



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Agenda Item No: 3.4

Market Towns Programme – Approval of Recommended Projects (Funding Call 7 - January 2022)

To: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board

Meeting Date: 26 January 2022

Public report: Yes

Lead Member: Mayor Dr Nik Johnson

From: John T Hill
Director of Business & Skills

Key Decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: KD2021/078

Recommendations: The Combined Authority Board is recommended to:

Approve project proposals received under Market Towns Programme received from East Cambridgeshire District Council for the town of Soham to the sum of £470,000.

Voting arrangements: A simple majority of Members present and voting.

To be carried, the vote must include the vote of the Mayor, or the Deputy Mayor when acting in place of the Mayor.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek Combined Authority Board ratification of two project proposals received from East Cambridgeshire District Council for the market town of Soham, under the seventh funding call for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) Market Towns Programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 The CPCA are committed to helping their region's market towns to thrive and are investing to ensure towns remain vibrant and thriving places. This commitment included the production of a Masterplan for each of the key market towns (based on new research and analysis required to deliver the bold growth ambitions) and their interventions hereby enshrine the importance of inclusive growth, in line with CPIER and LIS recommendations.
- 2.2 Combined Authority funding of £13.1m was allocated across the market towns, with district authority leads able to bid for capital funds for each town. Proposals are invited to support the mobilisation of each Masterplan and against activities which address the needs and those interventions identified as required to drive targeted growth and regeneration of each town in a post Covid-19 pandemic economy.
- 2.2 All project proposals are independently appraised where the strategic need, economic and commercial case is assessed against an agreed set of appraisal metrics. Appraised applications are scored based on programme criteria set and must achieve a minimum pass mark to be recommended for CA Board approval.
- 2.3 To date, there have been six funding calls under the Programme, resulting in 44 projects being approved by the CA Board, awarding a total of £10,497,850 in grant funding (and bringing in an additional £11,755,295 of partner match investment). The total funding awarded to date and remaining budget allocations against each town is as follows:

Programme Financials				
Town	Total Allocation	Total Funding Approved	Funding Call 7 - January 2022	Remaining Allocation
St Ives	£1,000,000	£620,125		£379,875
Huntingdon	£1,000,000	£577,725		£422,275
Ramsey	£1,000,000	£1,000,000		£0
Wisbech	£1,000,000	£1,000,000		£0
March	£1,000,000	£1,000,000		£0
Whittlesey	£1,000,000	£1,000,000		£0
Chatteris	£1,000,000	£1,000,000		£0
Ely	£1,000,000	£1,000,000		£0
Soham	£1,000,000	£200,000	£470,000	£330,000
Littleport	£1,000,000			£1,000,000
St Neots	£3,100,000	£3,100,000		
	£13,100,000	£10,497,850	£470,000	£2,132,150

- 2.4 One final funding call is scheduled for March 2022 with the aim to get the remaining

£2,132,150 fully allocated by the end of this financial year.

3. Funding Call 7 – January 2022

- 3.1 The following 2 bids are recommended for CA Board approval. The independent Appraisal Report and Scoring Matrix are included as Appendices 1 and 2, and set out the assessment and appraisal recommendations:

Funding Call 7 - January 2022		
PROJECT NAME	DESCRIPTION	CPCA GRANT AMOUNT
East Cambridgeshire		
45. Soham Agritech Business Centre	This project supports the successful activities at Soham's Eastern Agritech Innovation Hub (EAIH) managed by NIAB. The Hub is home to five start-up businesses and supports a further seven stakeholder businesses, but doesn't have adequate seminar facilities. The investment will fund a log cabin style building with kitchen, toilets, and conferencing, meeting, exhibit equipment along with necessary audio visual and seating. This will enable businesses to better showcase innovations to wider audiences and NIAB the ability to further promote the EAIH to prospective new tenants and potential hub members.	£145,000
46. Soham Station 'Spencer Mill' Business Centre	This project supports delivery of 'Phase 2' of Spencer Mill to further develop a much-needed state-of-the-art community hub and business facility, with a strategic location next to Soham's new railway station and close to the town. The recent £2.4M investment at Spencer Mill completed the first phase of the project. It is now an operational theatre and with additional facilities, will expand its function as a working and/or learning environment. A later third phase could see an additional extension to the main building, offering a large open plan training space and an additional external office pod. The completed vision for the site, once all three phases are complete, is to be a thriving, well-connected business community and training hub, operating throughout the day and alongside the existing community hub and theatre that extends into the evening and weekend economy.	£325,000

Significant Implications

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Financial approval is requested for £470,000. Payments to fund approved projects will be subject to the conditions as set out in the assessment report being met and signed funding agreement in place.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Combined Authority maintains the legal agreements with project delivery bodies.

6. Other Significant Implications

- 6.1 The Market Towns Programme is a substantial commitment being made between the Combined Authority and the local areas, with scope for significant impacts on the growth of the local sub-economies. Successful delivery will have positive benefits to residents, community groups, and businesses and workers within the CPCA area.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Appraisal Report (January 2022)
- 7.2 Appendix 2 – Scoring Matrix (January 2022)

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 [Report to the Combined Authority Board 04.08.20 - Item 3.5](#)
- 8.2 [Report to the Combined Authority Board 25.11.20 - Item 3.4](#)
- 8.3 [Report to the Combined Authority Board 27.01.21 - Item 3.2](#)
- 8.4 [Report to the Combined Authority Board 28.07.21 - Item 3.4](#)