

# A Market Town Plan for



Ely



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# About this document

This document has been commissioned by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), working in partnership with East Cambridgeshire District Council. This Market Town Plan is a series of living documents, owned and updated by local partners including the District Council and the Combined Authority.

The devolution deal which created the combined authority recognises the **important role of market town economies** in growing the wider Cambridgeshire and Peterborough economy. A masterplan for each of the eleven market towns across the region provides the opportunity to look at the unique features of each town, and offers deliverables which will benefit the immediate and wider economy.

This Market Town Plan for Ely endorses Mayor James Palmer's target for the combined authority region to **double its Gross Value Added (GVA) over the next twenty-five years**. To achieve this, market town economies must 'do their bit' – the interventions outlined in this document have been selected for the purpose of achieving this.

We don't expect everything in this document to be funded immediately. There are some quick wins where an injection of funding can get things moving. For other projects, we will need to spend time developing detailed plans and compelling investment cases before we can begin to leverage in funding. While the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) has funded this report, and is keen to invest in our city, we know we will need to build a coalition of supporters, including central government, to get some of the schemes detailed here delivered.

As part of this dialogue with central government, this document signposts a recovery plan from the economic consequences of Covid-19. We have identified positive responses to the global economic shock, which, with government support, will relaunch our local economy, ensuring that our city comes out of the current crisis stronger than it was before.

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# Introduction

The historic city of Ely sits nestled alongside the River Great Ouse and is crowned by its impressive Norman cathedral, known fondly as ‘the ship of the Fens’, for its protruding presence against the flat landscape. Those visiting Ely on one of its market days<sup>1</sup> will be sure to experience the city’s bustling character.

Though city by status, Ely’s economy is categorised alongside Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority’s **market town economies**. Market towns vary in size, provision, and performance - Ely is the largest market town economy in context of East Cambridgeshire, estimated as contributing 32.7% of the district’s GVA.

Ely is the most developed market town economy in East Cambridgeshire and acts as a retail, service and administrative centre for a wide rural catchment. Its commercial centre has undoubtedly experienced the Cambridge effect and is destined for further growth. In a recent market town workshop attended by businesspeople based in Cambridge, Ely scored as the most familiar economy, averaging at a familiarity score of 7.5/10.<sup>2</sup>

The interplay between Ely’s offers plays to the Combined Authority’s ambition: ‘delivering a leading place in the world to **live, learn and work**’.

- **Live:** Housing provision, access to environment and leisure opportunities, amenities, strong connectivity
- **Learn:** A competitive education offer, with plans for an additional primary school
- **Work:** An important commuter city for Cambridge, with direct rail connectivity to London, also attracting high levels of inward commuting for work from other market towns and rural communities.

Ely’s charm and competitive education offer will continue to make it a desirable place to live, but this is insufficient in attracting investment essential to support and grow the local economy. Ely’s proximity to Cambridge will be viewed as a missed opportunity if other market town economies ‘step up’ to the challenge of providing a complementary and competitive alternative.

**This market town plan focuses on prioritising Ely as a leading place to work.** This involves building a strong, competitive and specialist commercial reputation which is supported by Ely’s housing and educational offer.

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<sup>1</sup> 3 main and 3 ‘mini-markets’ per week, with a farmers’ market twice a month

<sup>2</sup> Cambridge Ahead, Market Town Workshop

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# A vision for Ely

There are already lots of good things happening in Ely. **This document delivers a vision for Ely, structured around economic recovery from Covid-19 and growth.**

The overview of Ely draws upon a broad analysis of available data. Interventions outlined in this vision are supported by an action plan at the end of this document.

Our vision is driven by three major opportunity areas, which have been identified as priorities to secure economic growth in Ely and its surrounding area as well as contributing to doubling Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's GVA targets.

**Ely's output (GVA) was £566m in 2017 – doubling this would place Ely's GVA at over 1 billion.**

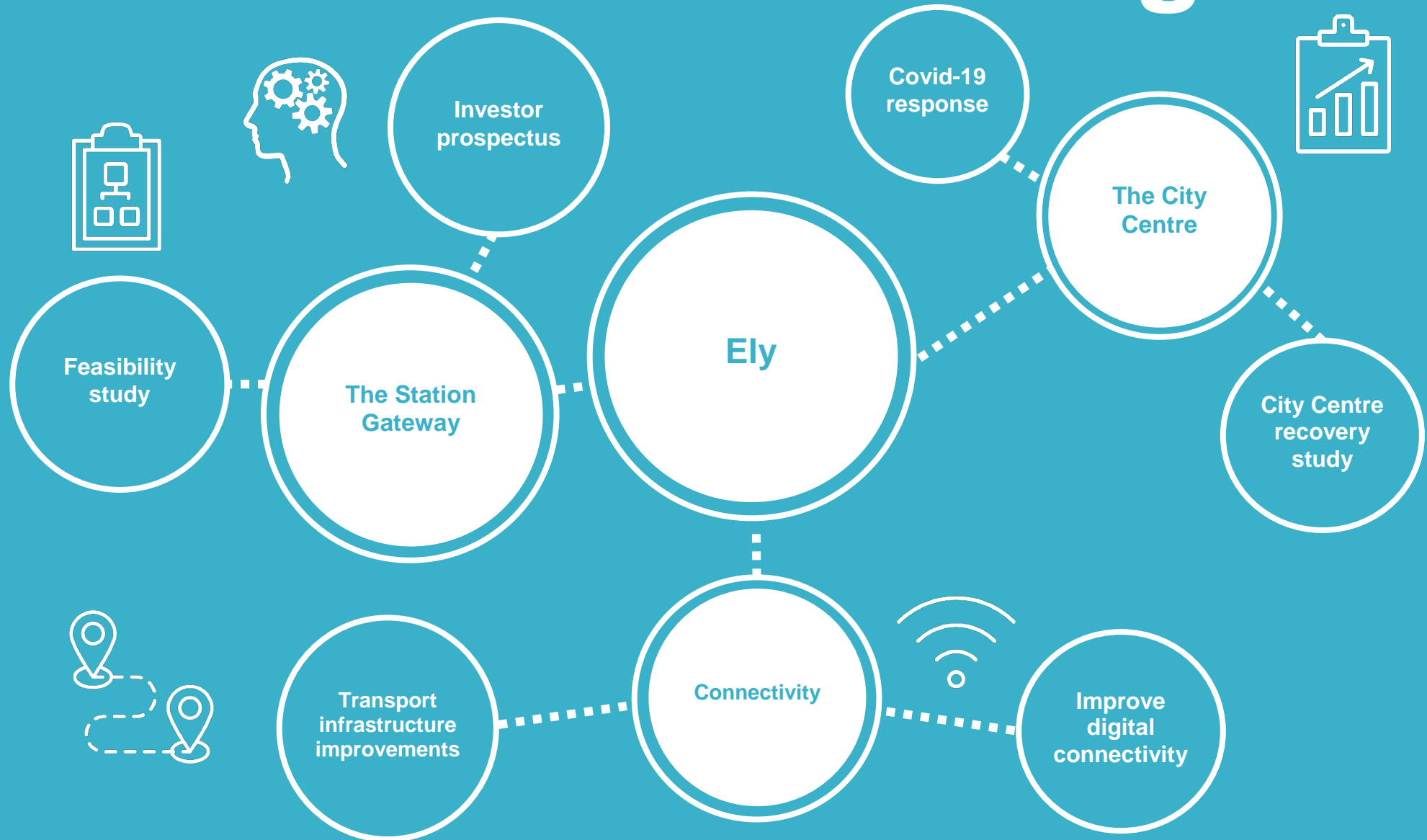
The **three opportunity areas** for Ely explored in this document must be prioritised to deliver maximum economic growth in Ely, and its surrounding area. These are as follows:

1. The Station Gateway
2. The City Centre
3. Connectivity

This market town plan recognises that local business bases across the country have been heavily affected by Covid-19 induced economic consequences. Under the direction of precise immediate to short-term actions, local economies can position themselves on the path to recovery. This market town plan looks at the city's role as a service centre for the district highlighting medium-term to long-term investments that are essential to Ely's expected economic trajectory. Support and funding for these three opportunity areas underpin predicted economic growth for the district and Combined Authority economy.

**Ely needs to react to the changing market and position itself competitively with other market towns and the Cambridge economy.** To achieve this, Ely must build itself a commercial reputation that is well thought out - both contemporary and future proof, offering a broad employment mix and facilities, digital connectivity for businesses and improved road infrastructure.

