatteris workers use their cars to get to work, compared to 60.4% for Cambridgeshire and 57.0% for England.

Levels of cycling to work are also low (2.5%), with no good cycle lanes out of the town. Cars drive very quickly down our local A-roads, and they are very exposed to the wind, meaning it can feel unsafe to travel by bike.

More positively, stops at our closest station (Manea) have increased, meaning it is easier to get to Cambridge and Peterborough by rail than before (though we need to improve our links to Manea station).

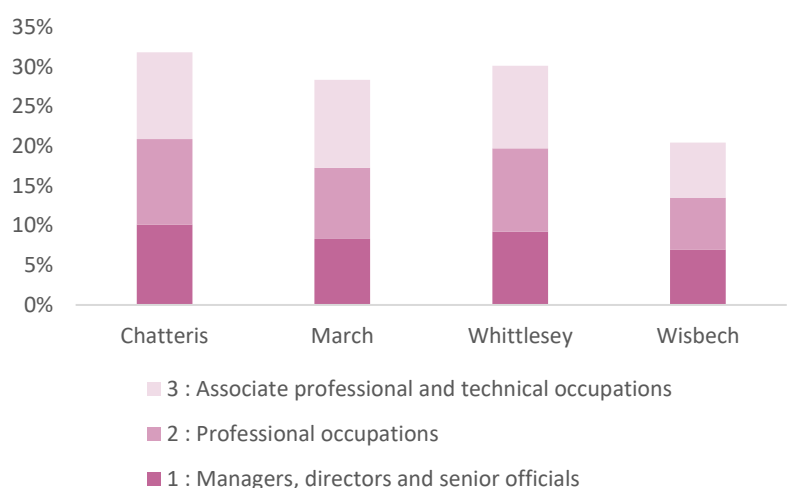
**“Overwhelmingly, the use of public transport was for non-work related activity such as shopping, leisure trips or medical appointments” – Chatteris Community Plan 2018**

## A highly skilled, professional class

Of the four market towns in Fenland, Chatteris has the largest proportions of residents working in the top three occupational categories. 20% of the local employment falls in the “Professional, Scientific, and Technical” sector (ONS Business Register and Employment Survey).

These jobs are provided by some of the high-end businesses around the town, including the emerging Advanced Manufacturing Cluster of high-end firms.

Similarly, 17.9% of Chatteris residents have degree-level qualifications – well above the Fenland average of 14.8%.

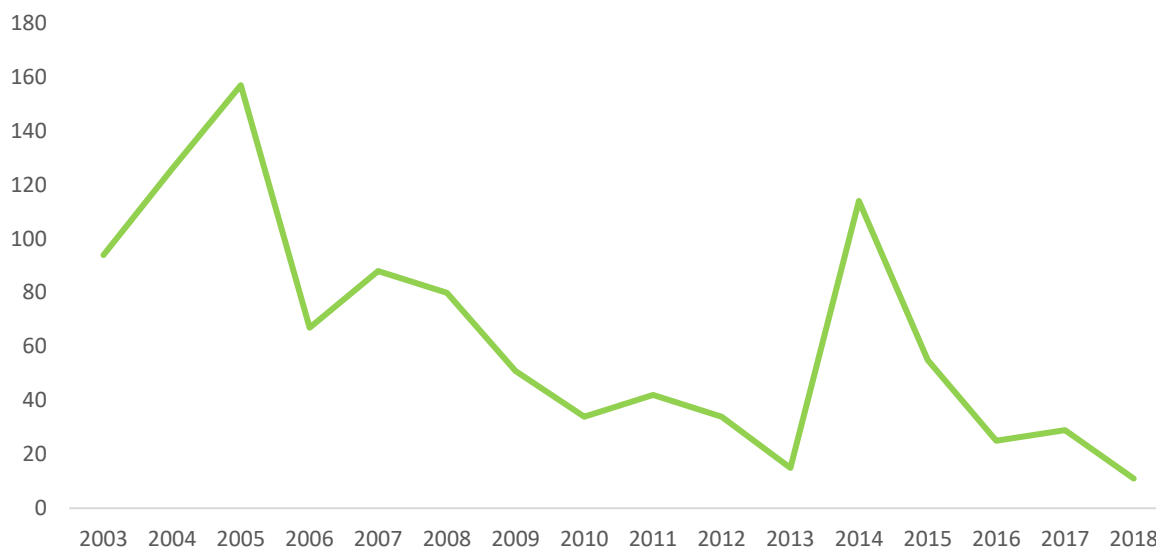


Source: Annual Population Survey

## Difficulties in bringing forward development, but affordable housing

There has been some building of new properties in Chatteris recently, however the general trend over the last fifteen years has been downward, with only a temporary recovery following the financial crisis.

### *Housing completions in Chatteris, year ending March*



*Source: Cambridgeshire County Council*

What is behind this, when plenty of land has been allocated for housing in the Local Plan? The big issue is low land values, meaning there is less of an ‘uplift’ for a developer who wants to build. This also makes it challenging to get developer support for some of the infrastructure needed to build more houses – like roads and utilities. In the longer term, we may find we are also constrained by flood zones.

However, this does also feed through to lower house prices, which are an attractive factor to people – in the recent Chatteris Community Plan consultation, 234 people reported that they moved to Chatteris because housing costs were lower than elsewhere.

### **Many outdoor activities, but difficulties accessing the countryside**

There are many opportunities for outdoor pursuits in and around Chatteris, including fishing, boating, and walking. This is a real strength of the town which we can and should shout more loudly about. The recent Pocket Park initiative at Little Acre Fen is a great new space, which has had community involvement in its creation.

However, there are some challenges in accessing the local countryside. Generally, the number of rights of way is somewhat limited. In a recent consultation “access to more parks and green spaces” was highlighted as the biggest priority for local residents.

This may be connected to some health outcomes in Chatteris being worse than national and local averages:

		Healthy Eating Adults	Obese Adults
Chatteris		24.8%	25.9%
Cambridgeshire		32.4%	20.9%
England	28.7%	24.1%	

## Education – a good, and improving picture

The town's high school – the Cromwell Community College – is a real asset for the town. It has a good reputation, and by September 2020 will be the county's first state school offering education all the way through from four to eighteen years. Rates of students achieving 5 A\*-Cs in their GCSEs, at 42% is above the national average of 40%. 97.1% of A-levels which are started are completed, above the England average of 95.4%.



However, the town's primary schools are performing slightly less well, with one being identified by Ofsted as requiring improvement at the most recent inspection, with only 33% of pupils meeting the expected standard (Cambridgeshire – 61%, England – 64%) – though these are improving.

## Chatteris – what residents are telling us

Our work consulting the community brought out the following key themes.

### *Likes*

People mostly express affection for the community spirit, and the aesthetic appeal of the town, with comments like “Sense of community” being common. One resident noted that the affordability of housing was an attractive feature of the town, something we have picked up elsewhere, while another commented the town was “positioned well” – again relating to feedback we have heard about the beneficial geography of the town.

### *Dislikes*

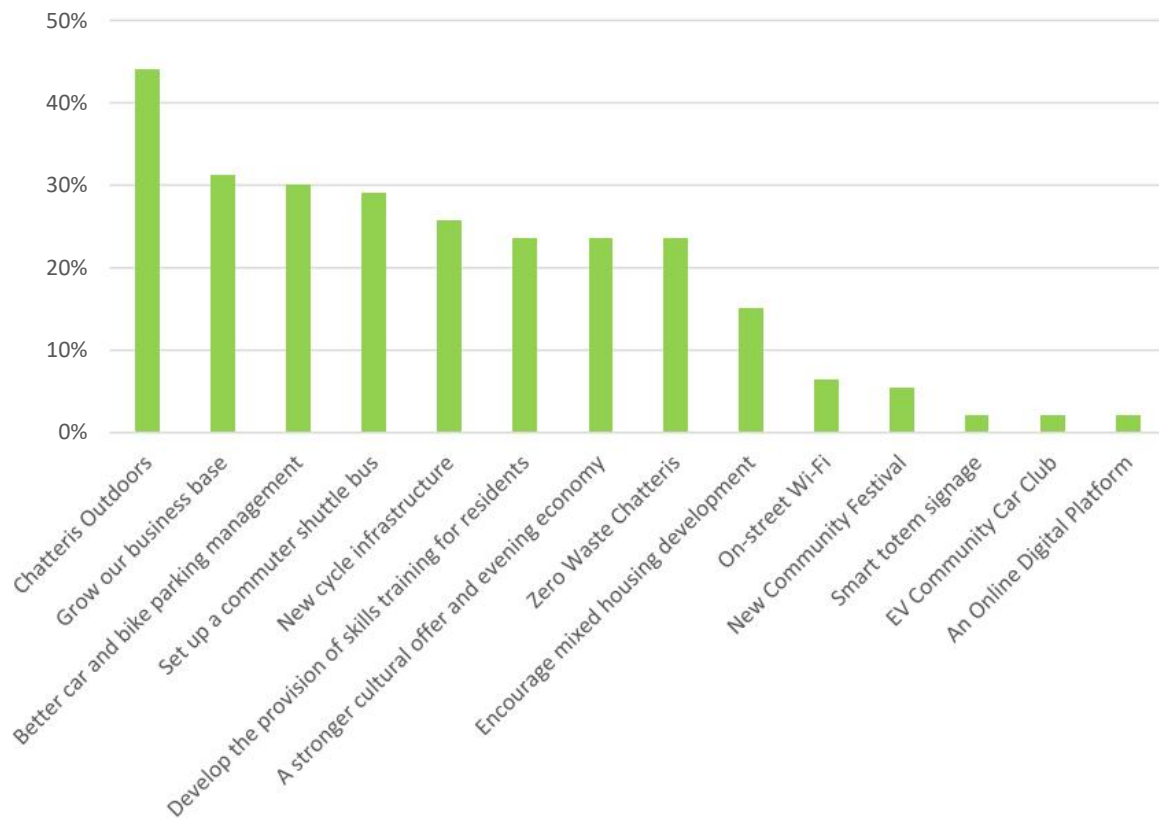
These comments fell into a few categories. The High Street was the predominant concern: “No decent shops”, “demise of high street”, and “Could do with some good shops” were typical. Public transport was another major issue, people feeling the bus service had got “worse and worse”, and linking this to isolation. One commented that there was a real need for more cycleways. Finally, there were also those who felt the town was overlooked relative to other towns, with comments such as “It has not developed as much as surrounding Fenland towns”, and “lack of investment”.

### *Improvements*

This gave a very wide range of responses – with no clear agreement. Again, the high street was the most often mentioned. Improved doctor’s services, support for youth activities, police services, leisure services (including a concern about selling the swimming pool), and local transport were all mentioned.



### *Favourite ideas from the interim report*



*Source: Analysis of Fenland District Council data. Height of bars shows the proportion of residents who chose an idea in their top three.*

Clearly, the Chatteris Outdoors concept was the most popular of the ideas given, with almost half of respondents putting it in their top three. Many of the transportation-themed interventions were also popular, as well as those which focused on business and skills – helping our residents to access opportunity. We have taken forward the key ideas identified for development.

## Chatteris – A vision for an aspirational community

**Chatteris brings together high-tech manufacturing, glorious countryside, nationally significant agriculture, and a new national museum in one place.** Very few towns of our size can make such claims. We have grown our own industries, learned independence and worked hard to create a successful town.

Now, we need to combine these strengths to turbo charge our town and grow our prosperity, providing good jobs, excellent education and green access. It is time for a step change in how our town works, thinks about itself, and is thought about by others. We need to show people that Chatteris is the place to be to start a business, buy a home, and bring up a family.

At the centre of our vision for Chatteris is that it will be home to **an aspirational community**.

This captures two things. Firstly, we want our town to be full of aspirers, those who want to succeed, flourish, and make a difference. We want those who live here to have opportunities – and take them. We want to see high quality career pathways, a variety of activities, and excellent schools, making our town attractive for young families and entrepreneurs looking for a place to live.

But secondly, we want our town to be a community. Community spirit is already one of Chatteris' key strengths – we want this to continue to develop and grow. We want to see a bustling high street where people bump into each other, where cultural events give people the opportunity to throw themselves into the life of the community, and where people never feel lonely or unwelcome.

## Nine key proposals for Chatteris

We have nine areas where we know that interventions will make a transformative difference in Chatteris. We recognise that not all of these will be immediately deliverable. Some are areas where an immediate funding boost can help get things moving – others will take time. But over time, we need all of these to come to fruition for our town to prosper.

These ideas are:

### 1. Grow our business base

An Advanced Manufacturing Launchpad and a potential Agri-tech Launchpad facility with scope to support and grow our existing businesses and increased resource for economic development will help us bring more high quality employment to the town.

### 2. Develop the provision of skills training for residents

Local provision associated with industrial development, adult courses, and connections to other skills providers will make sure members of our aspirational community can access the opportunities on offer.

### 3. Promote mixed housing development

To grow and develop our town, we need places for people to live at different stages of their lives. Mixed housing development, along with support for necessary infrastructure to make it happen, will bring people to our town.

### 4. Set up a commuter shuttle bus

Chatteris suffers from poor public transport provision, particularly to centres of employment. A shuttle bus connecting into key transport nodes on the rail network (Ely, Manea) will help us connect residents to opportunity.

### 5. Develop the Chatteris Outdoors platform

Chatteris Outdoors was our most popular idea in the interim reports. We will improve access to and use of our countryside, and develop this as a key attractor for our town.

### 6. Develop a stronger cultural offer and evening economy

High streets are changing, we need to adapt. By encouraging business to trial early evening opening, and encouraging more creative uses in the town, we will restore the popularity of our high street.

### 7. Create new cycle infrastructure

People avoid active travel in the town because it is seen as dangerous. Links to Somersham and Ely will encourage people to exercise more, tackling our town's health challenges.

### 8. Provide better car and bike parking management

To make our high street more attractive and encourage cycle commuting, we need to better manage parking facilities.

## 9. Create a community project funding pot

Our community needs to take ownership of the town to drive improvements. By creating a small fund, we can support local projects, including improvements to the visual amenity of the town.

We unpack each of these below in a summary case for making the investment.

# 1. Grow our Business Base

We have excellent businesses. We need to support them, and attract other companies to make Chatteris their home.

## Strategic Case

### The Advanced Manufacturing Launchpad

The **advanced manufacturing launchpad** will build upon the presence of Metalcraft, a large business working in the nuclear and medical sectors. This can become the “anchor” by which to attract smaller companies to base themselves in the area, looking to tie into the manufacturing process here. By doing so we can create a dense web of supply chains, to create an innovation ecosystem here. This will increase efficiency, create jobs, and raise the profile of our town.

The mechanism we propose for this idea is to provide capital grants to firms in these sectors which can prove their offering qualifies as advanced manufacturing, and which offer high-paid, high-quality jobs. This will ensure funds are allocated to strengthening the local economy of the town.

This idea is of such significance that it has been recognised as one of the key strategic actions for Fenland District as a whole. This is because it will significantly raise the jobs profile of the district, and, by working with other manufacturing companies across the district, will help other manufacturing firms move up the value chain.

### Support for our Agri-Tech businesses

The land around Chatteris is of extremely high quality, and generates a significant proportion of the vegetables eaten by UK consumers. “Agri-Tech” is the big opportunity to drive up the value of this sector. But wafer-thin margins make it difficult for agricultural businesses to invest in better technology. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) states a key intervention as “expansion of the Eastern Agri-tech Research, Development and Prototyping Growth Initiative, enabling direct funding support to more firms”<sup>3</sup> and looks to develop an Agri-Tech launchpad facility or facilities within the Combined Authority.

We need to support our local agricultural businesses in applying the latest technologies and encouraging engagement with existing support and funding initiatives, such as the Agri-Tech fund. We know that with the right approaches we can improve crop yields by tailoring the application of water and fertiliser at the crop level. There have also been successful examples elsewhere of support for glass houses and water management to allow higher value crops, such as fruit and flowers, to be grown.

### More proactive economic development to bring companies to new sites

To bring businesses in, we need to tell them why Chatteris is a great place to invest. To do that, we need greater investment in economic development. The Combined Authority has set out plans to

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create a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Growth Company, to support the growth of business in the district. This needs to promote Chatteris with the following key themes:

- A highly skilled workforce
- A network of leading companies in the advanced manufacturing and agricultural sectors
- A high quality of life offer, with good countryside and location
- Available land on which to develop

Related to this last point, we note there are key growth opportunities on the Jack's site, and land around the South Fens Business Park, which are primed for commercial development. We want this to come forward, in a way that doesn't take people away from our high street, but rather **creates high value jobs for people to then spend money on the high street.**

## Financial Case

The **advanced manufacturing launchpad** will, by creating new commercial sites on the launchpad, increase local business rates. As is being trialled at Alconbury Weald, it may be possible to split these benefits in order to include provision for marketing the site and attracting more companies. This will also help to offset the cost of small capital grants to move companies to the area.

**Support for Agri-Tech business** will involve finance on a project by project basis to develop key elements of infrastructure. This conversation needs to be taken forward with local agri-businesses to understand what can drive most value without causing damaging environmental impact.

**More proactive economic development** requires funding for extra staff for the District Council to promote the offer of the area.

## Management Case

We look to the Combined Authority to lead on the work on the first two points, as it takes forward work following the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) process. Fenland District Council will lead on more proactive economic development, but we will use our local resources to frame the Chatteris offer in a way which can be clearly and easily promoted to interested parties.

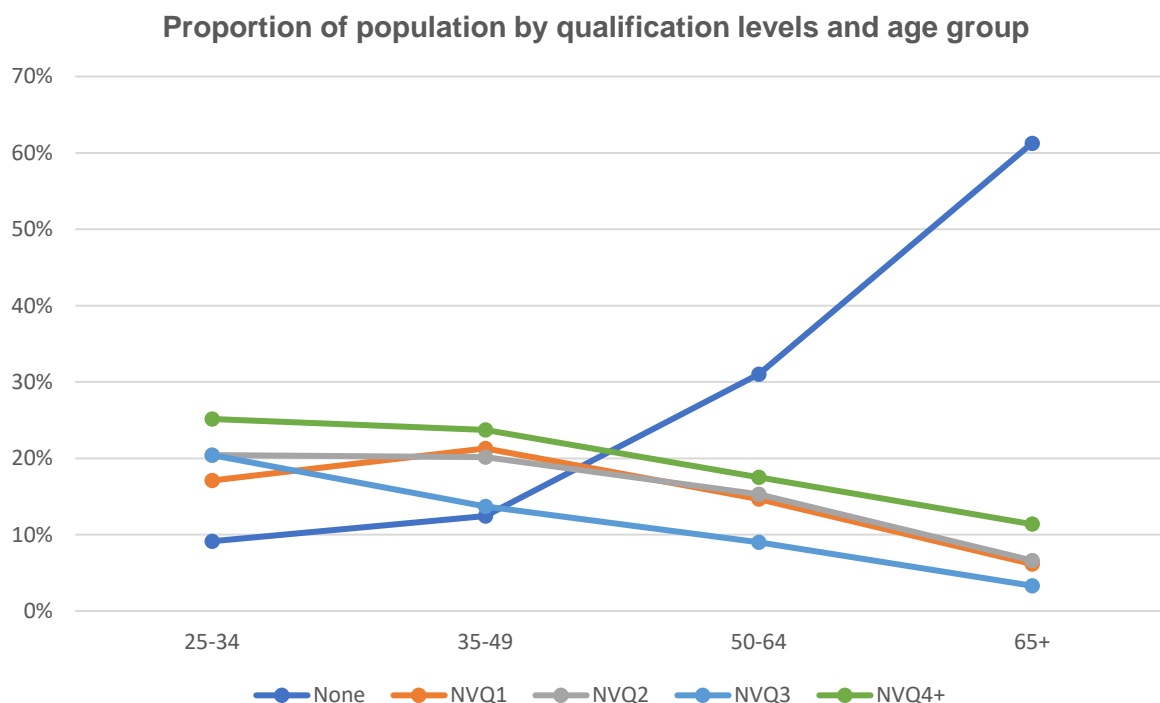
## 2. Develop the provision of skills training for residents

### Strategic Case

Attracting new companies to base themselves in Chatteris will help us provide highly skilled and well-paid employment. However, this, in and of itself, will not be enough to guarantee jobs for local people – if they lack the skills to take up this employment. Therefore, it is vital that we find ways of improving skills provision to our residents, so that they can share in the opportunities coming forward in the town.

Firstly, this means bringing new local provision associated with industrial development. The advanced manufacturing launchpad has training facilities “designed in” alongside a commitment from the companies involved to providing support for local people (particularly those entering the workforce) to get the training they need. The LIS includes a plan to “Create a Skills, Talent and Apprenticeship Hub: connecting employers, providers, and learners”. Our plans for provision on the launchpad must be embedded in this programme, and by working with the Cromwell Community College we can ensure there are good connections with our young people as they come to the end of their schooling.

We will also work with existing training providers in order to create more short courses within the town. These will include adult education courses to help those in older age brackets upskill. We have identified that skills levels in the town are lower among those of older age brackets – with more than three in ten of those aged 50-64 having no qualifications. At the same time people are working longer.



Source: Analysis of ONS Annual Population Survey

In addition to all of this, we realise that there are other excellent further and higher education facilities in our area, and that we will never be able to (nor should we aspire to) provide all the training which our people need within the town – however, efforts should focus on providing a broad mix of academic and vocational qualification pathways which will provide a much greater choice, currently lacking in the town. Other key providers include the College of West Anglia, Cambridge University, iMET at Alconbury Weald, and the forthcoming Technical University at Peterborough.

This means that, as discussions around the approach to transport in the district are taken forward, including the overall approach to bus services, **a top priority must be securing fast access to key local training centres**. Part of this will be met through a shuttle bus to key transport hubs such as Manea and Ely, from where it is possible to get a direct train to either Cambridge or Peterborough (see proposal 6).



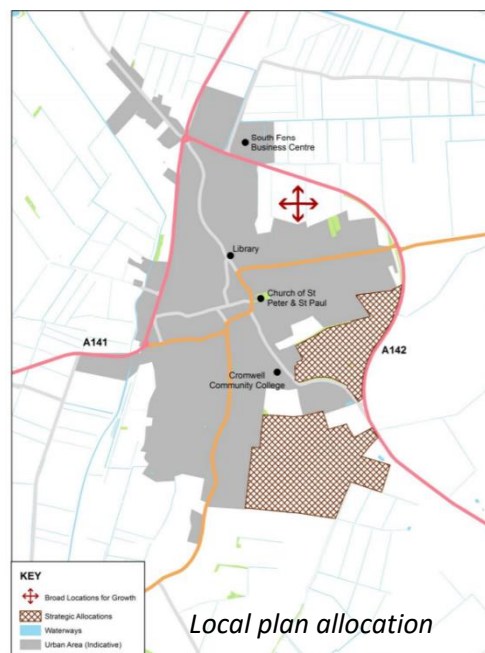
### 3. Promote mixed housing development

#### Strategic Case

We know that to grow our aspirational community, and keep presenting opportunities to new people, we need to give people desirable places to live. Different people will be looking for different things – young people may focus on affordability (already a strength of our town), while there is a need to begin to promote “executive housing” for those looking to move up to a more luxurious offer.

There are two key ways we can start to develop more housing in the district:

- 1) Densification.** This means building more in and around the town centre. This will help to support our town centre, by bringing more people to live in it. We propose a programme of engagement with shop owners about the space over shops to understand what options there are to improve residential provision here. Where retail units have remained vacant for a long time, we will look to work to develop residential units.
- 2) Building around the town.** Key sites around Chatteris are mostly to the East (see local plan map). Some of these have been optioned for a long time. We ask the Combined Authority for some capital funding to help move on the infrastructure requirements to make these a reality, in negotiation with developers.



These things can all help, though we acknowledge that many of the challenges in bringing forward the housing we need comes down to economic and environmental factors, over which we often have little control. Developments struggle to come forward because the uncompetitive nature of housing delivery means big developers often aren't interested in areas like ours where returns are lower. Chatteris is also surrounded by flood zone 3 land – which in the long run will prevent us from developing.

Our aims around growing our business base will increase demand, and therefore help tackle the viability issue. But we also recognise – as set out in the strategy paper – that new approaches to housing are needed. The innovations in housing being brought about through the Wisbech Garden Town programme – most notably modular build (where costs are lower) and sophisticated flood modelling – will help our housing market to pick up, enabling us to grow our aspirational community.

#### Financial Case

To establish costs involved in allowing infrastructure to develop for housing sites will require convening developers around proposals for specific sites. This will require developers being willing to share the viability calculations they have done to conclude that a site cannot come forward at the present time – to understand how much of this is tied up in delivery of required infrastructure. From this point, it can be established whether a small capital grant or loan will enable a site to come forward.

## Management Case

This work will have to be overseen by Fenland District Council (FDC) as the planning authority. This requires partnership working with developers, which will take time to develop. FDC will also be able to work across the towns to ensure that the lessons learnt through work on other projects, most notably the Wisbech Garden Town, can be shared with Chatteris to help remove the other barriers to development within the town.

## 4. Set up a commuter shuttle bus

### Strategic Case

At the moment, public transport is used almost exclusively for non-work travel in Chatteris. At the time of the last census (2011) less than 2% of the employed population in Chatteris used the bus to get to work – compared to almost 75% who used the private car. This is unsustainable into the long term, and discourages younger people from moving to our town (as a shrinking proportion of young people now drive). A service which focused on employment destinations (Ely, Huntingdon) or other public transport nodes (Manea station) could make using public transport on a day to day basis more viable for our commuter class.

This would be a shuttle bus service (ideally an electric vehicle) to connect with trains to Cambridge and Peterborough at working hours. In Chatteris, for example, a minibus could leave the town at 6.45, dropping people off at Manea at 7, to catch the 07.08 train to Peterborough. It would then return to the town to pick up another load for the 07.39 Manea train to Cambridge. It would do one final run, this time to Ely, to drop people off for the 08.33 service to Cambridge, or the 8.16 to Peterborough.

### Financial Case

The cost of the vehicle for this scheme will depend upon what model is chosen (see below). If the option chosen is to work with existing operators, the capital cost will be zero, but there may be an ongoing revenue cost in the form of a subsidy.

Because some parents choose to send their children to sixth form in Cambridge, there should automatically be some demand for the service – as it will provide an easy link to travel into Cambridge in time for morning lessons. This will help improve the commercial viability of the service.

### Management Case

There are a few approaches to providing a shuttle bus in the town which should be considered:

Approach	Benefits	Disbenefits
Work with existing operators to provide the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Doesn't require the procurement of new infrastructure</li><li>- Could be a means of "testing" the popularity of the service without incurring sunk cost</li><li>- There is the potential to build the shuttle into existing routes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Existing operators have little incentive to co-operate if they do not wish to</li><li>- The fare to the user is likely to be higher (or a greater ongoing subsidy will be required).</li></ul>
Provide own service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Complete control over the route and timings</li><li>- Ability to "brand" the bus as a Chatteris commuter shuttle, to show people clearly how the</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- May require navigating legal issues in relation to providing municipal bus services in the Bus Services Act 2017 – particularly if the service is run on a commercial basis. This could be navigated by providing the bus on a</li></ul>

	service is meant to be used	Community Transport (i.e. free) basis.
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Which option is preferable largely depends upon the policy context. At the present time, it may be best to open up discussions with the current operator in the area, Stagecoach. However, if as the Fenland Strategy paper recommends, bus franchising is taken forward in Fenland, it will be possible to designate this route as one which needs to be provided – either on its own, or as part of a package of bus routes for the area.

We are also exploring this idea for Wisbech as part of establishing immediate connectivity to transport hubs (Wisbech being the other Fenland market town without a railway station), therefore, if the option is to provide the services ourselves, running these two services in tandem will provide economies of scale, reducing the overall cost for both.

## 5. Develop the Chatteris Outdoors platform

Chatteris Outdoors was the most popular idea with the public. It involves both a) developing the provision of outdoor amenity to residents of the town, and b) using our links into the countryside to develop a real selling proposition for the town.

### Strategic Case

For place branding to be successful, it needs to offer three key things:

1. A unique identifier of a place
2. Something which builds on genuine strengths – i.e. has a grounding in reality
3. Something which future ambitions for the place can also be tied to.



*An example of what the platform could look like*

**The Chatteris Outdoors brand does all of these.**

Firstly, it identifies something unique about Chatteris. The outdoor environment is a key attractive feature of the fens, and distinguishes Chatteris from market towns in other parts of the country. It is also not something which other towns in the area have particularly sought to capitalise upon in any branding (heritage is a much more common angle) and therefore, it gives Chatteris a unique selling point.

It is also grounded in reality, and seeks to build on what is there. Many of these activities are based around our waterways, including **angling**, **boating**, and **canoeing**.

While **cycling** is represented in Chatteris by the local cycling club, roads are too busy and unsafe for families to cycle, and cycling to work lags behind national levels. We will kickstart a cycling revolution in Chatteris by turning the old railway to Somersham into a cycle path, extending the current bike path from Ely – Sutton – Chatteris, and creating new cycle parking facilities in town.

There are **walking** opportunities at the new pocket park in Little Acre Fen, and many areas around the town (though accessibility is often a challenge, and we need to promote these opportunities more). **Birdwatching** is a related opportunity at the nearby Block Fen where a Nature Reserve exists, and work is ongoing by Cambridgeshire County Council to develop wetland habitats.

And there are already opportunities for more adventurous sports, such as **skydiving** at the North London Skydiving Centre.

## Financial case

The key element of this, from a cost point of view, will be the online digital platform. It is estimated that this will cost between £5k and £10k to set up (drawing on experience in a nearby and similar size town, Ramsey). If this can then be run on a volunteer basis, this will keep running costs to a minimum. There will be a need for ad hoc developer support to stop the site become clunky.

## Management case

The overall oversight for establishing the website should be with Fenland District Council, who can ensure that the website is of sufficient quality and ties into other developments going on through the Growing Fenland programme. The plan is then to hand it over to volunteers within the town who can manage and run the site, ensuring it also promotes other goings on within the town.

## 6. Develop a stronger cultural offer and evening economy

### Strategic Case

What people are looking for from their towns is changing. High streets are no longer a place people *need* to go to – online shopping and supermarkets have put an end to that. The high streets which thrive are those where people *want* to go there. That means giving them things to do, and places to dwell in and see friends.

This is especially true of the young. A recent report by the events website Eventbrite found that: “this generation [millennials] not only highly values experiences, but they are increasingly spending time and money on them: from concerts and social events to athletic pursuits, to cultural experiences and events of all kinds. For this group, happiness isn’t as focused on possessions or career status. Living a meaningful, happy life is about creating, sharing and capturing memories earned through experiences that span the spectrum of life’s opportunities.”<sup>4</sup>

This also means we need to think again about how and when our high street operates. In general, most of our shops open the standard hours of 9-5. However, for those who work during the week, particularly if they are commuting to cities like Cambridge or Peterborough, this is no good, and means that the income they earn (in sometimes well-paying jobs) does not end up benefitting our local retailers at all. But it is challenging to get to this place as it requires a cultural change – and co-ordination. If only one shop or café opens later, then it will be hard to succeed, as footfall will be lower.

How can we achieve this in a town of our size? There are some concrete steps we can take:

- **Co-ordinate on one night a week when shops and cafes will be open longer.** This can be administered through the Chatteris in Business Cluster, to ensure co-ordination between businesses. Thursday night would be a natural choice generally used in these initiatives – it is later in the week so people are happy to be out later, but not at the weekend when people are more likely to be away. Businesses may also want to co-ordinate to not be open for a couple of hours earlier in the day to compensate for this. In order for this to work it will need to be well publicised.
- **Development of a virtual high street for Chatteris.** One of our media businesses is exploring the option to develop a virtual high street for Chatteris, as has been developed in an area of East London and Aberdeen. This would allow people visiting the town to go online ahead of time and scroll through a panorama of the available shops, with business cards popping up as they clicked on individual outlets. This could be promoted through the town’s Chatteris Outdoors platform (see above).
- **Use planning powers to turn unused retail space into new uses.** The Grimsey review of the High Street sets out this key recommendation: “Accept that there is already too much retail space in the UK and that bricks and mortar retailing can no longer be the anchor for thriving high streets and town centres. They need to be repopulated and re-fashioned as community hubs, including housing, health and leisure, entertainment, education, arts, business/office space and some shops”<sup>5</sup>. We therefore need to:

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<sup>4</sup> Eventbrite, 2015. Millennials: Fueling the Experience Economy.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.vanishinghighstreet.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GrimseyReview2.pdf> p8

- Identify local artists/entrepreneurs who want to try out interesting things in new spaces, and help them move into vacant spaces, possibly with rent relief for a short period (this could include sixth formers looking to develop business skills). We can work with local arts organisations, such as Market Place and Babylon Arts to develop proposals around specific spaces.
- Work creatively with the planning authority (FDC) to ensure spaces can have the use classes needed for this to happen. Converting unused spaces to planning categories which allow a wider range of uses – such as D2 and Sui Generis will enable this to happen.

This will work best if we trial it with one building to see what can work. One example might be the recently closed Barclays Bank on Park Street. Bringing together a group to develop a more creative use for this space would be a stand of defiance against high street decline, by positively embracing new usage for the building.



## 7. Create new cycle infrastructure

This proposal breaks down into three separate elements:

- 1) A cycle lane on the old course of the railway line joining Chatteris to Somersham
- 2) A cycle lane connecting Chatteris to Sutton – which would link to the continuing cycle lane to Ely
- 3) New cycle parking facilities in the centre of town

### Strategic Case

Cycling has multiple advantages over driving as a means of transport. These include:

- 1) **Health benefits.** According to the NHS, “Regular cycling can reduce the risk of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke. It can also boost your mood and keep your weight under control.” They also note that a regular cycle, such as a work commute, contributes towards the recommended exercise target of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week. It has been estimated that in the UK, if we cycled at the same rates as prevail in Denmark, we would save the NHS £17 billion within 20 years.<sup>6</sup>

Health outcomes in Chatteris are generally poorer than national and local comparators. 25.9% of adults in Chatteris are obese – compared to 20.9% in Cambridgeshire and 24.1% in England. And in Fenland as a whole, physical activity rates are estimated at 60.7%, which compares unfavourably to England on 66.1%<sup>7</sup>.

- 2) **Environmental benefits.** The importance of finding alternatives to fossil-fuel based transport at both a local and global scale cannot be overstated. Locally, switching to cycling will dramatically reduce air pollution. Globally, the World Health Organisation reports that: “the transport sector is the fastest growing contributor to climate emissions. Growth in energy use is higher for the transport sector than any other end-use sector.”<sup>8</sup> Cycling, by contrast, neither pollutes the air, nor contributes to global warming.
- 3) **Social benefits.** The private car is an isolating form of transport, with many journeys taken alone. Cycling can easily take place in groups, and at slower speeds it is easier to interact with people while making the journey. The lack of a physical windshield as a barrier between the driver and the environment makes social interaction easier.

Within Chatteris, at the time of the census in 2011, rates of cycling were 2.5% - lower than England (3.0%) and much lower than Cambridgeshire (9.7%).

A lack of decent cycling infrastructure has been highlighted as a cause here. This is particularly important, as the Fen roads are wind swept and very open, increasing the sense of vulnerability felt

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<sup>6</sup>

[https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/zuvvi/media/bc\\_files/campaigning/BENEFITS\\_OF\\_INVESTING\\_IN\\_CYCLING\\_DIGI\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/zuvvi/media/bc_files/campaigning/BENEFITS_OF_INVESTING_IN_CYCLING_DIGI_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Figures from Public Health England’s data tool

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.who.int/sustainable-development/transport/health-risks/climate-impacts/en/>

by the cyclist. The main roads leaving our town are all A-roads – which can be a very off-putting factor, particularly for families with children.

The three elements included are:

**1) A cycle lane on the old course of the railway line joining Chatteris to Somersham**

Chatteris used to lie on a branch line between March and St Ives, which was closed during the Beeching cuts. This means there is a clear straight line which is unbuilt on between Chatteris and Somersham, which leaves the town at the South West, off the Huntingdon Road. At current, there is a footpath here.

This would be transformed into a joint footpath/cycle path to attract people to cycle to Somersham. This, in turn, could be connected through to Huntingdon and St Ives in future, in co-operation with Huntingdonshire District Council.

**2) A cycle lane connecting Chatteris to Sutton – which would link to the continuing cycle lane to Ely**

At the moment, there is a cycle lane from Ely to Sutton, which runs alongside the A142. This stops in Sutton, and does not continue on to Chatteris. Ely is one of the key towns we want to develop better connections to, along with Huntingdon. Therefore, we will increase the ease of cycling to Ely by creating an adjoining cycle route for the next section of the A142.

**3) New cycle parking facilities in the centre of town**

While crime is fairly low in Chatteris, 2% of the crimes reported in Chatteris in 2018 related to bicycle theft<sup>9</sup>, and reports of the theft of a bike will discourage people from leaving their bike in town. This in turn will discourage cycle commuting. We want to install secure cycle facilities in the town to give people the confidence to commute to work by bike.

## Financial Case

We have estimated approximate costs for each of these interventions.

**1) A cycle lane on the old course of the railway line joining Chatteris to Somersham**

The Department for Transport document *Typical Costs of Cycling Interventions* gives a range of costs per km for resurfaced cycle routes. The closest example given is for the Leeds-Liverpool canal towpath between Kirkstall and Shipley. “Associated works included signage, repairs to the wall of the canal itself, and upgrade of barriers to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists whilst excluding vehicles and motorbikes.” The cost of this was estimated at £140,000 per km. This seems comparable to the work which would be needed to create a high quality bike lane here, although we wouldn’t need to make any equivalent repairs to canal walls – so we estimate £100,000 per km would be more accurate.

The distance along the course of the old railway between the two towns is 7.5km. This would give a total estimated cost of £750,000 for the route.

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<sup>9</sup> Metro Dynamics’ analysis of Cambridgeshire Constabulary data

**2) A cycle lane connecting Chatteris to Sutton – which would link to the continuing cycle lane to Ely**

Working on the same assumptions, the Chatteris to Sutton cycle route is also approximately 7.5km. Therefore, the estimated cost would again be £750,000. However, we want to work to understand if this cost can be brought down any further.

**Management Case**

The work would be led by Fenland District Council, working in partnership with the Combined Authority, to ensure the new routes are reflected in the new Local Transport Plan, and with Chatteris Town Council on the location of the new cycle parking facilities and promotion of the new routes. Liaison with Huntingdonshire District Council would also be necessary in relation to any future development of the Somersham route.

## 8. Provide better car and bike parking management

### Strategic Case

One of the challenges facing our high street is facing is that it is often overly cluttered with cars. This makes the streets difficult for pedestrians to navigate, and creates a sense of “clutter”. It also causes problems for high street retailers when potential shoppers decide not to use the high street due to concerns about finding a place to park.

We also want to encourage people to, where possible, move away from their cars, and instead use more sustainable approaches to transport. Those who work in or around the town may be choosing not to cycle in due to concerns about the theft of bikes.

To tackle this problem we need to work with Fenland District Council to implement a stricter regime of parking monitoring (at the moment, parking is unregulated). An approach based on free usage for a set period of time followed by charging would encourage people to still use the town centre, but not to abandon their cars there, while heading off for hours on end. It would also mean using tickets where double yellow lines were being parked upon.

### Financial Case

According to jobs website indeed.co.uk, the average salary of a parking enforcement officer is £10.98. The most cost effective way to run this would be to share resource between the four towns, with the officer adopting a varied pattern to ensure that people didn't learn, and work around the routine. On this basis, plus additional costs for travel between the towns, this would give an estimated cost of £25,000 a year. Between the towns, this would work out at £6,250 per town per year.

### Management Case

This would be managed by Cambridgeshire County Council, as the statutory highways authority.

## **9. Create a community project funding pot**

### **Strategic Case**

One area that the Town Team identified as being a concern was the condition of some ornate street furniture, street lamps and the lack of some basic facilities for the public benefit, such as the availability of secure cycle racks. Many potential initiatives were identified as part of Chatteris Town Council's engagement with its residents and the creation of the Chatteris Community Plan – January 2018.

