

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH**  
**LOCAL ECONOMIC RECOVERY STRATEGY: APPENDIX 2 -**  
**THE CITY, DISTRICT & TOWN LEVEL RECOVERY STRATEGY**

**Cambridge City**

Cambridge is one of the fastest growing economies in the UK and a world-renowned centre for knowledge-based industries, drawing on the strength of two universities and a high degree of networking and connectivity to create the Cambridge Phenomenon. It is one of a minority of net contributors to the exchequer. Benefiting from one of the most highly-skilled workforces of any city in the country, Cambridge has an impressive record on research, development and innovation, and is home to many of the world's leading tech and life science companies.

Cambridge City Council's role in the Cambridge Phenomenon has been a facilitative one, creating the space for growth through successive statutory local plans in the last 25 years. The Council also played a key role in establishing the Cambridge Business Improvement District and has directly supported the tourism and cultural sectors.

The Council also maintains a large and diverse commercial property portfolio which provides business premises for a variety of businesses across the city. The Council's vision is for One Cambridge, Fair for all. The Council has worked, through its Anti-Poverty Strategy, to support more inclusive and sustainable growth, through championing the Real Living Wage and business involvement in community activities and through promoting energy efficiency measures to businesses.

***District Level Actions:***

- A focus on quality of life, quality of place, social inclusion and environmental sustainability will be key themes for the Council through the recovery phase of the pandemic crisis, and in the years beyond, not least as expressed in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.
- The Council has distributed nearly £23m of business support grants during the Covid crisis, and will continue to provide a conduit for Government support to city businesses. We have worked with business networks to ensure businesses receive regular information on funding and support available.
- We have worked closely with our commercial tenants to support their recovery, through individual engagement on rent holidays and discussions on appropriate payment plans over the longer term.
- Cambridge City Council has played a leading role on re-opening Cambridge city centre in the early stages of the recovery phase, working with partners in the CBID, Greater Cambridge Partnership, Cambridgeshire County Council and CPCA. This work includes promotion of the city centre as a safe place to visit, to increase footfall in a secure way.

- Aligned with this is the Greater Cambridge Partnership work on City access to enable more sustainable transport options into and out of the city, alongside longer term Combined Authority plans for the CAM metro
- The city council, with network partners, will continue to provide a channel for the voice of Cambridge's businesses – particularly in the most vulnerable sectors – to be heard in Government.
- Cambridge City Council has ambitious, low-carbon development plans in place for its land as part of the exciting new urban quarter at Cambridge North East, and is developing an innovative BREAM Excellent aparthotel at Park Street. The Council will continue to explore options to develop its land to bring vitality and variety to the city's economic landscape.
- Cambridge City Council has been nominated for a national award for leading work, in partnership, to address the local homelessness challenge. Having successfully provided temporary accommodation for c.140 people, the Council is working on longer-term plans to support the re-establishment of homeless people.
- We will continue to build new council homes to contribute to the stock of housing available for workers of all income levels in Cambridge. Our current programme is on track to provide nearly 1000 new homes with c.550 being council-owned and rented homes, and we have ambitious plans for a new 10 year programme to develop 1000 new Council rented homes on our own and purchased sites alongside other tenures. These will all be high quality and sustainable, with a trajectory towards net zero carbon development where appropriate.
- In addition to this, we are working with Anglian Water and Homes England (through the support of the Housing Infrastructure Fund) to enable the development of a new sustainable quarter for a mixed development including c5000 homes and the district centre in north east Cambridge
- Through our environmental health team we will work with partners to manage any local outbreaks of Covid-19, to ensure Cambridge remains open and safe for business.
- We will continue to work with the business networks in the city to help support current business and drive sustainable growth in skills and employment in the City. We will consider the impacts of the pandemic on the commercial workspace requirements and to support development to meet future needs.
- The Council is working with partners to explore the inward investment and visitor economy needs arising from the pandemic and to develop a leading cluster of creative industries in Greater Cambridge alongside South Cambs District council, to ensure that its commercial, visitor and cultural offer are fit for future purpose.

## **Peterborough City**

Peterborough has much going for it with a young, active and engaged workforce; diverse local communities; low cost of doing business; nation-leading gigabit fibre networks; great road links; 39 minute train journey times to London King's Cross; and direct train services to both Gatwick and Stansted Airports.

Immediately, prior to the pandemic, Peterborough was England's 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest growing city with a rapidly expanding population and an investment pipeline of over £600m in the city centre alone. The city's economic trajectory had been very positive with considerable employment; net business creation in the city outpaced regional and national trends; growth in economic output (GVA) was higher than regional and national averages; and the level of patent registrations indicated strong, continued investment in innovation and R&D.

Since the Coronavirus outbreak PCC has worked closely with CPCA, Peterborough Positive (the Business Improvement District Steering Group) and Opportunity Peterborough (OP) to engage with and support the business community. Many millions of pounds in grant funding has been issued to eligible businesses; PCC commercial tenants have received rent deferrals where required; and Peterborough Positive has been coordinating activity to re-open the city centre in a safe and inviting manner, as well as supporting businesses to pursue a 'café culture' resulting in a higher than average return to the high street.