# The Plan on a Page



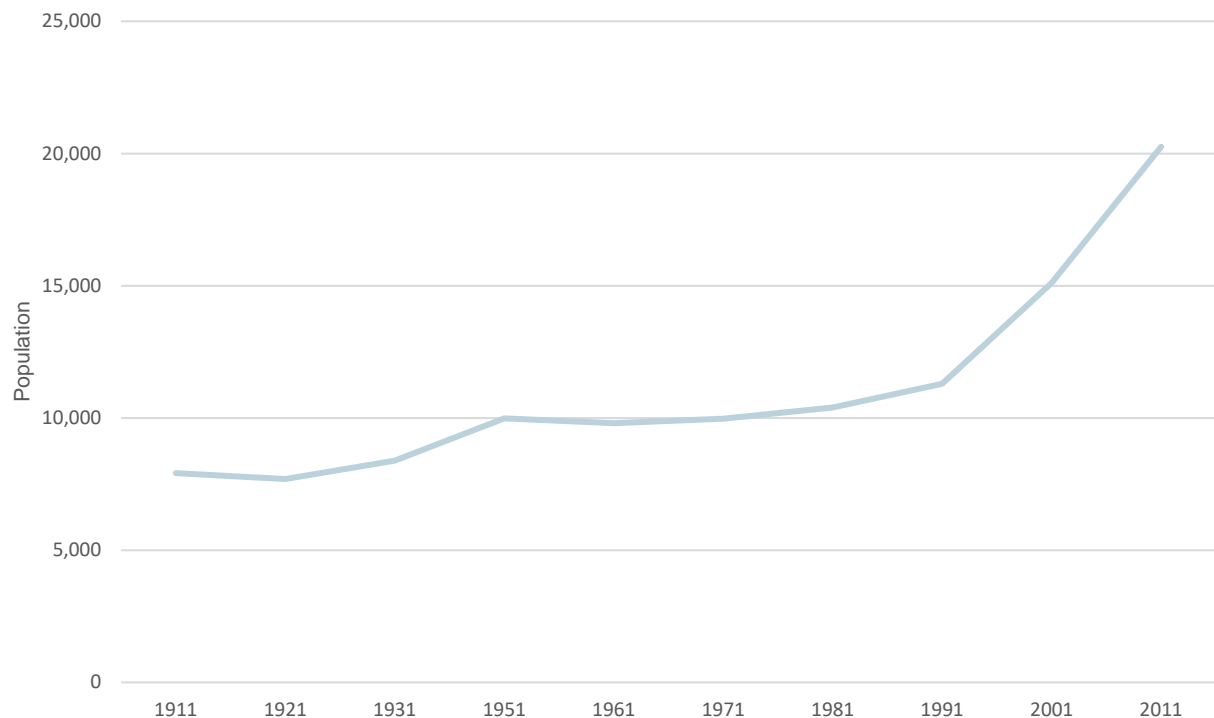
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## An overview of Ely

### An attractive place to live and work

The population of Ely almost doubled between 1981 and 2011 (see fig. 1). This dramatic growth has been followed by a much slower pace in recent years, of 4% between 2013 and 2018.

**Figure 1. Ely's population over the last hundred years, 1911-2011**



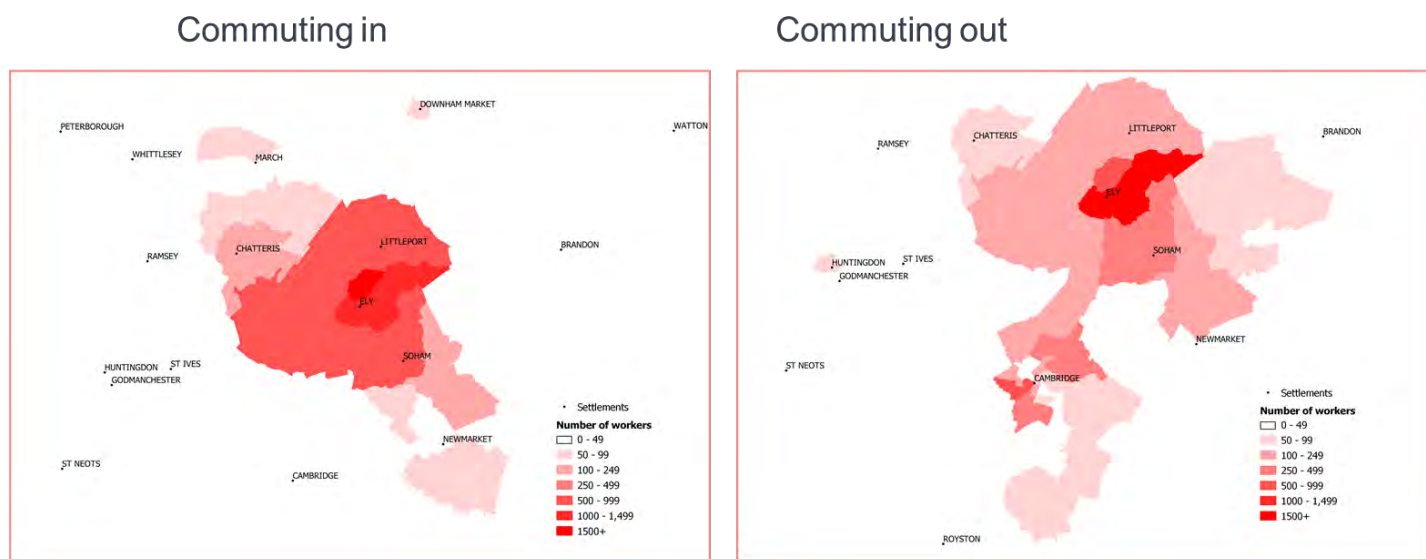
*Source: Census 2011*

Ely's population is expected to grow by more than 35% by from 2016 to 2036. And like all Cambridgeshire market towns, Ely's population is expected to age - there are to be an estimated 2,840 more over-65s living in Ely by 2036 – an increase of 76% from 2016. Interestingly over the last five years, the 25-44 age group has declined in size, this may raise concerns about the future vitality of the city.

Ely is an important commuter city for Cambridge, but also attracts high levels of inward commuting for work from the other market towns and rural communities. (see fig.2)



**Figure 2. Commuting data**



*Source: Census 2011*

### Ely is the primary centre of economic output in the district

Ely produces almost a third of East Cambridgeshire's Gross Value Added (GVA), making it the primary centre of economic output in the district. (see fig.3) Ely's significant economic output is focused on **manufacturing, property and retail** and Ely produces a proportionally high level of economic output in the **service industry**.

Five out of ten of Ely's top specialisms are in Manufacturing - Ely is over *nine times* more specialised than Great Britain in the Manufacture of computer, electronic, and optical products. Another specialism is Scientific Research and Development, in which Ely is nearly 3.5 times more specialised than Great Britain.

**Figure 3. Estimated GVA**

Geography	GVA by District – 2017 prices	GVA by District (% of East Cambridgeshire's total GVA)
Ely	£566m	32.7%
Soham	£190m	11%
Littleport	£126m	7.3%
Other	£849m	49%