To ensure that many modest, but highly visible community projects can be delivered, it is recommended that a community project funding pot is created and used to either wholly fund or leverage in match-funded contributions towards projects that benefit the community of Chatteris.

### **Financial Case**

It is recommended that a pot of £50,000 is created that can be administered by Chatteris Town Council against worthy projects that improve the appearance and visual amenity of the Town Centre area.

### **Management Case**

This fund would be managed and administered by Chatteris Town Council.

## Next steps

We have set out a vision for Chatteris to be **an aspirational community**, by showing which interventions can make a real difference to our town.

We now look forward to working constructively with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), and its Mayor, James Palmer, to implementing these ideas. This will require both direct support from the Combined Authority, and the resources needed to take these ideas to key government funds such as the Stronger Towns Fund as and when they come forward.

This work will be overseen by Fenland District Council, working in conjunction with the town team that was put together for this work.



# March:

## A Destination Market Town

### Market Town Masterplan



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## Introduction

What is Growing Fenland? This Combined Authority sponsored report is part of a series of reports that together provide a master plan approach for Fenland through 4 town based plans and an overarching strategy report.

A lot of strategy has historically focused on making cities work well, and assuming the rest will follow. But because the Fenland area economy is recognised as separate, and in some ways quite isolated with sub-standard transport links, this approach won't work for us. We need a strategy for each of our towns, which helps them prosper, and delivers the best quality of life for the people who live here. This must acknowledge where we have links to other towns or cities, while seeking to build strength in our places. The Combined Authority is committed to doubling economic output across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by 2040 – to do this, all areas are going to have to succeed, not just the city based economies.

To make this happen, the Combined Authority has decided to support a process of creating market town plans for each town in our district – Chatteris, March, Whittlesey, and Wisbech. These plans will be used to bid for funding from the Combined Authority and other funding providers, based on the vision for each town.

To develop these plans, each town has established a town team, consisting of representatives from business, local government, schools, and others. The town team has looked at life in the town from every angle, and has developed a vision for each town.

***“Our vision is that March will be a destination market town where people want to live and work. We will be a destination for shoppers and visitors looking to enjoy the revitalised high street. We will be a destination for employers looking for ambitious and highly skilled employees. We will be a destination for households looking for affordable homes in friendly, safe, attractive neighbourhoods.***

***We will do this by making the centre of town a high-quality destination for people looking to work, shop, eat, drink and relax. Shoppers will have a choice of prestigious brands and niche, locally rooted offers. The strength of the retail offer will be matched by the night-time economy, offering a wide variety of food, drink and entertainment venues.”***

## March – an overview of the town

***March is a friendly town with many assets and strengths. To continue to prosper we know that we need to improve the town centre, build the right homes in the right places, make best use of empty business premises, help businesses develop and grow, and keep hold of learners and workers.***

### Local assets and a friendly community

March is an attractive and popular place to live. The town's population continues to grow strongly as people are attracted by the offer of good quality housing, new community facilities, including a modern library and recently developed Academy, along with a low crime rate.

Residents take pride in March's strong sense of community and friendliness, its many voluntary groups and societies, and a range of popular events throughout the year, such as St George's Fayre, the Summer Festival, Memorial Service and the Christmas Market all held in the centre of town.

March grew up as a very significant railway town and has retained large railway sidings and network rail operations. The town has the potential for improved connectivity through the existing links by rail, road, and river to other towns and cities.

***"It's friendly, lovely. An amazing place to live."***

We have an active Town Team that includes local businesses who are keen to make a further contribution to the success and vitality of the town.

While the population overall is set to grow, by about a third to 2036, it is also set to grow older. **The proportion of the working age population will decline from 62% to 56%.** This points to one of the most significant challenges facing March.

### Need to boost access to education and job opportunities

**Too many of March's talented and ambitious young people have to leave the town to access the educational and employment opportunities to which they aspire.** We have heard directly from young people about the struggles they face when trying to take opportunities to develop their skills and ready themselves for the world of work.

In recent years, school performance at primary and secondary stages has also trailed behind local and national averages. We have heard that one of the reasons that schools sometimes struggle to deliver on a consistent basis is that there are not enough affordable homes for teachers and other key workers and young professionals.

***"People have to leave March to get a job or an apprenticeship."***

Compounding this problem, **opportunities in the town for apprenticeships, work experience and training from age 16 are limited**, while the opportunities that do exist are not reaching potential candidates. There appears to be a

mismatch between local people looking for apprenticeships, and employers looking for apprentices but struggling to find local candidates.

At the same time, opportunities to learn, work and train outside the town are often made difficult by **transport connections that are too expensive, uncoordinated, or simply not running at the time of the day** when people need them. This applies to both bus and train routes.

## A mixed skilled picture

In terms of adult education and skills, the town retains **the core of an educated professional workforce**. This includes a concentration of public sector jobs, with Fenland District Council offices and HMP Whitemoor nearby. We have a small cluster of high-tech engineering businesses, such as PCML, Qualitetch, Liberate Engineering, and Mundell. As set out in Figure 1 below, a fifth of the local population is educated to NVQ4 or above. This is another of March's strengths.

However, our overall skill levels are lower than the Cambridgeshire and national averages. Like the rest of Fenland, **nearly a third of the population has no qualifications**.

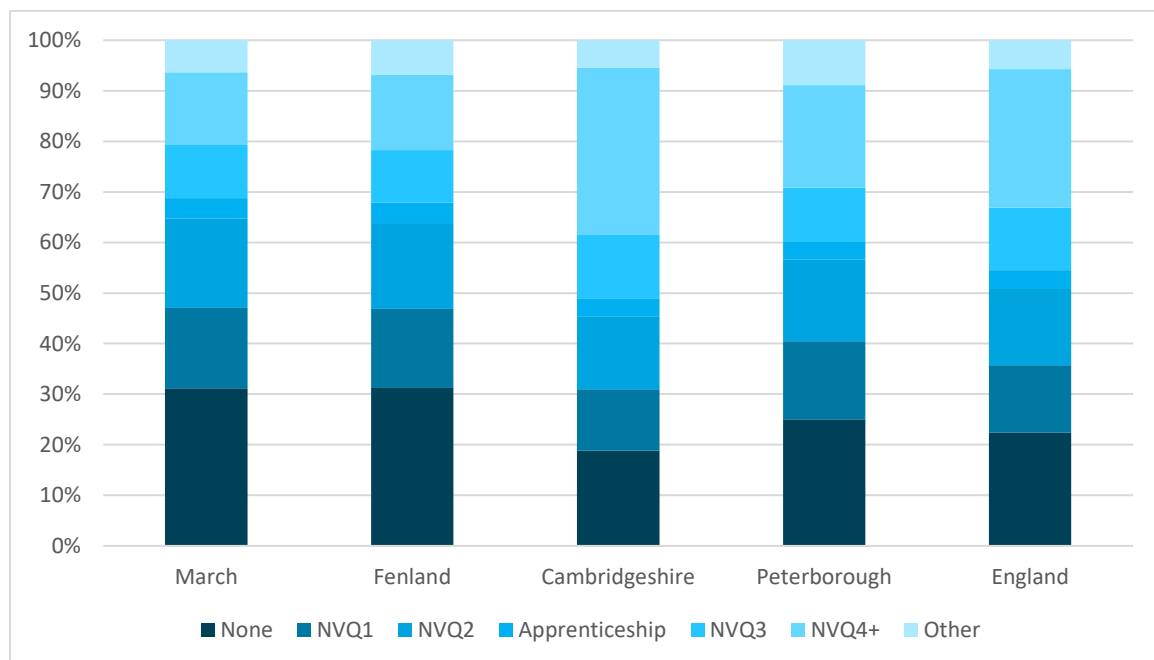


Fig 1: Highest level of academic qualifications

The new Academy, with its range of facilities, dynamic leadership and commitment to working with local partners is part of the answer to this challenge.

However, more effort and coordination are required to achieve three connected goals.

The first is the need to **better link up apprenticeships with potential candidates** within March and beyond. Together we will work closely with the Combined Authority on the implementation of the apprenticeship brokerage programme and bring forward local partners to pilot the scheme in March.

***"The challenge is to create a critical mass of hi-tech, high-value added companies."***

Second, we need to make it easier for people in March to **travel to places where they can further their education**

and career.

Third, we need to nurture the **further development of a cluster of high-tech, high-skill jobs** that will retain more of the town's young people and attract new talent. The potential is there, but we need coordinated activity to build on what already exists.

## A high street with huge potential

**March's most under-utilised assets are the high street and the riverfront.**

The town's central shopping parade boasts some beautiful, historic architecture, the iconic war memorial and some popular, long-standing stores. However, **the retail offer as a whole is not as strong as it was – or could be in future.** When we spoke to local residents this was the biggest issue they raised, along with congestion, which we discuss below. Their words are borne out by available data. The retail vacancy rate for the area defined as March Town Centre is 3.3%, which has climbed steeply from 0.3% in 2015. This compares unfavourably to a UK rate of 2.3% and reflects a quite rapid decline. Relatedly, the "Months-on-the-Market" measure shows an average of 19.9 months for a retail property in March to be taken on – well above the UK average of 9.4 months.

**As much as the main thoroughfare needs revitalising, the river and Nene Parade in particular have huge but untapped potential.** Nene Parade is the iconic view of the town and already contains the oldest building in March (the Ship Inn pub) and a few restaurants. These look out over the bank down to the River Nene, and across the river to the historic Town Hall. The river attracts some narrowboaters, but there is much more we can do with this area.

While some of our local treasures are obscured from view, a few highly-visible derelict eyesores – such as the long-vacant Indoor Market, the dilapidated Collingwood's auction house at the top of Broad Street, and the long vacated Freezer Shop in Station Road – send a negative signal to residents and visitors alike.

Improving the appeal of the town centre could also **realise the potential of March's night-time economy.** The town's Pubwatch group attracts upwards of twenty landlords to its meetings. There appears to be an opportunity here to create more of an evening economy to bring additional expenditure and more of a buzz into the town.

In a bid to the government's Future High Street Fund, there is the aim to make a winning case for investment in an iconic new development that will breathe new life into the town. This could include improved leisure and retail opportunities as well as spaces for smaller businesses and start-ups to cluster and network on and around the high street and riverfront.

## Connected but congested

*"The car is King in March."*

*""It feels difficult and dangerous [to walk around]."*

**In some ways, March is a well-connected place.** We have a railway station, unlike other market towns. **However, traffic dominates the centre of town.** Overall, this can make shopping or simply strolling through town a stressful experience. Through initial engagement as part of this process, residents consistently identified traffic congestion as one of the main issues in the town.

The twelve-month average concentration of NO<sub>2</sub> on Broad Street for 2018 was 39.59µg/m<sup>3</sup>, pushing the European Union’s legal limit of 40µg/m<sup>3</sup> (though note, these figures can be subject to revision). This pollution is produced by idling vehicles on this congested stretch of road.

A Combined Authority sponsored Transport Study for March, which will be ready for public feedback early in 2020 is much anticipated. It is expected to provide some options around reduced congestion, an enhanced town centre and improved connectivity for the town. The town team look forward to supporting the outcomes of this study where they match the aims of this report.

The problem of congestion is also driven by the issue identified above. That too many people looking to work and learn have to travel out of town every day, putting great pressure on the road network. This is reflected in Fig 2 below, which shows how many workers currently travel to other parts of Fenland and beyond.

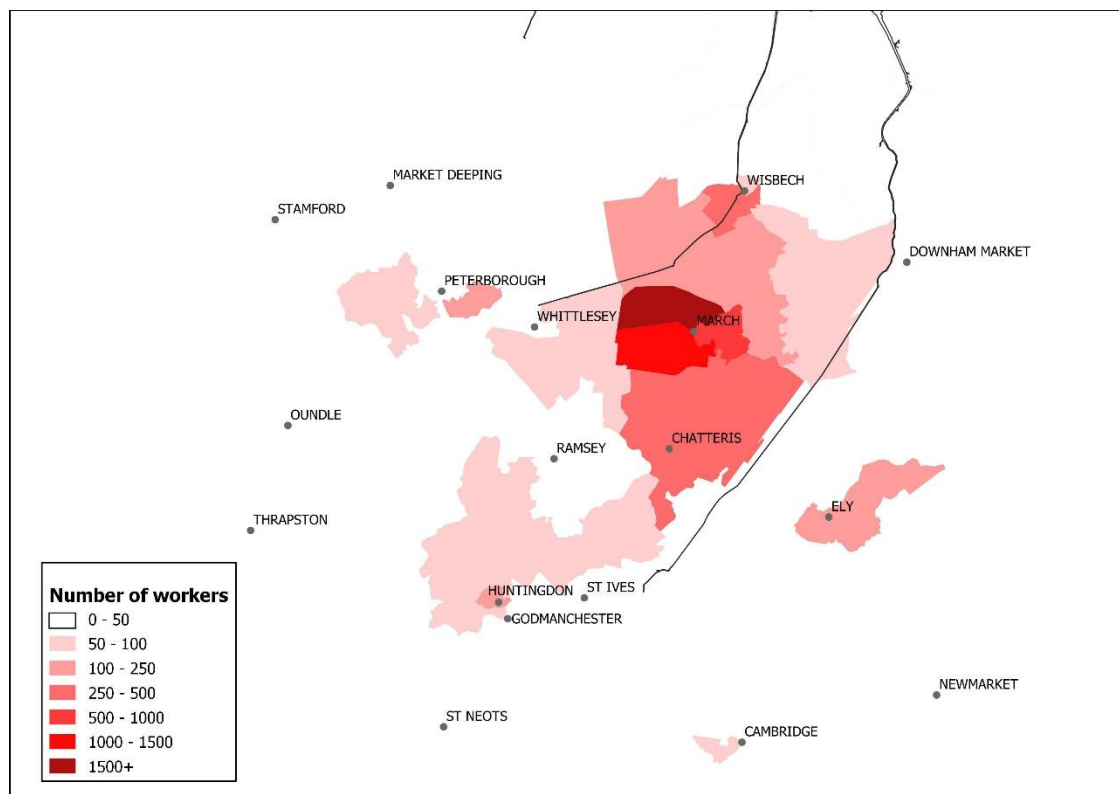


Fig 2: Where March residents work – commuting in all directions

Whilst the majority of the town has good internet connectivity, a further brake on our connectivity, which also impacts on our ability to set the new skills agenda, is the **comparatively slow broadband speeds** in some parts of the town. This was an issue raised by residents in the early initial consultation for this work.

*“The internet speed where we live is slower compared to where we used to live.”*

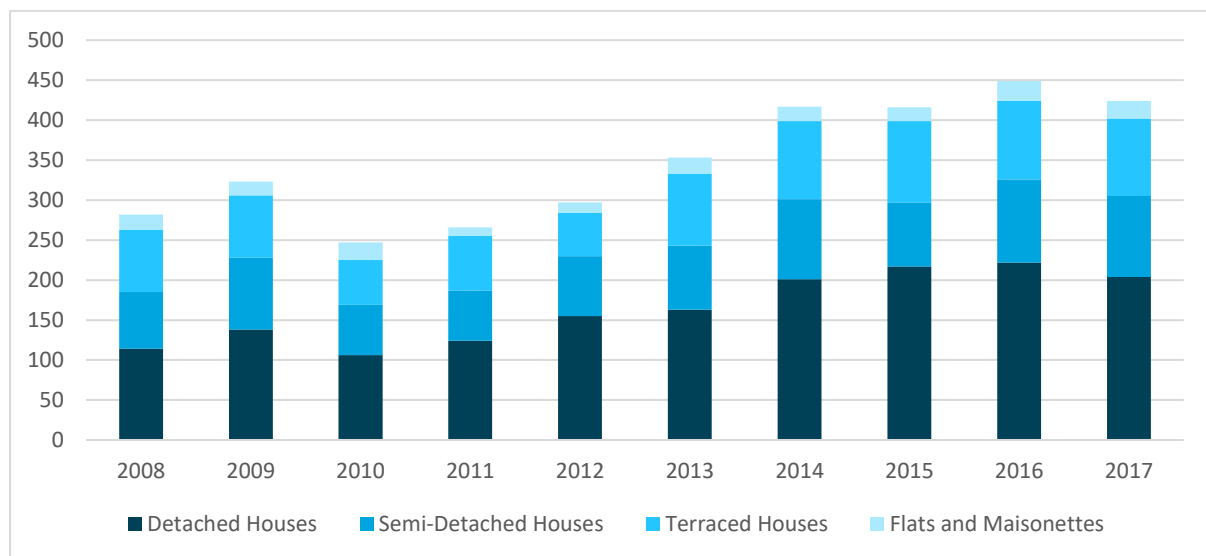
## An under-supply of new homes

While the quality of housing in March is high, **house sales have plateaued in recent years**, as illustrated in Fig. 3 below. Development sites have been identified, to the south east and south west

of the town, taking the western boundary of March closer to the A141. **However, progress through the planning process has been slow.**

**There is a growing risk that March's pipeline of affordable homes, especially for key workers such as teachers, will run dry.** This is particularly true of build types, especially flats and maisonettes, favoured by some young professionals – detached houses still dominate housing sales in the town.

Meanwhile, there are many areas in the vicinity that are building large numbers of homes and benefitting from wider investment as a result. For example, the North Ely development will deliver 3,000 homes alongside the development of a large new country park and the North Stowe new town development of 10,000 homes will include a range of transport and other opportunities



*Fig 3: Sales of housing types in March since 2008*

It is clear that March would benefit from a means of ensuring that the right properties are available for those who choose to live in March. It isn't clear where the barriers exist to releasing some of the areas already identified for development. For the town to continue to prosper, a range of options need to be considered and made available for decision makers, land owners and developers alongside the developing local plan process.

## March – what residents are telling us

Our work consulting the community on the initial ideas in the plan brought out the following key themes.

### *Likes*

The most common response to what people liked about the town was the ‘sense of community’, with respondents making reference to the friendliness of “good people”. Respondents also made reference to the smallness and quietness of the town, the rural setting / easy access to the countryside, and the pleasantness of having a river running through the centre of town. Events in the town, such as the Christmas Market and St George’s Fair, were also mentioned.

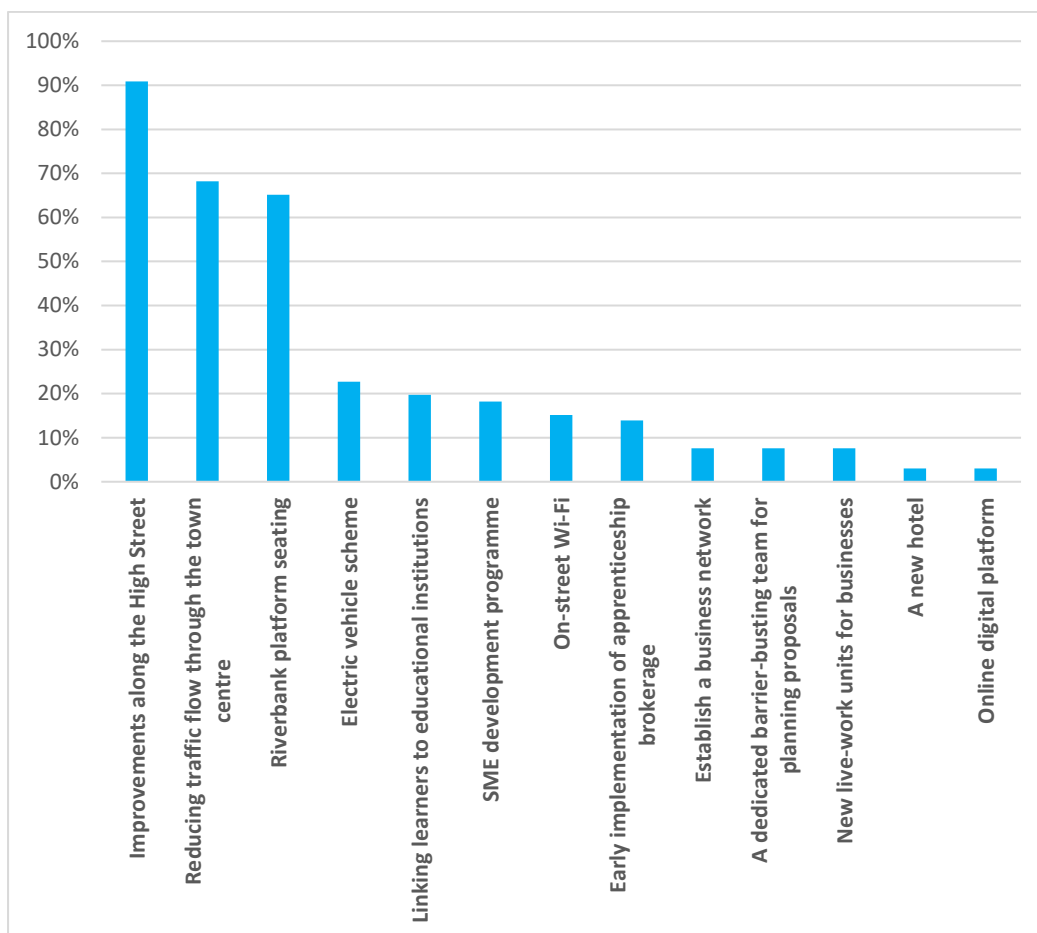
### *Dislikes*

Traffic emerged as the main dislike residents had. People felt there was “not enough room for pedestrians” and too much “traffic going through town centre”. As a result, these are the issues we aim to address in this document. The other issue often raised was the limited variety of local shops, with lots of the same type of shops and not enough known brands.

### *Improvements*

The main improvement people identified was the potential to do more with the high street and market square, generally improving the quality and appeal and tackling some of the derelict buildings identified in the profile.

### *Favourite ideas from the community consultation*



Source: Analysis of Fenland District Council data. Height of bars shows the proportion of residents who chose an idea in their top three.

**When asked to identify their favourite ideas, resident and visitors asked expressed some very clear preferences:**

- **Improvements along the High Street (91%)**
- **Reducing traffic flow through the centre of town (68%);**
- **Riverbank platform seating (65%).**



## March – A destination market town

**Our vision is that March will be a destination market town where people want to live and work.**

We will be a destination for shoppers and visitors looking to enjoy the revitalised high street. We will be a destination for employers looking for ambitious and highly skilled employees. We will be a destination for households looking for affordable homes in friendly, safe, attractive neighbourhoods.

We will do that by making the centre of town a high-quality destination for people looking to work, shop, eat, drink and relax. Shoppers will have a choice of prestigious brands and niche, locally rooted offers. The strength of the retail offer will be matched by the night-time economy, offering a wide variety of food, drink and entertainment venues. The 'star attraction' for March will be a redesign of the area around the River Nene to create a pleasant area to spend time and relax.

Unused buildings in the centre of town will be brought to life, for a range of uses, while street furniture and attractive shop frontages will give the centre a distinctive look and feel.

We will tackle congestion on Broad Street and make it easier and safer to walk and cycle in the centre of town. An in-depth transport study is under way at the moment, which will no doubt inform the final approach, but the ambition is to make the town centre feel less congested and as a result more attractive.

The strategy will support small and medium sized businesses to develop and grow in the town, through a programme of expert support, including access to funding, premises and networking.

Within our other proposals, a town website could promote all the ways that people can shop, have fun and relax in March. It could also be a place where local residents, community groups and enterprises can share and hear about what is going on in the town.

## Key proposals for March

We have identified a package of connected interventions that will make a lasting difference to March:

### 1. Improving the town centre

#### a. Appearance and appeal

Delivering a range of major changes that will remove or activate derelict or vacant buildings and improve the overall appearance and appeal of the high street.

#### b. Reducing traffic flow through the centre of town

We will support and inform the Combined Authority's Local Transport Strategy where it delivers an improved town centre that assists the development of the town centre economy, public transport improvements, and cycling and pedestrian access to the town.

#### c. Development of the riverbank asset

We will investigate the possibility to develop a tiered seating area and platform area on both sides of the town bridge to allow the asset of the river to be seen and enjoyed. The aim is to open access to the riverside and provide new areas for residents, workers and visitors to eat, relax and socialise.

#### d. On street Wi-Fi

To support the enhanced town centre we will install a zone of free to the user Wi-Fi access as a further addition to our high street offer.

#### e. Electric vehicle charging points

We will encourage the use of electric vehicles for those living, working or visiting the town centre by provide charging points within town centre car parks.

### 2. Small and medium sized enterprise development programme

We will invest in a new programme that will enable local small-to-medium sized enterprises to network, grow and develop new products and services, across different sectors.

### 3. Improving the availability of properties

To enable a coordinated solution to the broader development of the town, both minor and major developments, a Challenge Busting Team will bring together land owners, developers and the local councils to ensure that March can continue to deliver the range of properties that the town needs for future years, in line with local plans.

## **4. Other future options**

### **a. New town website**

We will develop a brand new website that will promote everything we have to offer to visitors, and provide a single reference point for all information about the town.

### **b. Develop a 'car club'**

We will trial a new car club that makes available a pool of rechargeable electric or hybrid vehicles to be rented or used by the hour by residents and local small and medium sized enterprises.

We unpack each of these in more detail below.

## 1a. Improving the appearance and appeal of the town centre

### Strategic Case

A programme of targeted improvements to the appearance and overall appeal of our high street. This intervention would work well in conjunction with the riverside platform seating. In tandem, these would bring more activity and vibrancy to the centre of town.

As set out in the profile section of this masterplan, our High Street contains some beautiful and historic architecture, as well as some highly-visible derelict eyesores, such as the long-vacant indoor market, the old auction house at the top of Broad Street, and the old freezer shop on Station Road. Such sites send a negative signal to residents and visitors alike.

There is also a high level of first floor vacancy, where above-shop accommodation lies empty. This results in a deteriorating condition for many buildings along the High Street, including blocked gutters, vegetation in roofs and walls, failing or poor-quality windows, and unattractive shop fronts.

The retail vacancy rate for the area defined as March Town Centre is 3.3%, which has climbed steeply from 0.3% in 2015. This compares unfavourably to a UK rate of 2.3% and reflects a quite rapid decline. Relatedly, the “Months-on-the-Market” measure shows an average of 19.9 months for a retail property in March to be taken on – well above the UK average of 9.4 months.

This decline is driven by wider changes in retail habits, but there is more we can do to improve our high street. As well as making physical improvements to the high street, as described below, a programme of investment would send a strong signal of belief and be used as a powerful hook to attract both a wider range of shops and other activities and amenities.

Our proposal is for a programme of coordinated investment in the high street that would include:

- Dealing with the acknowledged eyesores and vacant buildings as part of the development of the town centre in line with the Future High Street Fund bid outlined below. This could be done through significant re-development to re-purpose, or demolition to make way for a new development.
- Installing eye-catching street furniture. This could be a mixture of traditional features such as benches, bins, water fountains and less conventional features such a ‘hang out space’ as well as electric vehicle re-charging points in nearby car parks.
- Improved signage around the high street and beyond that makes consistent reference to key landmarks (such as the Town Hall and War Memorial) and directs and encourages people to explore the distinct parts of the high street and the areas around it.
- A shop frontage improvement schemes, offering access to experts and a small amount of capital funding to create attractive and modern-looking frontages.
- Ensure local In Bloom and other volunteers are able to continue to make the town look great.
- Work with landlords to arrange obvious improvement work like gutter clearance.
- Bringing currently vacant first-floor units back into use. This could be a mixture of residential use, office or maker space, and live-work units. These would need to be modern, attractive and well-managed and marketed by a qualified agency, as well as being affordable to local businesses. This is in line with our ambition to create a cluster of high-tech, high-skill jobs in March.

- To support the March Area Transport Study in the re-designing of traffic flow through the town centre to encourage walking, cycling and town centre activities and events.
- Create 'space to breath' in the town centre.

The introduction of free wi-fi to the centre of town is also designed to encourage greater activity and interaction.

Whether funded as part of a wider Future High Streets Fund package or as a stand-alone set of improvements, these measures should boost the look and feel of the high street. From a place that is dominated by cars and feels, as per feedback in the overview, "difficult and dangerous" for pedestrians, to a place that is much more attractive and welcoming to shoppers, visitors and workers alike.

## Financial Case

Fenland District Council has included an outline proposal in its initial Future High Streets Fund bid. Funding has now been allocated to work this up into a full business case to attract further funding from government. The return on investment from a successful programme of improvements would be significant.

## Management Case

This is multi-layered project; the extent of which depends on the precise mixture of ingredients. It ranges from immediate, practical changes such as clearing gutters; through to more creative changes that require some design, such as wayfinding and improving shop frontages; to somewhat longer-term shifts, such as bringing vacant first-floor units back into use.

This project would likely to need to engage specialist advice on issues like wayfinding, where expert input could lead to more innovative proposals.

Contractors would be required to deliver certain elements such as the frontage improvement schemes.

Local businesses and retailers on the high street would of course be a core partner. They would need to be engaged early on and throughout, so they benefit from and contribute to the project, and understand the impact of any potential inconvenience.

Another important set of partners are the residents and businesses, some of whom may not currently live in March, who could be attracted to occupy first-floor units.

## 1b. Reducing traffic flow through the centre of town

### Strategic Case

The problem with traffic in March town centre is clear. Traffic data collected as part of the March Area Transport Study revealed speeds of under 10mph both north and southbound through the centre of town.

This heavy traffic has a negative effect on local air quality. The twelve-month average concentration of NO<sub>2</sub> recorded on Broad Street for 2018 was 39.59µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Even allowing for variability, this is pushing the European Union's legal limit of 40µg/m<sup>3</sup>. This pollution is produced by idling vehicles on this frequently congested stretch of road.

Within our public consultation, reducing traffic flow through the centre of town received the second most priority preferences, with 68% of respondents identifying it as one of their three favourite proposals.

Such an unpleasant situation makes it difficult to attract visitors, shoppers and businesses to the town centre and works against the positive impacts of the other proposals in this masterplan. Similar public consultation elsewhere ([Smarter Cambridge Transport](https://www.smartertransport.uk/smarter-cambridge-transport-urban-congestion-enquiry/)) has argued that it is necessary to go beyond minor changes and that we must design urban roads and streets to be attractive and convenient places to walk, cycle and use public transport.<sup>1</sup>

In the above context, it is clear we need to reduce the feel of the overall amount of traffic on Broad Street and make it more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists.

Any changes to traffic in Broad Street could improve other current traffic situations in the town and make it easier to drive out of the market square and similar junctions within the town.

An in-depth transport study supported by the Combined Authority is currently under way and will include public consultation in early 2020. We will support this where it meets our aim to make the town centre more walkable and give a boost to the shops here.

## Funding

Alongside the transport study, Fenland District Council has included an outline proposal in its Future High Streets Fund bid. This is under development, and will result in a business case which looks to government for funding.

## Management

The transport study will inform the final approach, but the changes are likely to require:

- Engagement and communication with residents and stakeholders – including engagement with businesses on the short-term impact of changes to the road.
- Further assessments of likely impact on traffic flow and potential modal shift.
- Detailed assessment of required engineering works.
- Identification of additional changes and modification required to adjoining roads, including signage, and the scope for inbound flow control.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.smartertransport.uk/smarter-cambridge-transport-urban-congestion-enquiry/>

## 1c. Development of the riverside asset

### Strategic Case

New platform or tiered seating on the riverbank, located on either side of the town bridge, will create a new focal point for residents, workers and visitors to eat, relax and socialise. This is part of the bid being submitted to central government's 'Future High Streets Fund'.

As set out in the profile of the town, March faces many of the same challenges encountered by other market towns. The town centre is congested, retail patterns are changing, and there are some empty, derelict and abandoned premises in the heart of the town centre.

Looking ahead, the high street of the future will be less a place where individuals shop, and more of a location for groups of people to socialise, relax and enjoy their leisure time.

March has the potential to become such a 'destination location'. The River Nene runs through the centre of town. We have a range of pubs, with an active and committed group of local landlords. The town has some beautiful and historic architecture; including the Town Hall, Fountain and War Memorial on Broad Street.

To realise that potential we need to do more with the assets we have and address the reasons why March, as it is today, isn't attracting more people.

In the bid to the Future High Streets Fund, this has been focussed upon to deliver the town centre growth of leisure, retail and culture.

The improved riverside seating would be the 'star attraction' of the area along Nene Parade offering an iconic view of the town, including the oldest building in March (the Ship Inn pub) and restaurants. These restaurants look out over the bank down to the River Nene, and across to the historic Town Hall.

The river is currently not accessible to residents of the town, due to the busy roads, high fences and steep banks. The river represents the connection of March to the old trading and access routes within this historic Fenland landscape. By improving access to the river bank, and to leisure options such as day boats, we hope to open up a new appreciation of this valuable asset within the heart of our town.

The seating would offer:

- Spaciously-designed seating arrangements so people can relax and use the space.
- Much easier access to and from the riverside for residents wanting to access the water and visitors to the town e.g. narrow boaters.
- Access to the free wi-fi that is also proposed in this masterplan.
- Safety features such as railings.

The proposal is scalable, but the development would need to be of sufficient size to become a recognised 'feature' and make a meaningful difference to the look, feel and appeal of this central part of town.

## Funding

Estimates are based on experience of a smaller project elsewhere, the Porter Brook Pocket Park, where it is estimated that Sheffield City Council spent £1.35m. There is already evidence that the Porter Brook Pocket Park has revitalised part of the city centre and increased local spend. It is therefore anticipated that this large scale project will cost between £3 and £5 million.

## Management

This would be a significant, but deliverable. Working with Middle Level Commissioners, the project would require several inputs:

- Geotechnical assessment including any flood risk implication
- Detailed design
- Consultation with local residents and stakeholders on potential uses, features and appearance
- Installation

### CASE STUDY

Sheffield's Porter Brook Pocket Park won the 'Contribution to the Built Environment' award at the Living Waterways Awards ceremony in 2016. The purpose of the project was to open up and utilise an under-used part of a small scale riverside space. The project involved removal of a culvert and the development a tiered new terrace that enables residents to access the riverside.

Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oexE1N4WwvU>

## 1d. On street Wi-Fi

### Strategic Case

The development of digital technologies has had an inescapable impact on our high streets. However, prophecies of the total demise of the high street overlook the fact that humans are, and always will be, physical creatures, benefiting from face to face interaction. People will also often want to look at and assess goods before buying them. The fact that Amazon, one of the dominant forces in e-commerce, is now trialling pop-up shops on the UK High Street testifies to the continued importance of the physical high street, and the opportunity which exists to combine the digital and the physical.

Successful high streets of the future will be those which manage to do this. The towns in Fenland enjoy good broadband – with superfast or ultrafast broadband in most of March. The next step to future proof the high street will be the installation of free on-street Wi-Fi – this is one of the basics in providing an integrated digital/physical experience for the future, and may well become a criteria for national chains when deciding where to set up. Bill Grimsey, Former Chief Executive of Iceland and one of Wickes' subsidiary businesses, set out as a key recommendation in his second review of the High Street to "provide free public Wi-Fi and well-connected workplaces that support flexible working patterns and attract freelancers to high streets and town centres."



Our proposal for the Wi-Fi is deliberately constrained to the town centre is to encourage people in to it. It would encompass Broad Street to market square and the proposed new seating area.

## Financial

The estimated total cost for installing the Wi-Fi in March is around £20,000, followed by an annual charge of £2,000 for a seven-year period. We can access Cambridgeshire County Council funding through the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme.

## Management

The installation of the points for the on-street Wi-Fi would be managed by Connecting Cambridgeshire – who already have experience of successfully installing on-street Wi-Fi in Cambridge and Ely. The network could be supported by Cambs Wi-Fi. The Town Team will work with Connecting Cambridgeshire to ensure the user interface is optimised for a visitor to the town.

## 1e. Electric vehicle charging points

### Strategic Case

We will encourage the use of electric vehicles for those living, working or visiting the town centre by provide charging points within town centre car parks. Electric vehicles are becoming increasingly commonplace as awareness grows of the impact of air pollution on the health of current and future generations and the need to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport.

There are environmental, economic and social reasons for supporting the shift to electric vehicles. We want to drive this change.

We therefore propose to install **new electric charging points at key locations** in and around the town.

## Financial

Funding will be sought to install charging points within town centre car parks owned by Fenland District Council.

The work is scalable, but to be viable is expected to cost in the region of £35,000.

## Management

The new charging points will be managed by Fenland District Council, subject to resources available. There are local authority powers available to ensure that the charging points remain accessible to electric car users with usual parking enforcement penalties applicable.

## 2. Small and medium sized enterprise development programme

### Strategic Case

Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are crucial to the long-term financial success of market towns and the UK economy as a whole. The programme would provide:

- Tailored packages for individual businesses;
- Generic, cross-business support such as sector networking; and
- Small-scale grant funding to help businesses access additional support.

The programme would be delivered with an experienced partner. It would be designed to become self-sustaining after an initial period of funding.

By their nature, most SMEs have limited access to funding and staff time to look ahead at future opportunities and threats to develop their businesses accordingly. They could, for example, invest in staff skills and develop new business projects if resources were available. Unlike larger companies, which can appoint staff or outside consultants to do this work, most SME are focused on getting by. We are also informed that business networking in Fenland is limited. In addition, nearby in Wisbech research shows that some SMEs that are operating profitably have limited interest or incentive to expand or do things differently.

The development of a project to address these gaps could include:

- Supporting SMEs to access public investment and private capital.
- Liaising between SMEs and educational providers to shape courses to match future skills needs.
- Increasing the amount and quality of networking between businesses.

We therefore propose a programme of work that would deliver:

- Tailored packages of support in individual SMEs across a range of support needs, including:
  - Business planning and financial management
  - Branding and management including online marketing e.g. how use LinkedIn effectively
  - New product / service development testing
  - Market analysis / horizon scanning
  - Applying for loans and other sources of finance
- A general programme of face-to-face and online networking opportunities, designed and facilitated to encourage SMEs to share information and identify opportunities.
- A transparent small grant programme to enable businesses to access further support outside the programme. Such support might be highly technical or sector-specific.

The following aspects would also need to be considered:

- Qualification criteria, such as company size and turnover.
- The amount of support available to companies and communicating that clearly from the beginning – with the option of SMEs purchasing further support as desired.
- Effective marketing and promotion and proactive engagement of businesses – this is a crucial element, given the current lack of networking and engagement from some SMEs.
- Arrangements for consulting on the detail of the programme with local SMEs.

- Which sectors are eligible and which, if any, should be a priority for support.
- Whether the programme should also look to engage SMEs outside of March with an eye to attracting them to locate to the town.
- The scale and assessment criteria for the small grant pot.
- Coordination of locally available premises in a portfolio format to allow growing businesses to relocate locally.

The programme should be coordinated with and signposted to other support opportunities. These should include the new Greater Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local Skills Support for the Workforce (SSW) contracts, which is aimed at SMEs.

## Financial

A three-year contract should give any delivery partners enough time to deliver the programme. The aim should be for the programme, or elements of it, to become self-sustaining after this period through:

- SMEs buying in tailored packages of support;
- Subscriptions to networking activities;
- SMEs undertaking some of the delivery themselves e.g. responsibility for organising network events.
- Link to any existing business groups, such as Chamber of Commerce.
- Coordination of empty premises to encourage use of empty and under used premises.

We would seek specific costings from suppliers, but could allocate £350,000 for a five-year package.

## Management

There are several providers of SME development programmes on the open market, including private companies and universities. The contract would need to be advertised and commissioned in line with Fenland District Council's procurement policies.

It would be advisable to build some element of local consultation with SMEs before the final detailed programme is agreed.

### **3. Improving the availability of properties**

#### **Strategic Case**

We recognise that there is a lack of coordinated solutions to the broader development of the town. With both minor and major developments stalling or being delayed, there is a risk that the right properties will not be in place to fulfil the needs of the growing town. The town needs to bring together land owners, developers and the local councils to ensure that March can continue to deliver the range of properties that the town needs for future years. This could involve both enabling improved communication and myth busting, but also utilising pump-prime funding and drawing together funding sources and opportunities in line with existing and developing local plans, planning approval/requirements and funding opportunities.

#### **Financial**

This type of arrangement requires appropriately skilled resource to facilitate the change outlined.

An estimate of costs of this resource is in the region of £350,000 over a 5 year period to enable the appropriate facilitator and support to be provided.

