



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

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**Appendix A**

# **Getting Building Fund (Accelerated 2021 Local Growth Fund) Government Call for Shovel Ready Projects Lessons learned**





## **1. Background**

This brief report sets out the process and lessons learned from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) area projects submission in response to the Letter from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) calling for returned submission(s) for the Getting Building Fund announcement (Accelerated 2021 Local Growth Funding).

On the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020 MHCLG issued a letter calling for 'Shovel Ready Projects' to be submitted across the Country with a deadline of 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

The criteria for submitting projects was clearly indicated as Capital same as Local Growth Funding with ability to deliver spend within 18 months and outcomes related to Jobs, Growth and Green recovery in the proceeding 18 months after that spend. There was also very clear note that projects would have to comply with and go through the Local Assurance Framework in each Combined Authority and/or Local Enterprise Partnership area.

There was some confusion because MHCLG wrote to all Local Authorities in parallel to writing to the Mayor and Chair of the Business Board and they did not make it clear if they required the return to be one combined spreadsheet long list or various multiple project list responses from each area.

The CPCA Business & Skills Directorate communicated with all CPCA Local Authority Chief Executives on the 19<sup>th</sup> June in respect of setting out the criteria around the Local Growth Fund Local Assurance.

An Extraordinary Business Board meeting was held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020 to agree the project(s) that should be put forward to MHCLG as the basis of the allocation and delivery by January 2022.

A Mayoral Decision notice was approved by Leaders at Leaders Strategy meeting and letter written back to MHCLG accepting the allocation and proposing the main project for delivery.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> August MHCLG released news on the Gov website of the approved allocation and confirming details of the project to be funded from the allocation of the £14.6million. See webpage [here](#)

## **2. Activities that were undertaken**

The following list charts the steps we undertook within the process:

- A few of the Local Authorities informed CPCA that they had projects they wanted to put forward in response to the letter – some unfortunately too late to build into the CPCA list at its first draft and submission.





- There was a lack of guidance from MHCLG and this meant that some of the Local Authority partners were uninformed that this call/competition was for Local Growth Funding criteria in nature and therefore projects would require to be approved for funding under the existing Business Board Local Assurance Framework – requiring those projects to score sufficiently well at internal and external evaluation and Entrepreneurs Assessment Panels against the criteria set in the Business Board LGF Investment Prospectus Document.
- CPCA adopted a position, as the Accountable Body for the LGF, to coordinate but not necessarily collate and own the list – this being because the Local Authorities rightly had felt they had been empowered to respond to MHCLG individually, as a result of the letter they had received directly addressing them from the Secretary of State.
- CPCA explained to all the Local Authorities through an email to the Chief Executives that the CPCA LGF team would be very interested if any of the Local Authority partners had LGF compliant projects that they had not raised with us over the last year and were not potentially already in the LGF pipeline, but the LGF team advised if they did, before submitting them to either the CPCA or directly to MHCLG, that those Local Authorities should, if they could, assess them against the following;
  - a. **The of criteria in the Secretary of State letter and template**
  - b. **The LGF eligibility criteria** (Business Board Local Investment Prospectus)  
Which is different for each category of (a) growth projects (<£3m) or (b) major projects (>£3m) in the prospectus document
  - c. **The LGF evaluation criteria** – to meet the Business Board Local Assurance Framework through the approvals process, including independent external evaluation and the EAP Entrepreneurs Assessment Panel (a dragon's den of local businesspeople and Business Board members).
- CPCA Officers offered advice to all the Local Authorities that requested it to guide them through this assessment, not least because it would help the CPCA LGF team rank the new ideas, to add to the LGF existing pipeline as new projects – should the individual Local Authorities wish to submit through the CPCA LGF team
- CPCA LGF team already had a pipeline of projects in development from the calls for projects since the LGF Investment Prospectus was launched in July 2019 and CPCA submitted two accelerated projects, one in PCC (Uni of Peterborough R&D innovation ecosystem project) and one in CCC/GCP (CAM Innovation Body) and then also included three 'new' category projects one each in East Cambridgeshire District (Kennett Garden Village), Fenland





District (COWA Construction Hub) and Huntingdonshire District (Waste to Energy Park).

- CPCA LGF Officers ranked these submitted projects above using the following methodology:
  - a. How many of the template priorities were met, and the strength of evidence provided in justifying those claims;
  - b. How well developed the idea was as an LGF eligible project;
  - c. How well it matched the Business Board Growth Investment Prospectus criteria and hence the likelihood of it being recommended for funding to the business board – irrespective of whether HMG allocates funding for it;
  - d. How in particular: It aligns to the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), it was a LIS defined strategic priority project already; it met or got close to the benchmark cost of £5000 per job;
- CPCA hoped that all Local Authority partners would share their list of submitted projects plus took up the offer for the guidance offered – some did share and consulted on guidance and some partners didn't share their lists until after submitting them directly to MHCLG. Subsequently CPCA Officers did manage to get complete set of all projects submitted to MHCLG for consideration.
- MHCLG Officer staff tasked CPCA LGF Officers to assess and rank all the projects that MHCLG had received from Local Authority partners even if the projects were not submitted through the CPCA main list, CPCA Officers using the criteria outline and methodology above completed the ranking exercise and returned this to MHCLG to aid their decision making process with Officials.
- MHCLG Officers then undertook further more in depth discussions with CPCA Officers and the wider project partnership for the preferred identified highest ranked project for the allocation of the award – these meetings were to dive a little deeper to understand deliverability by January 2022, management of risks and the confirmation of the outputs/outcomes for the preferred project that was being proposed.

### **3. Areas for improvement on process and communication**

Whilst this particular call for projects was done at pace and with little preparation / guidance from the Government Depts to aid CPCA and its Local Authority partners, there are improvements that could be considered as learning points for CPCA, Local Authorities and for stakeholders in preparation for any future calls:





- Communications with central Government departments on future funding needs and responses to funding opportunities should be led and facilitated by the CPCA and the Mayor
- Coordination of the direct calls for projects should be handled through one central point and CPCA is positioned to already do that with the work of the LGF team
- Project pipeline gathering should be conducted in an open and transparent way – communication on sharing potential investment opportunities and key development projects should be regular process between CPCA and its partners/stakeholders
- Sharing updates on current pipeline of potential projects from CPCA/Business Board perspective would be useful for our stakeholders but this should also be reciprocal.
- The application and Local Assurance process could be developed more into an online platform for open access and transparency – whilst the LGF processes and forms are all on the CPCA website moving to online application and processes is an option

#### **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The call for projects and subsequent process for this exercise could have been handled for more effectively and efficiently if the following could be introduced:

- i. Communication – more regular with stakeholders regards specific projects in the area, creating a wider funnel leading to bigger pipeline of projects and with Gov Depts about future funding and related calls
- ii. Coordination – aim to improve across all stakeholders both business and Local Authorities and this is a role that CPCA and its Business Board should be facilitating
- iii. Project pipeline building as per above with stakeholders but in parallel using more methods of engagement such as networks, events, and technology such as an online data capture form for projects
- iv. Sharing the pipeline of projects regularly with our key stakeholders and this should also be reciprocal.
- v. Use technology to mechanise the process for project development and the approval processes with an online platform that supports whole life cycle of projects