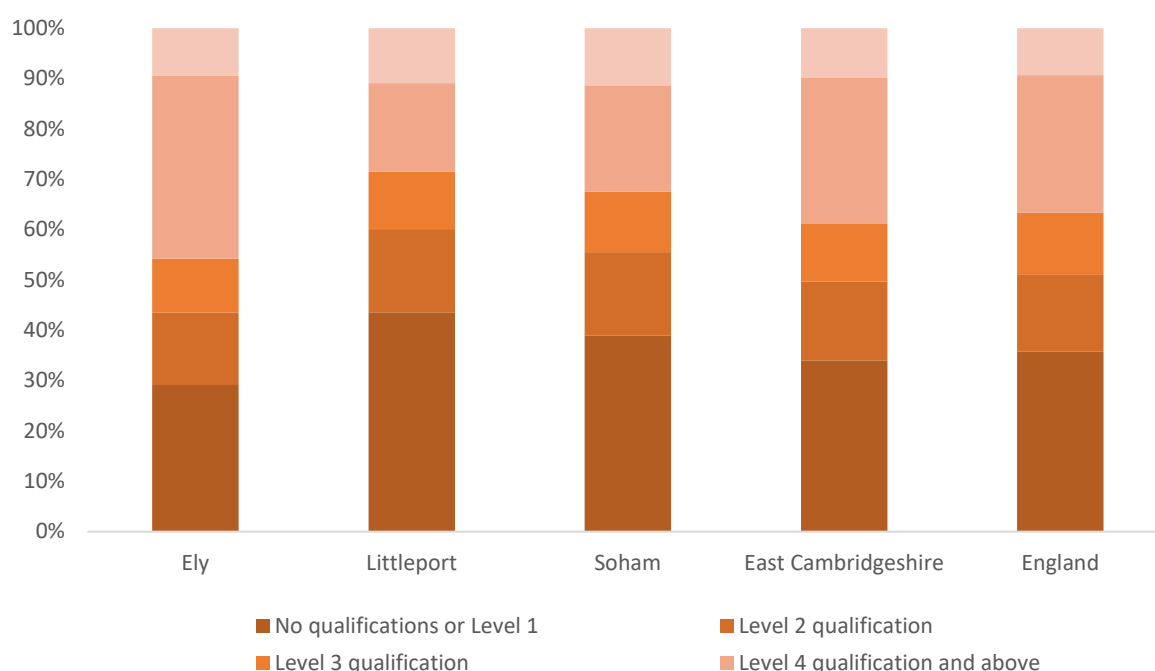
*Source: East Cambridgeshire District Council*

## A highly skilled population

Ely's population has a higher percentage of residents with Level 4 qualifications and above than market town comparators, the East Cambridgeshire average and England average. It also has a lower proportion of Level 1 or no qualifications than the above comparators. (see fig. 4)

Ely is a desirable place for professional and highly skilled workers to live. Just under half of Ely's residents are employed in the three highest skilled occupations (Managers, directors and senior officials, Professional occupations and Associate professional and technical occupations) this is higher than the district, county and country average.<sup>3</sup> Though, Ely's skilled workers command higher wages by commuting out of the district. The median wage for a resident of East Cambridgeshire (£24,885) is significantly higher than the average worker in the district (£21,147).

**Figure 4. Level of qualification attained by geographical area**



*Source: Census 2011*

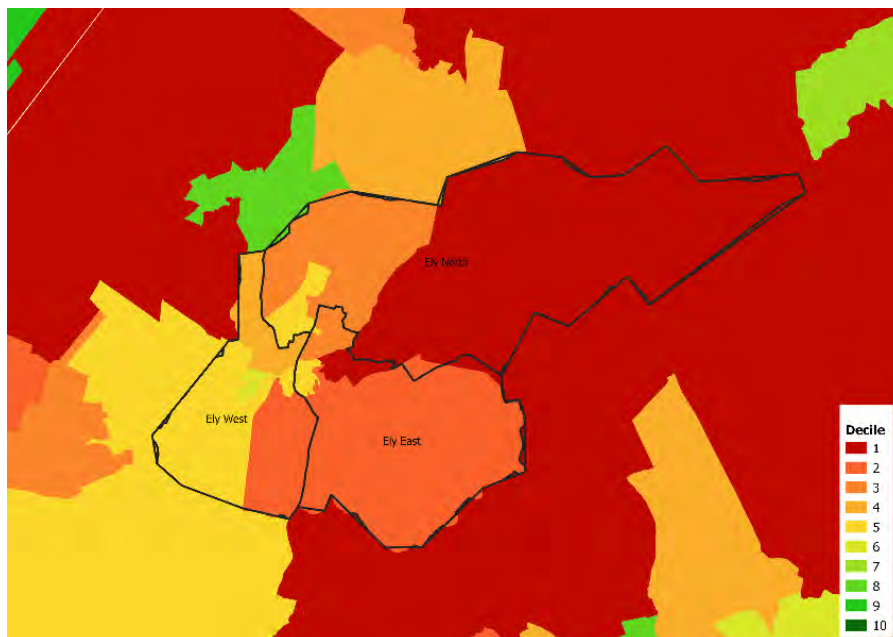
## Relatively low deprivation

Ely has relatively low levels of deprivation as a whole, but some parts of the city are more deprived than others. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights. The domains where Ely scores as more highly deprived are Barriers to Housing (see fig. 5) and Services and Education, Skills and Training Deprivation (see fig. 6),

<sup>3</sup> Highest skilled SOC occupations

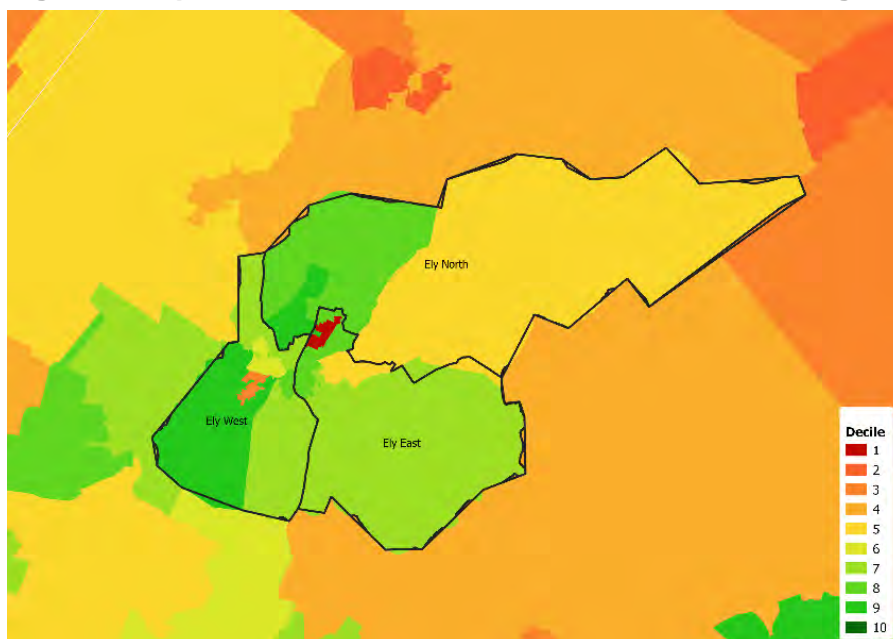
on both counts some neighbourhoods in Ely are among the 10% and 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.

**Figure 5. Deprivation Indices – Barriers to Housing and Services**



Deprivation spanning from Barriers to Housing and Services is high across most of Ely, but is considerably higher in neighbourhoods in Ely North (the dark red shows neighbourhoods among the 10% most deprived in the country), followed by the majority of Ely East and parts of Ely West (the dark orange shows neighbourhoods in the 20% most deprived in the country). Ely West is the relatively least deprived, with neighbourhoods in the west of the ward among the 50% most/least deprived neighbourhoods in the country. These neighbourhoods are around the built-up area of Ely.

**Figure 6. Deprivation Indices - Education, Skills and Training Deprivation**



Source: MHCLG (2019)

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Generally, levels of deprivation in Education, Skills and Training Deprivation are relatively low. Ely West is the relatively least deprived ward, with the exception of a neighbourhood that is among the 20% most deprived in the country. Moving into Ely North, neighbourhoods fall in line with the median levels of deprivation (50% most/least deprived). The dark red neighbourhood in Ely East is the City Centre, and among the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in England.

### **A competitive education offer**

Ely has a good provision of schools – nine primary schools, one secondary school, one independent school (Acremont & Nursery, Junior and Senior) and one special school. Nine out of ten schools that have undergone Ofsted review have been awarded ‘good’ status.

Ely is also part of the **Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area**, which looks to tackle social mobility challenges through additional education funding.

### ***Early years and primary education***

Ely has a higher proportion of early years achieving ‘at least expected at all early learning goals’ and achieving a ‘good level of development’ than the averages for Cambridgeshire and the UK. In primary education, KS2 students achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined is lower in Ely than the county and national averages - 60.2% compared to the county (62.8%) and UK averages (65.3%).