#### **Management**

Either through a third party or by direct employment through Fenland District Council, the required employees are recruited on suitable contracts and arrangements.

Any resulting network would be well placed to be involved in any developing local plans.

## Other Future Options

### 4a. New town website

#### Strategic Case

Successful market towns have a positive, friendly 'brand' that they communicate to the world. Towns such as Skipton and Ludlow have used this approach to great effect with a town website.

The new town website will:

- Promote the brand of March as a destination, especially to outsiders.
- Provide a central repository for local information, such as forthcoming events, business opening hours, and local discounts. While this information is available, it is usually spread across different sources, such as local magazines and Facebook groups, which local residents may not be aware of or subscribe to and outside visitors are very unlikely to know about.
- Link to local organisations to raise their profile and connect them to new members, customers and users.
- Provide information to residents about how to access services online.

We therefore propose to create a new website, clearly branded in line with the vision set out in this master plan, which will provide the information described above. This could be done with a local professional web designer.

While setting up a website is technologically straightforward, with the tools to do so widely available, several factors need to be high quality:

- High quality design, including appropriate and high-quality images, well-written and accurate copy, and ease of navigation – it is vital that the site looks professional and reflects well on the town.
- Importantly, the site needs to be kept up to date to be of value and to avoid disappointing visitors with inaccurate information. This information would need sourcing from liaison with local group and businesses.
- Active management of any discussion boards or discussions forums, including developing a set of rules, and responding to any queries directed to the site.
- Search engine optimisation (known as SEO) so that site appears prominently in response to search terms.

As above, while it is easy to set up a website, setting up and maintaining a good quality site of which the town can be proud requires effort and commitment.

#### Financial

A small amount of funding would be needed at the beginning to design, test and launch the site. This can be between £5k and 10k depending on functionality and design.

Ongoing resources would be needed to maintain the site and volunteer involvement has been used elsewhere to successfully reduce the costs of maintaining such a service.

## Management

There would be huge value in engaging a small group of local stakeholders in the development and testing process. This is useful to the technical process of designing, but also generates buy-in to the idea of the site and generates momentum behind local organisations putting their information on the platform.

Each town team could initially work with a local website designer(s) to develop, test and launch the site. Different skills are required at different points in this process e.g. designing the look and navigation of the site is different from ongoing management. It may be possible to find an organisation with all these skills that can enter into a single contract. Alternatively, different arrangements could be made e.g. one contract to design, test and build up to the point of launch, and another to maintain and promote on an ongoing basis.

As above, there would need to be clear and agreed arrangements for keeping the site regularly up to date. This could be done as part of a contract, or through a local volunteer group.

### CASE STUDY

The first result to searching for “Ludlow” on Google is the town’s website <https://www.ludlow.org.uk/> This presents high quality and attractive images from the town, has a single strapline – “A bustling market towns”, lists for forthcoming events, and provides two short paragraphs summarising the town’s assets and appealing features. It then then provides more detail on each of these aspects – where to stay, things to do, food and drink etc.

## 4b. Car Club

### Strategic Case

Pooled access to such vehicles also offers an affordable and flexible way for younger, older and lower-income people to get around without owning their own car. This is particularly beneficial to people who are looking to study and gain work experience out of town but are currently frustrated by bus and rail services that are inconvenient. We are aware that this is a problem across Fenland.

Car clubs also offer benefits to households who currently do have a car but, for whatever reason, rarely use them. According to [Comouk](#), car owners who drive fewer than 6-8,000 miles per year can save up to £3,500 each year.

Experience from elsewhere, as described below, suggests that once people are familiar with the idea of a car club, they tend to grow and become more popular. Our investment should therefore be seen as seed funding to germinate a long-term shift to a more accessible and sustainable form of transport for rural and semi-rural areas.

### Financial

Up front funding would cover the cost of purchasing a small fleet of suitable vehicles along with any garaging and charging requirements.

Members of the scheme pay a joining fee and a monthly or ad-hoc fee.

The cost of the scheme in the first year could be £100,000.

## Management

The scheme would need to be administered by an organisation with the requisite capacity and suitable rural, transport and community outreach experience.

An important option for the car club is to allow corporate membership for local businesses, so links to the formed SME network and similar are very important. Consideration could be given for small vans as well as cars should the need be established.

### CASE STUDY

In [Harbury, Warwickshire](#), a village of 3,000 people, they have managed to generate enough usage to support two electric vehicles. These are operated by a private company and come with insurance for drivers aged 19 and over. There is a one-off lifetime fee to begin with of £50, and then an hourly payment. This is used for community services, such as services to help the elderly get to appointments or the shops. The scheme was started with a grant from the Department for Transport worth £18k.

## Next steps

We have set out a vision for March and consulted upon the interventions that can make a real difference to the town.

We now look forward to working constructively with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), and its Mayor, James Palmer, and other funders or partners to implement these ideas. This will require both direct support from the Combined Authority, and the resources needed to take these ideas to key government funds such as the Stronger Towns Fund as and when they come forward.

It is anticipated that this work will be overseen by Fenland District Council, working in conjunction with a continued team of representatives from the town and developed from those who put together this work.



## The Overall Strategy for Fenland

The recently published Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) identified that within the Combined Authority there are three distinct sub-economies. There is the Greater Cambridge economy, which includes the many towns where people commute from into Cambridge. There is the Greater Peterborough economy, and its surroundings. But in an important classification, there is also the fen economy, which includes much of our district of Fenland, as well as parts of East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

A lot of strategy has historically focused on making cities work well, and assuming the rest will follow. But because our economy is separate, and in some ways quite isolated with sub-standard transport links, this approach won't work for us. We need a strategy for each of our towns, which helps them prosper, and delivers best quality of life for people who live here. This must acknowledge where we have links to other towns or cities, while seeking to build strength in our places. The Combined Authority is committed to doubling economic output across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by 2040 – to do this, all areas are going to have to succeed, not just the Cambridge economy.

To make this happen, following the CPIER analysis, the Combined Authority has decided to support a process of creating market town plans for each town in our district – Chatteris, March, Whittlesey, and Wisbech. These plans will be used to bid for funding from the Combined Authority and other funding providers, based on the vision for the town.

To develop these plans, each town has established a town team, consisting of representatives from business, local government, schools, and others. The town team has looked at life in the town from every angle, and has developed a vision for each town. They have also worked on ideas which could make a real difference.

The Growing Fenland project tries to capture a balance. On the one hand, each of these towns is unique, with its own particular opportunities, as well as challenges. On the other hand, there are some areas where by working together we can have more of an impact. Therefore, we are publishing a separate report for each of the towns under the same banner.

Because some of the challenges we face are common across all four towns, a Fenland-wide strategy has also been produced. This sets out interventions to tackle socio-economic challenges in our district through what could be real “game changers” for the local community and the local economy.

[Link to strategic document to be included].

## The process to produce this report

To produce this report, we have gone through several stages of information gathering to ensure our recommendations will work for March. These are:

- 1) Data collection, using a variety of sources
- 2) Meetings with the March town team, which has had representation from the town and district councils, businesses, and educational establishments.
- 3) Attending local events to allow residents to express views on the town, and ideas as they have developed
- 4) Interim reports, which set out a summary of key ideas for the town
- 5) Continued consultation and an online survey to refine and develop ideas, and production of final reports.



# Whittlesey – A Market Town fit for the Future

Final Report



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY



**Fenland District Council**



**Cambridgeshire  
County Council**



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## Introduction

### What is Growing Fenland?

The recently published Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) identified that within the Combined Authority there are three distinct sub-economies. There is the Greater Cambridge economy, which includes the many towns where people commute from into Cambridge. There is the Greater Peterborough economy, and its surroundings. But in an important classification, there is also the fen economy, which includes much of our district of Fenland, as well as parts of East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

A lot of strategy has historically focused on making cities work well, and assuming the rest will follow. But because our economy is separate, and in some ways quite isolated with sub-standard transport links, this approach won't work for us. We need a strategy for each of our towns, which helps them prosper, and delivers best quality of life for people who live here. This must acknowledge where we have links to other towns or cities, while seeking to build strength in our places. The Combined Authority is committed to doubling economic output across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by 2040 – to do this, all areas are going to have to succeed, not just the Cambridge economy.

To make this happen, following the CPIER analysis, the Combined Authority has decided to support a process of creating market town plans for each town in our district – Chatteris, March, Whittlesey, and Wisbech. These plans will be used to bid for funding from the Combined Authority and other funding providers, based on the vision for the town.

To develop these plans, each town has established a town team, consisting of representatives from business, local government, schools, and others. The town team has looked at life in the town from every angle, and has developed a vision for each town. They have also worked on ideas which could make a real difference.

The Growing Fenland project tries to capture a balance. On the one hand, each of these towns is unique, with its own particular opportunities, as well as challenges. On the other hand, there are some areas where by working together we can have more of an impact. Therefore, we are publishing four separate reports for each of the towns, but under the same banner – and if you read all four, you will see some crossover.

### The process to produce this report

To produce this report, we have gone through several stages of information gathering to ensure our recommendations will work for Whittlesey. These are:

- 1) Data collection, using a variety of sources (appendices showing the full data packs created at the back)
- 2) Meetings with the Whittlesey town team, which has had representation from the town and district councils, businesses, and educational establishments.
- 3) Public meetings to allow residents to express views on the town, and ideas as they have developed
- 4) Interim reports, which set out a summary of key ideas for the town
- 5) Continued consultation and an online survey to refine and develop ideas, and

- 6) Production of final reports, to generate support for our plans and leverage in funding from the Combined Authority

We would like to thank all those who participated in producing the reports, and offer our particular gratitude the Town Team representatives from each area who were so generous in sharing their time, thoughts and insights.

## Whittlesey – an overview of the town

*Whittlesey is a great place to live and learn. We want to build on these strengths to make Whittlesey a market town that thrives on its heritage and is fit for the future.*

**Whittlesey is a town with many strengths.** It is a popular and attractive place to live, with a strong community spirit. We have good and continuously improving schools. Our programme of annual events, including the Straw Bear festival, attracts people from far and wide. We have some excellent restaurants and shops that draw people into the town.

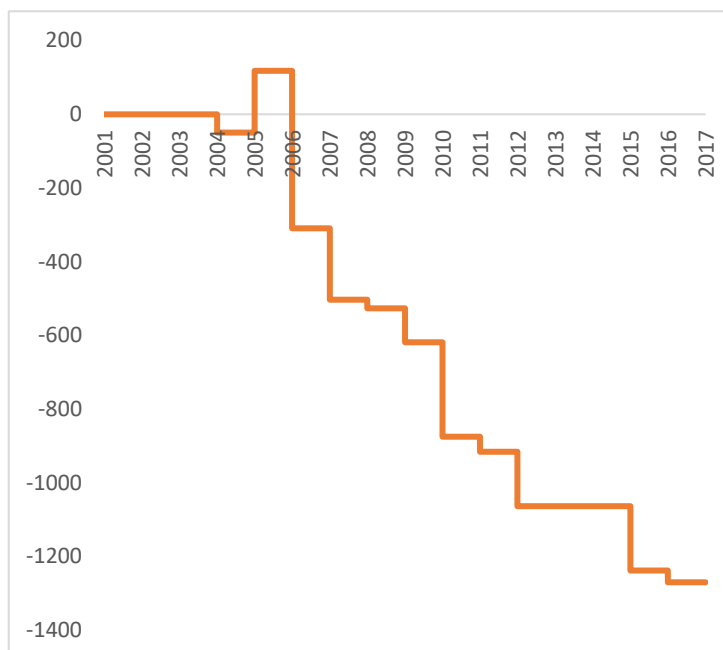
As a place we are always looking to improve and make necessary changes to thrive. Most recently, for example, the relocation of the bus station has brought new life to the centre of town and creates the opportunity to do even more with the square, the area in which it was previously located.

We also benefit from our proximity to Peterborough. As reflected in the CPIER, Whittlesey is considered much more a part of the Greater Peterborough economic geography, compared to the rest of Fenland. This creates opportunities for residents to work, study, and shop, while we still maintain a proudly independent identity and distinct local culture.

We can offer the ‘best of both worlds’ to current and future residents: the sense of community, the calm and closely to the countryside offered by a market town, alongside the benefits of proximity to a city, with everything that it has to offer.

## A High Street in need of regeneration

We have some high-quality shops in Whittlesey which are popular with locals and visitors alike. However, as shown in the graph to the left, the amount of retail floorspace in the town has declined.



*Fig. 1: A1 space (shops) in Whittlesey (m2) – change since 2001*

*Source: Analysis of Cambridgeshire County Council data*

**There are not enough shops in and around the town centre**, and the overall retail offer is not diverse or distinctive enough to compete with the wider range of shops available elsewhere, particularly in Peterborough.

The decline of the traditional high street is very much a national trend. However, as a historic market town, such changes force us to think radically about what our high street and town centre is for. As a priority we want to encourage more specialist markets, such as antique fairs and famers’ markets, that will attract more people to the town.

We also need to think about how we move with the wider shift from buying things to having experiences

on the high street.

## Rich heritage and culture

**An aspect of the town which is attracting more and more people is our rich heritage and culture.** Whittlesey is mentioned in Anglo-Saxon documents that precede the Domesday Book. At the centre of town is the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Buttercross. Must Farm, an excavation site describe by the BBC as “Britain’s Pompei” containing the “best-preserved Bronze Age dwellings ever found”, is a precious town asset.<sup>1</sup> Flag Fen Archaeology Park houses a perfectly preserved wooden causeway that is over 3,000 years old The Mud Walls, dotted across town, date back 200 years and were an innovative local way to avoid the unpopular Brick Tax.<sup>2</sup>

That rich history inspires a vibrant local culture, as reflected in a full calendar of events and celebrations. These include music and dance festivals including the famous Straw Bear, the annual Whittlesey festival, ‘BusFest’ vintage vehicle gathering, and our Christmas Extravaganza.

We want to share these assets with the world. We therefore make recommendations in this report for improvements to the market square and town centre that will set the stage for us to do that.

## A well-educated population – but not enough jobs in the town

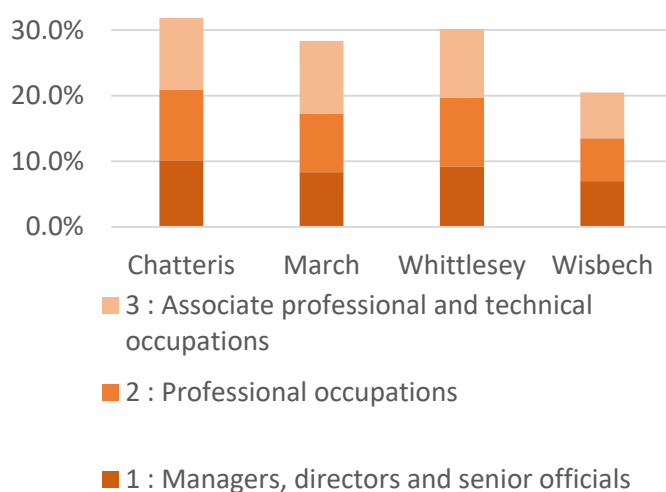
**Our schools perform well.** At primary level, each school has improved further in recent years, while pupils at Sir Harry Smith perform above the national average in terms of GCSE results, the Ebacc average points score and A Level completion.

**“Schools in Whittlesey are regarded as among the best locally.”**

**Our schools’ performances have helped develop a population that is better educated than other parts of Fenland.** As show in Fig. 2 below, just under one in three people in Whittlesey is in a professional, managerial or director-level job. This is a major

*Fig 2: Managerial, professional and technical occupations in the Fenland towns*

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey (APS)



asset for our ambition to lead the way as the market town of the future.

It is true that many of our residents live here and work in Peterborough (45.3% of workers, at the time of the last census). And, according to a 2017 survey, conducted in support of the Neighbourhood Plan, 78% of Whittlesey residents acknowledged that younger people tend to leave the town to find work.

Nonetheless, we have several important local employers such as Forterra and McCain Food.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-36778820>

<sup>2</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/in-your-area/east-of-england/mud-walls/>



Furthermore, recent data also reveals a large increase in the number of professional, scientific and technical jobs in recent years<sup>3</sup>.

In future, we want even more of our young people to live and work in Whittlesey. We will do this by exploring with local partners, including new businesses, what specific, targeted measures might further spur the growth of local enterprises.

## Good quality homes – a mixed picture of connectivity

As well as good schools, another reason that people move to Whittlesey is that we build a range of good quality homes. This includes family homes and affordable homes for teachers and other young professionals. The past five years have seen a strong increase in both house prices and completions; and in the past two years alone we built more homes than any other part of Fenland.

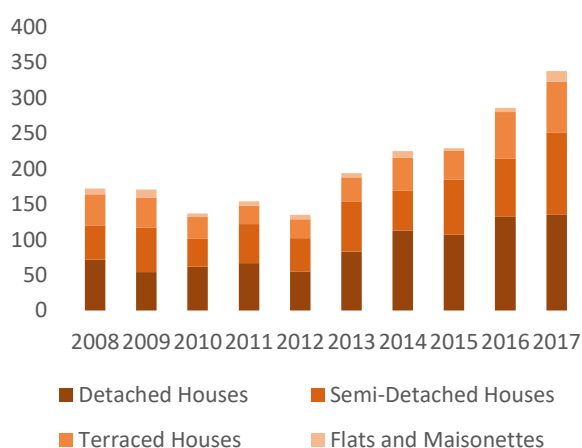
*“Whittlesey is a boom town in building terms.”*

People living in these homes also have access to ultra-fast broadband, as reflected in the map to the right. In a world of digital by default, households need broadband to access services and companies need it to research, trade and promote themselves. The blanket access to high speed broadband is a powerful competitive advantage.

In contrast to our online connectivity, we face some transport challenges. While this is true of many parts of Fenland, three quarters of people here rely on the car to get to work; this is higher than the Cambridgeshire and England averages.

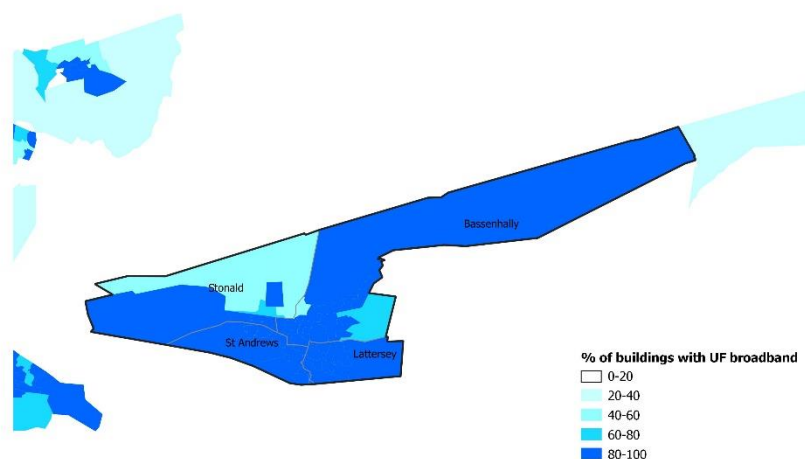
There is a train station at Whittlesey, but it is on the far edge of the town and is felt by some residents to be poorly lit and potentially unsafe at night. In the past, people using the trains have

Fig 3: Whittlesey housing sales since 2008



Source: ONS House Price Statistics for Small Areas (HPSSA)

Fig. 4: Access to Ultra-Fast Broadband



Source: Analysis of Ofcom Connected Nations Data

<sup>3</sup> Analysis of the ONS Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES)

complained that services did not stop at Whittlesey and the overall services was unreliable. Improvements to the station are currently being implemented, but to not to the agreed timetable.

As with the other market towns in Fenland, public transport services in Whittlesey do not run frequently enough at all times, finish too early in the evening, and offer an insufficient range of travel options in and out of town. Overall, most people in Whittlesey still opt to drive above all other options.

**People in Whittlesey experience somewhat worse health outcomes than the rest of the country.**

Incidences of cancer, emergency hospital admissions and rates of self-harm are all above the national and Cambridgeshire averages. Healthy eating amongst adults is below national levels, while deliveries to teenage mothers are above the national averages.

It also important to note that **we have a close relationship with Peterborough**, in terms of connectivity, commuting patterns, the housing and job markets, retail options etc. This is unlikely to change, and in fact brings us many benefits; having a city so close by creates opportunities for our residents. The question is how we can further benefit from that connection while also offering something distinct as a place to visit and spend time.

***83% of respondents say they would make journeys by public transport, walking and cycling if services are improved.  
(Neighbourhood Plan Scoping Report)***

## Whittlesey – what residents are telling us

Our work consulting the community brought out the following key themes.

### Likes

The sense of community linked to the “genuine friendliness” of local people was cited as the best things about life in Whittlesey. Respondents linked the sense of community to activities and events, especially the Straw Bear festival. Also linked to this sense of having a good community spirit, people described the place as quiet, safe and a good place to raise a family. Good quality local schools were also identified, which would fit with the feeling of Whittlesey as a good place for families. While people were positive about the small town feel of the place, they were also positive about the easy access to Peterborough.

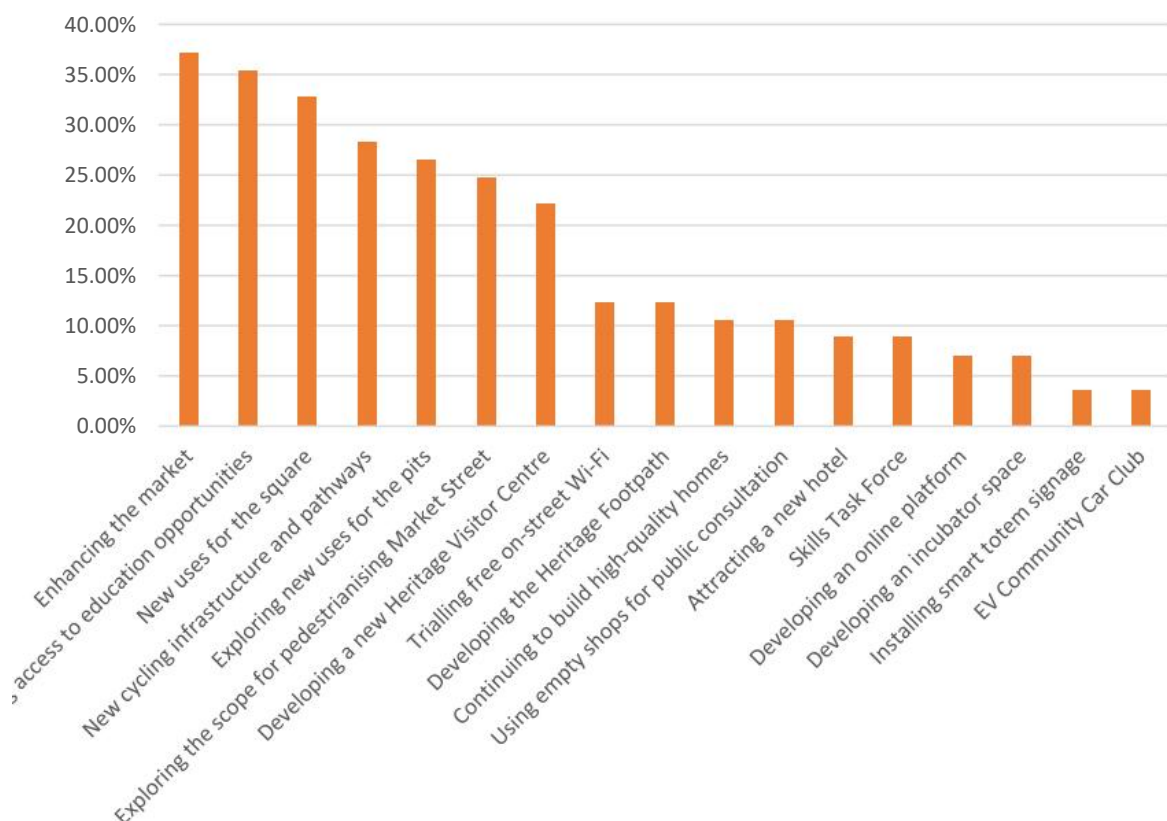
### Dislikes

Residents didn’t identify many things they disliked about Whittlesey. The main issues that people referenced negatively were general transport and accessibility issues, with calls for more public transport in and out town. High school students identified a lack of things to do for their age group.

### Improvements

The main aspects for improvement to emerge from resident feedback were the range of local shops, with calls for more specialised shops and large supermarket. Some residents also identified a need for additional amenities such as GP surgeries and a re-opened police station.

### Favourite ideas from the interim report



*Source: Analysis of Fenland District Council data. Height of bars shows the proportion of residents who chose an idea in their top three.*

When asked to identify their favourite ideas, respondents opted for a fairly wide spread of preferences, with no one option emerging as the clear favourite. The three options with most preferences were: enhancing the market (37%); improving access to education opportunities (35%); and new uses for the square (33%).

The second grouping of expressed preferences, garnering around a quarter of responses were: new cycling infrastructure and pathways (28%); exploring new uses for the pits (27%); exploring the scope for pedestrianising Market Street (25%); and developing a new Heritage Visitor Centre (22%).

## Whittlesey – a market town fit for the future

Whittlesey has so many assets that inspire local pride. We want to build on these and draw on our rich heritage to make Whittlesey **a market town fit for the future**.

We will do this by improving the heart of our town by bringing new life to its centre. We will do this through a programme of enhancements to the market so it becomes an even more important part of life in the town and an extra reason to come and visit. In parallel, we will work with local traders to encourage more activities and events in the square.

Future-facing market towns have a unique and distinctive reputation and 'offer' to the rest of the world. That might be connected to food, music or a famous son or daughter of the town. Whittlesey's offer is our heritage. Whittlesey is mentioned in the *Cartularium Saxonicum* of 973 A.D. and the Domesday Book. Must Farm, "Britain's Pompeii", magnificent bronze age settlement has been discovered, is precious asset of the town.

We will promote our heritage offer and the other things we have to offer through a new website for the town.

The third way we will ensure we are fit for the future is through increasing skills. We will work with partners to improve transport access to educational opportunities and develop a local skills partnership that will bring together partners to ensure local people can access the skills they need.

## **Eight proposals for Whittlesey**

We have identified a package of eight connected interventions that will make a lasting difference Whittlesey:

### **1. Enhancing the market**

We will explore an alternative location to the market, provide additional support to traders, and better promote the market to residents and visitors.

### **2. New uses for the square**

We will encourage more events and activities on the square, especially in spring and summer, to create a more vibrant 'piazza' feel.

### **3. Heritage Visitor Centre**

We will start to develop a new visitor centre that showcases local artefacts and tells the story of Whittlesey, and Fenland more generally, from the Bronze Age to the modern day.

### **4. Developing the Heritage Walk**

Alongside the visitor centre, the Walk will provide residents with a fascinating guided tour through key landmarks in the town and beyond.

### **5. New town website**

We will promote these new activities and assets, plus existing events like the Straw Bear festival, through a new website.

### **6. Access to educational opportunities**

We will explore with partners short- and long-term opportunities to make it easier for people to access educational institutions in Peterborough and Alconbury Weald.

### **7. Local skills partnership**

We will create a new forum for all those with an interest in skills in the town, including businesses, to ensure that provision matches future skills demands.

### **8. Transport improvement package**

A coordinated set of improvements in and around the town that will facilitate greater mobility and connectivity.

We unpack each of these in detail below.

Some interventions are short term, some medium term, and some longer-term. For each intervention, we set out outline version of the strategic case, the financial case, and the management case.

In most instances, the financial case includes an estimate of costs. We see the CPCA as the primary source of funding, to provide full funding or to provide sufficient funding to enable us to make a strong case to unlock other sources of support. In the latter case, we will also be looking to national government, and its various town support funds.

While we may not attain funding for every intervention immediately, the proposals we set out are 'shovel ready' and could be used as and when further funding from different sources becomes available in future.

# 1. Enhancing the market

## Strategic case

The market is, of course, an important part of Whittlesey's history and identity. Compared to other towns, the market does well. However, as set out in this masterplan, we are ambitious about the future and want to build on that success by further improving the market offer.

While retail patterns are changing, markets still have an important part to play in the future of small towns. They "contribute to the economic, social and political health of towns and cities" and shape the identity of a place by offering something "unique, quirky, unusual and always a bargain".<sup>4</sup> The weekly market is a fixture of life in Whittlesey. It is popular with residents and brings activity and buzz to the Market Place on a Friday.

As we develop the heritage offer of Whittlesey as a whole, we want the market to be a central feature of that offer to visitors. We want to explore with the market traders and others who may be affected, ways to enhance the market. These are:

- The potential for moving the location of the market to the High Causeway. A pedestrianised high street containing shops, this could mean increased footfall as more shoppers could combine visiting the market with using other shops and facilities. A move would also facilitate our proposal to create a 'piazza' feel on the Market Place by working with local bars and cafés to put tables outside.
- Stall appearance. Successful market stalls attract people's attention with striking, appealing branding. We could work with a specialist agency in high street and market brand to develop high-quality signs and an improved visual presence for each stall.
- Attracting more specialist markets, such as antiques fairs, farmers' markets, and fine food markets. This could be done through outreach to potential traders, including local entrepreneurs, and identification of what changes to facilities (see below) might enable a wider range of uses.
- Wider marketing and online presence. As well as supporting the traders to develop better marketing for their stalls, the market as a whole needs to be branded and promoted. Currently, the market does not have its own website. As part of the development of the digital platform for the town as a whole, we could develop a stand-alone page that promoted what was on offer on the market. We would also invest in bold, high-quality signage to be used on market days.
- Customer retention schemes. One way to keep customers returning is to offer them rewards for doing so; such as buy five coffees and get the sixth for free. We would identify ways in which the traders could introduce similar incentives and provide practical assistance for doing so e.g. help with printing high-quality loyalty cards.
- Improving market infrastructure. We would review the scope for improving the practical facilities available on market days and whether they could be improved e.g. the need for more or better refrigeration if that would help stall-holders to offer a wider range of produce.
- A local 'First Pitch' scheme. As well as working with existing stallholders, we would reach out to local entrepreneurs and invite them to take an empty pitch on the market and sell what

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.placemanagement.org/media/19883/markets-matter-final.pdf>



they have to offer. The National Market Traders Federation ran a national 'First Pitch' scheme between 2013 and 2014. This gave opportunities to people who, for examples, were baking cakes or making jewellery at home to get out and sell directly to the public. As well as giving local entrepreneurs a boost, a similar scheme will bring new offers to the market.

A proposal to come through the public consultation was moving market day to Saturday, on the basis that more people are free on the weekends. The potential downside of this proposal is that we may end up attracting fewer people by competing with other Saturday markets. It may be possible to attract specialist, niche market activity on a Saturday to avoid this risk.

## **Financial case**

Based on advice from support providers, a package of support could cost between £30k - £50k including a pot of funding for things like printing business cards, improved refrigeration etc.

## **Management case**

The most effective sequence for this proposal would be:

- Initial consultation with traders on the scope of the enhancement programme.
- Commissioning a specialist package of support from an experienced supplier.
- Delivery of the package of support over 3 – 4 months.
- Launch of new branding and marketing as part of the launch of the online platform for the town.

The market traders are the essential partner in this. Experience shows that enhancing local markets works best when traders feel they are central to the process instead of being 'done to'.

If the relocation were to go ahead, it would also be important to work with current businesses on the High Causeway including communication of how the move can increase footfall for everyone.

## 2. New uses for the square

### Strategic case

We will make it easier for local bars and restaurants to serve food and drink outside, and work with those businesses to develop a programme of annual events. The overall purpose is to create a 'piazza' feel in the square, attracting locals and visitors alike, to eat, drink, mingle and relax, especially in the spring and summer months.

The Market Square is in many ways at the heart of life in Whittlesey. Moving the bus stop from the square has already given it a new lease of life; improving the air quality and making it more pedestrian friendly.

To the sides of the square can be found well-regarded and in some cases award winning restaurants, pubs and hotel including the Grade II listed George Hotel pub, which is part of the Wetherspoons chain. The latter does have a licensed outside drinking area.

Beyond the George's small outside licensed drinking area, the venues on and near the square do not use the whole space. This means we have created the capacity for more activity in the square, by moving the bus stop, but have yet to fully take advantage of that.

As a result, the square is an under-used asset with the exceptions of the weekly market, some monthly events, and of course the annual Straw Bear.

To make even greater use of the square, we will develop an annual programme of locally sourced events, including themed evenings and weekends, that will catalyse the kind of vibrancy described above. We would not prescribe the programme in advance. Instead, as described below, we would work with existing venues and, in parallel, source ideas for new square uses from local organisations, artists and others.

### Financial case

We would look for funding of between £150k and £200k to bring in the specialist agency, deliver an extensive programme of promotion, and purchase additional equipment. This would be relatively modest amount of money for a programme that could generate significantly increased visitor numbers and footfall through the year.

### Making it happen / Delivery

The sequence for making this happen would be to:

- Undertake initial consultation with local businesses
- Deliver a programme of identified improvements to enhance the square amenity, including making the surface more level and user friendly
- Commissioning an event management agency to coordinate and oversee an annual programme of events
- Through the agency, engage local organisations, artists, musicians and others on potential uses the for square
- Work with the existing businesses to ensure that they understand what they can do on the square and address any barriers they identify and to source ideas for what additional events / evenings they would like to run

- Deliver an extensive campaign of promotion locally and more widely in conjunction with local businesses
- Purchase any equipment needed to support the events programme e.g. canvassing and tents.

Throughout, we would work closely with existing square users.

The key partners will be the existing square businesses, and local organisations and individuals who could use the square.

### 3. Heritage visitor centre

#### Strategic case

Market towns in the modern day need a distinctive 'offer' to the outside world. A unique appeal that is rooted in the character and identity of the town. Our offer is our heritage. Whittlesey is mentioned in the *Cartularium Saxonicum* of 973 A.D. and the Domesday Book. On our doorstep is Must Farm, "Britain's Pompeii", where six bronze age boats have been discovered. The vessels are currently being restored and conserved outside of the town.

There is scope for doing more with our heritage. According to the 2017 Neighbourhood Plan scoping report, a majority of people felt that Bronze Age heritage should be promoted as a tourist attraction. Fenland District Council is also currently working with Arts Council England to develop a culture strategy that will have a strong heritage element.

A new Heritage Centre would be built essentially to tell the Story of Whittlesey from Bronze Age to present day. This would have the added advantage of introducing more visitors to the Kings Dyke Nature Reserve. A network of local organisations such as museums, societies and community groups would be invited to use the facilities for exhibition purposes.

The location has been identified and links with Must Farm. The site utilises land given free of charge by Forterra (formerly Hanson Brick) close to the original Must Farm location and directly adjacent to the Kings Dyke Nature Reserve on the A605 with adequate parking facilities. This project was considered in detail by Fourth Street undertaking feasibility. It is acknowledged that exhibiting Must Farm artefacts alone is not sustainable in the long term.

#### Financial case

A new heritage centre should bring additional income to the town. According a recent report commissioned by Historic England, England's heritage sector generated GDP of £13.1 billion in 2016, equivalent to 0.75 per cent of UK's total GVA. The sector also accounted for 196,000 jobs. Our initial assumption is a comprehensive activity plan of around 50 events per year split over small (30 - 50 attendees), medium (100 -150 attendees) or large (300 – 500 attendees) events. The plan would be coordinated by a Community Engagement Officer, supported by a part time assistant and volunteer input.

The anticipated initial expenditure costs are modest at £61,000 with a projected income of £32,000, leaving a deficit of £29,000 in the first year. As interest grows in the Heritage Centre from both a visitor and educational view through schools and colleges the project is anticipated to be financially viable and self-supporting, drawing increased visitors into both Whittlesey and Fenland beyond.

However, up-front funding of around £50k is needed for a further feasibility and options study, including outline business planning.

#### Management case

As above, the next step is to commission a further feasibility and option study that will:

- Articulate the amount and type of artefacts these sites could hold, including preservation requirements.

- Identify potential visitor numbers and segment the potential audience (Whittlesey resident, Fenland resident etc).
- Develop outline budgets, drawing on those visitor projections.
- Identify benchmark examples and identify ways in which the centre can complement existing Fenland museums.

We would then develop a detailed business plan, subject to the findings of this work.

We would engage national partners at an early stage in this work, including Historic England and Arts Council England to ensure our thinking fits with the emerging culture strategy.

At the local level, as already emphasised, we would work closely with local stakeholders.

## 4. Heritage Walk

### Strategic case

As set out in the summary business case for the visitor centre, there are powerful reasons for us to expand our heritage offer:

- Market towns in the modern day need a distinctive 'offer' to the outside world.
- The economic rationale is strong, with heritage growing as a sector and more and more people visiting parts of the UK
- Fenland District Council is investing in a culture strategy which will have a strong heritage aspect.

In this context, there are several reasons why a Walk would be an effective investment:

- It would complement very well the proposed new visitor centre, offering an opportunity for visitors to see for themselves the elements of the story described in the centre.
- It will encourage healthier living amongst residents by giving them a safe and interesting route to explore.
- It will help address the issue of poor-quality pathways in parts of the town and, for routes out of town, accommodate a cycle lane.

At the moment, existing signage and general wayfinding is generic and does not direct local people or visitors to our assets.

We therefore propose to create a new Walk that would include historic landmarks in the town such as St Andrew's and St Mary's churches, the Buttercross, Portland House and the Mud Walls.

The Walk would be designed around the highest quality wayfinding standards. The route would be consistently and strikingly branded, with markings on the pavement and signage along the way. Each landmark on the way would include equally consistently branded information points.

As well as introducing new signage, the installation of the route is an opportunity to improve pavements, footpaths, railings and street furniture on the way.

We would speak to local business about ways they can benefit from the pathways e.g. placing adverts on route maps.

### Funding

We are looking for £150k for the combined package of work described above.

### Management case

The sequence for delivering this proposition is:

- Agreement of a final route and key landmarks, developed in consultation with local organisation and the landmarks, along with the centre to be accommodated at a later stage.
- Commissioning a wayfinding strategy.
- Delivering a combined package of wayfinding installation and improvements to pavements and street equipment.

- Promotion of the Walk, including a dedicated section on the new town website which is also recommended in this report.

The partners for this proposal are very similar to those who would be engaged in the centre. There should be an opportunity to engage partners on both proposals at the same time to avoid replication.

## 5. New town website and social marking strategy

### Strategic case

Successful market towns have a positive, friendly 'brand' that they communicate to world. Towns such as Skipton and Ludlow have used this approach to great effect.

The new town website will:

- Promote the brand of Whittlesey as a destination, especially to outsiders, and in relation to our heritage offer in particular.
- Provide a central repository for local information, such as forthcoming events, business opening hours, and local discounts. While this information is available, it is usually spread across different sources, such as local magazines and Facebook groups, which local residents may not be aware of or subscribe to and outside visitors are very unlikely to know about.
- Link to local organisations to raise their profile and connect them to new members, customers, users.
- Provide information to residents about how to access services online.

We therefore propose to create a new website, clearly branded in line with the vision set out in this master plan, which will provide the information described above. This could be done with a local professional web designer.

While setting up a website is technologically straightforward, with the tools to do so widely available, several factors need to be high quality:

- High quality design, including appropriate and high-quality images, well-written and accurate copy, and ease of navigation – it is vital that the site looks professional and reflects well on the town.
- Just as importantly, the site needs to be kept up to date to be of value and to avoid disappointing visitors with inaccurate information. This information would need sourcing from liaison with local group and businesses.
- Active management of any discussion boards or discussions forums, including developing a set of rules, and responding to any queries directed to the site.
- Search engine optimisation (known as SEO) so that site appears prominently in response to search terms.

As above, while it easy to set up a website, setting up and maintaining a good quality site of which the town can be proud requires effort and commitment.

We would develop a proactive social media strategy to promote the town via the website. This would involve coordinated messaging across different social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and new platforms), and the smart use of analytics to target tailored content at different audiences (such as shoppers, tourists and young people).

### Financial case

A small amount of funding would be needed at the beginning to design, test and launch each site. This can be between £5k and 10k depending on functionality and whether the contractor would be required to provide the copy or if this would be provided.



