

Business Board		Agenda Item
15 January 2024		3.3
Title:	Market Towns Programme – Management Update	
Report of:	Domenico Cirillo, Business Programmes and Business Board Manager	
Lead Member:	Deputy Mayor Councillor Anna Smith	
Public Report:	Yes	
Key Decision:	No	
Voting Arrangements:	A simple majority of all Members	

Recommendations:

A	Note the latest delivery position for projects funded under the Market Towns Programme (Phase 1).
B	Note the latest progress reporting for Market Towns Programme (Phase 2).

Strategic Objective(s):

The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):

X	Achieving ambitious skills and employment opportunities
X	Achieving good growth
X	Enabling resilient communities

1. Purpose

1.1	To update the Combined Authority Board on the latest position in delivery of the CPCA Market Towns Programme.
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2. Programme Background & Update Items

	Market Towns Programme – Phase 1: Masterplanning & Capital Investment
2.1	The CPCA is committed to helping its region's market towns to thrive and is investing to ensure towns remain vibrant and thriving places. This commitment included revenue funding to produce Masterplans for each key market towns (based on new research and analysis required to deliver bold growth ambitions) and identified interventions that enshrined the importance of inclusive growth.
2.2	In July 2021, £10m of CPCA funding (including an additional £3.1m for St Neots and £1.1m for March towards the two Future High Street Fund projects) was allocated across the market towns, with district authority leads able to bid for capital funds for each town. A programme prospectus was launched, and proposals were invited to support the mobilisation of each plan and against activities which addressed