### ***Secondary schools and sixth form colleges***

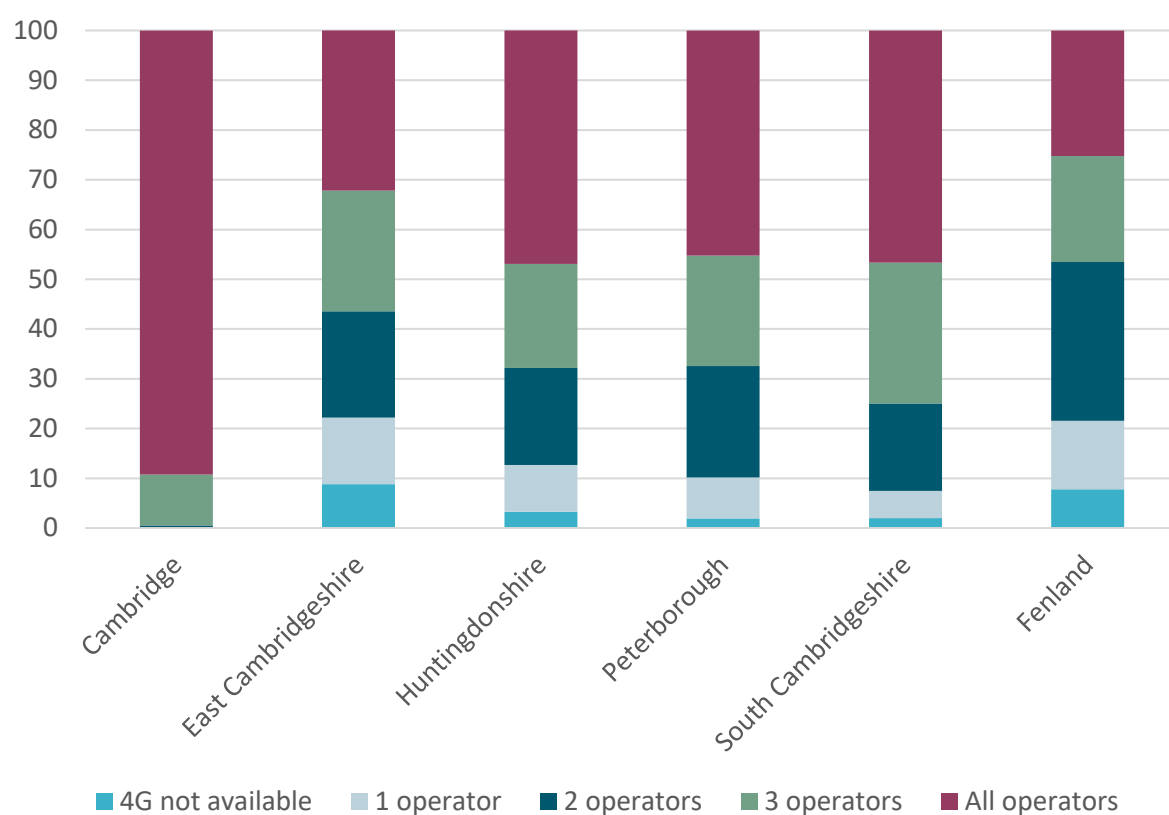
There is a disparity between secondary school provision, with King’s Ely performing above the Cambridgeshire and England averages in the % of secondary school pupils achieving a 9-5 pass in English and Maths GCSE. Ely College performs just below the Cambridgeshire average and just shy of the England average.

Sixth form performance shows King’s Ely has a higher average for A Levels and Bishop Laney Sixth Form offers a range of Level 3 Vocational Courses, A Levels and Level 2 and performs well.

### **Digital connectivity – with varying strength and provision**

Poor mobile coverage is a district-wide issue. East Cambridgeshire has the highest % of premises without 4G in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The chart overleaf shows it performs only marginally above Fenland in the next bracket, in being the second most likely district to only be covered by one mobile operator. (see fig. 10) Ely Cathedral and City Centre are both recognised in the Combined Authority’s ‘Top 20’ priority locations for mobile coverage improvements.

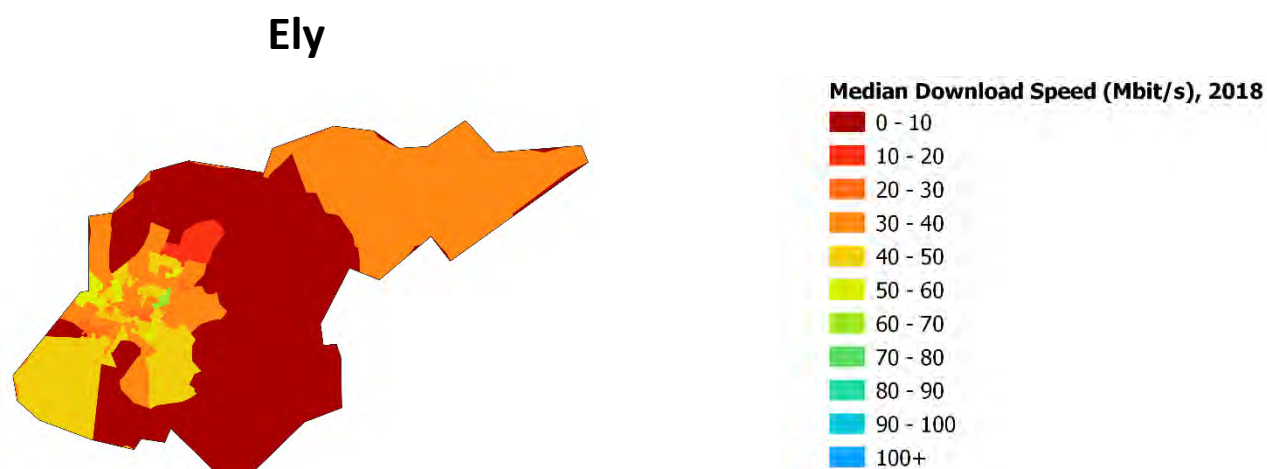
**Figure 10. Mobile signal - % of premises, by number of mobile phone operators giving coverage, by district**



*Source: Ofcom Connected Nations Spring Update 2018, output area level*

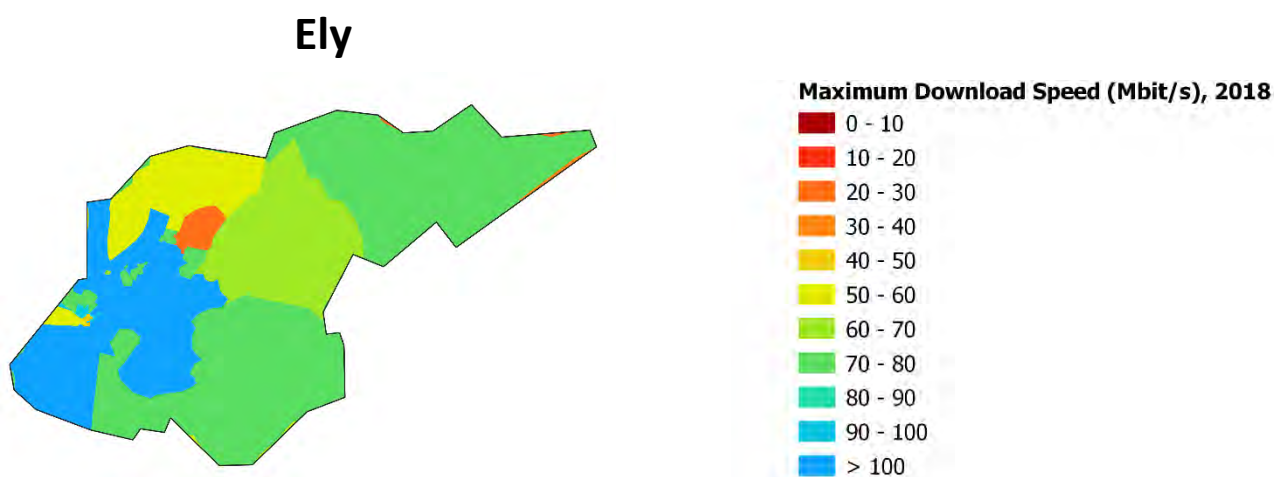
Ely suffers from slow median broadband download speeds, with the exception of the city centre. Large areas of Ely are within the 0-10 Mbit/s decile as shown in the map below and not everyone has the means of accessing broadband. (see fig. 11)

**Figure 11. Broadband: median download speed**



On the other hand, most areas of Ely have access to speeds within the superfast category. (see fig. 12) 'Superfast' broadband is measured as a service that offers speeds of more than 24Mbit/s.) But this is not enough for many businesses, particularly in data-heavy sectors where ultrafast and full fibre are needed.