Ongoing resources would be needed to maintain the site. This could be a modest cost if the site were updated on a voluntary basis, or through an existing resource, meaning the only cost would be the required licensees for the software including the Content Management System (CMS) and services such as back-up and security. This could be £500 per year.

## Management case

While each site would be different and distinct, tailored to the branding and messaging of each town, Fenland District Council should play a role in ensuring there is consistency of tone and voice in relation to the Growing Fenland brand.

Each town team could then work with a local website designer(s) to develop, test and launch the site. Different skills are required at different points in this process e.g. designing the look and navigation of the site is different from ongoing management. It may be possible to find an organisation with all these skills that can enter into a single contract. Alternatively, different arrangements could be made e.g. one contract to design, test and build up to the point of launch, and another to maintain and promote on an ongoing basis.

There would also be value in engaging a small group of local stakeholders in the development and testing process. This is useful to the technical process of designing and generate buy-in to idea of the site and generate some momentum behind local organisations putting their information on the platform.

As above, there would need to clear and agreed arrangements for keeping the site regularly up to date. This could be done through as part of a contract or through a local volunteer.

The first result when searching for “Ludlow” on Google is the town’s website <https://www.ludlow.org.uk/> This presents high quality and attractive images from the town, has a single strapline – “A bustling market town”, lists for forthcoming events, and provides two short paragraphs summarising the town’s assets and appealing features. It then then provides more detail on each of these aspects – where to stay, things to do, food and drink etc.

## 6. Improving access to education

### Strategic case

Our local schools provide a good quality education at all ages. However, some pupils at age 16 and 18 will be looking for other opportunities to further develop their education outside the town. Adults already in work may want to develop their skills and gain new qualification in order to progress in their careers.

For too many people, these opportunities are out of bounds. Whittlesea train station is on the very edge of the town, the service has a poor reputation for reliability, and the station, until recently, was felt by some to be dark and unsafe.

Residents' dissatisfaction with local bus services emerged clearly from the responses to the online consultation on the interim version of this document. There are insufficient buses out of the town in the morning and in or out of town in the evening (services out might be used for people accessing evening classes). As a result of these restrictions, we have people of all ages being frustrated from developing their full potential.

As part of the Fenland-wide strategy document, which makes recommendations across the four market towns, there is consideration of the scope for franchising bus services. This is made in reference to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Strategic Bus Review, which noted that franchising "may be most easily applied to rural initiatives, and would probably be critical to the holistic approach identified as it gives greater control to the CPCA to integrate bus services with wider rural transport initiatives in areas where there are few (if any) commercial bus operators to partner with."<sup>5</sup>

As part of that discussion, we will make the case for increased bus capacity, through more regular and reliable routes, to be built in to a new and improved timetable.

While discussions are ongoing, there is scope to develop a dedicated shuttle bus service, running in the mornings and late afternoon / early evening, west to Peterborough and south to Alconbury Weald.

Given the time it takes to get to Peterborough during morning or afternoon rush hour, it makes sense to run a single service with sufficient capacity e.g. single decker bus to the city. Given the further distance, it also makes sense to run a single service to Alconbury Weald, although demand will be lower and could be accommodated through a mini-bus.

This service could be developed to demonstrate and define more precisely the level of demand and later be integrated into a new timetable.

### Financial case

Funding a new service would need to be negotiated as part of any wider re-organisation of bus services, including the scope for franchising.

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<sup>5</sup> Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Strategic Bus Review, p65

## Management case

The case for changing the current timetable will need to be made with and through the CA, which commissions local bus services. We will continue these discussions over the next few months in line with the strategic recommendations being developed through the Growing Fenland process.

Creating a new service would require the CA to procure an additional service from a registered transport supplier through a separate contract.

As above, the key partner in relation to this proposition is the CA and, through them, Stagecoach, which is the dominant supplier of bus services in Fenland.

Discussions would be held with relevant educational institutions, to ensure they supported the service and to address practical matters like appropriate drop-off and collection points. There may also be scope to explore whether the institutions had uses for the coaches in between the morning and afternoon service.

## 7. Skills Task Force

### Strategic case

As explored in the portrait of Whittlesey above, our town generally performs well in relation to education and skills. Our schools perform well and our population is more highly skilled than some other parts of Fenland. There has also been an increase in recent years in the number of people in highly skilled professional and technical professions.

We want to build on these strengths and ensure that more residents have access to skills and development opportunities. In turn, this should ensure that businesses will have greater access to highly qualified apprentices, trainees and employees. This is vital to pursuing our ambition of making Whittlesey a hub for highly skilled companies and enterprises.

A specific issue we face is that there is currently no mechanism or structure through which partners in the area of skills development can come together. This means we have no way of ensuring, for example, that the courses on offer locally actually met employers' needs, either now or in future.

We therefore propose the formation of a voluntary grouping to provide that liaison between different stakeholders. Its purpose would be to share information and stimulate action on:

- Horizon-scanning future skills demand. This could be done through light-touch engagement, such as short surveys with local employers on their current and future skills needs.
- Facilitating conversations with providers about the suitability of current provision in light of future demand.
- Identifying work experience / placement / apprenticeship opportunities at local businesses – this element of the work would be coordinated with the Combined Authority's apprenticeship brokerage programme.
- Identifying opportunities to re-train and up-skill adult workers. This could include using local institutions to provide courses to adults and finding findings practical ways to open up existing provision to a wider range of people. This will help individuals progress and contribute to the development of a more highly-skilled and flexible workforce.

The group would not have formal power to effect change. Its role would be to convene partners to take mutually beneficial actions. For example, it is the interests of providers to provide the kinds of courses that meet demand.

The group should also feed into the proposed Education Opportunity Area (please see overarching strategic document) which will look, amongst other things, at ways to improve the linkages between different providers at key points.

This idea is very much in line with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Industrial Strategy. This includes, among its strategic objectives, the goal of:

Bringing employers and skills providers together to understand the current and future skills needs, and planning provision to meet them.<sup>6</sup>

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6

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/818886/Cambridge\\_SINGLE\\_PAGE.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818886/Cambridge_SINGLE_PAGE.pdf)

It equally in line with the underlying case for CPCA's emerging Skills Strategy. The independently produced Skills Strategy Evidence Base Report asserted that the CPCA's role is to "commission, to test, and to facilitate collaboration between learners, employers, providers and organisations." We want to see this kind of collaboration developed, even pioneered, here in Whittlesey.

## Funding

As a voluntary partnership, the group would not require funding, but partners would need to commit resource i.e. time and attention to make the group work. If the town council is to provide active development of the group, this too would need to be resourced.

## Management case

As a voluntary arrangement, making it happen would be dependent on the commitment of partners to work together. To assist this, the town council could proactively engage partners to introduce the idea and the rationale for it. It would be important for those identified partners to be able to shape a simple Terms of Reference, or equivalent, so they felt some ownership over the idea.

The group could then meet on a quarterly basis, with smaller sub-groups looking at specific issues in between meetings.

There may be value in identifying and agreeing a knowledgeable and trusted Chair, to mitigate any potential concern about the group being driven by one partner / agenda.

Potential partners include:

- Combined authority
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- District council
- Town council
- Sir Harry Smith Community College
- FE and HE institutions
- Local employers that should cover different sectors
- Skills providers including voluntary as well as commercial providers

It should be clear that partners are not participating as 'delegates' or 'representatives' from their own organisation. Instead they are there to work together as described above to improve access to high-quality skills development for Whittlesey residents.

As above, the group should be plugged in to the proposed Education Opportunity Area.

## 8. Transport improvement package

### Strategic case

As set out in this paper, we want Whittlesey's economy to continue growing sustainably. We want more people to visit and enjoy our rich heritage and cultural offer. We want our residents, of all ages and at different stages in their career, to access opportunities to improve their CV and boost their career.

For these things to happen, we need a coherent package of improvements to make it easier to get in and out of Whittlesey, at all times of day, through an improved range of options.

We propose five interventions:

- **More frequent and reliable bus services.** The Growing Fenland strategy paper, which makes district-wide proposals, makes the case for rethinking the model of bus delivery in Fenland through franchising. As this approach is developed, we will work with our partners on the introduction of more, and more regular, services. This should include services in and out town, to the other market towns and beyond, and within town, including more service to and from the train station.
- **More train services throughout the day and later in the evening.** In parallel to improving bus services, we will work make a strong case for more train to stop at Whittlesey, especially in the evening. This would be obviously complementary to more bus services going to the station.
- **A new park and ride scheme from the town centre to Peterborough** would alleviate pressure on town centre parking spaces that are currently being taken by commuters. It would free those spaces during the day for residents to use local shops and amenities; boosting those businesses and generally contributing to a more vibrant and active feel to the centre of town in the middle of the day.
- **New bridge over the railway crossing.** The level crossing at King's Dyke is widely recognised to have been a cause of "significant delays to traffic travelling between Whittlesey and Peterborough for years". There remains a strong case for completion of a new bridge over the crossing. With a final design and price for the construction phase of the project already submitted by the chosen engineer, we will continue to work with partners on the completion of the project.
- **A new relief road** from Coates to the Morrisons / Cardea Roundabout so that Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) can access industrial sites from the east rather adding to the congestion of residential routes, particularly along Inhams Road and Station Road. As well as adding to the congestion, HGVs degrade the quality of the road and street surfaces and contribute to the problem of air pollution.

### Financial case

The immediate financial asks are for

- £50k for a feasibility and options study into the new relief road. This would look at options for the route and related changes e.g. the introduction of roundabout and other impacts e.g. on the national cycle way.
- £30k for a similar study into the park and ride scheme.

## Management case

We recognise that these proposals are a mixture of short and long term. We will continue to work with our partners on the successful delivery of the package as a whole over time.

## The Overall Strategy for Fenland

Because some of the challenges we face are common across all four towns, we have published alongside this a Fenland-wide strategy to set out what some of the real “game changers” will be for our district. The key ideas coming forward from this are:

1. Nene River Barrier
2. Opportunity for full bus franchising
3. A47 Dualling
4. Wisbech Garden Town
5. A New Deal for Education
6. A New Partnership for Skills
7. Early Years Support
8. A Health Action Area
9. The Manufacturing Launchpad
10. Cambridgeshire Jobs Compact
11. A Mayoral Implementation Taskforce

It is at this level that we hope to tackle challenges around health and education, where the opportunities from acting at a district level are much greater.



## Next steps

We have set out a vision for Whittlesey, showing what interventions can make a real difference to our town, in the context of the overall strategy for Fenland.

We now look forward to working constructively with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), and its Mayor, James Palmer, to implement these ideas. This will require both direct support from the Combined Authority, and the resources needed to take these ideas to key government funds such as the Stronger Towns Fund as and when they come forward.

This work will be overseen by the CPCA, FDC and other key partners working in conjunction with the Town Team which was put together for this work.





# Wisbech:

## Market Town Masterplan



Wisbech Town Council



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## Introduction

This piece of work is a response to the Combined Authority's plans for Market Town Masterplans. These are being brought forward across the district.

This report is unlike the other three market town reports (Chatteris, March, Whittlesey). This is because Wisbech has done a lot of its strategic thinking already. Throughout the Wisbech 2020 Vision work, there has been extensive consultation of residents to understand the mood of the town. The Wisbech 2020 Vision work is currently being refreshed to create an action plan for the year 2019/20. The Wisbech Garden Town proposals have also been developed, and we are securing buy-in for these.

This document, then, does not represent another strategy, or a totally new set of ideas. Nor will it constitute a new workstream on top of the significant activity already going on in Wisbech.

However, we are excited about the new opportunities that the advent of the Combined Authority brings. We invite the Combined Authority to get involved in the work we are leading on to transform the town of Wisbech: focused on improving economic, social, and environmental outcomes for the benefit of all our residents. We have worked with the Wisbech 2020 Vision team to understand which of the long list of actions are the key proposals where Combined Authority support would be most helpful.

## A strategy that works across Fenland

As well as this report, we are also bringing forward a set of strategy proposals for the whole district. These will move the dial on many of the big challenges experienced right across the district.

It is at this level that we hope to tackle challenges around health and education, where the opportunities from acting at a district level are much greater.

[Include link to strategic document]

## A mandate to be bold

We are acting with courage to transform the town of Wisbech. This reflects our history. Thomas Clarkson was a leading abolitionist, who courageously challenged the dominant views of his day to bring about the end of the slave trade. The Peckovers were philanthropists who stood for improvements in education and pacifist causes. Octavia Hill was a pioneer in creating new models of social housing and founded the National Trust. We have never been cautious of embracing change, or speaking out against the consensus.

Now, more than ever, we need to draw on this tradition of doing things differently. There are many brilliant things about our town – but we have some serious challenges we need to work on, including education and health. And we need to think creatively about how we manage factors which are not directly under our control, such as land values, flood risk, and climate change. We want Wisbech to be a **resilient town of the future**, ready to adapt to whatever challenges come our way.

This call for resilience is in particular reflected in our longer-term ambitions for future housing growth. Our plans embrace the need to be resilient to the impacts of climate change, particularly flooding. This



reflects the recommendation in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) that Wisbech becomes a “UK testbed for new flood-resistant approaches to development”<sup>1</sup>. And by being fully integrated within the Wisbech community, we can also strengthen community resilience.

Now is the time for those standing in the model of our radical past to embrace the opportunity.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cpier.org.uk/media/1672/cpier-report-151118-lowres.pdf> p92

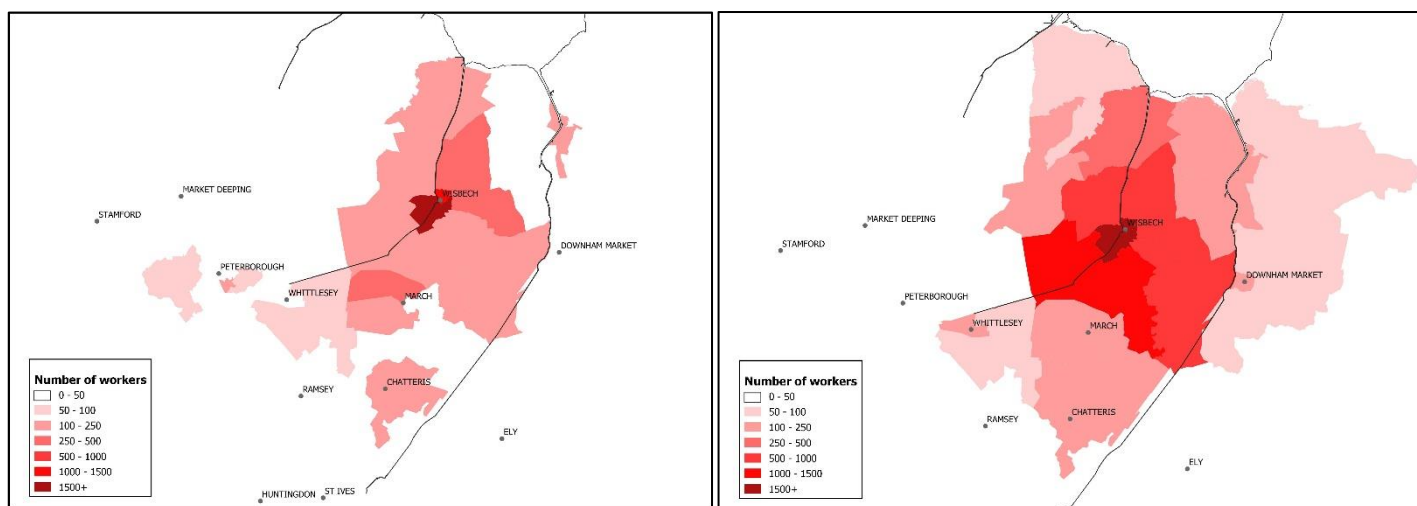
## Wisbech – what residents and the data is saying

### A strong local centre

Wisbech, unlike other towns in Fenland, acts as a magnet – it draws in more people than it sends out for work. We can see this by looking at commuting patterns for the town:

*Commuters out....*

*...and commuters in*



*Source: Analysis of Census 2011*

This is the result of a few things. Firstly, Wisbech<sup>2</sup> is by some margin the largest of the Fenland market towns. While it is still some way off city size, in the absence of another city nearby, this makes Wisbech an important local centre.

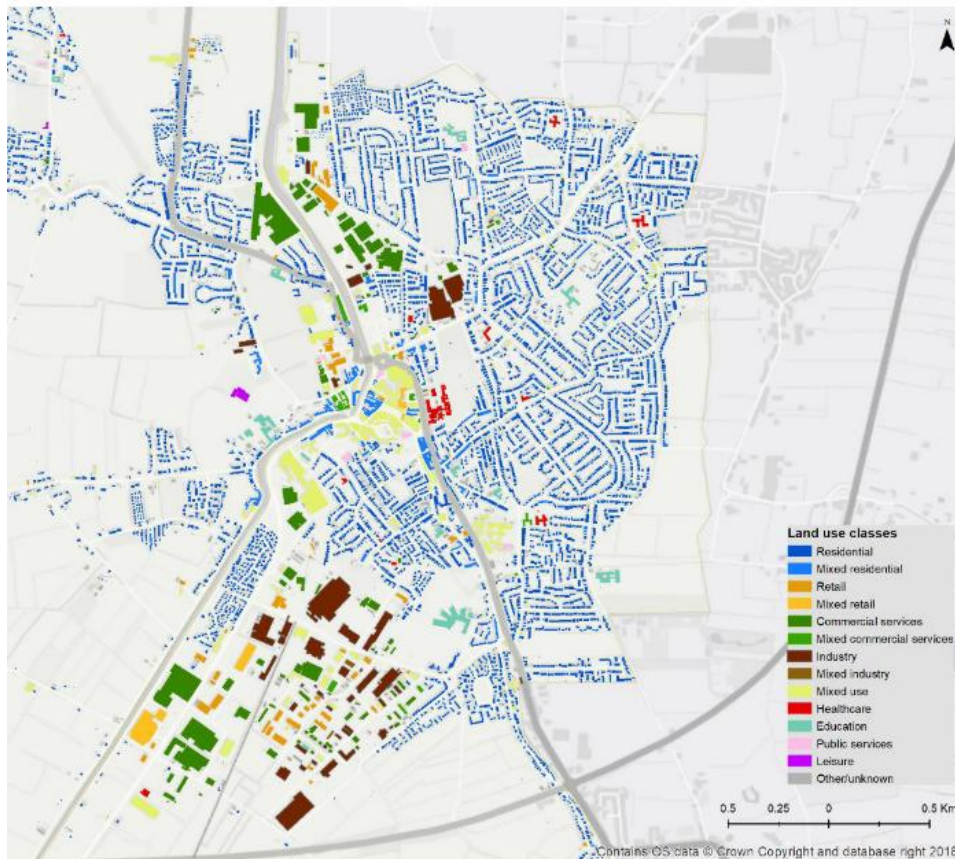
Secondly, Wisbech has high employment – with many larger firms. Total employment is 13,750 in Wisbech, and 15.2% of all business have ten or more staff – very high compared to Fenland (10.1%) and the England average (10.5%).

This can be seen in the large industrial clusters around the town. But Wisbech also offers significant retail and leisure services, as well as healthcare services at the North Cambridgeshire Hospital. The local importance of Wisbech can be seen from the variety of different land use types in the town.

***“We’re a bit in-betweeny in terms of size.” – Wisbech resident***

### *Land use in Wisbech*

<sup>2</sup> Our geographical definition is based upon ward boundaries. For more details, please see Appendix



Source: Metro Dynamics analysis of Ordnance Survey Points of Interest data

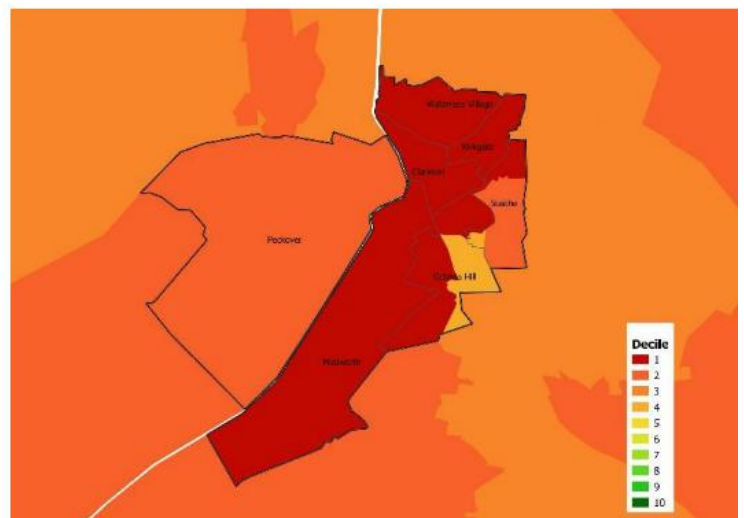
One cause for concern, though, is the lack of substantial amounts of people commuting west to Peterborough. While this may have grown since the data was recorded in 2011, Peterborough is our nearest city, which contains higher-paid employment. There is virtually no commuting south to Cambridge. Much of this comes down to issues with transport – inadequate road links which are prone to closure, and poor public transport provision.

## An educational offer that needs support

While recent improvements have been seen at several schools in Wisbech, educational deprivation remains a big challenge. There are a few elements to this. Firstly, when children arrive at primary school in Wisbech, they are generally performing less well than their peers elsewhere. Phonics skills among young children are among the worst in the country.

Secondly, rates of children staying on for sixth form have historically been low – though this has not been the case at the grammar school.

Educational Deprivation in Wisbech (2015)





Thirdly, there are many different cultures in Wisbech, which brings diversity to our town, but can also put extra pressure on resources – with the need to teach children who don’t have English as a first language, and who may come from a culture where schooling starts later.

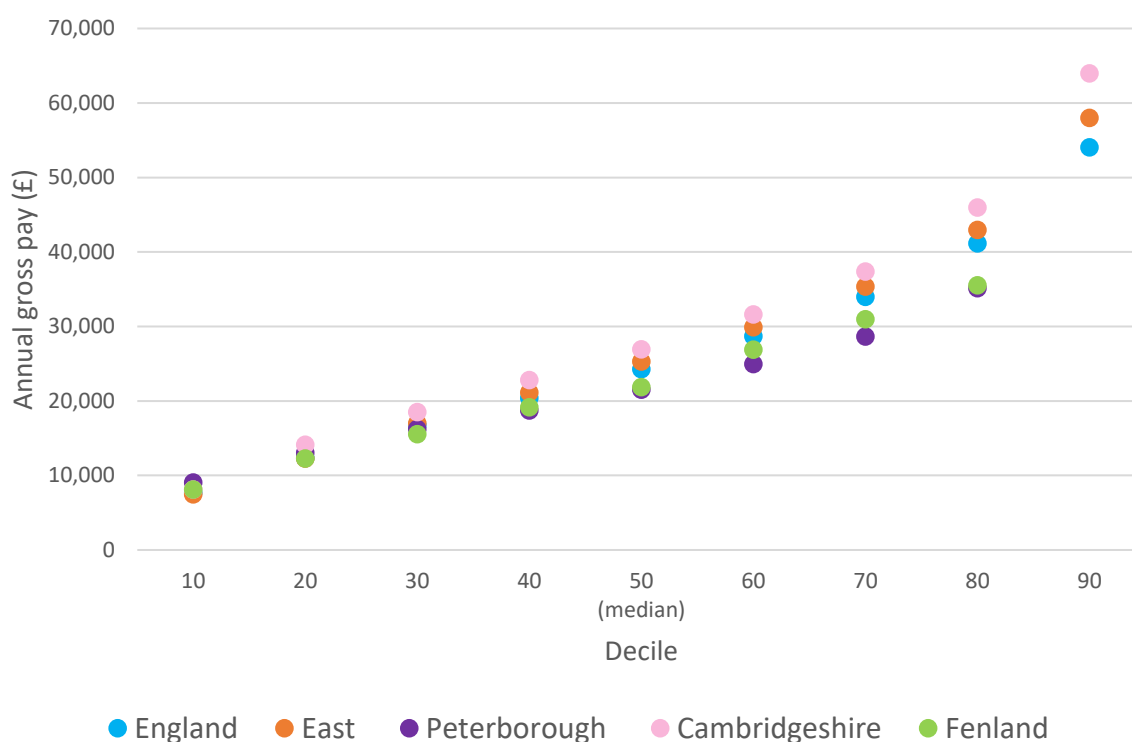
*Source: Analysis of Home Office data (2015)*

## Low unemployment – but also low wages

Unemployment is low in Wisbech – with only 2.2% of the working age population claiming Job Seekers’ Allowance (JSA). The large industrial cluster which has grown up around the town testifies to the fact that people work hard in Wisbech, and employers recognise this.

At the same time, much of this work is in lower skilled occupations. At the time of the last census (2011) **43% of Wisbech residents were in occupations that were either “Elementary Occupations” or “Process, plant, and machine operatives”**, compared to 29% in Fenland and 18% in England<sup>3</sup>. This lower skilled work is linked to generally low wages – which lag behind Cambridgeshire across Fenland as whole.

*Wages at different deciles for different areas*



*Source: ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. Data not available for Fenland and Peterborough at the 90<sup>th</sup> decile.*

<sup>3</sup> Analysis of ONS Annual Population Survey data

## A mixed picture on the high street

Wisbech High Street has seen conversions from shops to restaurants, cafés, pubs and bars over the last fifteen years – with the amount of floorspace for shops decreasing by 2,500m<sup>2</sup> between 2002 and 2017, while the amount of floorspace for eating and drinking increased by 2,350m<sup>2</sup> over the same period<sup>4</sup>.

*“There’s no real night time economy” – Wisbech business owner*

In many ways, this is in line with national trends, where retailers have struggled with the increase in online shopping. **But the increase in cafés, restaurants and pubs has not yet translated into a busy evening economy for the town, which generally feels quiet post 7pm.** This is probably in part due to the leisure and dining facilities which exist out to the west of the town (including the Light Cinema) which may draw people away from the town centre at this time. Wisbech also suffers somewhat from not having a “flagship store” to bring footfall to the town centre.

However, the town is weathering the declining retail trend well with a busy market and few vacant units. A recent report on the market commented that “the traditional market days are Thursday and Saturday which still appear to be strong trading days as does not unsurprisingly Friday”<sup>5</sup>.

At the same time, the town is blessed by a wealth of brilliant architecture and cultural attractions, including Peckover House, Wisbech Castle, and the Wisbech & Fenland Museum, meaning there is plenty for visitors and residents to see and do. There is a full calendar of events, and numerous community organisations.

## Some challenges with health

Health outcomes are generally worse in Wisbech than England averages (though not on every measure). Most notably, hospital stays for alcohol related harm are 46% above the England average, cancer incidence is 10.6% above the England average, and rates of emergency admissions for heart disease, heart attack, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) are all over 50% above England averages. As a consequence, premature mortality rates for those under 75 are 30.9% higher than in England, and for those under 65 are 43.8% higher – indicating a significant challenge here.

In terms of lifestyle factors, the available data is less detailed, but there is a notable gap with England in the rates of healthy eating adults – 22.7%, compared to 28.7% in England, and 32.4% in Cambridgeshire<sup>6</sup>.

## A town that is taking the initiative

Wisbech is very unusual for a market town in being very proactive about its future. Through the Wisbech 2020 Vision, the town has actively engaged with the Government, which has resulted in visits

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Cambridgeshire County Council. Based upon change of use applications for planning categories A1, A3 and A4. Figures rounded.

<sup>5</sup> NABMA: Market Health Check Report

<sup>6</sup> All figures taken from Public Health England data, available through the Local Health tool



from ministers and senior civil servants, signalling support. While cities tend to have more resources for this type of activity, Wisbech has used its assets to make a strong case for investment. A recent visit from Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall has raised the profile of the town still further.

The town also benefits from a strong community spirit. In recent surveys undertaken for the 'I Love Wisbech' work, the friendliness of the town was frequently referenced, as well as voluntary sector organisations such as the Ferry Project and local churches. Wisbech Town Council have also tried to be as proactive as possible in enhancing community integration through their wide range of community events.



## **Our key asks of the Combined Authority**

We invite the Combined Authority to be a part of transforming our town. The Combined Authority has recognised, through its response to the CPIER, the importance of the Fens as a separate economic area to both the Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough economies. Wisbech is the largest town in the Cambridgeshire Fens – so realising the potential of this economy has to mean a prosperous and inclusive future for Wisbech.

Our key asks are:

- 1. Provide immediate connectivity to key employment centres**
- 2. A Town Centre Improvement Initiative**
- 3. Support cohesion and community shared space**
- 4. Open up countryside access, and develop the Wisbech Country Park**
- 5. Develop a workplace health award scheme**
- 6. Focus on Tourism**
- 7. Repair Derelict Buildings**
- 8. Commercialisation of Wisbech Port**

We now unpack each of these in turn.

## 1. Provide immediate connectivity to key employment centres

Wisbech suffers from poor transport connectivity. According to Wikipedia, it is among the twenty largest towns in England not to have a train station<sup>7</sup>. The fact that the A47 is single carriageway for much of its journey east and west from Wisbech makes it unsafe and slow. Cycle infrastructure to connect the town to other places is virtually non-existent. All of the above means that it is difficult to work in any of the East of England's primary employment centres – Peterborough, Cambridge, and Norwich – while living in Wisbech.

The economic impacts of this are clear. Within Wisbech there are low levels of professional employment, meaning that many who want to move on in their career feel they need to leave the town. This takes people and resources away. It is also a missed opportunity to bring more money in to flow around the town, which would help the high street immensely.

We know what the real “game-changers” are to make changes to this in the long run, which are covered in the strategy paper. The A47 needs to be fully dualled to open up employment opportunity. In the longer term a rail link to the town will mean young professionals, who are increasingly unlikely to drive, will base themselves in the town. A 45-minute link to Cambridge would increase employment and allow for people working in Cambridge to access more affordable housing. Further ahead, Wisbech may be able to become part of the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM) network, which is initially being developed in the south of the county.

But, even if all goes as best as it possibly can on these projects, construction of heavy infrastructure inevitably takes a long time in both the planning and delivery. It is highly unlikely that either project will be complete before 2030. This is too long to wait – we need solutions now. Business cases for ambitious schemes will also stack up more readily if we can nurture patterns of commuting out of the town. Fenland Association for Community Transport (FACT) is working to help address this – but much more needs to be done, which goes beyond the limits of what a volunteer organisation can provide.

Some ideas which should be developed, tested, and if viable rolled out include:

- **A shuttle bus service to key transport hubs.** Both March and Watlington stations are within 25 minutes' drive from Wisbech. These enjoy quick connections to Cambridge (and Peterborough, in the case of March). A shuttle service which was designed to coincide with train departures would make public transport commuting a feasible option.
- **Testbed for the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM).** The technology for the Cambridge Autonomous Metro will need to be trialled. According to the Strategic Outline Business Case, the CAM will use “high-quality, zero-emission ‘trackless metro’ vehicles, powered by electric batteries recharged overnight and at route termini throughout the day, without the need for overhead wires”. This technology could be trialled to connect Wisbech on the course of one of the old railway line connections. This would help as a proof of concept both for the CAM, and also for future connectivity to Wisbech.

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<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_largest\\_towns\\_in\\_England\\_without\\_a\\_railway\\_station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_towns_in_England_without_a_railway_station)



These suggestions are fixes for the short term – but impetus must be kept up for Wisbech Rail and the dualling of the A47.

## 2. A Town Centre Improvement Initiative

Throughout the Growing Fenland project, among the normal rivalries between towns, one refrain has been clear from other towns that they believe Wisbech has been the focus an undue amount of resource and attention. That there has been real focus on Wisbech is clearly true. This is to a degree justified by the socio-economic and demographic statistics in the town which are particularly challenging.

In our view, a focus on Wisbech is justified over and above the proposals suggested by the town team, but the focus should be on giving the town the support it needs to capitalise on its assets and deal with its issues so that it has a momentum of its own going forward. We think it is possible and necessary to get Wisbech even more firmly on the right path. This is because the context has changed or is set to do so.

The strategy paper includes a range of transport proposals. Alongside the revenue proposals also considered for improvements to education and health, these capital proposals, if implemented, would change the potential of Wisbech Town Centre, making it both possible and necessary to improve the town's offer.

This is a project that other key stakeholders have a concern with. NPP, owners of the Horsefair Shopping Centre, have reported a marked decline in footfall and wish to work with the Town and District Council and others to develop proposals to improve footfall in the town centre. At the moment, footfall is not tracked in the Town Centre – but as this initiative is taken forward it will be important to do so.

Based on all of these factors, we propose a Wisbech Town Centre initiative.

Its aim should be to make Wisbech a venue of choice for retail, leisure and culture for the widest possible cross-section of local people as well as to a growing number and range of visitors.

The way this will be achieved is through a combination of measures designed to:

- increase footfall in the town centre, thereby embedding and sustaining the existing retail offer as well as creating new opportunities. Footfall counters to be introduced to monitor changes in footfall i.e. when events are held or if a new store is opened. It will be important to do so as anecdotal evidence suggests the market place and surrounding streets are doing better than the Horsefair shopping centre – the only place footfall is currently counted.
- improve the attractiveness of key gateways to the town centre including by potentially remodelling the Horsefair carpark
- improve the range of hotel accommodation on offer
- investigate the possibility of covering the market, or other creative approaches to maximising its potential, while exploring whether there is a case for more retail space in the town centre (or whether existing large retail space in the centre can be made more attractive for large retailers).
- develop a distinctive food and beverage offer which reflects the rich agricultural offer of the Fenland area

- develop the area around the Wisbech Castle and Museum as a cultural quarter, with space for artists to display and sell their products.
- create community owned and managed space as a home for community groups
- Fund and work with Wisbech Town Council to introduce their plans for Wisbech Market Place which includes pedestrianisation as well as visual features
- Introduce policies to encourage nightlife such as restaurants into the Town Centre

We believe that there is a valuable opportunity to take forward these proposals in a joint partnership between the Town and District Councils the owner of the Horsefair shopping centre, NPP, and potentially others including Elgood & Sons Brewery.

This approach would need to be accompanied by other policy changes, including a commitment to more effective policing of the Town Centre and a commitment on the part of the District Council to focus development on the Town Centre, curtailing further developments on the outskirts of town for activity that could reasonably find a location in the town centre.

King's Lynn was improved by a focus on a large retail offer, whilst this is difficult to do in the existing High Street, sites very close to the existing centre should be identified as possibilities to improve the shopping precinct.

As well as improving the digital offering for the town, there is an important role for doing things around the town which will help to generally improve the “feel” of Wisbech.

But there are some smaller things we can do as well.

## Attractive Totem Signage to improve legibility

Wayfinding totems are smartly presented, with well-designed maps, clean text, and attractive colour palette. These will help to improve the town centre aesthetic. They also send a clear message that the town expects visitors to come and look around – which grows a sense that the town is “on the map” and reminds locals about reasons to take pride in their town. Including historical sections on the signs about key features of the town can also help connect people to the town’s heritage.

The importance of navigability, or “legibility” of places is becoming increasingly appreciated. People will spend longer, discover more, and have a more positive experience if a place has an effective wayfinding strategy.





## Support a “digitally-enabled” town centre which can thrive in the era of online shopping

Online sales as a percentage of total retail sales has grown from 3.4% to 18% between 2007 and 2018<sup>8</sup>. This has been blamed for the challenges we have seen on the high street in Wisbech. Retail space has fallen by 2,500m<sup>2</sup> between 2002 and 2017<sup>9</sup>, though much of this has been absorbed by another trend – towards café culture, pub, and restaurant space.

However, many town centres are thriving, which shows the link between growth in online shopping and high street decline is by no means cast in iron. Shops which are innovating to bring together their digital and physical offerings can continue to maintain a high street presence, where customers can continue to appreciate using the store, even if they then wait until returning home to order. **The integration of the physical and digital offering is a key trend** of the moment.

To adapt to this trend, we need to enact the following:

- **On-street Wi-Fi across the town centre.** This currently exists in Cambridge, and has recently been launched in Ely. As well as giving people a reason to be on the high street, it also increases digital inclusion, by supporting those who would be unable to afford a data-heavy phone contract. In Ely, it has also been shown to really boost the takings of local market stallholders – as it enables them to use contactless for payments, instead of having to take cash. More work needs to be undertaken to identify current Wi-Fi ‘white spots’ and provide coverage in these areas.
- Working with Wisbech Town Council, the potential for **enhancing the existing Town Council website** to be explored, using search engine optimisation to make it easier for potential visitors to see the main attractions in the town.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/retailindustry/timeseries/j4mc/drsi>

<sup>9</sup> Cambridgeshire County Council data on changes of use

### 3. Support cohesion and community shared space

#### A cohesion programme, drawing on the example of Peterborough

Peterborough has been chosen by the Government as one of the UK's five "integration areas". This means it has had funding to respond to some of the challenges associated with high levels of international immigration, and develop responses accordingly. The interim strategy for the programme, "Belonging Together" has been developed, which sets out four key areas of work:

1. **Economic Opportunity** – which focuses on removing barriers to the labour market through interventions such as childcare support and careers fairs
2. **Bringing Communities Together** – which focuses on improving community relations, through support for community projects, and using planning approaches to improve cohesion and control the number of Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs)
3. **Young People** – which focuses on how to develop a shared sense of citizenship among the young, and understand their perspectives on integration
4. **English Language** – with tailored English for Speakers of Other Languages training (ESOL), particularly focused on allowing those with skills to put them to use where English Language is a barrier, and developing a partnership of providers

Within the Belonging Together strategy, partners state that: "we welcome the opportunity to share our learning"<sup>10</sup>. We believe Wisbech could offer a great opportunity to apply many of the lessons learnt in Peterborough to our context – where we share many of the same challenges, as well as the same ambitions to ensure our town is inclusive, welcoming, and cohesive. We are already making progress, with mandatory licencing that came into effect in October 2018 is beginning to address the issue of the overabundance of HMOs.

We also believe that **some initiatives can be trialled most successfully within a town setting**, where the scale of the challenge is lessened. We would welcome the opportunity to be involved in conversations with government about the future of Peterborough's Integration Area – and by working with Peterborough we can evidence the benefits of the Integration Area being felt beyond the city itself.

#### A public indoor space to bring the community together

In order to deepen a sense of community in the town, we need to create spaces where people can come to dwell together. The historic market square is one such key space, which could undergo improvements while preserving the heritage. There is also work ongoing to bring in heritage funds to this area.

Another approach which some towns are taking across the UK is to create a new indoor shared space. Altringham, Cheshire (see example) has used a food court with independent traders to bring people into the town centre, helping to bring it back to life. In Great Yarmouth, a vacant M&S store has been transformed into an art gallery for showcasing work by local talent. An initiative which helps local entrepreneurs – be they artists, craftspeople, or chefs – to display and sell their work in an attractive

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<sup>10</sup> <https://pcc-live.storage.googleapis.com/upload/www.peterborough.gov.uk/council/strategies-polices-and-plans/BelongingTogether-AConversationAboutOurCommunitiesAndFuture-May2019v2.pdf?inline=true> p16

setting would make our town centre more vibrant. We also know that in and around Wisbech there are many affluent families – testified to by the popularity of the fee-paying grammar school and presence of numerous asset management firms. We need to give these people something unique which cannot be found online to bring them into the town centre and spend their disposable income.

This event space could also be used for town events – such as the annual Wisbech beer festival. **Elgood's brewery is one of the town's foremost assets** – a beautiful Georgian brewery on the North Brink with a long history of beer making. At a time when interesting beers are in vogue, we will use our association with beer making to attract people to spend time in the town and advertise our offer.

### Case Study: Reviving the town centre in Altrincham



Altrincham, in Cheshire, has managed to buck national trends by *reducing* its shop vacancy rate – from 25% in 2014 to 10% in 2018. This dramatic reversal of fortunes was sparked by a proactive market development strategy, which has looked to bring in independent “street food” suppliers, breweries, and other retailers. The market has become the new “anchor” for the town, in a way that department stores have traditionally acted in other towns.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/sep/16/uk-market-towns-embrace-foodie-wave-to-revive-ailing-centres>

## A continuation of public events

As one of the Partners of Wisbech 2020 the Town Council was tasked with delivering community events to help cohesion. These events such as the Rock Festival and the WisBEACH Day are attended by thousands. Other organisations in the town are also putting on a number of great free events. We should aim to encourage these events to take place as frequently as possible and aim to reduce bureaucracy as much as possible to allow people to put on more events.