	the needs and those interventions required to drive targeted growth and sustained regeneration for each town, especially in a post Covid-19 economy.
2.3	In March 2023, the Combined Authority Board approved the last of project proposals to a value of £2,257,150 under the final funding call (10) and the £14.2m programme budget was fully allocated, resulting in a portfolio of 52 projects with programme completion expected by March 2026 (and bringing in over £12.5m of external match funding).
2.4	Unfortunately, post Covid issues around contractors and increased material costs have negatively impacted on project delivery across the Programme. This has been further exacerbated by the recent 'cost of living' crisis and international conflicts which have affected the cost, and availability, of goods and services.
2.5	To date, a total of 30 projects are now completed, 10 projects are 'in delivery' (completion expected by March 2024), 9 projects are 'in delivery' (completion expected by March 2025), and 1 project is 'in delivery' (ECDC Littleport E-Space) with completion expected by March 2026. 2 projects were cancelled (FDC Whittlesey Heritage Centre and HDC Bicycle Kitchen) and remaining budget was reallocated within the towns project portfolio. Appendix 1 includes the project tracker for the programme and details delivery and expenditure profiles for the phase 1 project portfolio.
2.6	Project completion reports are required as part of programme monitoring and enables officers to capture project outputs against the agreed business case. Appendix 2 includes a summary of the outputs achieved to date from completed projects (of which Q3/Q4 data is currently being processed and report updated).
2.7	As of December 2023, the financial position for the programme is as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022/23 (actual spend) - £4,089,708 • 2023/24 (actual spend to Q3) - £2,440,565 • 2023/24 (profiled for Q4) - £2,953,970 • 2024/25 (profiled spend) - £4,590,756 • 2025/26 (profiled spend) - £125,000
	Market Towns Programme – Phase 2: Supporting Social Enterprises & Rural Community Groups
2.8	In March 2023, the Combined Authority approved the business case for a continuation of the market towns programme and committed £2.5m investment to strengthen local communities and groups and to support for social enterprises and community-owned businesses. The programme (phase 2) emerged from a long-running concern about the performance of market towns and rural areas within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The £2.5m capital funding is a continuation of the effort to tackle the long-standing challenges surrounding market towns over the next 2 years, with a particular focus on strengthening local communities and supporting the Social Enterprise support ecosystem.
2.9	The Programme looks to build on the first Market towns funding but with a particular focus on targeting this capital spending on people-based initiatives – including community owned businesses, social enterprises, and educational support. The 3 delivery streams to the programme are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stream 1 - Community ownership of local businesses (Lead delivery partner - The Plunkett Foundation) - through this first stream, the CPCA has established a dedicated support programme, community "support package" and bursary funding for community groups in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, with a focus of revitalising assets in market towns and rural hinterlands. • Stream 2 - Social enterprise hubs (Lead delivery partner - Social Enterprise East of England (SEEE)) - through this second stream, funding has been provided for the creation of social enterprise hubs in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. The hubs will support the growth of social entrepreneurship and the social economy ecosystem across market towns and rural areas, providing co-working / business startup space for social enterprises alongside community space and a retail offer for residents and communities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stream 3 - STEM exhibition programme (Lead delivery partner - Cambridge Science Centre (CSC)) - under this third stream, a grant has been disbursed to support the capital element of an educational programme, to be delivered via pop-up science centres, located in publicly owned buildings, community or educational. The pop-up centres will be accessed by children, families, schools, and adult groups and aim to raise awareness and aspirations for STEM related study and careers.
2.10	<p>Market Towns Programme (Phase 2) – Programme Financials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stream 1 – £800,000 community ownership grant & bursary fund / £120,000 fund delivery & management. Stream 2 - £1,175,800 social enterprise hub grant funds / £50,000 fund delivery & management / £24,200 fund support provision / £130,000 business support pilot & social enterprise strategy development for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. Stream 3 - £200,000 grant to deliver STEM Pop-Up Science Centres and events across the areas market towns.
2.11	<p>Market Towns Programme (Phase 2) – Programme Progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stream 1 - Since the launch of the project in early July, Plunkett Foundation has formed a project team and created project and comms plans. Internal systems and processes have been set up and documentation for grants applications and internal governance has been drafted and approved by the Combined Authority. The existing pipeline of potential new community owned businesses in the Combined Authority area has been contacted and extensive awareness raising work has taken place at a grassroots level, with local authorities and with others working within the sector. Following a soft launch in August, the project officially launched in September with a mayoral visit to Houghton & Wyton Community Shop which showcased the importance and impact of community owned businesses. In November Plunkett delivered an in-person event at the Community owned Plough & Fleece in Horningsea: “An introduction to community business and raising finance in Cambridgeshire”. It was attended by 14 people from community groups across the county as well as staff from Cambridgeshire district and county councils. Three groups looking to save or create assets for their communities are now receiving tailored support from Plunkett advisers, several very early-stage enquiries are being nurtured by Plunkett’s Community Business Team, and three applications for small grants are pending return. Awareness raising work is continuing and Plunkett looks forward to publicising the award of the first small grant to generate further interest and enquiries and build on the momentum that is beginning to gain pace. Stream 2 - Funding of £130,000 has been allocated to Social Enterprise East of England (SEEE) in delivery of complementary strategic work and support provision development, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <u>Social Enterprise Strategy</u> - SEEE has designed the methodology for the strategy to capture as much of the current Social Enterprise activity in the CPCA’s region as possible and receive input from a wide range of stakeholders within the Social Enterprise ecosystem across the region, recognising the unique characteristics of the area’s 3 distinct economies: Greater Peterborough, Greater Cambridge, and Fenland. In this way, it’s hoped that the vision for the SE movement is authentic, that is, that it’s owned by the organisations that are operating within and for the movement, and that the action plan makes the practical steps required by all the stakeholders to make the desire for a strong social impact economy a reality. The strategy will remain ‘live’ and be tested and growing in content as more input is received through the life of this contract. ➤ <u>Social Impact Business Growth Pilot Programme</u> - SEEE designed the prospectus and application form for the onward grant funding and, following the input and agreement of those documents from the CPCA, invited all known established social impact support organisations within the CA area to a workshop to present the funding opportunity and explore how best to deliver a system wide pilot programme within a consortium. The awarded consortium is led by Allia who will coordinate a group of partners to provide support across the region, as well as delivering its proven ‘Start Your Business’ and ‘Grow Your Business’ programmes. These deliver targeted support for those who have an idea to get a new social venture off the ground as well as those more established businesses that want to grow.

Networking events, mentoring and workshops will also be available. The partners are working under the a project title of '*Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Impact*' and consist of Support Cambridgeshire (Hunts Forum and Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service (CCVS)) and Peterborough Council for Voluntary Service (PCVS) which will deliver 1-1 support, networking events and set up peer support for sustainability and growth beyond the end of the project; and Cambridgeshire ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England) which will support rural community not-for-profit organisations that are trying to establish community-led businesses. During the pilot, the programme will deliver to 122 or more organisations through structured programmes of business support, expert sessions and one-to-one support, plus mentoring, networking and a community of practice.