**Figure 12. Broadband: maximum download speed**



*Source: Ofcom Connected Nations Spring Update 2018, output area level*

### **Good public transport connectivity via rail, while Ely's bus services leave room for improvement**

Weekday transport is made efficient by rail, directly connecting Ely with Cambridge (both the central station and Cambridge North), King's Lynn and London. The new Cambridge South station will provide a rail link to the south of Cambridge. Many combine this with active travel (cycling and walking), as Ely has a higher than average proportion of people commuting to

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work by train, bike, and walking than the district, region and England averages. However, there is still an issue about how people can access the station. Access from the rural hinterland is a more difficult problem and may still be car based for the foreseeable future

Bus services are less efficient. While they offer direct services to Soham, Littleport and Cambridge – their frequency is often every two hours. There is need to change buses to reach March and Newmarket, St Ives and Huntingdon which significantly increases travel time, in comparison to that by car and when different service providers operate the route, passengers may face variable ticketing charges.

The district is predominantly rural with a dispersed population, which creates challenges in providing a comprehensive public and active transport network. Many local communities are reliant on the car as their only transport option to access Ely.

There is a need and an opportunity to change the whole balance of transport use and provision in order to underpin the economic viability of Ely City Centre, the new residential communities on the edge of the city, and its rural hinterland. This strategy will need to examine what the key elements of such change should be and how they should be brought into effect.



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# Area of focus 1: Station gateway

## Introduction

**The station gateway has been identified as the key to achieving the target of doubling GVA** - the new hub will work in tandem with the Enterprise Zone at Lancaster Way Business Park as Ely's commercial hubs. Strategic redevelopment is essential to support existing businesses in the station gateway area, as well as to attract new businesses to this prime location and broaden the employment mix.

The area in question lies between green space on either side and backs on to the River Great Ouse, and the Ely Southern Bypass (see orange shaded area on map below). The value of this area was recognised in the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy (2009), Ely Masterplan (2010), and North Ely: Joint Strategic Masterplan (2013), yet the case for redevelopment of the station gateway has never been stronger. A fresh approach to the station gateway project provides opportunity to reflect what the current market can deliver.





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### ***Developing the commercial offer***

The station gateway area already serves a commercial function - the Cambridge Business Park and The Dock Business Park (both a short walk from the station) accommodate approximately 40 companies including:

- ALS Food and Pharmaceuticals (Pharma testing)
- Shearline Precision Engineering (Manufacturing)
- IT Governance (Data protection)
- Oil & Gas Systems
- Thorlabs (Hi Tech Manufacturer)

The new station gateway will be characterised by specialist companies, similar to those identified above. Ely's commercial offer will attract high skilled workers from the Cambridge ecosystem and encourage business start-ups.

### ***Rail connectivity***

The station is a huge asset to Ely, offering direct journeys to Cambridge and London King's Cross and an interchange to Stanstead Airport, Ipswich, Norwich, King's Lynn, Peterborough and further afield to the midlands and the north. The station gateway's commercial offer will continue Ely's trend as an inbound commuting destination.

### ***Integrating the station gateway into the city***

The aesthetic of the station gateway area is a harsh contrast to the city centre, much of which is a conservation area. From the elevated station entrance there is a dramatic view up Station Road and Fore Hill to the Cathedral. The proximity of the Cathedral, the old buildings along station Road, and the steepness of the slope of the island, accentuate the visual and physical dominance of the Cathedral from this view. Landscaping the development will soften what is currently dominated by tarmac, and improve the impression a visitor receives upon arriving in Ely.

Creating a natural pedestrian flow to the river and city centre will incorporate a transitioning of green and blue space that surrounds the station gateway area and is such an asset to Ely.

## **1. Feasibility study**

The station gateway area involves a significant number of stakeholders – several key landowners and tenants have been identified by the District Council. A feasibility study will need to be conducted to determine opportunities for development in this area, which will include a site options appraisal and require consultation with key stakeholders and landowners.

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## 2. An investor prospectus setting out the vision for the station gateway

It is important to look forward to what we want the station gateway to be, and some of its components. Once the commercial vision for the area has been agreed, an investor prospectus will be a vital document to pitch Ely station gateway to potential investors.

A vision for the station gateway development may include:

### *Provision for a broad employment mix*

The commercial quarter needs to support businesses which are already located in the station gateway area and attract new talent.

The vision for Ely recognises an opportunity to develop the city's commercial reputation. Centre for Cities research indicates that successful city centres are supported by **'knowledge-based'** industries such as marketing, finance and law.<sup>4</sup> Just 20 miles from the station gateway is Cambridge Biomedical Campus, Europe's largest centre of medical research and health science. The proposed new Cambridge South station will provide a rail link from Ely to this. Ely needs to position itself as a key component in the Cambridge ecosystem, particularly attracting these knowledge-based companies. One way of strengthening Ely's commercial reputation is for the station gateway redevelopment to reflect Ely's **sector specialisms**, such as the manufacture of computer, electronic, and optical products, and pharmaceuticals.

New talent also includes **business start-ups** - attracting entrepreneurs to grow their business in Ely. The District Council's e-space South business centre already provides some office space for small businesses, but the station gateway needs to include provision for growth space and be integrated into a business support network provided by the District Council and Combined Authority

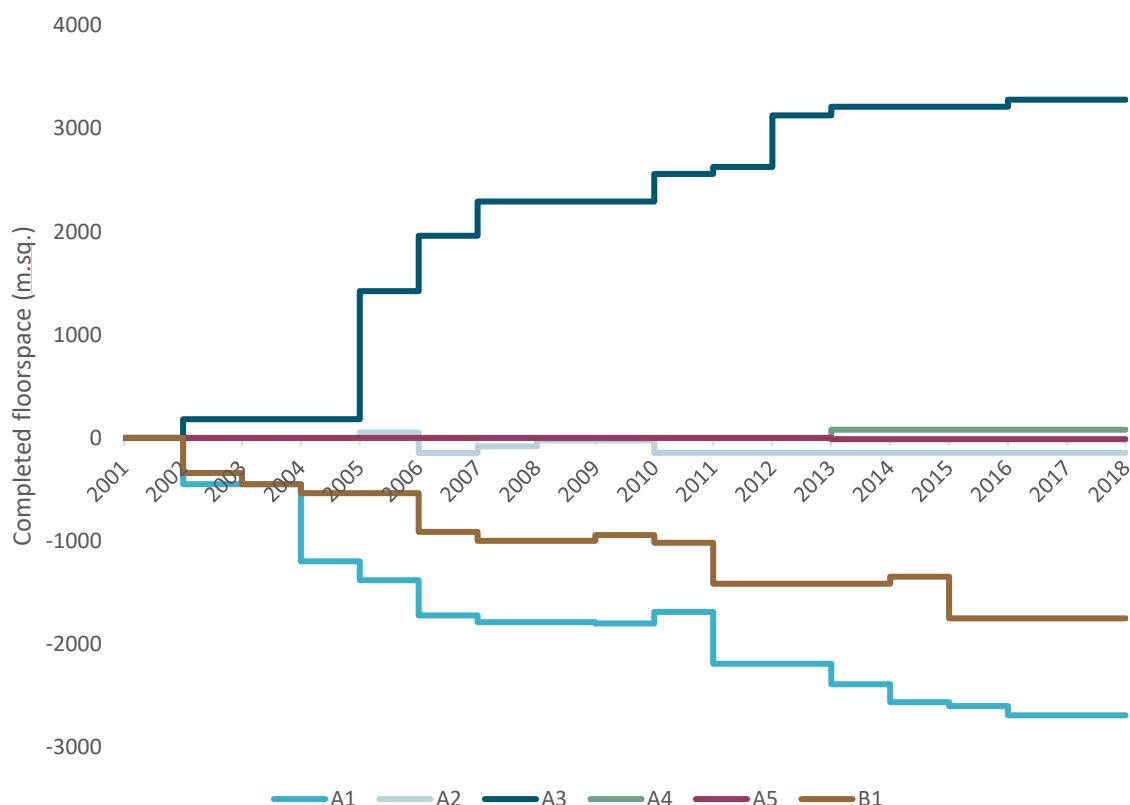
### *Introduction of high-quality business space into the city*

The station gateway offers companies a prime location to base their business, with strong rail and road connectivity and close proximity to the charming city centre. Introducing more office space into the city responds to demand and lack of current provision - looking at change of use data reveals a steady decline in office space (land use class B1). One reason for this is that permitted development rights have led to offices being converted to residential uses. (see fig. 7).