## 4. Open up countryside access, and develop the Wisbech Country Park

While Wisbech is well placed in a rural area, opportunities for access to the countryside are limited. This is due in part to the historic nature of the land – much of which was brought above water with the express purpose of farming it, and therefore doesn't have many rights of way across it (the Nene Way being the only footpath of any length that comes near the town).

Physical activity is one of the most effective ways to tackle the health problems our town faces. As a former Chief Medical Officer for the NHS has commented: "The potential benefits of physical activity to health are huge. If a medication existed which had a similar effect, it would be regarded as a 'wonder drug' or 'miracle cure'."<sup>12</sup> The Active Fenland programme is working to promote physical activity in various different forms across the District, but we need to join this up with making the countryside more accessible to people.

We will work with the Department for Farming, Environment, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and Cambridgeshire County Council to explore where we might be able to create extra rights of way to make it easier for residents to access the countryside. This process requires new creation orders, which it is within the power of the County Council to generate. We will use our relationships with local landowners where we have them to smooth this process.

We will explore the inhibiting factors around walking and cycling in the town with the aim of helping people to walk or cycle in a town where rates are currently low compared to Cambridgeshire averages. We could be a trial area for the use of new lightweight recycled plastic bike lanes. These have been developed in the Netherlands, where the geographical terrain is identical to our landscape. They have the added benefit of being much lighter than asphalt, and more durable, so don't need repairing anything like as often.



Within the town itself, a country park is central to the Garden Town vision. Work can begin on this now, even while we wait for support to come in around transport and housing. This will bring a

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<sup>12</sup> <http://nbhottopics.blogspot.com/2014/01/helping-gps-promote-exercise-motivate.html>



pleasant, green, shared space to the heart of Wisbech, increasing the presence of blue and green infrastructure. This will have numerous benefits:

- **The health and wellbeing of residents will be improved.** Extensive research has shown the benefits which greenery in the local environment provides for tackling stress and lifting mood. The World Health Organisation comments that: “Having access to green spaces can reduce health inequalities, improve well-being, and aid in treatment of mental illness. Some analysis suggests that physical activity in a natural environment can help remedy mild depression and reduce physiological stress indicators.”<sup>13</sup>
- **Social interaction will increase.** The Country Park will be a place to meet people and dwell together.
- **Attractive visitor facility.** As the town looks to become more attractive for visitors, having a Country Park will be a big part of the draw.
- **Flood attenuation.** The Country Park will serve as a basin for holding floodwater in the event that the River Nene floods. This will make construction of housing and infrastructure more viable.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.who.int/sustainable-development/cities/health-risks/urban-green-space/en/>

## 5. Develop a workplace health award scheme

Our big action on health is the **North Cambridgeshire Health Opportunity Area**. This is covered in the strategy paper and will hold across all four market towns.

However, one big opportunity here in Wisbech is to respond to challenges around workplace health. Many of Wisbech's biggest employers are factories where much of the labour is manual and heavy going, with long shifts. This increases health risks – therefore it is especially important here to guarantee good working conditions.

One of the most significant impacts on a person's health, both mental and physical, is their workplace. Employers need to recognise the responsibility they have for supporting the health of their workforce, and by doing so they can enjoy the benefits of more productive workers. Therefore, we propose to launch an occupational health award scheme, which employers can choose to sign up to if they want to make a priority of this issue. This has been developed successfully in Cornwall (see case study) and ties into our aim of developing the degree of networking between businesses in Wisbech. In order to support this, we will work with the health opportunity area, local Clinical Commissioning Group, and Cambridgeshire County Council to develop a clear set of health standards for the workplace.

### Case Study: Occupational Health in Cornwall

Ten years ago, Cornwall Council appointed a Workplace Health Co-ordinator with the sole remit of engaging businesses on this issue. After discussions with businesses about what could help, an award scheme was launched, where businesses would be recognised as bronze, silver, or gold for their contribution to worker health and well-being. A framework and toolkit are published, which is regularly updated to reflect new public health initiatives (such as the recent National Sugar Smart Campaign). Businesses who want to participate then assess themselves against criteria relating to ten key areas, including mental well-being, back pain, smoking, alcohol and substance misuse, and healthier eating, with the Co-ordinator visiting to confirm this assessment.

Companies have really seen the benefits – a director commented: “We recognise that employees perform at their best when they are happy and healthy, and that optimal employee performance is necessary for the company to be a leader in its field.” Another smaller company managed to reduce sickness rates by 10%, saving £20,000, which was put into further worker health initiatives. These examples demonstrate that an interest in worker health can have transformational productivity benefits for business, and transformative lifestyle impacts for workers.



## 6. Focus on Tourism

Wisbech has a very rich heritage with a number of significant buildings which many people come to see. Our history includes Clarkson and Wilberforce fighting against slavery, The Jesuit movement which has roots to Wisbech Castle, The Peckovers who were one of the founders of Barclays Bank and Octavia Hill who founded the National Trust. It also has an extensive network of underground tunnels that have had many uses such as smuggling. This is seen most clearly on Heritage Open Day, where people always come away pleasantly surprised about the amount of heritage the town has to offer.

A focus on tourism will help the town by bringing prosperity. We can do this by:-

- Developing a Cultural quarter in Museum Square and link to the proposed FDC Cultural Strategy
- Look to reopen the tunnels under the town as a tourist attraction
- Reinvigorating the Wisbech Tourism group, using it as a forum to bring together the different visitor attractions in Wisbech to co-ordinate on
- FDC Economic Development team try to focus on attracting hotel and leisure services
- FDC Economic Development Team and Wisbech Town Council to work together to push Wisbech Tourism nationally and increase dwell time in the town by promoting 'The Wisbech Experience'

## 7. Repair Derelict Buildings

Wisbech has a number of derelict buildings which have been caused by neglect and/or arson. It is highly unlikely that these will ever be bought back into use due to viability issues – in particular, the Phoenix Hotel. Work has been done to draw up a list of these buildings and develop approaches to each. With the Phoenix Hotel, a strategy which may succeed is to use a CPO and build flats at the back. Other buildings would simply look better with a fresh lick of paint or cleared gutters. A small fund that was tied to owners making improvements to their properties would incentivise the town being well kept, helping to attract visitors.

## 8. Commercialisation of Wisbech Port

Wisbech is unique in Fenland in the fact it is a port town – a fact which has played a key role in the town's history. The port supplies timber to a local business and has the potential to be more of a commercial opportunity. The land surrounding the Port has also been earmarked for development for a number of years and to begin this could bring up that whole area which is currently not very visually appealing. Providing attractive 1- and 2-bedroom apartments would give the area a big lift. This could be the ideal place for the Combined Authority to trial its plans for the £100k home.



Regarding the commercialisation of the port, it is currently hard for larger vessels to turn in the port due to the tight circle. We also need to think about how the port relates to a possible future Nene barrage – which may require creative solutions to maximise the benefits to the town as whole from both initiatives. The capital works to enhance this are in the region of £1 million. The actions falling out of this are for CPCA to help:

- Accelerate development round the port
- Fund, or help seek funds, to enable works to increase commercialisation

## What happens now?

We have set out a plan for Wisbech which, along with the Fenland-wide strategy document, can transform the town, showing which interventions can make a real difference.

We now look forward to working constructively with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), and its Mayor, James Palmer, to implementing these ideas. This will require both direct support from the Combined Authority, and the resources needed to take these ideas to key government funds such as the Stronger Towns Fund, as and when they come forward.

This work will be overseen by Fenland District Council, working in conjunction with the town team that was put together for this work.



**CUSPE: HOW TO DESIGN THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TODAY**

**To:** Communities & Partnership Committee

**Meeting Date:** 23 January 2020

**From:** Amanda Askham, Executive Director: Business Improvement & Development

**Electoral division(s):** All

**Forward Plan ref:** Not applicable      **Key decision:** No

**Purpose:** To consider the outcome and recommendations that result from the Cambridge University Science and Policy Exchange's (CUSPE) Policy Challenge research into the question of how to design the future of local government today in relation to the Council's Think Communities approach.

**Recommendation:** The Committee is being asked to:

- a) Note and comment on the findings of the research undertaken by CUSPE into the question of how to design the future of local government today; and
- b) Consider the recommendations made by CUSPE for Think Communities, as detailed in paragraph 2.6.

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In October 2016, Cambridgeshire County Council initiated an annual collaboration with the Cambridge University Science and Policy Exchange (CUSPE). The partnership, known as the CUSPE Policy Challenges, brings teams of researchers from the University of Cambridge together to explore challenges the Council faces.
- 1.2 In March 2019, the questions offered to researchers in the 2019 CUSPE Policy Challenges included '*How do we design the future of local government today?*'. This question formed the basis of the present report.
- 1.3 In July 2019, it was decided that this question and the researchers' approach to it are most relevant and beneficial to work being done within Think Communities, and therefore that the Communities & Partnerships Committee would be the most suitable committee to receive the researchers' report, which is attached at **Appendix 1**.

## 2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 The question to which this report responds is motivated by concerns about the capacity for local government to respond to stresses and uncertainties that are anticipated in light of certain social, political and environmental developments in the near future. Accordingly, the report tackles the question by focusing on the notion of *resilience* for local government. Section 1 of the report outlines a 'resilience framework for sustainable governance' to guide the Council's response to these future challenges. Section 2 draws on this framework to make recommendations for the Think Communities approach.
- 2.2 In Section 1, the proposed resilience framework focuses on problem-solving and change implementation by coalitions of stakeholders that represent different facets of the affected communities. The multiple stakeholders that make up the coalition help to ensure diversity of viewpoints and that the proposed solutions and changes have maximal legitimacy and positive impact within the affected communities.
- 2.3 The framework is adapted from the Wayfinder Guide, a freely available 'resilience guide for navigating towards sustainable futures' developed by an international group of resilience experts from the Stockholm Resilience Centre, Resilience Alliance, and the Australian Resilience Centre. The Wayfinder Guide consists of five phases for designing and implementing positive systemic change, each of which are detailed in the report:
  1. Building the coalition
  2. Creating a shared understanding of the system
  3. Exploring the dynamics of the system
  4. Developing innovative strategies for change
  5. Implementation, learning from the process, and iteration
- 2.4 In Section 2, the current state of work in Think Communities is summarised and recommendations are proposed for future work in this area. The report explains how

the Wayfinder Guide is particularly suited to the multi-scalar nature and place-based focus of Think Communities, wherein the distinctive strengths and needs of communities are identified and harnessed to enable them to co-design and co-deliver their required services with partners at a local level.

- 2.5 As further evidence of this fit, it is noted that Think Communities – prior to acquaintance with the proposed framework – have already initiated work on the first two phases of the Wayfinder Guide above, insofar as combined authority-level coalitions have been assembled with place-based coalitions planned to be formed (Phase 1), and combined authority coalitions are currently engaging with stakeholders to create a shared understanding of the relevant systems (Phase 2). The report's recommendations therefore focus on the successful completion of these two phases of work while suggesting Think Communities continue through the remaining three phases on its own subsequently.
- 2.6 The recommendations, whose rationales are explained further in Section 2 of the report, are:
1. Structure Think Communities place-based teams in light of the coalition model of the Wayfinder framework: focusing on recommended skills, representativity, and agency of its members.
  2. Ensure a shared vision and multi-scale agency within the Think Communities approach by defining a *Principles for good practice* charter, signed by combined authority and place-based teams.
  3. Define mechanisms for funding of place-based teams. Explore options around increasing flexibility of funding.
  4. Set out place-based teams to establish local *Change narratives* through interactions with combined authority and place-based stakeholders, to build support for the Think Communities approach and define a shared understanding of system strengths and needs.
- 2.7 (Section 1 of the report explains the coalition model, principles for good practice charter, and change narrative mentioned in the recommendations.)

The report concludes by summarising the benefits of implementing change and maintaining resilience through a coalition-based model, such as communities having agency and relevance in the changes that affect them and the Council having the advantages of community buy-in, community expertise, and a more responsive and less bureaucratic public image.

### **3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

#### **3.1 A good quality of life for everyone**

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in 2.2 and 2.7

### **3.2 Thriving places for people to live**

See 3.1 above

### **3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's Children**

*There are no significant implications within this category.*

## **4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 Resource Implications**

*There are no significant implications within this category.*

### **4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications**

*There are no significant implications within this category.*

### **4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications**

*There are no significant implications within this category.*

### **4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications**

*There are no significant implications within this category.*

### **4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications**

The implementation of the recommendation for forming place-based coalitions in 2.6 above would involve the work of the Communications and Community Engagement workstreams within Think Communities to recruit place-based coalition members, which could include county, district, city, and parish councillors as well as various members of the community.

### **4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement**

The entire report and its recommendations are in support of increased localism and community empowerment to reform the relationship between the Council and the communities it serves through the Think Communities approach. More specifically, the coalition-based model mentioned in 2.2-2.6 above is explicitly formed and recommended for the purpose of maximising local agency, knowledge, and legitimacy in the co-design and co-implementation of changes that affect communities.

### **4.7 Public Health Implications**

There is evidence that engaging with and strengthening the resilience of communities supports community action in addressing their health and wellbeing needs.

<b>Implications</b>	<b>Officer Clearance</b>
<b>Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?</b>	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Stephen Howarth
<b>Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Gus de Silva
<b>Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Monitoring Officer?</b>	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan
<b>Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
<b>Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?</b>	No Name of Officer: Matthew Hall
<b>Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
<b>Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Val Thomas

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
None	N/A



# **How to design the future of local government today?**

***A resilience framework for sustainable governance - and applied recommendations for the Think Communities approach.***

James Baye, Helen Cook

Cambridge University Science and Policy Exchange (CUSPE) in collaboration with the  
Cambridgeshire County Council

**January 2020**

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## **Introduction**

### **What will the future look like?**

It has always difficult to predict the future. Now, this is becoming increasingly difficult, as the amount of uncertainty in the future is growing rapidly. Demographic change is resulting in an ageing population, and with that comes a new set of economic challenges. The full economic effects of Brexit, and further the full effects on social cohesion of either Brexit or no Brexit will have lasting effects that are hard to predict. Climate change is slowly but increasingly more strongly starting to make its effects felt, and many of the resulting feedback loops, knock on effects, and amplifiers are still unknown to us.

These forces and more will continue to place stresses on society, and it will be local government's task to continue to effectively serve the population in the face of these challenges. To do so is going to require understanding these challenges, and knowing how to adapt to rapidly changing forces in society. It will take being creative about the best ways to improve life for citizens, and it will require bold action to put change in place. This will mean facilitating discussion between people with a range of different skills and expertise, understanding how change impacts the population, and collaborating across disciplines and across branches of government to best serve the population.

Local government can achieve this by developing its capacity for resilience. Resilience is the capacity to recover from stress, and to thrive in unstable environments. In these recommendations, we outline a framework that is a guide to resilience, which is very much in line with some of the initiatives that the Cambridgeshire County Council already has in place. We encourage further investment in these initiatives, such as Think Communities, and broader adoption of this style of project.

### **Scope and overview**

In order to effectively implement change, we propose a model in which change is led by a coalition of people composed of members of the city and county councils as well as members of the community.

Being multi-faceted, this coalition will examine solutions from many perspectives to ensure their actions have a positive impact on the community immediately and that they will continue to do so going forward.

The Wayfinder guide to resilience describes such a system and is outlined in the next section of this document. Released in September 2018 by the Stockholm Resilience Centre and Australian Resilience Centre, it brings together 15 years of resilience science in a step-by-step format for policymakers. It lays out the process to build a coalition to investigate a given problem, and provides a detailed framework to help the coalition arrive at resilient solutions to that problem. The Wayfinder process involves stakeholders from the community, gathers input from a wide range of viewpoints, and identifies interventions most appropriate given the opportunity context and agency within the

community. This is an extensive guide, that can be adapted if necessary to work best for the Cambridgeshire County Council. The motivation and goals behind the Wayfinder guide are already closely aligned with that of the Think Communities effort, albeit more formalised. Thus, the Wayfinder presents an excellent resource to enable Cambridgeshire County Council to implement resilient, community focused solutions.

One of the main problems that Cambridgeshire County Council is facing is the increasing demand for elderly care under decreasing budgets. Here, we have identified the Think Communities project and its efforts to move elderly care into the community as an example application of the Wayfinder guide.

The work that has already been done by the Think Communities team aligns with stages 1 and 2 of the Wayfinder guide.

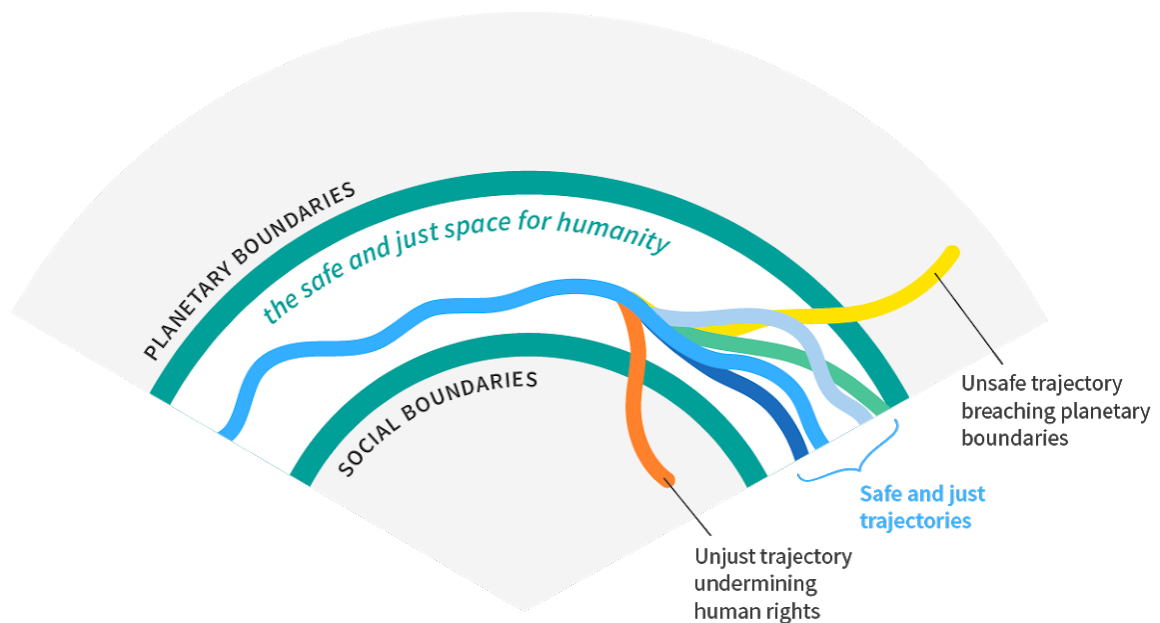
## 1. A resilience framework for sustainable governance

### The Wayfinder guide

Wayfinder is a resilience guide for navigating towards sustainable futures. It has been developed by a group of resilience researchers and professionals from Stockholm Resilience Centre, Resilience Alliance and the Australian Resilience Centre. It was developed at the Stockholm Resilience Center program “Guidance for Resilience in the Anthropocene: Investments for Development”, which is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. Wayfinder is licensed under the Creative Commons License BY-NC-SA 4.0, making it free to use for non-commercial purposes. An in-depth description of the framework with relevant worksheets and step-by-step guides can be found online at [www.wayfinder.earth](http://www.wayfinder.earth).

Wayfinder is a guide to developing resilient solutions that will bring positive change into existing systems. It begins by building a coalition of interested parties who will work together to analyse the problem. The coalition will consult with experts where necessary as they consider possible solutions, and map the feedbacks and consequences of these solutions. It’s implementation includes a pilot project – and findings from the pilot phase will be fully analysed before putting larger scale change in place. Subsequent projects with new coalitions to put further change in place should be expected and planned for.

A recurring representation in the Wayfinder, embedded in resilience science, is that of trajectory space (Figure 1). The Wayfinder process intends to facilitate adaptation of a system in the face of complexity, in order to unlock new sets of trajectories. This in turn maintains the system in a safe operating space and avoids unsustainable practices that lead to runaway costs.



**Figure 1: Sustainable governance trajectories.** The Wayfinder resilience framework formalises structures and practices that facilitate adaptation and transformation, which in turn unlock a higher set of sustainable trajectory options for government. Image from wayfinder.earth.

There are 5 phases to the Wayfinder process, which will be summarised here. These are

1. Building the coalition,
2. Creating a shared understanding of the system,
3. Exploring the dynamics of the system,
4. Developing innovative strategies for change, and
5. Implementation, learning from the process and iteration.

## Phase 1: Building the coalition

### Getting people onboard

The Wayfinder process is best executed by a small group of key people, a coalition. People should be selected carefully to be on the coalition for the skills they bring such as leadership, facilitation, communication, and data analysis as well as for their different perspectives on the system. The coalition must also be representative in the sense that it has legitimacy with stakeholders at different scales. Stakeholders of different backgrounds (age, gender, ethnicity, culture, livelihood) will face different challenges and have different expectations of the system. Coalition members must also be selected strategically according to their influence and vested interests. Members with influence at

different scales will provide the agency to implement plans in reality. Some members with influence may also have vested interests in maintaining the system as it is and hinder the process.

Once the coalition is formed, it is important to agree on **principles for good practice**. This is particularly crucial in the case of a framework that aims for systemic change and has the potential to change people's lives. These may involve the description of a shared ethics in the form of a signed charter, as well as clarifying the agile and reflexive mindset needed among coalition members. As the coalition forms, its members will also require **training in systems literacy and reflexive practice**. This may be done through a succession of workshops and reading groups.

### Process design

By paying attention to the 5Cs (*context, culture, capacity, cognition and creativity*), **the Wayfinder process can be tailored to the needs, capacity and history of the system**. From this, **principles for stakeholder participation** can be defined in order to balance representativity and agility. Then, coalition and stakeholders may agree on **information management systems**.

### Scoping report

A **scoping report** is recommended at this stage to articulate the main assumptions of the work and the previous attempts that have been made. The coalition will **map previous efforts, projects or interventions** to avoid frustration of stakeholders who have seen or been involved in similar efforts in the past and learn from past mistakes. This may then lead the coalition to form an internal **Change Narrative**.

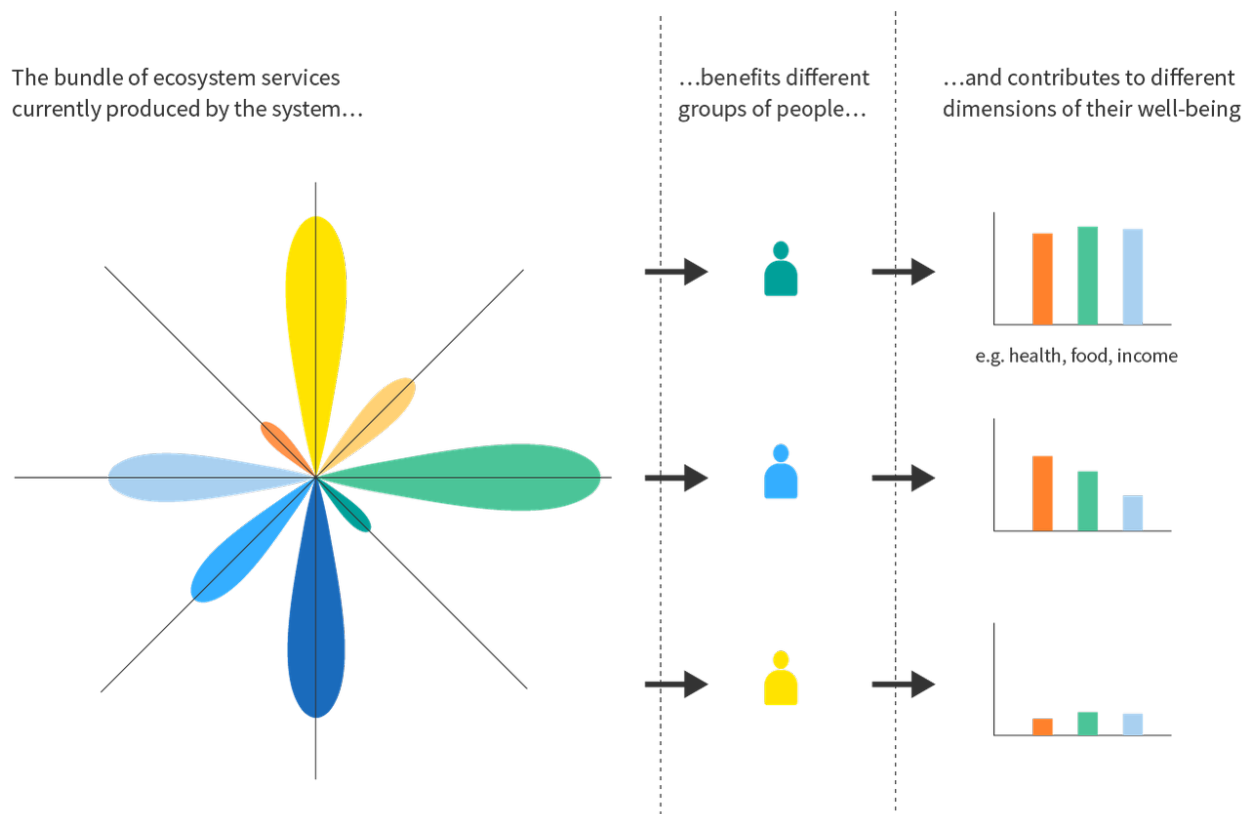
## **Phase 2: Creating a shared understanding of the system**

The purpose of this phase is to give the Wayfinder process its framing and scope, and provides a first agreement of a stakeholder-wide Change Narrative. Phase 2 requires engagement with a wide range of stakeholders outside the coalition.

For the coalition to start working together, their first task is to lay out their broad aspirations for the system in which they would like to drive change. Instead of focusing on the immediate problems they will focus on possibilities, and come together with a shared understanding of what could be possible. Even if different groups disagree and have competing aspirations at this point, the purpose is to find common ground and to build commitment to the process.

The coalition will map how the current system benefits different groups of people, and also what it is that people find problematic about the current system (Figure 2). They will also look at how the system has evolved, and it has responded to challenges in the past. This will give the coalition some

perspective to ask whether they are facing the same or novel challenges today, and the space to choose whether they will take a new approach.



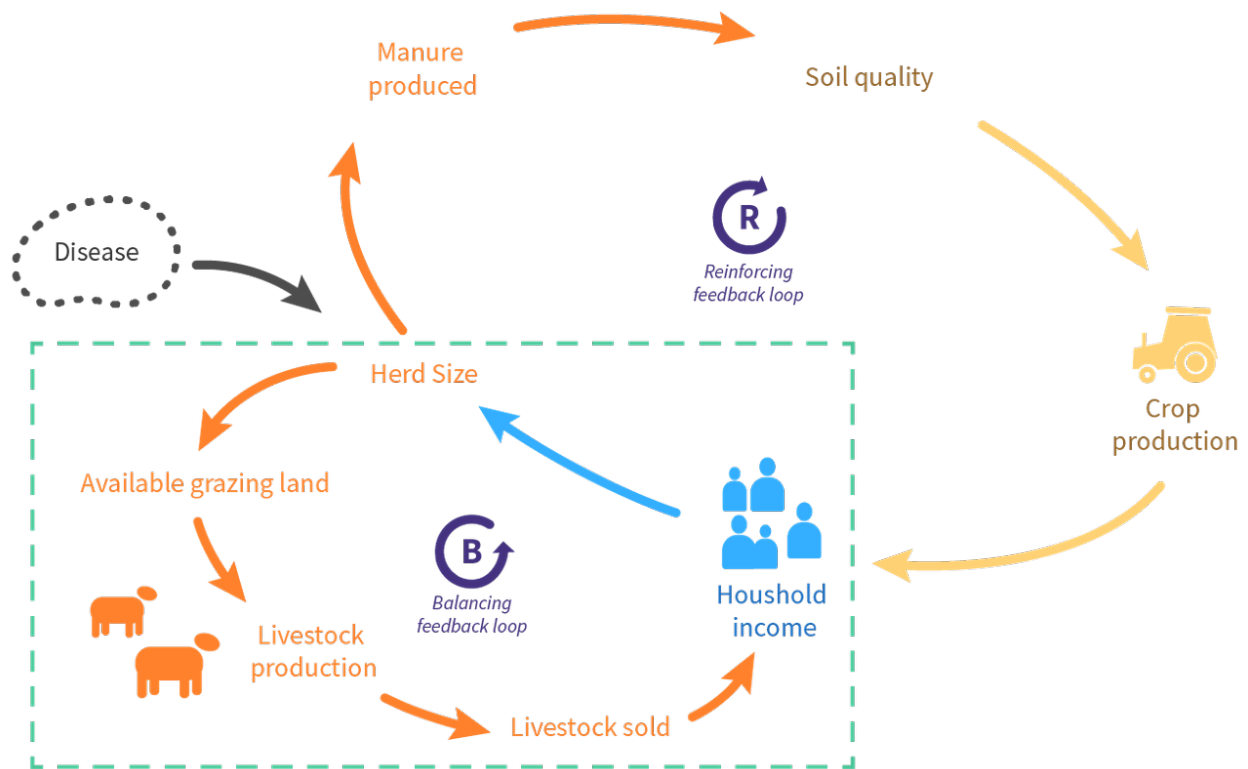
**Figure 2: Schematic of systems identity.** Different groups of people in the system will benefit from the bundle of services in different ways (food, health, income) and to different degrees. Image from [wayfinder.earth](http://wayfinder.earth).

In considering the new approaches that are available, the coalition will begin to consider the social and ecological system boundaries framing the development of solutions. These boundaries, as well as the connections between them will be essential in the next phase of exploring the options that are possible solutions. Finally, the coalition will want to consider how cross-scale interactions can cause emerging trends that are geographically distant today to become local game changers tomorrow.

To conclude this phase, the coalition will synthesise all the gathered information into a conceptual model of the social-ecological system that will include the major actors, governance bodies, resources, action outcomes, and change drivers.

### Phase 3: Exploring the dynamics of the system

Phase 3 begins to use the model generated in the previous phase to model the dynamics of this system and to describe alternative future scenarios. The purpose of this phase is to understand how the system will change once an intervention is put in place, and to anticipate any second order effects of the intervention that may not be immediately obvious. This phase will start to distinguish between true evidence and assumptions that have been made in the previous phase, and to identify where the key uncertainties lie. During this phase, coalition members can identify the key people and organisations who will be responsible for bringing about change.



**Figure 3: Schematic of system dynamics.** Example of the dynamics of a household farm showing two feedback loops, an external influence (disease). Image from wayfinder.earth.

#### Understanding interactions across scales

The coalition will continue to work together, and will identify key interactions of the system. One strategy for this is to ask and answer “Why?” 5 times to understand what is happening at a deeper level. Through this process, the system will be examined to see how it will evolve over time. For example, identify where cycles will emerge, are what the thresholds are that lead to step functions, or

traps (for example, a family who cannot afford to invest in education will have earning potential that stays low).

### Exploring option space

After these interactions have been identified, options for solutions can start to be explored. There are several criteria that our options should meet, given that our goals from the beginning were to satisfy social needs while staying within planetary boundaries. Further, we want to understand how these trends can evolve over time. The coalition will approach this by looking backwards to understand how the system has changed in the past, and then will use the interactions that they have defined in previous steps to extrapolate out to future scenarios.

## **Phase 4: Developing innovative strategies for change**

Over the previous phases, the coalition has worked to understand how changing the system will impact stakeholders and the environment in the short and long term. The task in phase 4 is to implement resilient solutions that maintain the largest option space, improve human well-being, and use resources sustainably.

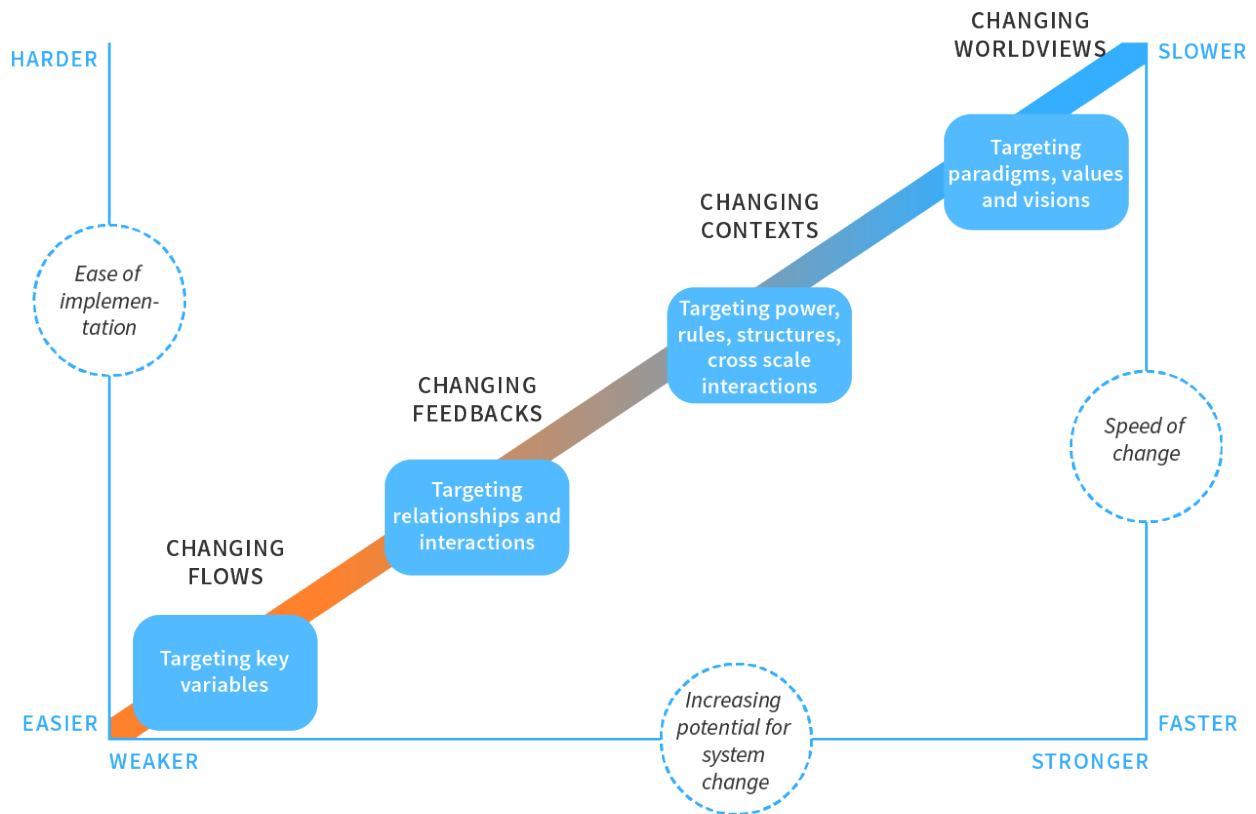
Actions will target leverage points, places where small changes can have large impacts. The coalition may have the option of many different points to target, and some may be more effective than others. For example, targeting the way decisions are made are likely to have longer lasting effects compared with targeting a single decision.

The larger context of the change, including formal institutions as well as social norms may be more or less conducive to the change that the coalition wants to bring about. The coalition should consider strategies that will increase the chance that their proposed actions will be adopted across the wider community. For example, timing the action plan to coincide with other expected changes may be an effective strategy, and training specifically for marginalised groups make change take hold faster.

The coalition should also consider the unintended consequences of the change they are proposing. Using the work from the previous sections, the impact the action will have on the rest of the system can be scrutinised for unintended consequences. Of course there will also be uncertainties in the future that cannot be predicted, and therefore the change should be designed to be as robust as possible across a range of possible futures.

The result of this phase will be a refined list of actions that target leverage points for systemic change, that consider agency and opportunity context, that are feasible and effective, and that handle unintended consequences, uncertainty and option space in a satisfying way. Lastly, the action plan will be communicated to stakeholders and to the wider community.





**Figure 4: Trade-off between the scale of system change and ease of implementation.** Image from *wayfinder.earth*

## Phase 5: Implementation, learning from the process and iteration

The final phase encompasses large scale implementation of the plan that has been developed in the previous stage. The plan may be adapted if the situation has changed since originally doing the planning. Refining the plan should not be viewed as failure, instead it is an essential part of working in a complex system.

One of the last tasks of the coalition will be to define the implementation team, which will include all stakeholders — members of the coalition, others with specialist knowledge, and those with agency to enact change.

Instead of a rigid monitoring system, the coalition will develop a framework that encourages asking the right questions to determine the effects of the change. For example, questions to be asked could

include: what other effects has the intervention had? who was or may be disadvantaged by the changes? was the transformation process fair and transparent? The questions should be developed to assess how critical system dynamics change following interventions. The questions should aim to address the earliest indicators that can be observed, and should cover human well being as well as ecological and environmental variables. Questions should also cover long term indicators such as changes in feedback, flows and changes in the system option space — by putting this change in place, which future options are being excluded, and which are being made possible?

#### Implementation plan — short term pilot

The purpose of the short term pilot is to target interventions that may reveal new insights about any new leverage points, or dynamics that may have the potential to contribute to a sustainable, safe and just future, or new implications for scaling, or new barriers or challenges before moving on to large scale implementation. This is the chance to apply the questions developed in the previous stage to refine the plan for large scale implementation.

#### Implementation plan — at broader levels

As the implementation plan increases in scale, control of the process can move from the implementation team to people in the system to 'own' the process and adjust the action to their needs. The implementation team will work with decision makers to change any existing laws, rules, and guidelines in favour of the action, and similarly with other change-makers to change social norms in support of the action. This will bring about change in the structure of the existing system in a way that makes the intervention and its impacts more likely to persist and spread. For example, forming a new cross-scale governance structure, or reintroducing a cultural practice that would support the change.

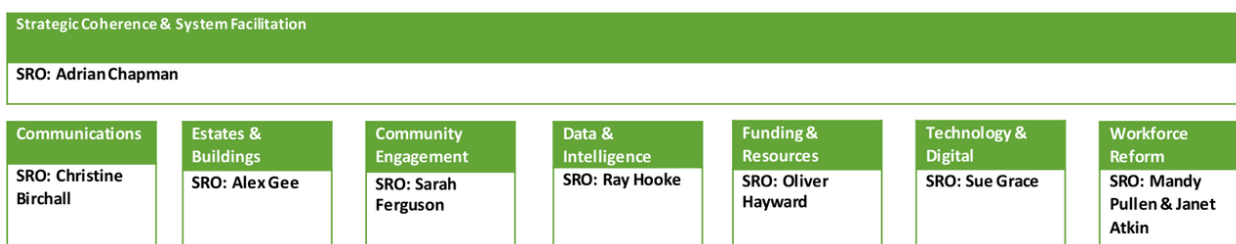
Finally, through reflection and further evaluation of the implementation on this change, the entire process can be iterated on with the new information gained, and with strengthened understanding of the system, and how change affects people and communities associated with the system.

## 2 Recommendations for Think Communities

### 2.1 Background

The Think Communities approach presents itself as a reform to the organisation and delivery of public services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Endorsed in September 2018 by the Communities and Partnership Committee, it emphasises the importance of place-based models to identify strengths and specific needs of communities, as well as foster closer interactions between and within communities, partners and the public sector. It argues that partners and the public sector may work more effectively in delivering services to the same communities if appropriate alignment of planning and resources is performed at a local and combined-authority level. It also calls for a shift in the relationship between communities and public sector, in which the public sector should provide agency to communities so that services may be designed and delivered with and by the community.

To drive the Think Communities approach forward, eight workstreams have been developed (Figure 5). Each workstream is driven by a combined-authority level officer leadership group and supported by an operational team. To initiate place-based service delivery, workstream officers and partners have agreed that community boundaries will match those defined by the NHS Primary Care Networks, leading to 21 communities of 30,000-50,000 citizens each for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is planned that local multi-agency teams be formed in each community, each led by a Think Communities Place Lead post-holder.



**Figure 5: Think Communities combined-authority level workstreams.**

Currently, efforts are under way to organise and set up community teams (Community Engagement), communicate the Think Community approach to citizens (Communications), map public assets (Estates & Buildings), define sources and mechanisms for funding (Funding & Resources) and facilitate work by and between stakeholders (Workforce Reform) whilst understanding what currently hinders them (Data & Intelligence).