- Social Enterprise Hubs Fund – SEEE designed prospectus to safeguard and enhance social capital, employment opportunities, and skills in market towns throughout Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by stimulating social entrepreneurship and boosting the local Social Enterprise ecosystem though the implementation of Social Enterprise Hub space. The space itself will provide co-working / business startup space for social enterprises alongside community space and a retail offer for residents and communities. A fund investment panel was held on September 6th to assess proposals, and a total of £1,175,800 grant funding was successfully awarded in support of 3 Social Enterprise Hubs:
 1. Allia Printworks (Papworth) - Allia will develop the former Papworth Printworks building in Cambridgeshire village Papworth Everard to provide a much-needed base to support the growth of local social entrepreneurs and small businesses. The building will provide a café, microbrewery and pizzeria to create a vibrant social base for the local village as well as a business workspace that will support entrepreneurship, the development of existing and new social enterprises and create employment and training opportunities. Exact plans are still being developed but one meeting room may be equipped as a podcast facility and rented out. The aim is for the different spaces to be hired out to local businesses with enquiries already received for counselling and mentoring space. Expected to open September 2024.
 2. CCORRN (March) – The acquisition of buildings to enable them to expand their Eco Hub in March, Cambridgeshire. The Eco Hub will offer support and start-up premises for Fenland based Social Enterprises as well as co-located retail opportunities to help local residents access affordable eco products and services. The aim is to accelerate an equitable transition to a Circular Economy which will be good for people's purses and the planet. The sale agreement for the purchase has been agreed and contracts exchanged, with completion expected in the first week of January. CCORRN are currently going through the tendering process for the fit out works which are expected to start in the first quarter of 2024 and take approximately six months.
 3. People & Animals Community Farm (Wisbech) - To extend Wisbech Community Farm where they deliver outreach Animal-Assisted Interventions that provide access to community support so people can overcome challenges to their mental health. The Hub will enable them to share their learnings to support the growth of local enterprises, empowering local people and organisations to sustainably offer their solutions to local need, whilst facilitating a wider network of opportunities to the community. The planning application was approved on 7th November and the tendering and contract agreement is underway with construction of the building due to start in the first quarter of next year with completion at the end of 2024.
- A further £24,200 will enable SEEE to provide support and consultancy to the awarded organisations to foster collaboration and co-ordination between the awarded organisations during and after the build, develop an impact measurement framework and tools, and ensure the projects work holistically together within the Social Enterprise ecosystem.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stream 3 - first three STEM roadshows (Ramsey, Chatteris and Wisbech) successfully completed with over 6,500 public visitors and 2,680 pupils engaged from over 65 local schools and communities. CSC will move on to March Community Centre for the fourth Pop-Up Science Centre from January 13th 2024. ➤ <u>Ramsey</u> – the first Pop-Up Science Centre was held at the Ramsey Rural Museum from April 22nd in collaboration with schools, public and community groups in and around the Ramsey vicinity. The opportunity to explore the interactive exhibits was eagerly embraced by the children. The PopUp Science Centre closed on June 17th, with 2,274 public visitors and 1,000 school pupils engaged from 40 schools and 9 community groups. ➤ <u>Chatteris</u> – the second Pop-Up Science Centre was held at at the North Cambridgeshire Training Centre (and supported by Metalcraft) during June-August building on the success of Ramsey and the continued to engage with schools and families. Included two days at Chatteris Midsummer Festival and the launch of two new school workshops, developed in partnership with the Department of Engineering at Cambridge University. Local schools took part in 'Home of Tomorrow' and 'City of Tomorrow' workshops where they explored renewable energy, energy consumption in our homes and cities, and engineering solutions for the future. The Pop-Up Science Centre closed on August 19th, with 1,912 public visitors and 880 school pupils engaged from 14 schools. ➤ <u>Wisbech</u> - the third Pop-Up Science Centre was held at the Wisbech & Fenland Museum during September-November. Following on from Ramsey and Chatteris events, CSC successfully continued to engage with schools and families. The Wisbech and Fenland Museum proved to be an excellent venue with its location in the town centre and regular visitors - the specimens in the Museum partnering well with the STEM exhibits. In total over 2,391 people from Wisbech and the surrounding areas engaged, and CSC visited 32 classes from 11 schools with over 800 pupil interactions.
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3. Appendices

3.1	Appendix 1 - Market Towns Programme (Phase 1) – Project Tracker (December 2023)
3.2	Appendix 2 – Market Towns Programme (Phase 1) – Summary of Outputs (Completed Projects)

4. Implications

Financial Implications	
5.1	No implications
Legal Implications	
5.2	No implications
Public Health Implications	
5.3	No implications
Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
5.4	No implications
Other Significant Implications	
5.5	No other significant implications
Background Papers	
5.6	CA Board Report (November 2022) - Document.ashx (cmis.uk.com)
5.7	CA Board Report (MTP Phase 1 – Funding Call 10 - March 2023) - Document.ashx (cmis.uk.com)
5.8	CA Board Report (MTP Phase – Approval of Full Business Case - Document.ashx (cmis.uk.com)