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.centreforcities.org/press/open-for-business-britains-strongest-city-centres-suggest-the-high-street-is-not-dead/>

**Figure 7. Changes of use: net gains/losses in space since 2001 by planning use class**



*Source: Cambridgeshire County Council, CoStar*

If the station gateway is to secure Ely's role in the Cambridge ecosystem, the site needs to offer **high-quality business space** - attracting firms who may be looking to expand or relocate their headquarters.

#### **State-of-the-art facilities**

Over time, we need to work towards provision of state-of-the-art facilities – including laboratory space, training facilities, and conference suites.

As a starting point, the station gateway should include **co-working spaces**, which are becoming increasingly popular amongst smaller businesses and self-employed workers.

#### **Additional car parking**

The station gateway will need to include additional car parking, catering for the businesses and commuters.

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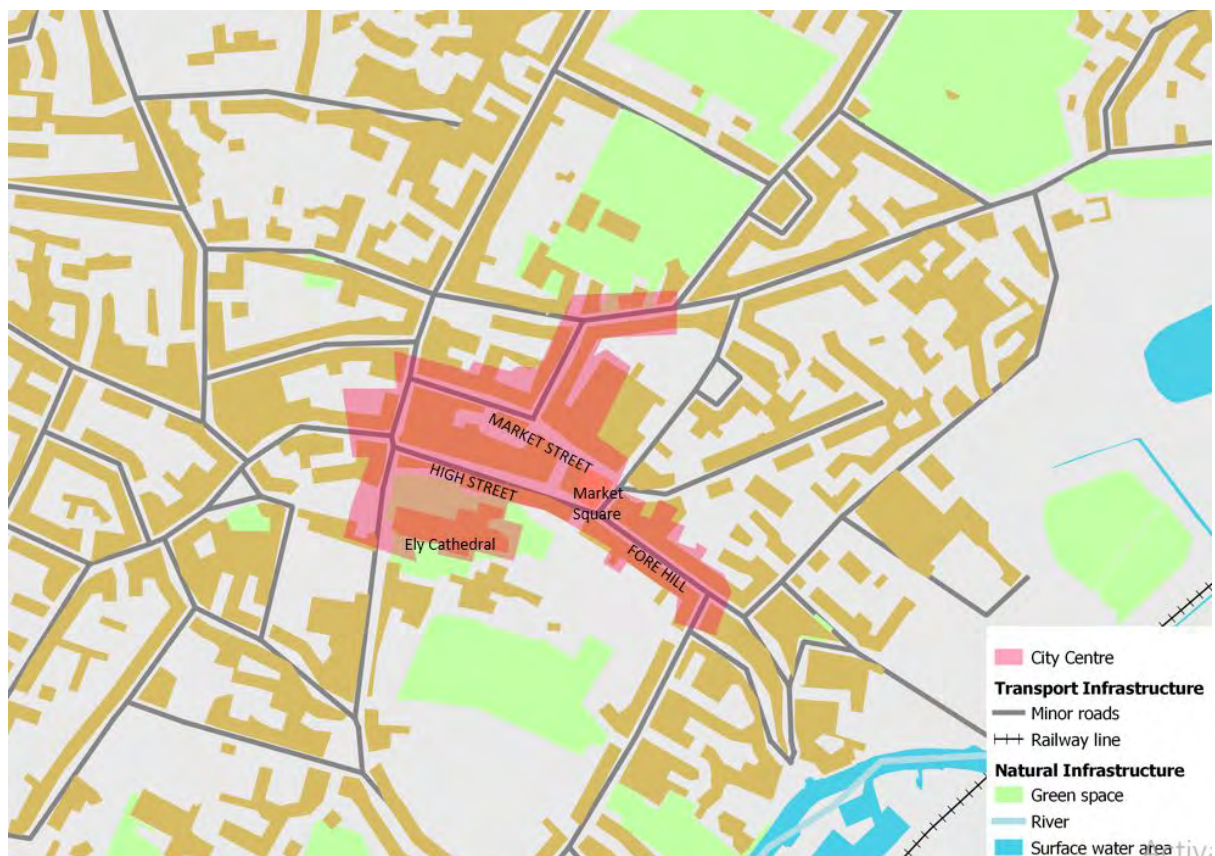
# Area of focus 2: City Centre

## Introduction

Ely's city centre has developed around its historic core (highlighted in red on the map below). A number of important sites including Ely Cathedral, Ely Market, Ely Museum, Oliver Cromwell's House and the Cloisters are located in this small geography. Ely city centre therefore provides a varied offer to visitors and residents, including:

- Heritage
- Retail
- Leisure

The above offer attracts 1.5 million visitors annually and can be enjoyed by tourists as well as people who live and work in Ely. Headlines from a 2017 study revealed Ely Markets generated turnover of more than £5 million per year, with market customers going on to spend a further £10 million in the wider Ely economy.



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## The impact of Covid-19 has had an instant dramatic effect on local economies

Across the UK people are restricting movements to key work, essential goods, and exercise. Covid-19 has caused a shift in behaviours overnight, many businesses have been ordered to close, to furlough staff or instate a work from home policy. A change to business models has seen a number of companies rely or revert to a 'takeaway' service, or to move their business online.

In the Combined Authority area, restrictions around travel have impacted the movement of people, with patronage on buses down by 90%.<sup>5</sup> In Ely city centre, the government-required lockdown has prevented people from using the space as they would usually. Sectors in Ely city centre recognised as being particularly vulnerable to this economic shock are retail, leisure and hospitality.

The economic impact of Covid-19 poses direct challenges to the future of Ely city centre, including an uncertain future of tourism and Ely's experience economy.

- **Tourism** – Ely will remain a desirable place to visit on account of its built and natural environment, but visitor patterns are likely to change as a consequence of the pandemic. This may be short-lived, particularly around international tourism – but we must not allow complacency in assuming things will return to 'how they were before'.
- **Experience economy** – Pre Covid-19, Ely's "experience economy", which includes visitor experiences and unique cultural attractions, could be considered as healthier than other market town offers. A stand out element of this would be Ely's food and drink offer, since 2001 change of use has added an extra 3.000 m.sq. of floorspace in Ely to food and drink planning use.<sup>6</sup>

The experience economy has been hit hard by the impact of Covid-19, and despite government support, many smaller businesses will be uncertain about their future. For those businesses that do stabilise and recover in the short-term, the question of how long it will take for patterns of demand to return is paramount.

## 1. Immediate Covid-19 response

Covid-19 poses an immediate challenge to ambitions for the city centre, therefore it is important that local businesses are **signposted to existing and emergency support** offered by the District Council, Combined Authority and Government.

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<sup>5</sup> CPCA Transport committee, Covid-19

<sup>6</sup> Cambridgeshire County Council, CoStar

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## 2. Developing an evidence-based city centre strategy

Understanding the local economy plays a crucial role in directing local authorities' response to the Coronavirus pandemic. **An immediate action is for East Cambridgeshire District Council to produce a bespoke study of Ely's economy to inform a Covid-19 response.**

This must include:

- The latest research
- Best practice from around the UK and abroad
- Labour market assessment (particularly around universal credit data, and unemployment and redundancy figures)
- Business premises assessment (monitoring vacancy rates for different types of businesses)

These findings will work into a **district wide Covid-19 economic recovery strategy**, which will include recommendations for individual market town economies including a sectoral response.

Before this detailed study implements a Covid-19 economic recovery strategy it is useful to assess data that is already available.