Our current understanding of the Think Communities program brings us to think that it is very well aligned with the Wayfinder framework and in particular, appears to be exploring phases 1 and 2 of the Wayfinder cycle (Figure 5). A combined-authority level coalition has assembled, and place-based coalitions are still to be formed (Phase 1). Alongside this, stakeholders are being engaged by the combined-authority coalition to create a shared understanding of system identity (Phase 2).

Furthermore, pilots such as that in Soham, led by the Neighbourhood Cares initiative , have started to map issues relating to adult social care by describing the relationships between the healthcare system, carers, patients, acute treatment and preventative care.

To move forward, the multi-scale nature - combined-authority, partners and districts - within which Think Communities operates implies that careful coalition coordination and design will be required. In the following, we will therefore outline our main recommendations for the formation of place-based teams as well as initial interactions with stakeholders. Whereas these will mainly cover phases 1 and 2 of the Wayfinder framework, we expect that further phases may be explored by the Think Communities workforce on their own accord by exploring the in-depth resources available at [www.wayfinder.earth](http://www.wayfinder.earth).

## 2.2 Recommendations

First, to enable effective place-based insight and progress at pace, we recommend according to the Wayfinder framework that place-based teams be formed as coalitions that combine through its members the required skills, representativity and agency to maximise internally its capacity to enact change (see section 3.1 for more details). The recruitment of place-based coalition members may be facilitated by the combined-authority coalition's *Communications* and *Community Engagement* workstream officers. Agency and representativity requirements may inform which networks to advertise to whereas skill requirements will help shape expectations for hired personnel.

Once the place-based coalitions form, the Wayfinder framework suggests that principles for good practice be agreed within the coalitions. As the Think Communities approach also involves work between combined-authority and place-based coalitions, we recommend that a common *Principles for Good Practice* charter be signed between both to form an implicit contract. This charter will provide unity to the approach as it will clearly define a shared vision and ethics. Furthermore, it will provide an opportunity to ensure that both combined-authority and place-based work benefit from the multi-scale agency it requires to enact change. This may include mechanisms for training of place-based coalitions (in the form of workshops or reading groups), access to information management systems and network contacts, and sources of funding.

An initial task for the place-based coalitions will be to clearly define the scope of their work. According to the Wayfinder framework, we recommend that this take the form of a Scoping Report that may be submitted to the combined-authority coalition. In this report, place-based coalitions will outline past related projects or interventions and articulate a Change Narrative proposition. They will also identify the key stakeholders concerned with public service delivery within their district. This initial work is of importance as it will identify the knowledge gaps in the community, as well as the main assumptions that can then be investigated through interactions with the wider set of district stakeholders.

As place-based coalitions then engage with district stakeholders, a first aim according to the Wayfinder framework is to create a shared understanding of system identity and formulate a stakeholder-wide Change Narrative much like the Wigan Deal. The Wayfinder framework describes defining the broad aspirations of stakeholders, listing which services are being provided in the system and which people are benefiting from them, to then identify the dilemmas that exist within the system (see section 3.2 for more details). The aspirations and the dilemmas then form the basis for the stakeholder-wide Change Narrative which itself will build stakeholder-wide support for the Think Communities approach. We have been made aware of stakeholder work being currently undertaken in the Huntingdon district, and would recommend that these interactions implement some of the tools in the Wayfinder to work towards defining a local Change Narrative for Huntingdon.

We summarise our four main recommendations as follows:

**Recommendation 1: Structure Think Communities place-based teams in light of the coalition model of the Wayfinder framework: focusing on recommended skills, representativity and agency of its members.**

**Recommendation 2: Ensure a shared vision and multi-scale agency within the Think Communities approach by defining a *Principles for good practice* charter, signed by combined-authority and place-based teams.**

**Recommendation 3: Define mechanisms for funding of place-based teams. Explore options around increasing flexibility of funding.**

**Recommendation 4: Set out place-based teams to establish local *Change narratives* through interactions with combined-authority and place-based stakeholders, to build support for the Think Communities approach and define a shared understanding of system strengths and needs.**

## Conclusions

In summary, there are many advantages to adopting place-based models, and the Wayfinder framework provides a detailed guide to implementing change structured around a place-based model.

Establishing a coalition to implement change draws on the local lived experience of the community, which will help ensure that the proposed solutions are relevant to that community. By adopting the structure of a coalition, this will help identify the vision and aspirations of the community, and drive collaboration within it.

Once the coalition has been established, they will turn to understanding how the system that is to be changed behaves so that any unintended consequences can be anticipated early. This will ensure that the coalition develops a solution that really works for the people they intend to help, because they will be able to foresee potential feedback loops, pitfalls and traps. The plan the coalition ultimately develops will have been tested against a wide variety of perspectives, and will have community buy-in and be ready to implement.

Finally, in terms of evaluating the outcome, having an adaptive system is more important than choosing the perfect metrics to measure. Wayfinder recommends finding the right questions to ask that will help listen to the concerns of stakeholders throughout the implementation process, and encourages iteration of the implementation plan in response to new information. This provides agency to the community, and ultimately unlocks lower-cost interventions with support from the community.

**SHARED AND INTEGRATED SERVICES UPDATE**

**To:** Communities and Partnership Committee

**Meeting Date:** 23 January 2020

**From:** Amanda Askham, Director for Business Improvement and Development

**Electoral division(s):** All

**Forward Plan ref:** N/A                      **Key decision:** No

**Purpose:** To provide an overview of the work on the Shared and Integrated Services Programme since the previous update in July 2019.

**Recommendation:** The Committee is asked to:

**Note and comment on the key areas that have progressed during the monitoring period and the next critical stages of work between now and the end of March 2020.**

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>		<b><i>Member contacts:</i></b>	
Name:	Amanda Askham	Names:	Cllr Criswell
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Email:	Amanda.askham@cambridgeshire.gov.uk	Email:	Steve.criswell@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel:	01223 703565	Tel:	01223 706398

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Shared and Integrated Services Programme between Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Peterborough City Council (PCC) has been operational since May 2018 following Member approval to a new formal joint programme of work between the two Councils. This followed the success of a number of shared senior leadership posts between the two Councils as opportunities arose.
- 1.2 This report to the Communities and Partnership Committee, in their role as the overarching Member governing body for CCC, provides the Committee with an overview of the new shared arrangements since the previous reporting period.

## **2. HIGHLIGHTS SINCE THE PREVIOUS REPORTING PERIOD**

- 2.1 During the last 6 months, Shared Services between CCC and PCC have progressed in specific functional areas / teams across the Council. This includes areas such as IT, Communications Team and roles / teams within the People and Communities Directorate. Further details about these areas are provided in sections 2.2 – 2.4.
- 2.1.1 Linked to the annual review of the Joint Working Agreement between the two Councils, work has started to review the governance and underpinning processes relating to decisions around new shared arrangements to ensure they are streamlined and embedded within existing HR and Finance processes. This will be combined with a review of the programme to update Members on progress (lead Members in both Councils commissioned in October 2019), review the benefits of the programme to date (some of which are outlined in section 3 of this report) and to seek political endorsement for the proposed future development of the shared approach. This review will be discussed by Chairs (CCC) and Cabinet Portfolio Holders (PCC) at a workshop in late January 2020.

### **2.2 IT and Digital Strategy for CCC and PCC**

- 2.2.1 Some shared teams and front line services have been in place since 2017 and it is increasingly evident that there is a need for an IT and Digital Strategy to support these shared services and to progress the transformation of both councils.
- 2.2.2 The existing and planned convergence of services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough requires a step change in delivery of IT for both councils. The current arrangements have been ad-hoc and localised and are therefore, not as effective as they could be and in some cases are more expensive than they need to be.
- 2.2.3 This vision for future IT that has been articulated is for staff in shared services to be able to work effectively with colleagues across both organisations and be able to deliver more effective services to our citizens. Staff should have access to IT that supports this and enables secure, easy and robust sharing with collaboration tools delivered on a cost effective basis, with the minimum level of duplicate costs for equipment and licences. In short converged IT systems supporting converged teams that can work seamlessly across the two organisations.



- 2.2.4 In view of this, in July 2019, General Purposes Committee and Cabinet at Peterborough City Council (PCC) approved the joint IT and Digital Strategy and PCC Cabinet also approved the decision to share the Sand Martin House Data Centre with Cambridgeshire County Council. The CCC Data Centre, which is currently located in Shire Hall in Cambridge, needs to be re-located as the site is being re-purposed.

### 2.3 **Customer and Digital Services Directorate**

- 2.3.1 Within this Directorate, a staffing consultation has concluded and a joint Communications team across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has been established under the leadership of the joint head of communications.
- 2.3.2 The new structure mirrors the working of the CCC/PCC shared executive team to offer more transparent and dedicated support to the main service directorates of CCC and PCC as both experience considerable change and transformation to manage increasing demand with reducing budgets.
- 2.3.3 Across the whole council this increases the need to communicate the work and challenges of the council to key audiences not just in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, but nationally too.
- 2.3.4 The structure increases the dedicated communication capacity available to key parts of the organisation – it reduces duplication of management roles; and inside the team builds capacity and improved career progression within the team and creates resilience in service areas.

### 2.4 **People and Communities**

- 2.4.1 The Directorate continues to evolve their shared arrangements. This includes shared roles within the Education Directorate, Adult Safeguarding and a staffing consultation moving towards a shared leadership structure within the Communities and Safety Services Directorate. Work also continues on other shared programmes of work such as Adults Positive Challenge and approaches like Think Communities. Systems convergence in Adults and Children's Services is progressing as previously reported.

## 3.0 **BENEFITS OF SHARED WORKING**

- 3.1 Shared roles across PCC and CCC have proved an instrumental first step in efficiency and effectiveness, not just in helping to identify and drive out savings, but in delivering a wealth of additional customer/operational/organisation/system wide benefits. The two councils have something region of 200 shared roles in place which has enabled both councils to reduce costs. This in turn has led to greater opportunities for identifying further savings opportunities - but equally important have been a range of other benefits which are beginning to be realised:
- ***Sharing best practice more openly and easily*** - combining the expertise and learning across both councils to develop innovative solutions to the same demand and resource challenges
  - ***Speaking with one voice on key strategic issues*** - Cambridge and Peterborough are two of the fastest growing cities in the UK. A shared Chief

Executive allows us to bring a stronger and single voice in discussions with central government. The arrangement further strengthens both Councils' relationship with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority thus helping greater coordination of infrastructure investment across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. Having one Chief Executive at the heart of discussions across the region and with government ministers concerning the devolution agenda has been beneficial in jointly representing both parties' views in debate and has enabled a better understanding of how residents in both local authority areas could benefit from the devolution of powers from Government. The arrangement provided a single senior officer focal point – alongside politicians - for negotiating with Government.

- **Improved customer / partnership experience** - Partners report that it is both faster and easier to work with us - particularly in the areas of children and adults services, where a single officer can represent both areas at meetings, leading to a lack of confusion on hand offs around service. We also become a stronger partner for other public sector organisations. As we align Council services across the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire footprint, it will be easier for partner organisations – Health, Police, Fire, and District authorities to engage with us to meet common goals for communities
- **More resilient and efficient Councils –**
  - Working to join up both LA's front doors and digital services, is already delivering tangible benefits including procurement of a single reduced cost CMS (web platform), improved customer experience and the ability to managing rising demand at minimal additional cost
  - Our joined up approach has led directly to DFE investing £4m in Cambridgeshire for Family Safeguarding, to benefit from pilot work already developed in Peterborough
  - The creation of a shared Public Health (PH) service has led to a more resilient service with greater coverage and specialisms compared to two separate teams. For some areas of PH it is difficult to recruit, by working together it is possible to leverage these skills across both authorities. Joint Public Health analytical team means analysis can be undertaken once for both areas
  - Joint arrangements in place for the Procurement of Tenders means we procure services jointly across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This has reduced transaction costs through only procuring once, and allowed management savings to be extracted from contracts due to greater scale. Working in this way has reduced contract prices for; healthy workplace service, healthy schools support service, the children's public health section 75 arrangement, Carers Tender and The Mental Health Recovery and Community Inclusion service (including the CCG).
  - Sharing or fully integrating services gives both Councils greater resilience against challenging circumstances, allowing us to deploy resource effectively to cope with sudden (such as support to inspections) or complex change.
  - Reduced the number of Boards and meetings – much is now delivered across both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough e.g. joint commissioning board, SEN strategy and planning, Best Start in Life - freeing up officer's time
- **Workforce** - creating increased career development opportunities for officers

working across both councils, leading to improved retention in harder to recruit to areas

#### **4. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

##### **4.1 A good quality of life for everyone**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

##### **4.2 Thriving places for people to live**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

##### **4.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's Children**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

#### **5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

##### **5.1 Resource Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

As with all major change programmes, additional corporate and service resource will be required during the development of individual business cases and implementation. Any additional resource requirements will be determined at the discovery and design phase and will be put forward to the relevant Committee as appropriate.

##### **5.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

An allocation of any joint procurement activity will be required at individual project business case level between CCC and PCC.

##### **5.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

##### **5.4 Equality and Diversity Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

Equality (Community) Impact Assessments will be undertaken when changes are being proposed to existing service, policy, strategy or function through the Shared and Integrated Services Programme.

##### **5.5 Engagement and Communications Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

## 5.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

Implications in relation to this priority are outlined in section 2.1.1 of this report.

Both Councils are committed to continuing to represent the needs, priorities and ambitions of local people in their neighbourhoods. Commissioning or delivering services together is not designed to change how residents experience services, it is about how to get things done more efficiently.

## 5.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Tom Kelly
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Gus De Silva
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Monitoring Officer?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Christine Birchall
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Tess Campbell

Source Documents	Location
IT and Digital Strategy for CCC and PCC – report to General Purposes Committee – 16 July 2019	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/yxj4r7jp">https://tinyurl.com/yxj4r7jp</a>

Shared and Integrated Services Programme – Communities and Partnerships Committee – 4 July 2019	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/y6peubfw">https://tinyurl.com/y6peubfw</a>
Shared and Integrated Services Programme – Communities and Partnerships Committee – 18 October 2018	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/yxflzkuy">https://tinyurl.com/yxflzkuy</a>
Cambridgeshire County Council – 16 October 2018: 'Item for Determination from General Purposes Committee: 'Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council Shared Services – Joint Working Agreement and Protocols' (item 7)	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/y3rsg9g6">https://tinyurl.com/y3rsg9g6</a>
Shared Services Joint Working Agreement and Protocols – Paper to CCC General Purposes Committee – 20 September 2018	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/so6gujr">https://tinyurl.com/so6gujr</a>
Shared and Integrated Services Programme – Communities and Partnerships Committee – 31 May 2018	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/vs5lvyy">https://tinyurl.com/vs5lvyy</a>



**COUNTY COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO ADDRESSING HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS – SIX MONTH PROGRESS UPDATE**

**To:** Communities and Partnership Committee

**Meeting Date:** 23 January 2020

**From:** Sarah Ferguson, Assistant Director – Housing, Communities and Youth

**Electoral division(s):** All

**Forward Plan ref:** N/A **Key decision:** No

**Purpose:** To provide Members with a progress report on the cross Council Officer Working Group's activity over the past six months.

**Recommendation:** The Committee is asked to:

- a) Note the Working Group's progress since July 2019;
- b) Consider and agree a revised Key Outcome for Cambridgeshire County Council in relation to housing and homelessness: "To play our part in contributing to the system-wide change required to improve housing and reduce homelessness across our County in order to achieve better outcomes for citizens"; and
- c) To support the ongoing activity of the Working Group and agree to receive an update in six months' time.

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>	<b><i>Member contacts:</i></b>
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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On 4th July 2019, Members were presented with a detailed paper from the cross Council Officer Working Group on the Council's responsibilities and duties in identifying the current and future housing needs of the citizen groups we serve, the needs of our staff and whether our current activity is aligned to meet these needs.
- 1.2 The Working Group's activity in the last six months has focussed on the four priority areas which were endorsed by Members in July and this paper provides an update on each (see detail in section 2). These are:
- Supporting our most vulnerable citizens in preventing them from becoming homeless
  - Supporting our workforce, particularly our lower paid and / or essential staff, to enable them to support the communities they live and work in (note the wording has changed – see 2.2)
  - Influencing planning decisions, ensuring plans and strategies for new and existing communities maximise opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of residents
  - Adopting a commercially minded approach to trial new initiatives that will benefit our workforce and citizens alike (note the wording has changed – see 2.4)

The full Action Plan can be seen in **Appendix 1**.

- 1.3 Members also commented on the Key Outcome presented which has been revised (see section 3).
- 1.4 Our work in housing and reducing homelessness continues to be an important area for the Council to prioritise and invest in. Housing is a fundamental human right. The provision of housing which does not meet needs, or the lack of an appropriate affordable home for vulnerable people, can cause much greater demand on Council resources if not adequately addressed.
- 1.5 Although the Council is not the statutory Housing Authority, it does have key statutory duties and responsibilities, the execution of which impact on the housing economy and citizens for whom we have a duty of care. These citizens include: older people and vulnerable adults (with learning, physical or mental disabilities); older people with care needs; young adults with learning or mental health difficulties and those leaving care; vulnerable citizen groups who may be victims of domestic abuse, drug or alcohol dependant or offenders and ex-offenders. The Council also has a statutory duty through the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to take steps to improve residents' health for which housing is an important determinant.
- 1.6 In addition, as of October 2018 the Homelessness Reduction Act placed a new duty on public sector agencies to refer individuals or families who may be at risk of homelessness to local housing authorities.
- 1.7 It's recognised that homelessness prevention is integral to our work and it's acknowledged



that the majority of the statutory responsibilities sit elsewhere within the overall housing and homelessness system. However, the Council is tackling system-wide transformation through our partnerships primarily through the Cambridgeshire Public Service Board (CPSB) and the Housing Board (Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and West Suffolk).

## **2. PROGRESS ON THE PRIORITIES**

### **2.1 Priority One:** Supporting our most vulnerable citizens in preventing them from becoming homeless.

#### **2.1.1 What has been achieved**

A potential new model for Young People's services in Cambridge has been developed in collaboration with providers and other partners. Work has also started to look at different ways in which a different package of support could be provided to single homeless people, in particular those who are sleeping rough, which will lead to long term sustained tenancies.

Work on the Homelessness System Transformation (which was covered in the report to Committee in July) has started. This work was scoped in collaboration with partners through the Housing Board who had opportunities to input and shape the work needed to transform the housing and homelessness system.

A Needs Analysis of clients and potential clients across Cambridgeshire, as well as research into the wider context and opportunities which exist for system change, began in December 2019. This is a foundation stone for the delivery of the Housing Related Support (HRS) Commissioning Strategy which will be delivered by spring 2020. The development of the strategy will ensure that future commissioned services are provided in the right place to meet the identified need for the future, within the available resource.

Embedding a Think Communities approach within the housing and homelessness system will build resilience for individuals and communities – increasing the capacity of people to get the right support at the right time in order to prevent homelessness in the first instance. The Council, and our partners, have a shared vision and shared priorities in which housing and homelessness is a key focus.

#### **2.1.2 Next stages**

The Needs Analysis work is due to be completed by the end of January 2020. This will inform future potential operating models and opportunities for system-wide transformation and enable a clearer articulation of the Council's role within the system.

The work will also shine a light on the needs of some of our most vulnerable citizens across the County who are adversely impacted by homelessness. The needs analysis work will influence the use of future HRS funds to meet these needs better, with detailed proposals to be considered by future Adults and Children and Young People's Committees as appropriate.

### **2.2 Priority Two:** Supporting our workforce to access affordable homes, particularly our lower paid but essential staff, to enable them to support the communities they live and work in.

### 2.2.1 What we have achieved

The wording of this priority has changed slightly following comments from Members in July, to ensure that the intentions are clearer about the inclusion of our lower paid workforce.

Desktop research has been undertaken of how other organisations have approached supporting their staff to access affordable homes. Many have opted to include the categories previously defined by government, but with caveats to allow flexibility to include other groups as well if needed. Most have also specified a particular income range as part of the eligibility for being considered a 'key worker'. The key criteria for organisations are:

- The employee must provide an essential service to the community
- There must be evidence of recruitment and retention difficulties in the service area
- Be on a low to moderate income that is insufficient to allow them to rent or buy a home on the open market

We have confirmed our interest with Homes England in providing key worker housing. There is the potential that key worker housing for staff employed in the public sector in areas of skill shortage such as social care and NHS would be eligible to apply for accommodation on strategic development sites. The Council has recruitment challenges in key skills areas, such as experienced social workers and professionals in planning, transport planning and highways areas. All strategies need to be considered to facilitate the recruitment and retention of these staff.

### 2.2.2 Next stages

A draft definition will be tested out with services within the People & Communities and Place & Economy directorates. This will enable the Council to clarify which workers this would apply to and how it can support them.

Once a definition has been agreed, it will be possible to estimate accurate numbers of workers to apply to growth sites around our region, taking into account the variants across our county.

## 2.3 **Priority Three:** Influencing planning decisions, ensuring plans and strategies for new and existing communities maximise opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of residents.

### 2.3.1 What we have achieved

The Council has a key role in influencing section 106 funding for new developments and works closely with developers and partners such as Homes England and our planning colleagues within the Districts. For example, as a landowner at Northstowe, our Strategic Assets team is working with Homes England on Phase 3B looking for opportunities for new ways of delivering older people and specialist housing, and is exploring the allocation of key worker housing focused on the health and social care workforce.

The Council has a key role in influencing planning policy as well as the planning applications for the strategic sites. It works closely with developers and partners such as Homes England and our planning colleagues within the Districts. It has been involved in the Healthy New

Towns Programme and the resulting guidance developed by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) “Putting Health Into Place<sup>1</sup>” which documents core principles to design and deliver healthy places to live. These principles have been adopted in sites like Northstowe, Alconbury Weald and Waterbeach.

The Draft Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Health and Wellbeing Strategy recognises the important contribution “having a home” makes to a person’s health and wellbeing. The Strategy proposes outcomes on new housing which supports resident’s health and preventing homelessness and improving pathways into housing for vulnerable people. The draft Strategy will be available for consultation in January.

### 2.3.2 Next stages

We are exploring how the healthy new town principles can be applied to all developments across Cambridgeshire and we are exploring opportunities for key worker housing in other major growth sites.

The Council will continue to work with the relevant partners to deliver healthy new communities in keeping with the “putting Health into place” and Think Communities principles. This will include refining the housing requirements for the strategic sites across Cambridgeshire, which includes older peoples accommodation, specialist housing and affordable key worker housing – utilising Northstowe Phase 3 A&B as a pilot.

## 2.4 **Priority Four:** Adopting a creative and commercial approach to trial new initiatives that will benefit our workforce and citizens alike.

### 2.4.1 What we have achieved

The wording of this priority has changed slightly following comments from Members in July and takes into consideration that creative opportunities should also be looked at, not just commercial opportunities.

This workstream is reliant upon the results of the completion of the Needs Analysis (see 2.1.1) as these results will inform and shape creative and commercial opportunities.

### 2.4.2 Next stages

Opportunities will be identified following the outcome of the Needs Analysis. This will lead to piloting commercial/creative ideas which will be underpinned by the Think Communities concept with the ultimate aim of easing pressure on our most vulnerable citizen groups. It is anticipated this will result in a number of new business cases for 2021/22. In addition, the recent formation of a new Commercial Team within the Business Improvement Directorate will provide specialist commercial expertise and knowledge.

## 3. **KEY OUTCOME**

### 3.1 The recommended Key Outcome presented to Members in July 2019 for the Council to adopt was: ‘To play our part in contributing to the wider housing system in order to achieve

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<sup>1</sup> Documents available from <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns/>

better outcomes for Cambridgeshire citizens.'

- 3.2 After the comments from Members and reflection by the Working Group, we are recommending that Members approve our revised Key Outcome:

'To play our part in contributing to the system-wide change required to improve housing and reduce homelessness across our County in order to achieve better outcomes for citizens.'

- 3.3 This key outcome better reflects the system wide change required by all partners in the housing system to tackle homelessness which will ultimately result in better outcomes for Cambridgeshire's residents.
- 3.4 It also more accurately represents the need to get 'up stream' within the system in terms of tackling demand management into Council services which impacts on outcomes and ultimately expenditure for Cambridgeshire County Council. Acting preventatively with partners is an essential step and presents opportunities for public sector reform across the system.

#### **4. A JOINED UP APPROACH**

- 4.1 In July Members commented that a clear diagram of how the Council connected and interacted with all its different partners on homelessness and not just on housing would be helpful. This is included as **Appendix 2**.

#### **5. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

##### **5.1 A good quality of life for everyone**

- Housing is a fundamental human right – to have a safe place to live. The Council also has a statutory duty through the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to take steps to improve residents' health for which housing.
- Improving social and economic equality so that life expectancy, opportunity and social mobility are not determined by wealth or background.
- Using our public assets wisely and raising money in a fair and business-like way to generate social return for all citizens of Cambridgeshire.

##### **5.2 Thriving places for people to live**

- Working with District and Parish Councils, Public Sector Partners and other community organisations to provide local services which build supportive, resilient communities and great places to live.
- We want to ensure our citizens feel safe, healthy and connected to their community; that our places are integrated and possess a sense of place which supports its residents; and a system wide approach to better deliver services and community-led activity.

##### **5.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children**

- Joining services across health, education and social care to address social inequalities in our most deprived communities.
- The Council has a duty as corporate parents to support our young people into sustainable accommodation.

## 6. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

### 6.1 Resource Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Expertise has been, and will continue to be, sought from support services (such as HR, Legal) as appropriate.
- It's recognised that partnership working is fundamental to delivery.

### 6.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Any commercial opportunities would need to adhere to current procurement and contractual regulations as per existing policies.

### 6.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The report above sets out details of significant implications upon the Council's statutory duties in 1.5 and 1.6.

### 6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- There are no significant implications within this category – as anyone can be affected by housing related issues, however we are focussing our efforts on 'those in need'.

### 6.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Detailed engagement will be planned and implemented across the Council, with partners and clients impacted by the review if the recommendations are agreed by Members.

### 6.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- There is a strong interface with District Councils and Members.

### 6.7 Public Health Implications

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- Working with partners to secure sustainable good quality homes which meet the needs of our citizens is an essential building block to supporting their health and wellbeing and to reduce health inequalities.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade
Have the procurement/contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Gus de Silva

<b>Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?</b>	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan
<b>Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
<b>Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Matthew Hall
<b>Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman
<b>Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Iain Green

### **SOURCE DOCUMENTS GUIDANCE**

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
None	N/A

## Appendix 1: Action Plan

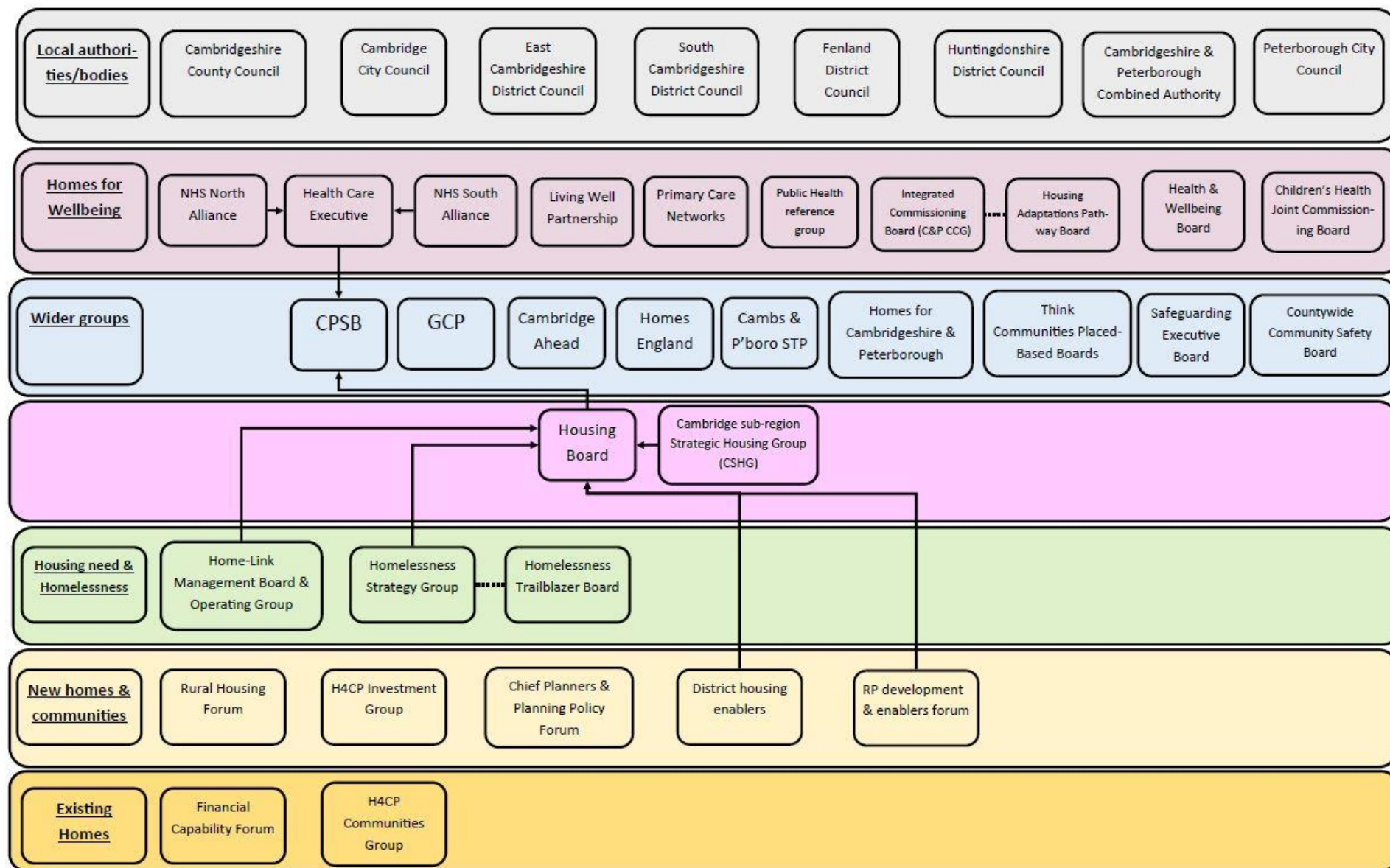
Action Plan						Progress (on / off track)
Priority	Recommendations	Complimentary activities	CCC resources	Partners	Timeframe	
Supporting our most vulnerable citizens in preventing them from becoming homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to fund initiatives through the redesigned Housing Related Support (HRS) model</li> <li>Undertake a comprehensive Needs Analysis, using HRS as a framework, to understand our clients' needs that will capture relevant and current data that will inform decisions around service delivery now, and in the future</li> </ul>	Housing First, HRS Commissioning activity, Adults Positive Challenge Programme	Commissioning Team	Districts CPSB Housing Board	Continuing through this financial year and into 20/21	On
			Commissioning Team	HRS providers	Start in September 2019 with the analysis completed by January 2020	On
Supporting our workforce to access affordable homes, particularly our lower paid but essential staff, to enable them to support the communities they live and work in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirm our interest with the developers of Northstowe to their offer of including units for low paid workers in their design, and explore the opportunities to deliver similar housing schemes in other major growth sites in Cambridgeshire</li> <li>Work with other public sector partners to ensure a joined up approach to similar schemes across the local system to</li> </ul>	Cambs 2020, Neighbourhood Cares Model, People Strategy	Growth & Development, Strengthening Communities	Developers	Confirm our interest as soon as possible; work will continue through this financial year and into 20/21	On
			HR with support from Services	Districts CPSB Housing Board	New policies in place by Spring 2020	On

	<p>maximise scarce availability of such housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formally define how we support our lower paid but essential staff</li> <li>Put in place supporting measures for new and existing staff to find a home</li> <li>Investigate where we have 'hot spots' of recruitment issues by analysing where our staff live and how they travel to work</li> <li>Review our recruitment / retention policies to ensure we are supporting our workforce</li> </ul>					
Influencing planning decisions, ensuring plans and strategies for new and existing communities maximise opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We need to build on the existing relationships with developers (and where they don't already exist we will forge new partnerships) to ensure that housing, land use planning and development strategies for new and existing communities maximise the opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of residents</li> </ul>	Supporting New Communities Strategy, Planning Obligations Strategy, Ageing Well, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy	Growth & Development, Strengthening Communities, Public Health	Districts Combined Authority Developers	Continuing through this financial year and into 20/21 and very likely beyond	On
Adopting a creative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once a comprehensive</li> </ul>	Think Communities	Property,		Will begin once	On



and commercial approach to trial new initiatives that will benefit our workforce and citizens alike.	Needs Analysis has been undertaken for our citizens (as recommended above) opportunities will then be identified as to piloting commercial ideas which will be underpinned by the Think Communities concept with the ultimate aim of easing pressure on our most vulnerable citizen groups		Finance, HR, Legal et al (depending on the solution), Transformation Team		the Needs Analysis work completed (February 2020)  Present business cases to Committees Spring 2020	On
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## Appendix 2 – Diagram Illustrating the Council’s Strategic Alliances for Homelessness and/or Housing



**FINANCE MONITORING REPORT – NOVEMBER 2019**

*To:* **Communities and Partnership Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **23 January 2020**

*From:* **Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director: People and Communities**  
**Chris Malyon, Chief Finance Officer**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Forward Plan ref:* **Not applicable**      *Key decision:* **No**

*Purpose:* **To provide the Committee with the November 2019-20 Finance Monitoring report for People and Communities (P&C).**

**The report is presented to provide the Committee with the opportunity to comment on the financial position as at the end of November 2019.**

*Recommendations:* **Committee are asked to:**

**Review and comment on the report.**

<b><i>Officer contact:</i></b>	
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Tel:	01223 699733

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1** A Finance Monitoring report for People and Communities (P&C) is produced monthly and the most recent available report is presented to the Committee when it meets.
- 1.2** The report is presented to provide the Committee with the opportunity to comment on the financial and performance position of the services for which the Committee has responsibility.
- 1.3** This report is for the whole of the P&C Service, and as such, not all of the budgets contained within it are the responsibility of this Committee. Members are requested to restrict their attention to the budget lines for which this Committee is responsible, the table below provides a summary of the budget totals relating to C&P Committee:

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Budget 2019/20 £000</b>	<b>Actual November 2019 £000</b>	<b>Forecast Outturn Variance £000</b>
Strategic Management - Communities & Safety	15	91	0
Safer Communities Partnership	880	837	0
Strengthening Communities	495	371	-0
Cambridgeshire Skills	2,438	1,302	0
<b>Total Community &amp; Safety</b>	<b>3,828</b>	<b>2,601</b>	<b>0</b>
Strategic Management – Cultural & Community Services	163	110	-0
Public Library Services	3,409	2,219	0
Cultural Services	332	115	0
Archives	440	226	0
Registration & Citizenship Services	-516	-533	-221
Coroners	1,117	1,082	353
<b>Total Cultural &amp; Community Services</b>	<b>4,946</b>	<b>3,218</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>8,774</b>	<b>5,819</b>	<b>132</b>
Grant Funding	-2,560	-2,178	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,214</b>	<b>3,641</b>	<b>132</b>

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 Cultural & Community services fall under the responsibility of C&P Committee.

## 1.4 Financial Context

The major savings agenda continues with £75m of savings required across the Council between 2019 and 2024.

Although significant savings have been made across P&C in recent years, the directorate continues to face demand pressures, particularly:

- In Children's Services related to the rising number of children in care
- Those related to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- In Older People's services where prices have risen well above inflation for residential and nursing care
- In Learning Disability services, where the needs of a relatively static number of service-users have continued to increase

## 2.0 MAIN ISSUES IN THE NOVEMBER 2019 P&C FINANCE & PERFORMANCE REPORT

### 2.1 Revenue

The November 2019 Finance Monitoring report is attached at **Appendix 1**. At the end of November the P&C forecast overspend has a revised position of £3,729k. This includes additional budget allocations as agreed by GPC in July.

Communities & Safety are forecasting an overspend of £132k, made up of a £353k overspend on Coroner Services and a £221k over-recovery of income in the Registration Service

**Coroners** is forecasting a pressure of £353k. This is due to the increasing complexity of cases being referred to the coroner that require inquest and take time to conclude, requiring more specialist reports and advice and the recruitment of additional staff to complete investigations and prevent backlogs of cases building up. The cost of essential contracts for body storage, pathology, histology and toxicology has also increased.

**The Registration & Citizenship Service** is forecasting an over-recovery of income of £221k, due to a combination of increased charges for certificates and staff vacancies.

Due to the cross-cutting nature of C&P Committee a brief summary of the other key variances forecast within P&C is provided below:

- Budgets relating to care provision for Adults and Older People are anticipated to overspend by £1.85m due to increases in both unit costs and demand. This pressure is inclusive of grant funding mitigating the position in line with the condition of the grant.
- Budgets relating to Children's Services are forecasting an overspend of £1.3m with pressures on the Children in Care Placements budget (£550k), the Legal Proceeding Budget (£400k) and the Children in Care budget (£350k).
- In Education Services a pressure of £450k is anticipated, largely due to over overspends on Home to School Special (£700k) and Mainstream (£200k) and an underspend of £400k on Children in Care Transport
- A pressure of £9m is currently anticipated on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

Further details of these variances will be reported to the relevant service committees (CYP and

Adults) and can be found in the main Finance Monitoring Report (**Appendix 1**)

## 2.2 Capital

The Capital Programme Board recommend that services include a variation budgets to account for likely slippage in the capital programme, as it is sometimes difficult to allocate this to individual schemes in advance. The allocation for P&C's negative budget has been calculated as below, updated for the transfer of Cultural and Community Services. Slippage and underspends expected in 2019/20 are currently resulting in £8.46m of the capital variations budget being utilised, £1.4m of which is due to slippage in C&CS schemes.

