

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.

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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.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Emma Jones
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 LGSS Law?	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: Val Thomas

Source Documents	Location
None	N/A