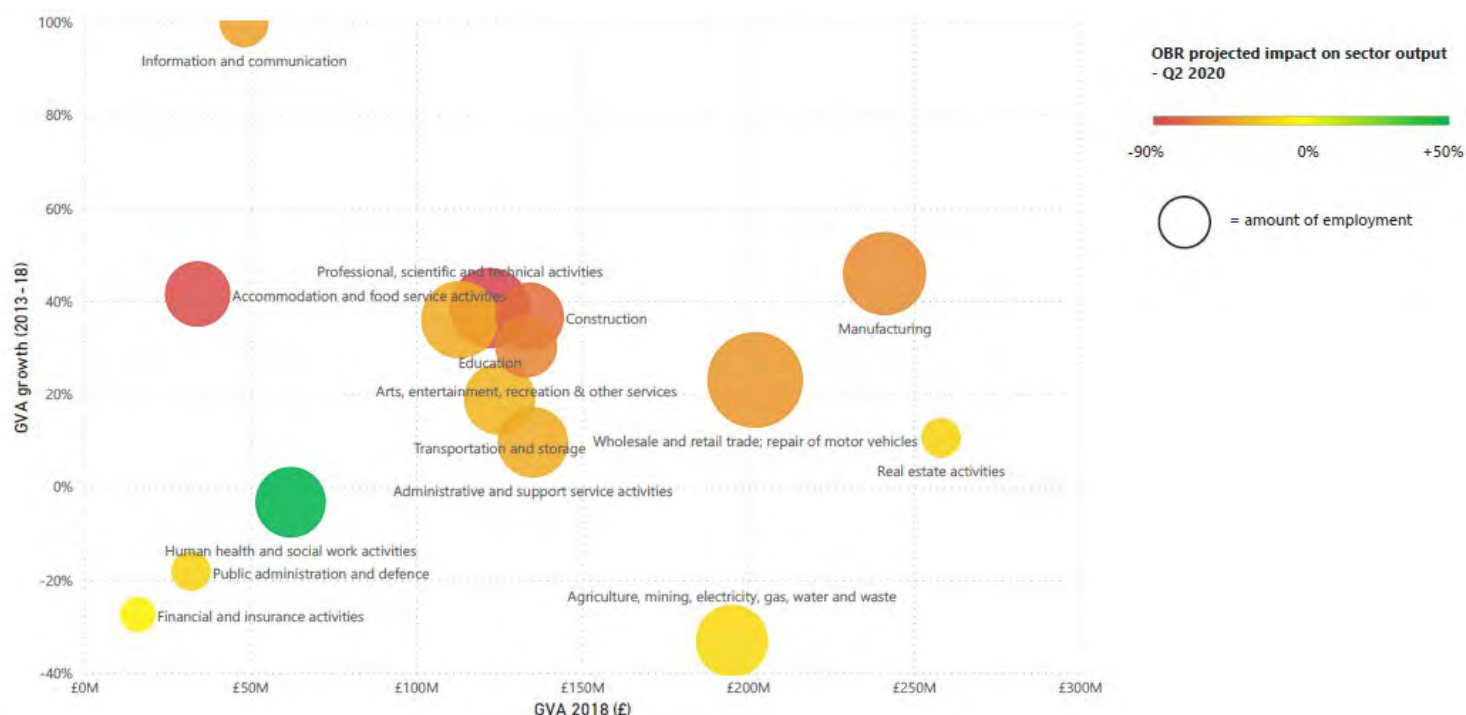
### **Economic vulnerability assessment**

Looking at the mix of sectors and professions is a useful starting point for Ely's recovery post Covid-19. The graph overleaf (fig. 8) shows the most at-risk sectors in East Cambridgeshire according to OBR estimates are in tourism and professional, scientific and technical services. In particular, Ely's fast-growing IT sector, which has doubled its output in five years, is at medium risk.

Some of the least affected sectors, financial and insurance, public admin, health, are a small and shrinking part of the economic mix. Whilst the oranges and reds are more typically the bigger, growing sectors - this poses existential threat to the business community in Ely should the recession turn out to be longer-lived.



**Figure 8. OBR projected impact on UK sectors, by local GVA, growth and employment**



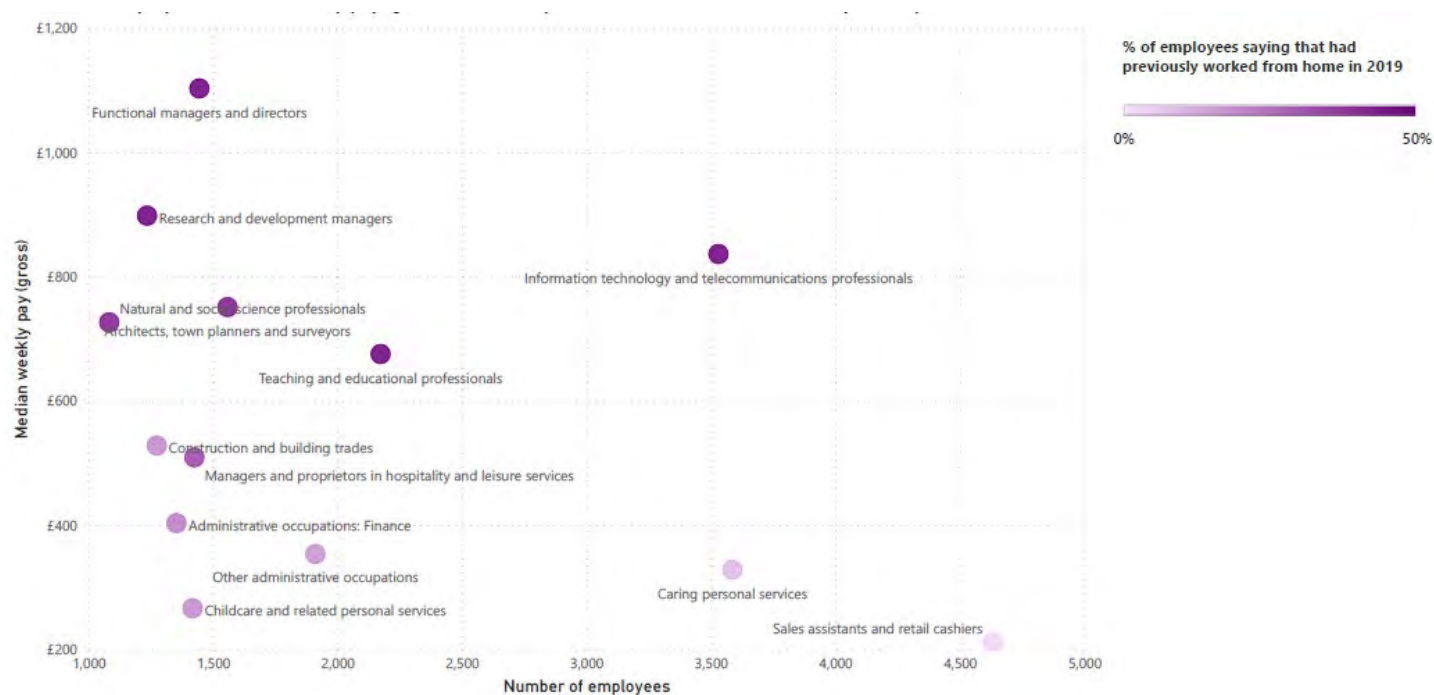
*Sources: Office for Budget Responsibility, ONS Regional Accounts, ONS Business Register and Employment Survey*

The increasing possibility of prolonged social distancing measures significantly impacts the workforce, and it is probable that parts of the economy will return to work in increments. It is useful to look at working from home data to provide insight to the proportion of the economy that can continue working under these measures.

From the graph overleaf (fig. 9), we can see a clear positive correlation in East Cambridgeshire between employees' past experience of working from home and higher median earnings. These occupations include Functional managers and directors, and research and development managers. The larger employing occupations, such as caring personal services and sales assistants and retail cashiers are less likely to be able to work from home by the nature of their role, and these employees earn less.

Across the UK we are seeing effects of Covid-19 exaggerating social and economic inequalities. It is important that East Cambridgeshire District Council and the Combined Authority are aware of this trend, and identify the communities, sectors and occupations at highest risk.

**Figure 9. Number of employees, Median weekly pay (gross), First Occupation and % ever work at home**



*Sources: ONS dataset Coronavirus and homeworking in the UK labour market 2019, ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings table 14.1a, ONS Social Survey (ad hoc request). Note some professions not included as numbers suppressed by ONS for being too small to be statistically significant.*



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## Area of focus 3: Connectivity

**Ely's connectivity needs to be exceptional to support its businesses and residents as part of the vision to double GVA.** As per the CPIER recommendation: 'A package of transport and other infrastructure projects to alleviate the growing pains of Greater Cambridge should be considered the single most important infrastructure priority facing the Combined Authority in the short to medium term. These should include the use of better digital technology to enable more efficient use of current transport resources.'<sup>7</sup>

### Digital connectivity

Free public Wi-Fi is available to retailers and visitors in the city centre, serving the Market Place, High Street and Fore Hill areas. This allows people to access services 'on the go' and has been transformative in allowing market traders to take contactless payments. But this provision serves only a small function, the bigger picture reveals broadband and mobile connectivity across Ely is not fit for purpose. The recent shift towards 'working from home' models and for a business need to be well-connected has heightened the demand for digital connectivity improvements in Ely and East Cambridgeshire - improvements which could be transformative to residents and businesses alike.