2019/20					
Service	Capital Programme Variations Budget £000	Forecast Outturn Variance (Nov 2019) £000	Capital Programme Variations Budget Used £000	Capital Programme Variations Budget Used %	Revised Outturn Variance (Nov 2019) £000
P&C	-13,399	-8,464	8,464	63.2%	0
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>-13,399</b>	<b>-8,464</b>	<b>8,464</b>	<b>63.2%</b>	<b>0</b>

## 3.0 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

### 3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

3.1.1 There are no significant implications for this priority.

### 3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

3.2.1 There are no significant implications for this priority

### 3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

3.3.1 There are no significant implications for this priority

## 4.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

### 4.1 Resource Implications

4.1.1 This report sets out details of the overall financial position of the P&C Service.

### 4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

4.2.1 There are no significant implications within this category.

### 4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

4.3.1 There are no significant implications within this category.

### 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

4.4.1 There are no significant implications within this category.

#### **4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications**

4.5.1 There are no significant implications within this category.

#### **4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement**

4.6.1 There are no significant implications within this category.

#### **4.7 Public Health Implications**

4.7.1 There are no significant implications within this category.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
As well as presentation of the FMR to the Committee when it meets, the report is made available online each month.	<a href="https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/finance-and-budget/finance-&amp;-performance-reports/">https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/finance-and-budget/finance-&amp;-performance-reports/</a>





<b>Service</b>	People and Communities (P&C)
<b>Subject</b>	Finance Monitoring Report – November 2019
<b>Date</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> December 2019

## **KEY INDICATORS**

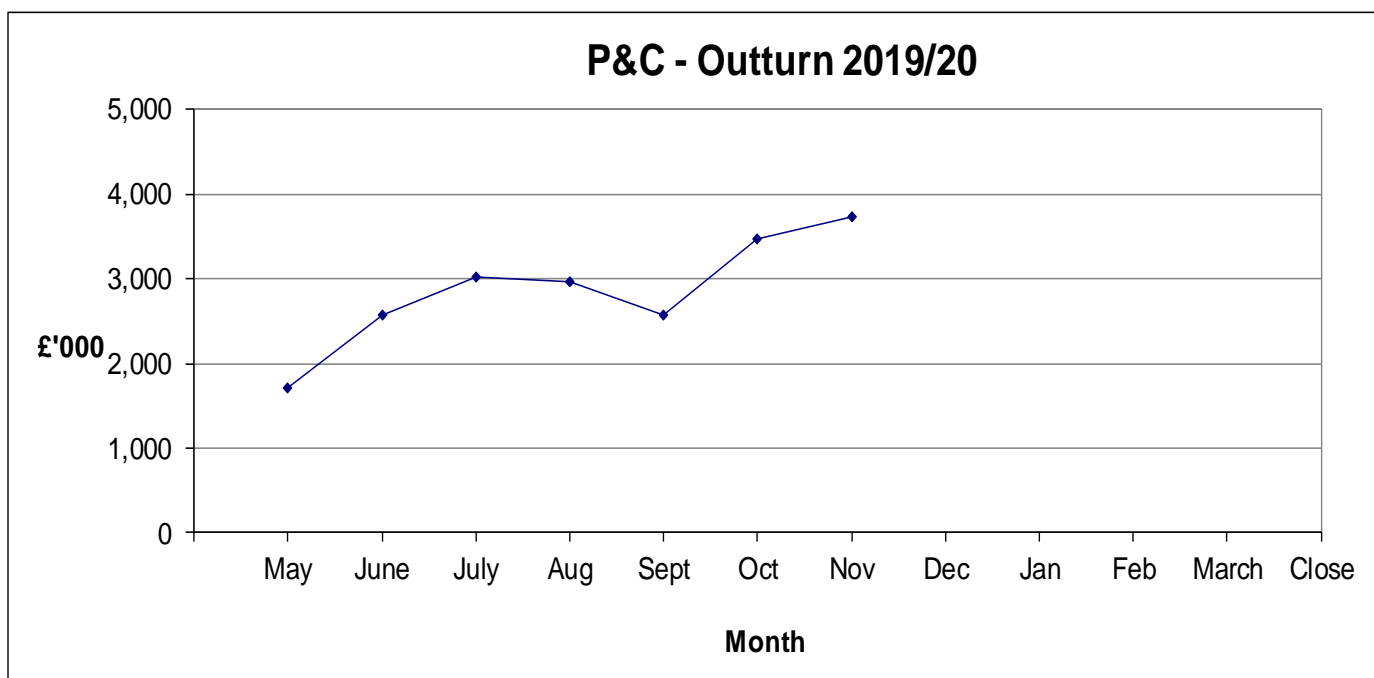
<b>Previous Status</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Section Ref.</b>
<b>Red</b>	Revenue position by Directorate	Balanced year end position	<b>Red</b>	1.2
<b>Green</b>	Capital Programme	Remain within overall resources	<b>Green</b>	2

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1	Revenue Executive Summary	High level summary of information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By Directorate</li> <li>• By Committee</li> </ul> Narrative on key issues in revenue financial position	2-6
2	Capital Executive Summary	Summary of the position of the Capital programme within P&C	7
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Appx 1	Service Level Financial Information	Detailed financial tables for P&C's main budget headings	13-15
Appx 2	Service Commentaries	Detailed notes on financial position of services that are predicting not to achieve their budget	16-22
Appx 3	Capital Appendix	This will contain more detailed information about P&C's Capital programme, including funding sources and variances from planned spend.	23-26
<i>The following appendices are not included each month as the information does not change as regularly:</i>			
Appx 4	Savings Tracker	Each quarter, the Council's savings tracker is produced to give an update of the position of savings agreed in the business plan.	
Appx 5	Technical Appendix	Twice yearly, this will contain technical financial information for P&C showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant income received</li> <li>• Budget virements into or out of P&amp;C</li> <li>• Service reserves</li> </ul>	

**1.1 Overall Position**

People and Communities is forecasting an overspend of £3,729k at the end of November, an increase of £263k since October.

**1.2 Summary of Revenue position by Directorate**

Forecast Variance Outturn (Previous) £000	Directorate	Budget 2019/20 £000	Actual £000	Outturn Variance £000	Outturn Variance %
1,301	Adults & Safeguarding	148,054	117,986	1,378	0.9%
757	Commissioning	41,984	7,805	1,070	2.5%
158	Communities & Safety	13,030	7,995	82	0.6%
750	Children & Safeguarding	59,829	39,572	750	1.3%
9,000	Education	94,210	62,996	9,450	10.0%
0	Executive Director	973	510	0	0.0%
<b>11,966</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>358,081</b>	<b>236,864</b>	<b>12,729</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
-8,500	Grant Funding	-95,145	-68,292	-9,000	9.5%
<b>3,466</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>262,935</b>	<b>168,572</b>	<b>3,729</b>	<b>1.4%</b>

### 1.3 Summary by Committee

Appendix 1

P&C's services are overseen by different committees – these tables provide committee-level summaries of services' revenue financial positions.

#### 1.3.1 Adults Committee

Forecast Variance Outturn (Previous) £000	Directorate	Budget 2019/20 £000	Actual Nov 2019 £000	Forecast Outturn Variance £000
6,040	Adults & Safeguarding	148,054	117,986	6,117
107	Adults Commissioning (including Local Assistance Scheme)	16,114	-8,213	475
<b>6,147</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>164,168</b>	<b>109,773</b>	<b>6,591</b>
0	Grant Funding (including Better Care Fund, Winter Pressures Grant etc.)	-15,138	-9,855	0
-4,739	Expected deployment of grant and other funding to meet pressures			-4,739
<b>1,408</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>149,030</b>	<b>99,917</b>	<b>1,852</b>

#### 1.3.2 Children and Young People Committee

Forecast Variance Outturn (Previous) £000	Directorate	Budget 2019/20 £000	Actual Nov 2019 £000	Forecast Outturn Variance £000
650	Children's Commissioning	25,858	15,804	550
0	Communities & Safety - Youth Offending Service	2,163	1,167	-50
0	Communities & Safety - Central Integrated Youth Support Services	1,399	700	-0
750	Children & Safeguarding	59,829	39,572	750
9,000	Education	95,093	63,482	9,450
0	Executive Director (Exec D and Central Financing)	91	24	0
<b>10,400</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>184,433</b>	<b>120,749</b>	<b>10,700</b>
-8,500	Grant Funding (including Dedicated Schools Grant etc.)	-77,448	-56,259	-9,000
<b>1,900</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>106,986</b>	<b>64,491</b>	<b>1,700</b>

#### 1.3.3 Community and Partnerships Committee

Forecast Variance Outturn (Previous) £000	Directorate	Budget 2019/20 £000	Actual Nov 2019 £000	Forecast Outturn Variance £000
0	Strategic Management - Communities & Safety	15	91	0
0	Safer Communities Partnership	880	837	0
0	Strengthening Communities	495	371	-0
0	Adult Learning and Skills	2,438	1,302	0
0	Trading Standards	694	309	0
158	Cultural & Community Services	4,946	3,218	132
<b>158</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>9,468</b>	<b>6,128</b>	<b>132</b>
0	Grant Funding (including Dedicated Schools Grant etc.)	-2,560	-2,178	0
<b>158</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,908</b>	<b>3,950</b>	<b>132</b>

## 1.4 Significant Issues

Appendix 1

Within People and Communities, the major savings agenda continues with £75m of savings required across the Council between 2019 and 2024. P&C budgets are facing increasing pressures from rising demand and changes in legislation, with the directorate's budget increasing by around 3% in 2019/20.

At the end of November 2019, the overall P&C position is an overspend of £3,729k, around 1.4% of budget. This is an increase of around £263k from October.

The projected overspend are concentrated in adult social care, children in care and education – these key areas are summarized below. Appendix 1 provides the detailed financial information by service, and appendix 2 provides a narrative from those services projecting a significant variance against budget.

### 1.4.1 Adults

Similar to councils nationally, cost pressures are faced by adult social care. At the end of November, Adults services are forecast to overspend by £1,852k, around 1.1% of budget. This is £443k more than in October. Within that, budgets relating to care provision are forecasting a £6.8m overspend, mitigated by around £4.7m of additional funding.

There remains a risk of volatility in care cost projections due to the large volume of care being purchased each month, the continuing focus on reduced delayed discharges from the NHS, ongoing negotiations with providers around the rates paid for care, and the continuing implementation of Mosaic (the new social care recording and payments system).

**Older People's and Physical Disability Services** are continuing to forecast an overspend of £5.4m. The cause of the overspend is predominantly the higher than expected costs of residential and nursing care compared to when budgets were set, in part due to the ongoing focus on discharging people from hospital as quickly as is appropriate. A detailed explanation of the pressures due to prior-year activity was provided to Adults Committee and GPC in the first reports of the financial year, and much of the further in-year pressure is due to the trends in price increases continuing.

**The Learning Disability Partnership** is forecast to overspend by £598k, with the NHS paying a further £178k as part of the pooled budget. This is a relatively static cohort of service users whose needs have been increasing year on year in line with experiences nationally. Based on changes over the first half of the year, we expect these increases to exceed the level built into budgets. In particular, the cost of young people transitioning into adults is high, linked to rising cost of services for children with high needs. Savings delivery within the LDP is on track to overachieve, which provides some mitigation.

**Strategic Management – Adults** contains grant and financing mitigations that are partially offsetting care pressures. Government has continued to recognise pressures on the social care system through the Adult Social Care Precept and a number of ringfenced grants. As well as using these grants to make investments into social care to bolster the social care market, reduce demand on health and social care services and mitigate delayed transfers of care, we are able to hold a portion as a contingency against in-year care pressures. As pressures emerged, this funding is deployed effectively as an underspend against this line.

**Adults Commissioning** is projected to overspend by £481k, mainly as a result of increased demand on some centrally commissioned preventative and lower-level services. In particular, the community equipment service is facing rising costs due to more complex equipment being ordered and used for longer (likely preventing higher cost care being required), and more block purchased domiciliary care has been contracted this year than originally budgeted for to provide more capacity over the Winter period and to support the system pressures on delayed discharges.

### 1.4.2 Children's

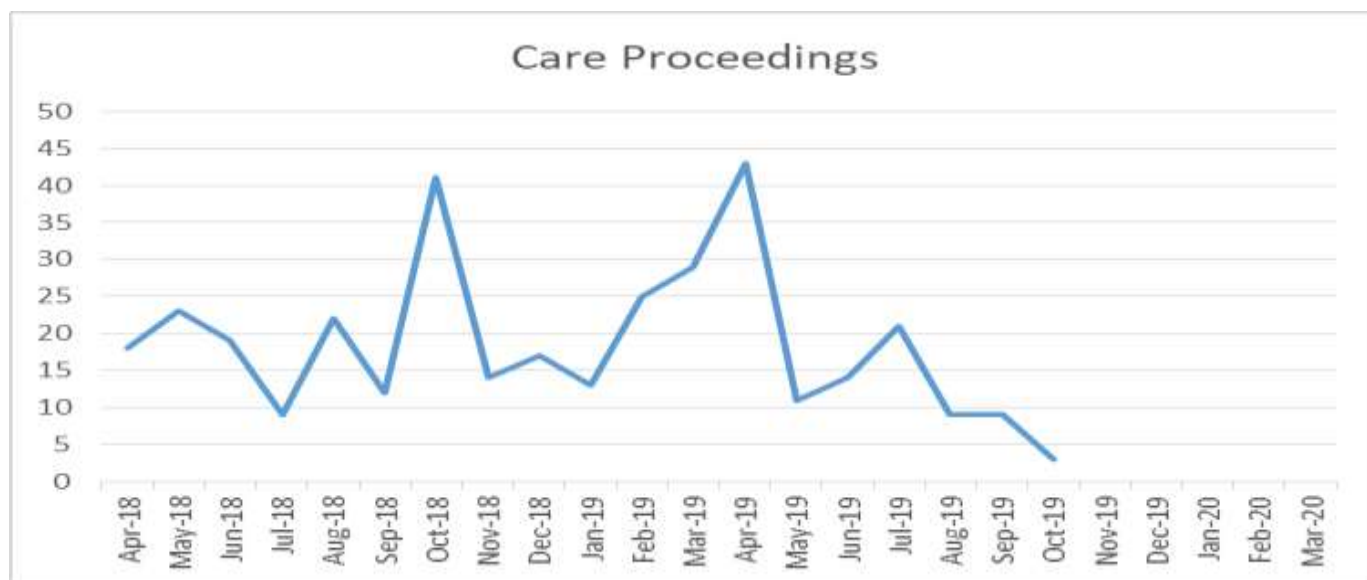
*Children in Care* is anticipating a pressure of c£350k across Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children budgets (£200k) and Supervised Contact (£150k). These pressures are offset in part by a forecast underspend across Fostering and the Corporate Parenting Teams. The service is working to mitigate these pressures by reviewing all applicable arrangements in order to attempt to bring these into line with the amount of government funding available.

*Children in Care Placements* is forecasting a year end overspend of £550k, despite a decrease in the number of children in care, an additional budget allocation of £350k as approved by GPC and the application of £500k of additional social care grant. Recent activity in relation to gang-related crime has resulted in additional high cost secure placements being required.

Significant work is underway to reduce high cost placements, however the placement market is saturated, with IFA providers having no vacancies which results in children going into higher cost residential placements. We are, however, seeing a net increase in, in-house fostering placements which is contributing towards planned savings.

*Legal Proceedings* is forecasting a £400k overspend. This is directly linked to numbers of care proceedings per month which increased by 72% for the period Feb to Apr 19 compared to the preceding 10 months. The spike in proceedings is related to the introduction of the new model of specialist teams, and greater scrutiny and management oversight. This has resulted in the identification of children for whom more urgent action was required. This is an illustration of the way in which the new model will improve services and outcomes in general. Following legal orders we are able to move to securing permanency for children.

There are currently (end Nov) 177 live care proceedings, and whilst we have seen reductions in live proceedings (183 end July) legacy cases and associated costs are still working through the system and causing significant pressure on the legal budget. The expectation is that reductions in live proceedings will continue, further mitigating the overall pressure.



### 1.4.3 Education

*Home to School Transport – Special* is forecasting a revised overspend of £700k. We are continuing to see significant increases in pupils with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and those attending special schools, leading to a corresponding increase in transport costs. Between

1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019 there was an increase in the number of pupils with EHCPs of 379 (8.9%), compared with 307 (8%) over the same period last year. Appendix 1

Alongside this, we are seeing an increase in complexity of need resulting in assessments being made that the child/young person requires individual transport, and, in many cases, a passenger assistant to accompany them.

*Children in Care Transport* is forecasting an underspend of £400k – Ongoing work around route optimisation, combined with decreasing numbers of Children in Care have resulted in lower than budgeted costs, despite the pressures on the wider transport market.

*Home to School Transport – Mainstream* is reporting an anticipated £200k overspend for 2019/20. While savings were achieved as part of the annual tender process we are continuing to see a significant increase in the costs being quoted for routes in some areas of the county, these increases being in excess of the inflation that was built into the budget. Where routes are procured at particularly high rates these are agreed on a short-term basis only with a view to reviewing and retendering at a later date in order to reduce spend where possible, however these subsequent reductions cannot be guaranteed.

There have also been pressures due to the number of in-year admission requests when the local school is full. These situations require us to provide transport to schools further away, outside statutory walking distance. The effect on the transport budget is taken into account when pupils are placed in-year which has mitigated the effect of this to some degree, however in many cases the only viable transport is an individual or low-occupancy taxi.

*Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)* – Initial in-year pressures have been forecast for a number of DSG funded High Needs Block budgets including funding for special schools and units, top-up funding for mainstream schools and Post-16 provision, and out of school tuition. As previously reported In 2018/19 we saw a total DSG overspend across SEND services of £8.7m which, combined with underspends on other DSG budgets, led to a deficit of £7.2m carried forward into 2019/20. Given the ongoing increase in numbers of pupils with EHCPs it is likely that a similar overspend will occur in 2019/20, however this will become clearer as we move towards the start of the new academic year and planned actions to deliver savings are implemented. Current estimates forecast an in-year pressure of approximately £9m. This is a ring-fenced grant and, as such, overspends do not currently affect the Council's bottom line but are carried forward as a deficit balance into the next year.

#### **1.4.4 Communities and Safety**

*Registration & Citizenship Services* are forecasting a surplus of £221k. An increase in the statutory charge for birth, marriage and death certificates has resulted in an over-recovery of income in the service. This increase is expected to continue into future years and as such has been recognised as part of the 2020/21 Business Plan.

*Coroners* is now forecasting an increased pressure of £353k. This is due to the increasing complexity of cases being referred to the coroner that require inquest and take time to conclude, requiring more specialist reports and advice and the recruitment of additional staff to complete investigations and prevent backlogs of cases building up. The cost of essential contracts for body storage, pathology, histology and toxicology has also increased.

## 2. Capital Executive Summary

### 2019/20 In Year Pressures/Slippage

At the end of November 2019 the capital programme forecast underspend continues to be zero. The level of slippage and underspend in 2019/20 is currently anticipated to be £8.4m and, as such, has not yet exceeded the revised Capital Variation Budget of £13.4m. A forecast outturn will not be reported unless this happens.

Details of the currently forecasted capital variances can be found in appendix 3.

## 3. Savings Tracker Summary

The savings tracker is produced quarterly, and will be included in the FMR once per quarter. The tracker at the end of quarter 2 is included as appendix 4, with a summary position of:

Committee	Number of Savings	Total Original Savings £000	Total Forecast Savings £000	Total Variance £000
Adults	9	-6,782	-6,810	-28
C&P	2	-60	-60	0
C&YP	14	-3,419	-3,404	15
Adults & CYP	1	-583	-321	262
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>-10,844</b>	<b>-10,595</b>	<b>249</b>

Further information and commentary for each saving can be found in appendix 4.

## 4. Technical note

On a biannual basis, a technical financial appendix will be included as appendix 5. This appendix will cover:

- Grants that have been received by the service, and where these have been more or less than expected
- Budget movements (virements) into or out of P&C from other services (but not within P&C), to show why the budget might be different from that agreed by Full Council
- Service reserves – funds held for specific purposes that may be drawn down in-year or carried-forward – including use of funds and forecast draw-down.

## 5. Key Activity Data

### Appendix 1

The Actual Weekly Costs for all clients shown in section 2.5.1-2 are calculated based on all clients who have received a service, are receiving a service, or we plan will receive a service. Some clients will have ceased receiving a service in previous months, or during this month, or we will have assumed an end date in the future.

### 5.1 Children and Young People

5.1.1 Key activity data to November 2019 for **Children in Care Placements** is shown below:

	BUDGET				ACTUAL (Nov)				VARIANCE		
Service Type	No of placements Budgeted	Annual Budget	No. of weeks funded	Average weekly cost per head	Snapshot of No. of placements Nov 19	Yearly Average	Forecast Outturn	Average weekly cost per head	Yearly Average budgeted no. of placements	Net Variance to Budget	Average weekly cost diff +/-
Residential - disability	3	£425k	52	2,980.70	3	2.94	£455k	3,128.48	-0.06	£29k	147.78
Residential - secure accommodation	1	£376k	52	5,872.95	0	1.81	£613k	6,269.93	0.81	£237k	396.98
Residential schools	19	£2,836k	52	2,804.78	14	15.61	£1,736k	2,056.15	-3.83	-£1,099k	-748.63
Residential homes	33	£6,534k	52	3,704.67	37	36.87	£7,052k	4,025.67	3.87	£518k	321.00
Independent Fostering	240	£11,173k	52	798.42	289	298.57	£12,917k	851.88	58.69	£1,744k	53.46
Supported Accommodation	26	£1,594k	52	1,396.10	25	21.93	£1,584k	1,427.92	-4.35	-£10k	31.82
16+	7	£130k	52	351.26	7	7.98	£313k	491.04	0.86	£183k	139.78
Growth/Replacement	-	£k	-	-	-	-	£k	-	-	£k	-
Additional one off budget/actuals	-	£750k	-	-	-	-	-£144k	-	-	-£894k	-
Mitigations required	0	£k	0	0.00	0	0.00	-£58k	0.00	-	-£58k	0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>£23,819k</b>			<b>375</b>	<b>385.71</b>	<b>£24,469k</b>		<b>55.98</b>	<b>£650k</b>	
In-house fostering - Basic	205	£2,125k	56	179.01	185	190.09	£1,958k	179.35	-14.91	-£167k	0.34
In-house fostering - Skills	205	£1,946k	52	182.56	192	203.43	£1,890k	195.14	-1.57	-£56k	12.58
Kinship - Basic	40	£425k	56	189.89	41	43.45	£467k	195.20	3.45	£42k	5.31
Kinship - Skills	10	£35k	52	67.42	13	12.25	£46k	70.76	2.25	£11k	3.34
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>£4,531k</b>			<b>226</b>	<b>233.54</b>	<b>£4,362k</b>		<b>-11.46</b>	<b>-£169k</b>	
Adoption Allowances	107	£1,107k	52	198.98	106	106.36	£1,162k	200.76	-0.64	£55k	10.80
Special Guardianship Orders	307	£2,339k	52	142.30	281	265.00	£2,074k	141.48	-42	-£265k	-2.18
Child Arrangement Orders	88	£703k	52	153.66	87	88.04	£712k	156.00	0.04	£9k	2.34
Concurrent Adoption	5	£91k	52	350.00	1	0.78	£7k	210.00	-4.22	-£84k	-140.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>£4,240k</b>			<b>475</b>	<b>469.61</b>	<b>£3,955k</b>		<b>-0.64</b>	<b>-£285k</b>	
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>1,082</b>	<b>£32,590k</b>			<b>1076</b>	<b>1,088.86</b>	<b>£32,785k</b>		<b>43.88</b>	<b>£196k</b>	

NOTE: In house Fostering and Kinship basic payments fund 56 weeks as carers receive two additional weeks payment during the Summer holidays, one additional week payment at Christmas and a birthday payment.



**5.1.2 Key activity data to the end of November 2019 for SEN Placements** is shown below:  
Appendix 1

BUDGET				ACTUAL (Nov 19)				VARIANCE			
Ofsted Code	No. of Placements Budgeted	Total Cost to SEN Placements Budget	Average annual cost	No of placements Nov 19	Yearly Average	Total Cost to SEN Placements Budget	Average Annual Cost	No of Placements	Yearly Average	Total Cost to SEN Placements Budget	Average Annual Cost
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	102	£6,218k	£61k	95	97.81	£5,860k	£60k	-7	-4.19	£-357k	£-1k
Hearing Impairment (HI)	3	£117k	£39k	3	3.00	£116k	£39k	0	0.00	£-1k	£k
Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD)	10	£200k	£20k	9	8.39	£409k	£49k	-1	-1.61	£209k	£29k
Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)	1	£75k	£75k	0	0.00	£0k	-	-1	-1.00	£-75k	£k
Physical Disability (PD)	5	£89k	£18k	5	4.94	£199k	£40k	0	-0.06	£109k	£22k
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)	1	£68k	£68k	1	1.00	£67k	£67k	0	0.00	£-1k	£-1k
Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)	45	£2,013k	£45k	48	44.45	£2,462k	£55k	3	-0.55	£449k	£11k
Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)	3	£138k	£46k	5	5.00	£247k	£49k	2	2.00	£109k	£3k
Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)	5	£445k	£89k	6	6.34	£431k	£68k	1	1.34	£-14k	£-21k
Specific Learning Difficulty (SPLD)	4	£138k	£35k	6	5.42	£195k	£36k	2	1.42	£57k	£1k
Visual Impairment (VI)	2	£73k	£36k	3	2.59	£96k	£37k	1	0.59	£23k	£1k
Growth	-	£k	-	-	-	£-509k	-	-	-	£-509k	-
Recoupment	-	-	-	0	0.00	£k	£k	-	-	£k	£k
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>£9,573k</b>	<b>£53k</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>178.94</b>	<b>£9,573k</b>	<b>£56k</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-2.06</b>	<b>£k</b>	<b>£3k</b>

## 5.2 Adults

In the following key activity data for Adults & Safeguarding, the information given in each column is as follows:

- Budgeted number of care packages: this is the number of full-time equivalent (52 weeks) service users anticipated at budget setting
- Budgeted average unit cost: this is the planned unit cost per service user per week, given the budget available
- Actual care packages and cost: these figures are derived from a snapshot of the commitment record at the end of the month and reflect current numbers of service users and average cost

A consistent format is used to aid understanding, and where care types are not currently used in a particular service those lines are greyed out.

The direction of travel compares the current month's figure with the previous months.

**5.2.1 Key activity data to end of November 2019 for the Learning Disability Partnership** is shown below: Appendix 1

Learning Disability Partnership	BUDGET			ACTUAL (November 19)				Forecast		
Service Type	Expected No. of Care Packages 2019/20	Budgeted Average Unit Cost (per week)	Annual Budget	Current Care Packages	D o T	Current Average Unit Cost (per week)	D o T	Forecast Actual	D o T	Variance
Accommodation based										
~ Residential	274	£1,510	£21,824k	255 ↓		£1,608 ↓		£22,897k ↑		£1,073k
~Residential Dementia										
~Nursing	7	£1,586	£430k	6 ↔		£1,478 ↔		£474k ↓		£44k
~Nursing Dementia										
~Respite			£431k					£579k		£147k
Community based										
~Supported Living	411	£1,202	£26,683k	455 ↓		£1,155 ↓		£27,793k ↑		£1,110k
~Direct payments	415	£404	£8,568k	420 ↑		£406 ↓		£8,375k ↓		-£193k
~Live In Care	14	£1,953	£k	14 ↔		£1,943 ↔		£k		£k
~Day Care	469	£136	£3,480k	470 ↔		£170 ↓		£3,932k ↑		£451k
~Other Care	175	£68	£759k	58 ↓		£42 ↓		£953k ↑		£194k
~Homecare	474		£10,440k	323				£8,460k ↓		-£1,980k
Total In Year Expenditure			£72,616k					£73,462k		£847k
Care Contributions			-£3,407k					-£3,954k ↑		-£547k
Health Income										
Total In Year Income			-£3,407k					-£3,954k		-£547k
Further savings included within forecast										£k
Forecast total in year care costs										£300k

The LDP includes service-users that are fully funded by the NHS, who generally have very high needs and therefore costly care packages

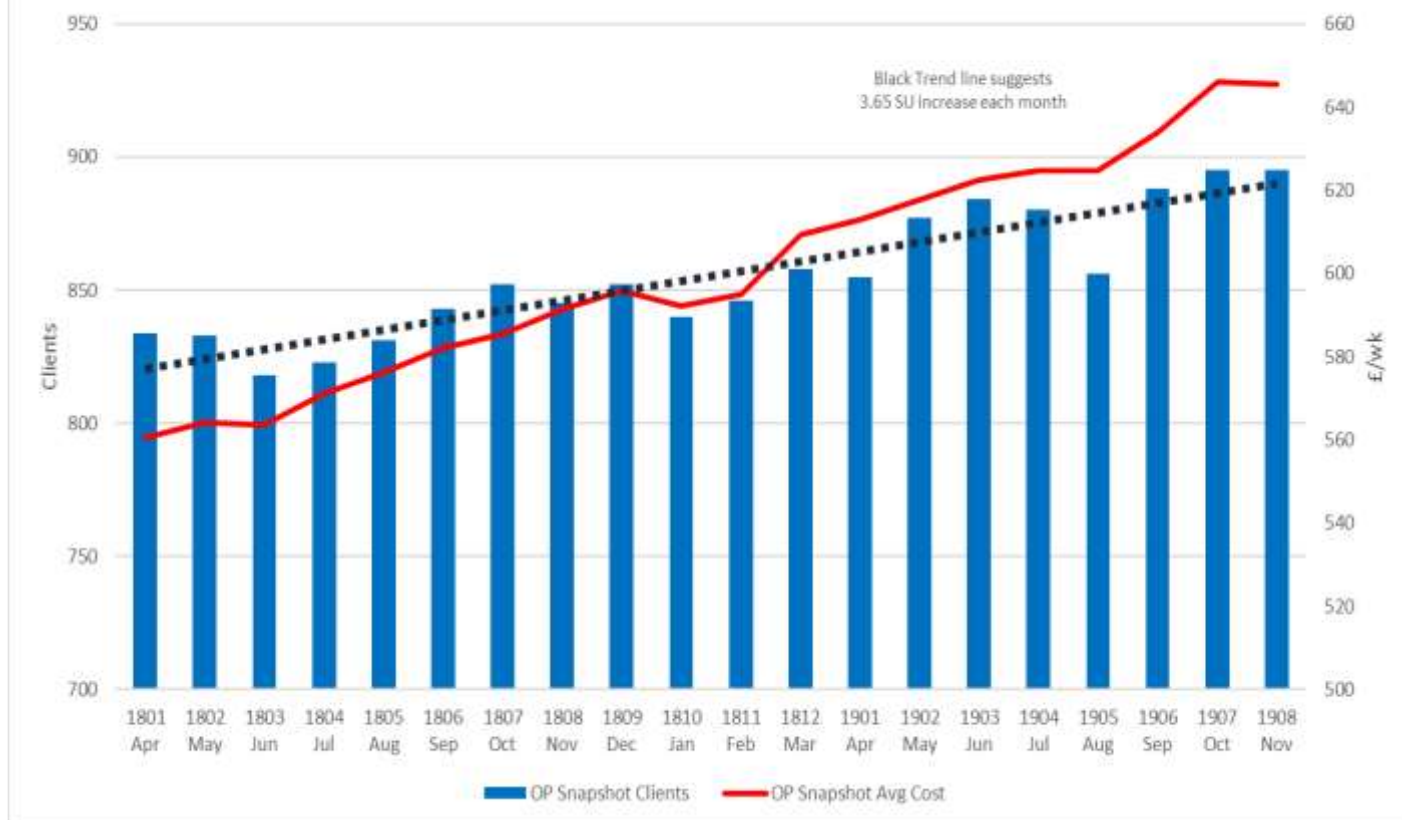
**5.2.2 Key activity data to the end of November 2019 for Older People's (OP) Services** is shown below:

Older People	BUDGET			ACTUAL (November 19)				Forecast		
Service Type	Expected No. of Care Packages 2019/20	Budgeted Average Unit Cost (per week)	Annual Budget	Current Care Packages	D o T	Current Average Unit Cost (per week)	D o T	Forecast Actual	D o T	Variance
Accommodation based										
~ Residential	446	£551	£11,791k	438	↑	£565	↓	£13,378k	↓	£1,587k
~Residential Dementia	432	£586	£13,271k	426	↑	£612	↑	£14,086k	↓	£815k
~Nursing	289	£643	£10,234k	260	↓	£654	↑	£9,736k	↓	-£498k
~Nursing Dementia	113	£753	£4,543k	123	↓	£810	↓	£5,708k	↓	£1,165k
~Respite			£1,733k					£1,585k	↓	-£148k
Community based										
~Supported Living	116		£4,043k	110	↔			£4,597k	↓	£554k
~Direct payments	208	£287	£2,921k	194	↑	£293	↑	£2,735k	↓	-£186k
~Live In Care	27	£779	£1,012k	32	↔	£832	↑	£1,197k	↓	£185k
~Day Care	43	£82	£1,447k	24	↓	£108	↑	£845k	↓	-£602k
~Other Care	6	£31	£11k	3	↓	£32	↓	£126k	↓	£115k
~Homecare	1,127	Per Hour £16.43	£11,270k	1,150	↓	Per Hour £16.37	↔	£11,537k	↓	£267k
Total In Year Expenditure			£62,277k					£65,530k		£3,253k
Care Contributions			-£17,732k					-£18,517k	↓	-£785k
Health Income			-£86k					-£86k	↔	£k
Total In Year Income			-£17,818k					-£18,603k		-£785k
										£k
Inflation and uplifts			£87k					£87k	↔	£k
Forecast total in year care costs			£44,545k					£47,013k		£2,469k

Appendix 1

## OP Spot Activity and Weekly Cost for Care Homes from April 2018

Appendix 1



**5.2.3** Key activity data to the end of November 2019 for **Physical Disabilities (OP)** Services is shown below:

Physical Disabilities	BUDGET			ACTUAL (November 19)				Forecast		
Service Type	Expected No. of Care Packages 2019/20	Budgeted Average Unit Cost (per week)	Annual Budget	Current Care Packages	Difference	Current Average Unit Cost (per week)	Difference	Forecast Actual	Difference	Variance
Accommodation based										
~ Residential	41	£786	£1,790k	35	↔	£1,030	↑	£1,893k	↑	£102k
~ Residential Dementia	1	£620	£32k	2	↔	£685	↔	£59k	↔	£27k
~ Nursing	31	£832	£1,441k	30	↑	£1,002	↑	£1,511k	↑	£71k
~ Nursing Dementia	1	£792	£41k	1	↔	£792	↔	£41k	↔	£k
~ Respite			£220k					£123k	↑	-£97k
Community based										
~ Supported Living	7	£774	£258k	3	↔	£995	↔	£222k	↓	-£35k
~ Direct payments	288	£357	£5,188k	273	↑	£1,361	↔	£5,003k	↑	-£184k
~ Live In Care	29	£808	£1,359k	33	↑	£367	↑	£1,389k	↑	£30k
~ Day Care	48	£70	£181k	27	↔	£813	↓	£141k	↑	-£40k
~ Other Care	4	£39	£4k	0	↔	£87	↔	£14k	↓	£11k
~ Homecare	257	Per Hour £16.37	£2,777k	280	↑	Per Hour £17.15	↔	£3,018k	↑	£240k
Total In Year Expenditure			£13,291k					£13,416k		£126k
Care Contributions			-£1,062k					-£1,157k	↓	-£95k
Health Income			-£561k					-£561k	↔	£k
Total In Year Income			-£1,623k					-£1,718k		-£95k
Inflation and Uplifts									↔	£k
Forecast total in year care costs			£11,668k					£11,698k		£31k

## 5.2.4 Key activity data to the end of November 2019 for Older People Mental Health (OPMH) Services is shown below:

Appendix 1

Older People Mental Health	BUDGET			ACTUAL (November 19)				Forecast		
Service Type	Expected No. of Care Packages 2019/20	Budgeted Average Unit Cost (per week)	Annual Budget	Current Care Packages	D o T	Current Average Unit Cost (per week)	D o T	Forecast Actual	D o T	Variance
Accommodation based										
~Residential	25	£528	£691k	22	↑	£653	↓	£745k	↓	£54k
~Residential Dementia	23	£539	£648k	26	↔	£607	↑	£766k	↑	£118k
~Nursing	25	£638	£833k	19	↓	£742	↑	£792k	↓	-£41k
~Nursing Dementia	80	£736	£3,079k	75	↓	£834	↓	£3,110k	↓	£31k
~Respite	1	£137	£7k	0	↔	£0	↔	£k	↔	-£7k
Community based										
~Supported Living	5	£212	£55k	5	↑	£406	↓	£105k	↑	£50k
~Direct payments	7	£434	£149k	7	↔	£271	↔	£122k	↑	-£27k
~Live In Care	2	£912	£95k	5	↔	£1,084	↔	£263k	↑	£168k
~Day Care	2	£37	£4k	2	↔	£30	↔	£3k	↔	-£1k
~Other Care	0	£0	£k	1	↔	£11	↔	£24k	↑	£24k
~Homecare	42	Per Hour £16.49	£406k	43	↔	Per Hour £17.45	↔	£405k	↓	-£1k
Total In Year Expenditure			£5,967k					£6,335k		£368k
Care Contributions			-£851k					-£857k	↑	-£6k
Health Income			£k					£k	↔	£k
Total In Year Income			-£851k					-£857k		-£6k
Inflation Funding to be applied			£184k					£110k		-£74k
Forecast total in year care costs			£5,300k					£5,588k		£288k

## 5.2.5 Key activity data to end of November 2019 for Adult Mental Health Services is shown below:

Adult Mental Health	BUDGET			ACTUAL (November 19)				Forecast		
Service Type	Expected No. of Care Packages 2019/20	Budgeted Average Unit Cost (per week)	Annual Budget	Current Care Packages	D o T	Current Average Unit Cost (per week)	D o T	Forecast Actual	D o T	Variance
Accommodation based										
~Residential	58	£654	£1,984k	60	↑	£713	↑	£2,201k	↑	£217k
~Residential Dementia	5	£743	£194k	6	↔	£776	↔	£238k	↔	£44k
~Nursing	16	£612	£512k	15	↑	£667	↑	£495k	↓	-£17k
~Nursing Dementia	1	£624	£33k	1	↔	£629	↔	£33k	↔	£k
~Respite	0	£0	£k	0	↔	£0	↔	£k	↔	£k
Community based										
~Supported Living	123	£162	£1,041k	116	↓	£111	↓	£798k	↓	-£243k
~Direct payments	9	£355	£167k	14	↑	£305	↓	£230k	↑	£63k
~Live In Care	0	£0	£k	3	↑	£970	↑	£58k	↑	£58k
~Day Care	2	£77	£8k	3	↔	£55	↔	£10k	↔	£2k
~Other Care	1	£152	£8k	0	↔	£0	↔	£20k	↑	£12k
~Homecare	140	£80.00	£586k	60	↑	£116.38	↑	£542k	↑	-£44k
Total In Year Expenditure			£4,533k					£4,626k		£93k
Care Contributions			-£396k					-£335k	↑	£61k
Health Income			-£22k					£k		£22k
Total In Year Income			-£418k					-£335k		£83k
Inflation Funding to be applied			£k					£k		
			£134k					£97k		-£37k
Forecast total in year care costs			£4,249k					£4,388k		£139k

Forecast Outturn Variance (October)  £'000	Service		Budget 2019/20  £'000	Actual November 2019  £'000	Outturn Variance  £'000   %	
Adults & Safeguarding Directorate						
-4,797	1	Strategic Management - Adults	-1,571	11,848	-4,778	-304%
0		Transfers of Care	1,836	1,403	0	0%
38		Prevention & Early Intervention	8,774	6,930	41	0%
0		Principal Social Worker, Practice and Safeguarding	1,404	994	0	0%
13		Autism and Adult Support	987	548	-4	0%
-216	2	Carers	416	99	-216	-52%
Learning Disability Partnership						
0		Head of Service	5,781	3,639	0	0%
-24	3	LD - City, South and East Localities	35,304	24,109	-24	0%
432	3	LD - Hunts & Fenland Localities	28,298	18,743	432	2%
300	3	LD - Young Adults	7,921	5,252	300	4%
55	3	In House Provider Services	6,396	4,403	68	1%
-175	3	NHS Contribution to Pooled Budget	-19,109	-14,332	-178	-1%
588	Learning Disability Partnership Total		64,591	41,815	598	1%
Older People and Physical Disability Services						
140	4	Physical Disabilities	12,338	9,947	200	2%
843	5	OP - City & South Locality	20,610	14,812	882	4%
825	5	OP - East Cambs Locality	6,565	5,264	938	14%
1,420	5	OP - Fenland Locality	7,977	6,502	1,706	21%
1,912	5	OP - Hunts Locality	10,921	9,163	1,693	16%
5,360	Older People's and Physical Disabilities Total		58,411	45,688	5,420	9%
Mental Health						
-174	6	Mental Health Central	1,973	1,148	-187	-9%
106	6	Adult Mental Health Localities	5,445	3,482	215	4%
384	6	Older People Mental Health	5,788	4,030	289	5%
316	Mental Health Total		13,205	8,661	317	2%
1,301	Adult & Safeguarding Directorate Total		148,054	117,986	1,378	1%
Commissioning Directorate						
0		Strategic Management –Commissioning	11	214	45	396%
0		Access to Resource & Quality	1,795	1,046	0	0%
-6		Local Assistance Scheme	300	214	-6	-2%
Adults Commissioning						
101	7	Central Commissioning - Adults	11,095	-11,964	513	5%
124		Integrated Community Equipment Service	1,024	1,356	80	8%
-113	8	Mental Health Commissioning	3,696	2,181	-113	-3%
113	Adults Commissioning Total		15,814	-8,427	481	3%

Forecast Outturn Variance (October)  £'000	Service	Budget 2019/20  £'000	Actual November 2019  £'000	Appendix 1 Outturn Variance	
				£'000	%
	<u>Childrens Commissioning</u>				
650	<sup>9</sup> Children in Care Placements	23,819	14,636	550	2%
-0	Commissioning Services	245	123	-0	0%
<b>650</b>	<b>Childrens Commissioning Total</b>	<b>24,064</b>	<b>14,758</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>757</b>	<b>Commissioning Directorate Total</b>	<b>41,984</b>	<b>7,805</b>	<b>1,070</b>	<b>3%</b>
	<b>Communities &amp; Safety Directorate</b>				
0	Strategic Management - Communities & Safety	15	91	0	0%
0	Youth Offending Service	2,163	1,167	-50	-2%
-0	Central Integrated Youth Support Services	1,399	700	-0	0%
0	Safer Communities Partnership	880	837	0	0%
-0	Strengthening Communities	495	371	-0	0%
0	Adult Learning & Skills	2,438	1,302	0	0%
0	Trading Standards	694	309	0	0%
<b>0</b>	<b>Community &amp; Safety Total</b>	<b>8,084</b>	<b>4,777</b>	<b>-50</b>	<b>-1%</b>
-0	Strategic Management - Cultural & Community Services	163	110	-0	0%
0	Public Library Services	3,409	2,219	0	0%
0	Cultural Services	332	115	0	0%
0	Archives	440	226	0	0%
-155	<sup>10</sup> Registration & Citizenship Services	-516	-533	-221	-43%
313	<sup>11</sup> Coroners	1,117	1,082	353	32%
<b>158</b>	<b>Cultural &amp; Community Services Total</b>	<b>4,946</b>	<b>3,218</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>158</b>	<b>Communities &amp; Safety Directorate Total</b>	<b>13,030</b>	<b>7,995</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>1%</b>
	<b>Children &amp; Safeguarding Directorate</b>				
0	Strategic Management – Children & Safeguarding	3,198	2,660	-0	0%
-0	Partnerships and Quality Assurance	2,326	1,375	-0	0%
350	<sup>12</sup> Children in Care	15,737	11,883	350	2%
0	Integrated Front Door	1,974	1,530	0	0%
-0	Children's Disability Service	6,598	4,547	-0	0%
-0	Children's Centre Strategy	29	-3	-0	0%
0	Support to Parents	1,749	612	0	0%
-0	Adoption Allowances	5,772	3,624	-0	0%
400	<sup>13</sup> Legal Proceedings	1,970	1,421	400	20%
	<u>District Delivery Service</u>				
0	Safeguarding Hunts and Fenland	3,741	2,575	0	0%
-0	Safeguarding East + South Cambs & Cambridge	6,773	3,116	-0	0%
0	Early Help District Delivery Service –North	5,342	3,079	0	0%
-0	Early Help District Delivery Service – South	4,619	3,152	-0	0%
<b>-0</b>	<b>District Delivery Service Total</b>	<b>20,475</b>	<b>11,923</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>750</b>	<b>Children &amp; Safeguarding Directorate Total</b>	<b>59,829</b>	<b>39,572</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>1%</b>

Appendix 1						
Forecast Outturn Variance (October)  £'000	Service		Budget 2019/20  £'000	Actual November 2019  £'000	Outturn Variance	
					£'000	%
Education Directorate						
0		Strategic Management - Education	7,069	2,318	0	0%
0		Early Years' Service	2,122	1,389	0	0%
0		Schools Curriculum Service	166	-82	0	0%
0		Schools Intervention Service	969	540	0	0%
0		Schools Partnership service	537	1,010	0	0%
0		Teachers' Pensions & Redundancy	2,910	1,601	-50	-2%
SEND Specialist Services (0-25 years)						
0		SEND Specialist Services	9,643	6,794	0	0%
3,500	14	Funding for Special Schools and Units	16,849	12,966	3,500	21%
2,500	14	High Needs Top Up Funding	17,100	13,313	3,000	18%
500	14	Special Educational Needs Placements	9,973	7,374	500	5%
2,000	14	Out of School Tuition	1,519	1,641	2,000	132%
8,500		SEND Specialist Services (0 - 25 years) Total	55,083	42,088	9,000	16%
Infrastructure						
0		0-19 Organisation & Planning	4,068	3,029	0	0%
0		Early Years Policy, Funding & Operations	94	30	0	0%
0		Education Capital	178	271	0	0%
500	15	Home to School Transport – Special	9,821	5,045	700	7%
0	16	Children in Care Transport	2,005	933	-400	-20%
0	17	Home to School/College Transport – Mainstream	9,189	4,824	200	2%
500		0-19 Place Planning & Organisation Service Total	25,355	14,132	500	2%
9,000		Education Directorate Total	94,210	62,996	9,450	10%
Executive Director						
0		Executive Director	882	469	0	0%
0		Central Financing	91	41	0	0%
0		Executive Director Total	973	510	0	0%
11,966		Total	358,081	236,864	12,729	4%
Grant Funding						
-8,500	18	Financing DSG	-61,469	-46,979	-9,000	-15%
0		Non Baselined Grants	-33,676	-21,313	0	0%
-8,500		Grant Funding Total	-95,145	-68,292	-9,000	9%
3,466		Net Total	262,935	168,572	3,729	1%



Narrative is given below where there is an adverse/positive variance greater than 2% of annual budget or £100,000 whichever is greater for a service area.

Service	Budget 2019/20	Actual	Outturn Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
<b>1) Strategic Management – Adults</b>	<b>-1,571</b>	<b>11,848</b>	<b>-4,778</b>	<b>-304%</b>
<p>Around £3.4m of grant funding has been applied to partially mitigate opening pressures in Older People's Services detailed in note 3 below, in line with one of the purposes of the grant funding, in addition to a number of other underspends in the services within this budget heading. A further £1.35m of in-year funding was agreed by GPC in July 2019 and applied to this line to provide further mitigation to cost pressures.</p>				
<b>2) Carers</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>-216</b>	<b>-52%</b>
<p>The number of direct payments made to Carers is lower than in previous years, mainly as a result of the focussed work in the Adults Positive Challenge Programme to provide more individualised support to Carers. This includes increased access to the right information and advice at the right time and an improved awareness of the need to work with the Carer and the cared-for person together, which may result in increased support to the cared-for person if required in order to better support the needs of the Carer.</p>				
<b>3) Learning Disability Partnership</b>	<b>58,810</b>	<b>38,176</b>	<b>598</b>	<b>1%</b>
<p>An overspend of £776k is forecast against the Learning Disability Partnership (LDP). According to the risk sharing arrangements of the LDP pooled budget, the proportion of the overspend that is attributable to the council is <u>£598k</u>.</p> <p>This is an increase of £10k from the position reported in October, which is due to a loss of income from in-house services.</p> <p>Total new savings of £950k are budgeted in 2019/20 in addition to the LDP share of the adult's positive challenge saving of £562k. These comprise the business plan target of £700k and a funnel saving of £250k relating to additional reassessments to be carried out by locality teams. Currently delivery of these savings is on track.</p> <p>However, demand pressures have been higher than anticipated and have exceeded the demand funding allocated to the budget thus far. This is despite much positive work that has been carried out to maintain a stable number of service users. Particular pressures have been seen on the budgets for residential care and supported living, despite service user numbers in these provisions being stable or decreasing. This reflects the increasing cost of packages, particularly for service users with complex and increasing needs, which we have a statutory duty to meet.</p> <p>New packages and package increases are scrutinised by panel and where possible opportunities to support people in alternative ways are being pursued. Referrals to Technology Enabled Care for LDP service users have increased in 2019/20.</p>				
<b>4) Physical Disabilities</b>	<b>12,338</b>	<b>9,947</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>2%</b>
<p>An overspend of £200k is forecast for Physical Disabilities services. The £60k movement from the position reported last month is due to an increase in bed-based care. Despite this, the net current year activity continues to partially offset the carried forward pressure from 2018/19 relating to increases in client numbers and the number of people with more complex needs requiring more expensive types of care.</p> <p>The total savings expectation in this service for 2019/20 is £269k, and this is expected to be delivered in full through the Adults Positive Challenge Programme of work, designed to reduce demand, for example through a reablement expansion and increasing technology enabled care to maintain service user independence.</p>				

Service	Budget 2019/20 £'000	Actual £'000	Appendix 1 Outturn Variance	
			£'000	%
<b>5) Older People's Services</b>	<b>46,073</b>	<b>35,741</b>	<b>5,220</b>	<b>11%</b>
<p>An overspend of £5,220k continues to be forecast for Older People's Services. The overall forecast reflects the full-year effect of the overspend in 2018/19 and additional pressures expected to emerge over the course of 2019/20. The full-year-effect of the pressures that emerged in 2018/19 is £2.8m.</p> <p>It was reported during 2018/19 that the cost of providing care was generally increasing, with the unit costs of most types of care increasing month-on-month and the number of people requiring residential care was also going up. The focus on discharging people from hospitals as quickly as possible to alleviate pressure on the broader health and social care system can result in more expensive care for people, at least in the shorter-term, and can result in the Council funding care placements that were appropriate for higher levels of need at point of discharge through the accelerated discharge process.</p> <p>Residential placements are typically £50 per week more than 12 months ago (8%), and nursing placements are typically around £100 per week more expensive (15%). Within this, there was a particularly stark increase particularly in nursing care in the last half of 2018/19 – around 75% of the increase seen in a nursing bed cost came between November and March, and so the full impact was not known when business planning was being undertaken by committees. The number of people in residential and nursing care increased over 2018/19 but around 30% more than anticipated, again concentrated in the second half of the year.</p> <p>This trend is continuing into 2019/20. We are including an estimate in the forecast of the additional pressure that will be seen by year end as a result of the upwards trend in price and service user numbers, particularly in residential and nursing care (£2.2m).</p> <p>The total savings expectation in this service for 2019/20 is £3.1m. It is expected that £2.1m will be delivered in-year through the Adults Positive Challenge Programme of work, designed to reduce demand, for example through a reablement expansion and increasing technology enabled care to maintain independence, and a further £400k will be delivered through increased capacity in the Occupational Therapy service. The shortfall against the saving is contributing to the overall overspend position.</p> <p>In addition to the work embodied in the Adults Positive Challenge Programme to intervene at an earlier stage so the need for care is reduced or avoided, work is ongoing within the Council to bolster the domiciliary care market, and the broader care market in general:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers at risk of failure are provided with some intensive support to maximise the continuity of care that they provide;</li> <li>• The Reablement service has been greatly expanded and has a role as a provider of last resort for care in people's homes</li> </ul>				
<b>6) Mental Health Services</b>	<b>13,205</b>	<b>8,661</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>2%</b>
<p>Mental Health Services are forecasting an overspend of £317k on operational budgets. Rising placement numbers for elderly mental health bed-based care at increasing unit costs is creating a pressure on budgets over and above the level of demand funding allocated. This trend is continuing on a month-to-month basis, however reductions in spot purchased community-based care following commencement of the Recovery and Community Inclusion block contract have offset the position this month.</p> <p>Mitigation of £113k has been identified in Mental Health Commissioning.</p>				

Service	Budget 2019/20	Actual	Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
<b>7) Central Commissioning – Adults</b>	<b>11,095</b>	<b>-11,964</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>5%</b>
<p>An overspend of £513k is forecast on Central Commissioning Adults, an increase of £412k from the position reported in October.</p> <p>The change in forecast is in relation to increased spend on the contract for block cars that deliver domiciliary care to people, including those leaving hospital. The council has needed to support a number of packages at an enhanced rate this year due to the large scale failure of a major provider of homecare in the last quarter of 2018. There was a need to retain the capacity in the market, as domiciliary care enables people to remain in their own homes and retain their independence; the alternative is often moving into bed based care at a higher cost. Retaining this capacity has helped us to support winter pressures and facilitate earlier discharges from hospital.</p> <p>This is an in-year pressure only as the contract has now been re-commissioned, with more favourable rates secured that will lead to a balanced budget in 2020/21. Reducing capacity within this area in order to mitigate the in-year cost pressure would ultimately lead to increased spend on alternative provision such as bed based care.</p> <p>The remainder of the overspend is mainly due to a delay in the realisation of savings on the Housing Related Support contracts; some contracts have been extended until the service is retendered. The full saving is still forecast to be delivered by 2021/22 and work is ongoing as to how best to deliver this service. The in-year pressure on housing related support is £274k, however, this has been mitigated in part.</p>				
<b>8) Mental Health Commissioning</b>	<b>3,696</b>	<b>2,181</b>	<b>-113</b>	<b>-3%</b>
<p>Mental Health Commissioning is forecasting an underspend of £113k. There is a one-off benefit as a result of credits due from two external providers relating to prior year activity (£90k). Additionally, a number of efficiencies have been achieved against current year contracts. Whilst these only have a relatively immaterial impact on the 2019/20 financial position, any ongoing efficiencies will be factored in to Business Planning for 2020/21 onwards.</p>				
<b>9) Children in Care Placements</b>	<b>23,819</b>	<b>14,636</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>3%</b>
<p>The revised Children in Care Placements outturn forecast is a £550k overspend. This is following an additional budget allocation of £350k as approved by GPC and the application of £500k of additional social care grant. Actual commitments are forecast to exceed this, as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent activity in relation to gang related crime has resulted in additional costs and high cost secure placements being required [at an average weekly cost of £7000.00 per child].</li> <li>Additional unaccompanied asylum seekers became Looked After</li> <li>An increase in the number of Children in Care in external placements [+20%] against a projected reduction.</li> </ul>				
<b>External Placements Client Group</b>	<b>Budgeted Packages</b>	<b>31 Oct 2019 Packages</b>	<b>30 Nov 2019 Packages</b>	<b>Variance from Budget</b>
Residential Disability – Children	3	3	3	0
Child Homes – Secure Accommodation	1	1	0	-1
Child Homes – Educational	19	14	14	-5
Child Homes – General	33	38	37	+4
Independent Fostering	240	289	289	+49
Supported Accommodation	26	24	25	-1
Supported Living 16+	7	11	7	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>+46</b>

- The foster placement capacity both in house and externally is overwhelmed by demand both locally and nationally. The real danger going forward is that the absence of appropriate fostering provision by default, leads to children and young people's care plans needing to change to residential services provision.

Mitigating factors moving forward include:

- Monthly Placement Mix and Care Numbers meeting chaired by the Service Director and attended by senior managers. This meeting focuses on activity aimed at reducing the numbers in care, length of care episodes and reduction in the need for externally commissioned provision.

Appendix 1

Service	Budget 2019/20	Actual	Outturn Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
<b>Children in Care Placements continued;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconstitution of panels to ensure greater scrutiny and supportive challenge.</li> <li>Introduction of twice weekly conference calls per Group Manager on placement activity followed by an Escalation Call each Thursday chaired by the Head of Service for Commissioning, and attended by each of the CSC Heads of Service as appropriate, Fostering Leads and Access to Resources.</li> <li>Authorisation processes in place for any escalation in resource requests.</li> <li>Assistant Director authorisation for any residential placement request.</li> <li>Monthly commissioning intentions (sufficiency strategy work-streams), budget and savings reconciliation meetings attended by senior managers accountable for each area of spend/practice. Enabling directed focus on emerging trends and appropriate responses, ensuring that each of the commissioning intentions are delivering as per work-stream and associated accountable officer. Production of datasets to support financial forecasting (in-house provider services and Access to Resources).</li> <li>Investment in children's social care commissioning to support the development of robust commissioning pseudo-dynamic purchasing systems for external spend. These commissioning models coupled with resource investment will enable more transparent competition amongst providers bidding for individual care packages, and therefore support the best value offer through competition driving down costs.</li> <li>Provider meetings scheduled through the Children's Placement Service (Access to Resources) to support the negotiation of packages at or post placement. Working with the Contracts Manager to ensure all placements are funded at the appropriate levels of need and cost.</li> <li>Regular High Cost Placement Review meetings to ensure children in externally funded placements are actively managed in terms of the ability of the provider to meet set objectives/outcomes, de-escalate where appropriate [levels of support] and maximizing opportunities for discounts (length of stay/siblings/ volume) and recognising potential lower cost options in line with each child's care plan.</li> <li>Additional investment in the recruitment and retention of the in-house fostering service to significantly increase the net number of mainstream fostering households over a three year period, as of 2018.</li> <li>Access to the Staying Close, Staying Connected Department for Education (DfE) initiative being piloted by a local charity offering 16-18 year old Children in Care Placements the opportunity to step-down from residential provision, to supported community based provision in what will transfer to their own tenancy post 18.</li> <li>Greater focus on those Children in Care Placements for whom permanency or rehabilitation home is the plan, to ensure timely care episodes and managed exits from care.</li> </ul>				
<b>10) Registration &amp; Citizenship Services</b>	<b>-516</b>	<b>-533</b>	<b>-221</b>	<b>-43%</b>
Registration & Citizenship Services are forecasting a surplus of £221k. An increase in the statutory charge for birth, marriage and death certificates has resulted in an over-recovery of income in the service. This increase is expected to continue into future years and as such has been recognised as part of the 2020/21 Business Plan.				
<b>11) Coroners</b>	<b>1,117</b>	<b>1,082</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>32%</b>
Coroners is forecasting a pressure of £353k. This is due to the increasing complexity of cases being referred to the coroner that require inquest and take time to conclude, requiring more specialist reports and advice and the recruitment of additional staff to complete investigations and prevent backlogs of cases building up. The cost of essential contracts for body storage, pathology, histology and toxicology has also increased.				

Service	Budget 2019/20	Actual	Appendix 1 Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
<b>12) Children in Care</b>	<b>15,737</b>	<b>11,883</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>2%</b>
<p>The Children in Care budget is forecasting an over spend of c£350k.</p> <p>The UASC budget is forecasting a pressure of £200k. This is mainly in the over 18 budget due to the increased number of children turning 18 and acquiring care leaver status. The costs associated with supporting both this group of young people are not fully covered by the grant from the Home Office.</p> <p>The Supervised Contact budget is forecasting a pressure of £150k. The over spend is due to the use of additional relief staff and external agencies required to cover the current 209 Supervised Contact Cases (215 end Oct) which equate to an average of 435 sessions (607 end Oct) or 1253 hours per month. 311 (305 end Oct) children are currently open to the service.</p> <p><b><u>Actions being taken:</u></b></p> <p>For UASC we are continuing to review placements and are moving young people as appropriate to provisions that are more financially viable in expectation of a status decision. We are also reviewing our young people who are appeal rights exhausted.</p> <p>These reviews are likely to see a drop in accommodation spending as CCC discharge their duty to these young people in line with our statutory responsibilities under the immigration act. For Supervised Contact we are reviewing the demand criteria across the cohort of Young People the service supports to include the review all of the cases that have completed proceedings (200+), to consider whether contact needs to continue to be supervised, if it does, does it need to be this service.</p>				
<b>13) Legal Proceedings</b>	<b>1,970</b>	<b>1,421</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>20%</b>
<p>The Legal Proceedings budget is forecasting a £400k overspend.</p> <p>Numbers of care proceedings per month increased by 72% for the period Feb to Apr 19 compared to the preceding 10 months. The increase was mainly due to care applications made in March, April and May, particularly in the North where four connected families saw 16 children coming into our care with sexual abuse and neglect the main concerns.</p> <p>There are currently (end Nov) 177 live care proceedings, and whilst we have seen reductions in live proceedings (183 end July) legacy cases and associated costs are still working through the system and causing significant pressure on the legal budget. The expectation is that reductions in live proceedings will continue, further mitigating the overall pressure.</p> <p><b><u>Actions being taken:</u></b></p> <p>Work is ongoing to manage our care proceedings and CP Plans and better track the cases through the system to avoid additional costs due to delay. However, due to the time lag in cases coming to court it will be a number of months before the increases seen earlier in the year work their way through the system.</p>				
<b>14) Funding to Special Schools &amp; Units, High Needs Top Up Funding and Out of School Tuition</b>	<b>45,440</b>	<b>35,294</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>20%</b>
<p><b>Funding to Special Schools and Units - £3.5m DSG overspend</b></p> <p>As the number of children and young people with an EHCP increase, along with the complexity of need, we see additional demand for places at Special Schools and High Needs Units. The extent of this is such that a significant number of spot places have been agreed and the majority of our Special Schools are now full.</p> <p><b>High Needs Top Up Funding - £3.0m DSG overspend</b></p> <p>As well as the overall increases in EHCP numbers creating a pressure on the Top-Up budget, the number of young people with EHCPs in Post-16 Further Education is continuing to increase significantly as a result of the provisions laid out in the 2014 Children and Families Act. This element of provision is causing the majority of the forecast overspend on the High Needs Top-Up budget.</p>				

Service	Budget 2019/20	Actual	Appendix 1 Outturn Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
<b>Funding to Special Schools &amp; Units, High Needs Top Up Funding and Out of School Tuition continued;</b>  <b>Out of School Tuition - £2m DSG overspend</b> There has been a continuing increase in the number of children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who are awaiting a permanent school placement.  Several key themes have emerged throughout the last year, which have had an impact on the need for children to receive a package of education, sometimes for prolonged periods of time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casework officers were not always made aware that a child's placement was at risk of breakdown until emergency annual review was called.</li> <li>• There were insufficient specialist placements for children whose needs could not be met in mainstream school.</li> <li>• There was often a prolonged period of time where a new school was being sought, but where schools put forward a case to refuse admission.</li> <li>• In some cases of extended periods of tuition, parental preference was for tuition rather than in-school admission.</li> </ul> <b>SEN Placements - £500k DSG overspend</b> A pressure of £500k is expected on the SEN Placements policy line, where an increase in the number of Cambridgeshire pupils being educated out of county has created a pressure of £200k on the Recoupment budget, and higher than budgeted costs per pupil have resulted in a £300k overspend on the SEN Placements budget.  <b>Mitigating Actions:</b> A SEND Project Recovery team has been set-up to oversee and drive the delivery of the SEND recovery plan to address the current pressure on the High Needs Block.				
<b>15) Home to School Transport – Special</b>	<b>9,821</b>	<b>5,045</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>7%</b>
Home to School Transport – Special is forecasting an £700k overspend for 2019/20. We are continuing to see significant increases in pupils with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and those attending special schools, leading to a corresponding increase in transport costs. Between 1 <sup>st</sup> April and 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2019 there was an increase in the number of pupils with EHCPs of 379 (8.9%), compared with 307 (8%) over the same period last year.  Alongside this, we are seeing an increase in complexity of need resulting in assessments being made that the child/young person's requires individual transport, and, in many cases, a passenger assistant to accompany them. In two cases, private ambulances have had to be provided due to the severity of the children's medical needs. This follows risk assessments undertaken by health and safety, and insurance colleagues.  A strengthened governance system around requests for costly exceptional transport requests introduced in 2018/19 is resulting in the avoidance of some of the highest cost transports as is the use of personal transport budgets offered in place of costly individual taxis. Further actions being taken to mitigate the position include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ongoing review of processes in the Social Education Transport and SEND teams with a view to reducing costs</li> <li>• An earlier than usual tender process for routes starting in September to try and ensure that best value for money is achieved</li> <li>• Implementation of an Independent Travel Training programme to allow more students to travel to school and college independently. A soft market test is about to be undertaken to establish potential interest from other organisations in shaping and delivering a programme for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.</li> </ul>				

Service	Budget 2019/20 £'000	Actual £'000	Appendix 1 Outturn Variance	
			£'000	%
<b>16) Children in Care Transport</b>	<b>2,005</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>-400</b>	<b>-20%</b>
Children in Care Transport is forecasting a £400k underspend. Ongoing work around route optimisation, combined with decreasing numbers of Children in Care have resulted in lower than budgeted costs, despite the pressures on the wider transport market.				
<b>17) Home to School Transport – Mainstream</b>	<b>9,189</b>	<b>4,824</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>2%</b>
<p>Home to School Transport – Mainstream is reporting an anticipated £200k overspend for 2019/20. While savings were achieved as part of the annual tender process we are continuing to see a significant increase in the costs being quoted for routes in some areas of the county, which are in excess of the inflation that was built into the budget. Where routes are procured at particularly high rates these are agreed on a short-term basis only with a view to reviewing and retendering at a later date in order to reduce spend where possible, however these subsequent reductions cannot be guaranteed.</p> <p>There have also been pressures due to the number of in-year admission requests when the local school is full. These situations require us to provide transport to schools further away, outside statutory walking distance. The effect on the transport budget is taken into account when pupils are placed in-year which has mitigated the effect of this to some degree, however in many cases the only viable transport is an individual or low-occupancy taxi.</p>				
<b>18) Financing DSG</b>	<b>-61,469</b>	<b>-46,979</b>	<b>-9,000</b>	<b>-15%</b>
<p>Within P&amp;C, spend of £61.5m is funded by the ring fenced Dedicated Schools Grant. Current pressures on Funding to Special Schools and Units (£3.5m), High Needs Top Up Funding (£3.0m), Out of School Tuition (£2.0m) and SEN Placements (£0.5m) equate to £9.0m and as such will be charged to the DSG.</p> <p>The final DSG balance brought forward from 2018/19 was a deficit of £7,171k.</p>				



## 3.1 Capital Expenditure

2019/20						TOTAL SCHEME	
Original 2019/20 Budget as per BP	Scheme	Revised Budget for 2019/20	Actual Spend (Nov)	Forecast Spend – Outturn (Nov)	Forecast Variance – Outturn (Nov)	Total Scheme Revised Budget	Total Scheme Variance
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
51,085	Basic Need – Primary	34,420	16,413	33,454	-966	273,739	-9,497
64,327	Basic Need – Secondary	51,096	33,364	44,309	-6,786	321,067	-493
100	Basic Need - Early Years	2,173	741	2,173	0	5,718	0
7,357	Adaptations	1,119	899	1,119	0	13,428	0
6,370	Specialist Provision	4,073	2,685	5,570	1,497	23,128	-53
2,500	Condition & Maintenance	3,623	2,678	4,083	460	27,123	952
1,005	Schools Managed Capital	2,796	0	2,796	0	9,858	0
150	Site Acquisition and Development	150	117	150	0	600	0
1,500	Temporary Accommodation	1,500	336	257	-1,243	12,500	-1,243
275	Children Support Services	275	0	275	0	2,575	0
5,565	Adult Social Care	5,565	4,189	5,565	0	30,095	0
3,117	Cultural and Community Services	5,157	1,634	3,731	-1,426	10,630	0
-16,828	Capital Variation	-13,399	0	-4,935	8,464	-61,000	0
2,744	Capitalised Interest	2,744	0	2,744	0	8,798	0
129,267	<b>Total P&amp;C Capital Spending</b>	<b>101,292</b>	<b>63,057</b>	<b>101,292</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>678,259</b>	<b>-10,334</b>

The schemes with significant variances (>£250k) either due to changes in phasing or changes in overall scheme costs can be found in the following table:

Revised Budget for 2019/20	Forecast Spend - Outturn (November)	Forecast Spend - Outturn Variance (November)	Variance Last Month (October)	Movement	Breakdown of Variance	
					Under / overspend	Reprogramming / Slippage
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Basic Need – Primary</b>						
<b>Histon Additional Places</b>						
400	3,000	2,600	2,600	0	0	2,600
Although delays were initially anticipated on this project as it involves building a replacement for the current Histon & Impington Infant School on a site in the Green Belt, the Buxhall Farm scheme has accelerated and construction will now take place in year. While the replacement school will not be required until 2021, commencing work at this point will result in lower construction costs than if the project were delayed.						
<b>Chatteris Additional Places</b>						
4,600	3,000	-1,700	-1,700	0	0	-1,700
£1.6m slippage anticipated in 2019/20 due to issues around Highways and planning permission. This scheme has now been combined with that listed separately for Cromwell Community College, following approval from the DfE to a proposal to extend the school's age range to enable it to provide all-through education, 4-19.						
<b>Bassingbourn Primary School</b>						
2,666	2,350	-316	-316	0	-225	-91
Savings made on completion of scheme.						

Revised Budget for 2019/20	Forecast Spend - Outturn (November)	Forecast Spend - Outturn Variance (November)	Variance Last Month (October)	Movement	Breakdown of Variance	
					Under / overspend	Reprogramming / Slippage
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Godmanchester Bridge (Bearscroft Development)</b>						
355	93	-262	-262	0	-262	0
Savings made on completion of scheme.						
<b><u>Basic Need - Secondary</u></b>						
<b>Fenland Secondary</b>						
5,000	300	-4,700	-4,400	-300	0	-4,700
Work is progressing to determine the final specification for the scheme and the associated project cost.						
<b>Cromwell Community College, Chatteris</b>						
5,500	4,000	-1,600	-1,600	0	0	-1,600
£1.5m slippage anticipated in 2019/20 due to issues around Highways and planning permission. This scheme has now been combined with that listed separately for Chatteris Additional Places, following approval from the DfE to a proposal to extend the school's age range to enable it to provide all-through education, 4-19.						
<b>Alconbury Weald Secondary &amp; Special</b>						
350	100	-270	-250	-20	0	-270
As a result of on-going discussions with the DfE over the timing of the opening of the secondary school, the decision has been taken to place all further work on hold until these have been concluded. Meetings are taking place on 17 December with the aim of enabling work to resume.						
<b><u>Specialist provision</u></b>						
<b>Highfields Ely Phase 2</b>						
3,600	5,200	1,600	1,600	0	0	1,600
Revised spend forecast received from contractor. Value of works higher than anticipated for 2019-20 due to pre-fabricated construction and works progressing ahead of schedule, which means that the project is likely to complete earlier than planned.						
<b><u>Condition &amp; Maintenance</u></b>						
<b>School Condition, Maintenance &amp; Suitability</b>						
3,123	3,482	359	0	359	952	-593
The forecast overspend of £359k has arisen due to an increase in the number of emergency projects requiring urgent attention to ensure the schools concerned remained operational. The in year position has been offset with slippage of £593k for Galfrid Primary (formerly known as Abbey Meadows) which was agreed by GPC as additional funding for 2019/20. This funding is required in 2020/21 due to the scheme timescales being delayed.						
<b><u>Temporary Accommodation</u></b>						
1,500	257	-1,243	0	-1,243	-1,243	0
£1,243k forecast underspend as the level of temporary mobile accommodation was lower than initially anticipated when the Business Plan was approved.						

Revised Budget for 2019/20	Forecast Spend - Outturn (November)	Forecast Spend - Outturn Variance (November)	Variance Last Month (October)	Movement	Breakdown of Variance	
					Under / overspend	Reprogramming / Slippage
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Cultural and Community Services</b>						
<b>Libraries - Open access &amp; touchdown facilities (hub libraries)</b>						
567	11	-556	0	-556	0	-556
Work is ongoing to tender for the system and create a detailed plan for the rollout of Open Access across all libraries; this will involve building surveys of all sites to determine the requirements for implementation, which is the expenditure projected within the current financial year. A report will be brought to C&P Cttee in the Spring to update members and make decisions about prioritisation and principles of the rollout, with implementation and expenditure taking place later in 2020/21 and 2021/22.						
<b>Libraries - Open access &amp; touchdown facilities - further 22 Libraries</b>						
605	0	-605	0	-605	0	-605
Work is ongoing to tender for the system and create a detailed plan for the rollout of Open Access across all libraries; this will involve building surveys of all sites to determine the requirements for implementation, which is the expenditure projected within the current financial year. A report will be brought to C&P Cttee in the Spring to update members and make decisions about prioritisation and principles of the rollout, with implementation and expenditure taking place later in 2020/21 and 2021/22.						
<b>Other changes across all schemes (&lt;250k)</b>						
-	-	-1,770	-1,505	265	-1,263	-507
Other changes below £250k make up the remainder of the scheme variances.						
<b>Total P&amp;C variances:</b>		<b>-8,464</b>	<b>-5,933</b>	<b>-2,531</b>	<b>-2,041</b>	<b>-6,423</b>

## P&C Capital Variation

The Capital Programme Board recommended that services include a variations budget to account for likely slippage in the capital programme, as it is sometimes difficult to allocate this to individual schemes in advance. The allocation for P&C's negative budget has been calculated as below, updated for the transfer of Cultural and Community Services. Slippage and underspends expected in 2019/20 are currently resulting in £8.46m of the capital variations budget being utilised.

2019/20					
Service	Capital Programme Variations Budget	Forecast Outturn Variance (Nov 2019)	Capital Programme Variations Budget Used	Capital Programme Variations Budget Used	Revised Outturn Variance (Nov 2019)
	£000	£000	£000	%	£000
P&C	-13,399	-8,464	8,464	63.2%	0
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>-13,399</b>	<b>-8,464</b>	<b>8,464</b>	<b>63.2%</b>	<b>0</b>

### 3.2 Capital Funding

2019/20				
Original 2019/20 Funding Allocation as per BP £'000	Source of Funding	Revised Funding for 2019/20 £'000	Funding Outturn (Nov 19) £'000	Funding Variance - Outturn (Nov 19) £'000
6,905	Basic Need	6,905	6,905	0
4,126	Capital maintenance	3,547	3,547	0
1,005	Devolved Formula Capital	2,796	2,796	0
4,115	Adult specific Grants	4,146	4,146	0
14,976	S106 contributions	6,555	6,555	0
2,052	Other Specific Grants	2,576	2,576	0
0	Capital Receipts	131	131	0
10,100	Other Revenue Contributions	10,100	10,100	0
390	Prudential Borrowing	48,395	48,395	0
11,598	Prudential Borrowing (Repayable)	16,141	16,141	0
<b>129,267</b>	<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>101,292</b>	<b>101,292</b>	<b>0</b>

# COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE AGENDA PLAN

Published on 15th January 2020



Cambridgeshire  
County Council

## Notes

The definition of a key decision is set out in the Council's Constitution in Part 2, Article 12.

\* indicates items expected to be recommended for determination by full Council.

+ indicates items expected to be confidential, which would exclude the press and public.

Committee Date	Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Key Decision	Draft Deadline	Agenda Publication
23/1/2020	Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th December 2019	N Mills	-	10/1/2020	15/1/2020
	Growing Fenland	J Blackmore / A Chapman	-		
	Cambridge University Science and Policy Exchange: How Can We Redesign the Future of Local Government Today?	A Askham	-		
	Shared Services Update	A Askham	-		
	County Council's Approach to Addressing Housing and Homelessness	S Ferguson	-		
	Innovate & Cultivate Fund – Endorsement of Recommendations	E Matthews	-		
	Budget Monitoring – Finance Report	E Jones	-		
	Community Champions Oral Update	Community Champions	-		
	Agenda Plan and Appointments	A Chapman	-		
Committee Date	Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Key Decision	Draft Deadline	Agenda Publication
13/2/2020	RESERVE DATE / WORKSHOP				
Committee Date	Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Key Decision	Draft Deadline	Agenda Publication

12/3/2020	Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 January 2020	N Mills	-	28/2/2020	4/3/2020
	Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence service review, including White Ribbon Campaign Update	TBC	-		
	Cambridgeshire Libraries: Civic Partnership Project report	TBC	-		
	Registration Service – review interim report	TBC	-		
	Coroner Service – review interim report	TBC	-		
	Think Communities progress report, including Cambs 2020	A Chapman	-		
	Innovate & Cultivate Fund – 2019 End of Year Evaluation Report and Endorsement of Recommendations	E Matthews	-		
	Committee Quarterly Performance Report	T Barden	-		
	Budget Monitoring – Finance Report	E Jones	-		
	Community Champions Oral Update	Community Champions	-		
	Agenda Plan and Appointments	A Chapman	-		
<b>Committee Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Draft Deadline</b>	<b>Agenda Publication</b>
16/4/2020	RESERVE DATE / WORKSHOP				
<b>Committee Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Draft Deadline</b>	<b>Agenda Publication</b>
20/5/2020	Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th March 2020	N Mills	-	6/5/2020	12/5/2020
	Registration Service – review report	TBC	-		
	Coroner Service – review report	TBC	-		
	Cambridgeshire Libraries – implementation and delivery of new vision, and Open Access in Libraries	TBC	-		

	Tackling Poverty and Improving Social Mobility	TBC	-		
	Think Communities, including Wisbech 2020	A Chapman	-		
	Shared and Integrated Services report	A Askham	-		
	Budget Monitoring – Finance Report	E Jones	-		
	Community Champions Oral Update	Community Champions	-		
	Agenda Plan and Appointments	A Chapman	-		
<b>Committee Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Draft Deadline</b>	<b>Agenda Publication</b>
18/6/2020	RESERVE DATE / WORKSHOP				
<b>Committee Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Draft Deadline</b>	<b>Agenda Publication</b>
2/7/2020	Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th May 2020	N Mills	-	19/6/2020	24/6/2020
	Cambridgeshire Libraries: progress report on capital schemes, and Civic Partnership Project report	TBC	-		
	Cambridgeshire Skills – 6 month report	T Meadows	-		
	Community Safety	TBC	-		
	Think Communities	TBC	-		
	Housing and Homelessness – progress report	TBC	-		
	Innovate & Cultivate Fund – Endorsement of Recommendations	E Matthews	-		
	Committee Quarterly Performance Report	T Barden	-		
	Budget Monitoring – Finance Report	E Jones	-		

	Community Champions Oral Update	Community Champions	-		
	Agenda Plan and Appointments	A Chapman	-		
<b>Committee Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Draft Deadline</b>	<b>Agenda Publication</b>
6/8/2020	RESERVE DATE / WORKSHOP				
<b>Committee Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Draft Deadline</b>	<b>Agenda Publication</b>
3/9/2020	Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd July 2020	N Mills	-	20/8/2020	25/8/2020
	Coroner Service Annual Report	TBC	-		
	Community Champions Annual Report	E Matthews	-		
	Think Communities	TBC	-		
	Committee Quarterly Performance Report	T Barden	-		
	Budget Monitoring – Finance Report	E Jones	-		
	Agenda Plan and Appointments	A Chapman	-		
<b>Committee Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Draft Deadline</b>	<b>Agenda Publication</b>
8/10/2020	Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd September 2020	N Mills	-	25/9/2020	30/9/2020
	Registration Service Annual Report	TBC	-		
	Innovate & Cultivate Fund – Endorsement of Recommendations	E Matthews	-		
	Business Planning	A Chapman / E Jones	-		
	Budget Monitoring – Finance Report	E Jones	-		



	Community Champions Oral Update	Community Champions	-		
	Agenda Plan and Appointments	A Chapman	-		
<b>Committee Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Draft Deadline</b>	<b>Agenda Publication</b>
12/11/2020	Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th October 2020	N Mills	-	30/10/2020	4/11/2020
	Local Council Development Plan – annual report	TBC	-		
	Support Cambridgeshire Annual Report	TBC	-		
	Cambridgeshire Libraries, including Civic Partnership Project report	TBC	-		
	Shared and Integrated Services report	A Askham	-		
	Think Communities	TBC	-		
	Community Champions Oral Update	Community Champions	-		
	Agenda Plan and Appointments	A Chapman	-		
<b>Committee Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Draft Deadline</b>	<b>Agenda Publication</b>
3/12/2020	Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th November 2020	N Mills	-	20/11/2020	25/11/2020
	Innovate & Cultivate Fund – Endorsement of Recommendations	E Matthews	-		
	Cambridgeshire Skills – 6 month report	T Meadows	-		
	Committee Quarterly Performance Report	T Barden	-		
	Business Planning	A Chapman / E Jones	-		
	Budget Monitoring – Finance Report	E Jones	-		

	Community Champions Oral Update	Community Champions	-		
	Agenda Plan and Appointments	A Chapman	-		
<b>Committee Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Draft Deadline</b>	<b>Agenda Publication</b>
21/1/2021	Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd December 2020	N Mills	-	8/1/2021	13/1/2021
	Think Communities	TBC	-		
	Innovate & Cultivate Fund – Endorsement of Recommendations	E Matthews	-		
	Community Champions Oral Update	Community Champions	-		
	Agenda Plan and Appointments	A Chapman	-		
<b>Committee Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Draft Deadline</b>	<b>Agenda Publication</b>
18/2/2021	RESERVE DATE / WORKSHOP				
<b>Committee Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Draft Deadline</b>	<b>Agenda Publication</b>
4/3/2021	Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st January 2021	N Mills	-	19/2/2021	24/2/2021
	Cambridgeshire Libraries, including Civic Partnership Project report	TBC	-		
	Think Communities	TBC	-		
	Budget Monitoring – Finance Report	E Jones	-		
	Community Champions Oral Update	Community Champions	-		
	Agenda Plan and Appointments	A Chapman	-		
<b>Committee Date</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Draft Deadline</b>	<b>Agenda Publication</b>
1/4/2021	RESERVE DATE / WORKSHOP				