### Transport infrastructure

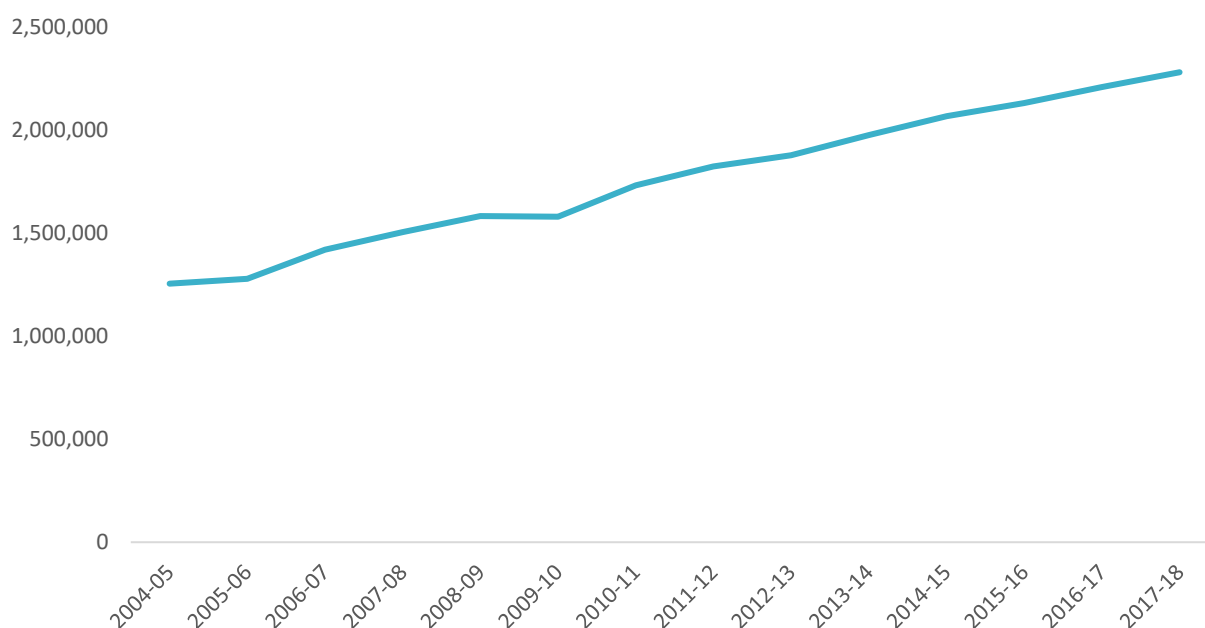
Ely is well-connected via a number of modes of transport. Rail usage in Ely has steadily grown, the chart overleaf plots annual estimates of station entries and exits from Ely station. (see fig 13) This has helped secure Ely as a commuter destination and as a viable daytrip option.

Ely Southern Bypass was opened in 2018. After years of suffering the effects of delays and congestion on the busy A142 route, this has delivered a boost to residents and the economy of East Cambridgeshire and beyond. Ely is also a popular destination for boating traffic along the River Great Ouse, which sees many visitors venturing into the centre to enjoy the heritage and food and drink offer. Ely has good public transport connectivity via rail, while its bus services leave room for improvement.

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<sup>7</sup> CPIER

**Figure 13. Annual estimates of Station entries and exits from Ely 2004 – 2018**



*Source: Office for Rail and Road*

## 1. Improve digital connectivity

**The strength and provision of digital connectivity across Ely needs to be improved so that businesses and residents can benefit.**

As aspects of our life increasingly go online, the importance of reliable and fast connections grows. The following actions have been identified as part of this initiative to improve digital connectivity.

- Support the free WiFi provision in the city centre and develop a medium-long term sustainable option providing a service to the wider city centre and beyond.
- Work with mobile network providers to make better mobile coverage available. An immediate action is to improve 3G and 4G coverage, this includes an opportunity to share masts and data via the Shared Rural Network (SRN), as part of a wider Combined Authority ambition. Further ambition is to work with Connecting Cambridgeshire to identify the infrastructure needed to support 5G.
- In order to position itself as 5G ready, there is an opportunity for Ely to work with the public sector to explore opportunities for being a test bed for the Internet of Things (IoT). As part of this, Ely could position itself as a smart city - the use of smart sensors and devices would provide innovative opportunities, such as that around smart mobility, including increased efficiency managing traffic and parking.

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## 2. Transport infrastructure improvements

Key transport infrastructure improvements around active travel, road and rail are listed below. In all cases, these are ongoing projects which will require support to deliver.

### Bus Services and Cycling and Walking Routes Consultation

East Cambridgeshire District Council has recently been consulting with residents to identify key bus services and cycling and walking routes that will allow local people to get to work, college, doctors, shops, public services or visit family and friends. The findings from this consultation will help shape transport improvements; funding will be required to deliver new bus services, cycleways and footpaths.

Evidence over the last 10 years shows that a city bus service for Ely is needed and could be commercially viable in the long term. This should be a fundamental aspiration of the strategy, as it supports economic development of the city centre.

The impacts of COVID-19 will also need to be assessed, in particular whether patterns of travel and modes of travel will change.

### Road

The first study is the **'Lancaster Way A10-A142 Improvements'** this concerns two roundabouts (the BP roundabout and Lancaster Way roundabout) which are often congested. The agreed interim improvements, which are now funded and moving to implementation will enable the delivery of the enterprise zone at Lancaster Way business park second phase extension, paving the way for 2,500+ new jobs.

The second, and largest project is the **A10 dualling and junction upgrades**. The A10 serves the local economy and is a route in high demand, yet lengths of the busy stretch remain single carriageway with few safe passing places. **The Combined Authority must make A10 improvements a central project, as identified in the CPIER.**

The A10 connects Ely with Cambridge and King's Lynn, two key places of commerce. The stretch of road between Ely and Cambridge carries the third highest level of north-south traffic in Cambridgeshire, with more than 18,000 vehicles currently using the A10 daily between Ely and Stretham, and up to 25,000 vehicles a day using the section between Waterbeach and the A14.

The A10 is critical to Ely's connectivity to the knowledge industry associated with the Cambridge ecosystem and will gain importance with the delivery of a new town, north of Waterbeach. The A10 joins the Cambridge and Fenland economies, benefiting East and North Cambridgeshire.

Improvements include dualling the 16 mile stretch of the A10 between the A14 north of Cambridge and the A142 at Ely and junction upgrades as well as delivering a new off road cyclepath from Ely to Cambridge. Opportunities exist for realignment of the A10 from Stretham to Ely, with the potential to significantly improve the congestion problems around

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the Lancaster Way area. Support for plans which are currently at Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) stage will:

- Cater for long term growth
- Offer safety benefits
- Provide alternatives to the car
- Ease congestion

Opportunities to expand the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM) beyond Cambridge and Waterbeach to Ely should be explored.

## **Rail**

A proposal around Ely North Junction was postponed in 2016, since then Network Rail secured £9.3m funding from the CPCA to embark on a wider review.

**Ely Area Capacity Enhancement (EACE) Programme** is underway and due for submission as a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) in 2020, the intention is to increase both passenger and freight capacity. The District Council continues to support EACE, so long as it offers a road solution to ensure continued road connectivity for the people of Queen Adelaide, Prickwillow and North Ely.

## Implementation plan

Vision section	Intervention	Key Actions	Additional partners
The Station Gateway	Feasibility study	Review of land, ownership, and constraints  Testing market demand for different types of space	CPCA, stakeholders and landowners
	A prospectus setting out the vision for the station gateway	Create a compelling document for use with prospective investors and interested companies  Work with local, regional, and national partners to promote this as a key part of Cambridgeshire's growth story	
The City Centre	Immediate Covid-19 response	Support local businesses, using all available channels  Research into and collection of real-time data to assess Ely's vulnerability	CPCA  Cambridgeshire County Council  Local Businesses
	Developing an evidence-based city centre strategy	Deep-dive review on how Covid-19 affects key sites and previously stated ambitions	

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Vision section	Intervention	Key Actions	Additional partners
Connectivity	Improve digital connectivity	Development of a 5G strategy	CPCA Connecting Cambridgeshire
	Transport infrastructure improvements	<p>Prioritise A10 dualling as a key project and take forward from SOBC</p> <p>Push forward Ely Area Capacity Enhancements in a manner which provides a retained road solution for residents of Queen Adelaide, Prickwillow and North Ely</p>	<p>Highways England</p> <p>Cambridgeshire County Council</p> <p>CPCA</p>