OP surveyed c.100 businesses to identify their challenges and priorities in the short to medium term. These were access to funding, particularly for investment in technology and the development of online services, and increased demands for skills, particularly digital skills. Regular business breakfasts have been held; a dedicated COVID support page has been created on the OP website, supported by a proactive social media campaign to disseminate crucial updates in a timely manner; and regular newsletters have been circulated to c.6,000 business contacts. OP has also been working closely with the CPCA to support their Talent Portal initiative, providing a free recruitment service to match job seekers with those businesses who are recruiting.

Extensive engagement has taken place with local businesses through these recent challenges which have strengthened our local business networks and shaped our Covid 19 economic recovery plans. This has helped to get the city safely and quickly back to business, while developing longer term plans to 'build back better' through smart technology, low carbon investment, inclusive growth, health and well-being. Whilst COVID-19 has had a serious short-term impact on the city's economy, we are confident that the city has the vision, resilience and drive to build back better, delivering a green economic recovery.

A bid for c.£25m has been submitted to the Towns Fund and we are confident that over the next 5 years, that we can leverage investor appetite for our city and deliver a number of game-changing projects that will become catalysts for the genuine and sustainable transformation of the city's prospects, and those of its communities. Short term projects to be funded through the Towns Fund programme include the Embankment Masterplan; £1m to accelerate projects in the Parks and Public realm strategy; and the development of an enterprise, training and business incubation hub. Medium term projects (to be delivered within 3 years) include the development of a new library and cultural hub on Bridge Street; the development of the National Bronze Age Museum; construction of a lakeside activity centre; and the construction of a pedestrian bridge connecting the embankment and University of Peterborough with the Fletton Quays development.

### ***District Level Actions:***

- Deliver the exciting vision set out in the city's local Plan 2018-36, and documents such as our City Development Brochure - *The Time is Now* - which provides a framework for developing major city centre sites.
- Take fuller advantage of Peterborough's strategic location and access to markets to attract new inward investment through the CPCA's Business Growth Service. This will be enhanced through the creation of a gateway inward investment site and commercial district around the city's Station Quarter anchored by a new Railway Station.
- Unlock the economic and environmental potential of the River Nene as an asset for the city by developing the riverside and promoting leisure and recreation activities; transform our city centre into a destination that will attract more visitors and become a place our thriving communities will be proud of by improving the public realm and strengthening pedestrian and cycleway routes connecting the Station to the City Centre and Embankment; and strengthen Peterborough's arts, sporting, cultural and leisure assets (supported through a recent Arts Council England funding application) boosting the city's visitor economy.
- Build on the recommendations made in the 2018 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review to develop more knowledge intensive, entrepreneurial business. Through the development of the University of Peterborough, and existing relationships with the broader higher education community, we will enhance the business and academic networks needed to support our knowledge intensive industries such as advanced manufacturing, agri-tech, clean-tech, and business and professional services. In doing so we will strengthen supply chains across the Combined Authority area as a whole and create higher value, secure employment for our communities. We will also support businesses on their journey to greater efficiency, productivity, and sustainability through the adoption of digital technologies and the development of digital skills.
- Address the city's skills deficit through targeted programmes across FE, HE and local businesses to address gaps and opportunities in vocational and technological skills and boost productivity.
- Build on over £600m in private finance planned, or already underway, in city centre commercial and housing development whilst unlocking opportunities to create a more environmentally sustainable city, protecting and enhancing the city's natural environment and creating sustainable opportunities for employment and growth, and supporting Peterborough's progress to zero carbon.
- Build on the early successes and enormous potential of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and bring a sharper focus to our contribution to the regional growth deal targets agreed between the Government and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA).

### **South Cambridgeshire**

South Cambridgeshire is a distinct and vibrant place in which to live and work. Alongside a largely micro and SME economy, we have some of the world's largest life sciences players homed at our science parks, meaning a healthy, vibrant and diverse economic territory overall. Intellectual gravitas, entrepreneurial flair and an open for business atmosphere also plays to our uniqueness.

Our South Cambridgeshire Business Plan to 2025 outlines the vision for our district, a vision intent on increasing the physical, mental, social and economic well-being of our residents and business communities alike.

This has not changed in a post-pandemic context, in fact, we are more resolute than ever before in our commitment to driving positive local change. Specifically, we are focussing on:

- Growing local businesses and economies
- Housing that is truly affordable for everyone to live in
- Being green to our core
- Being a modern and caring Council

***District Level Actions:***

- We continue to be focussed on promoting South Cambridgeshire as an attractive destination for start-ups, entrepreneurs, new to the area companies and those wishing to scale. A dedicated business support team of four officers was set up in June to deliver on this, working closely in partnership with the Growth Hub. This includes the promotion of our Enterprise Zones.
- We are supporting local businesses with weekly refreshed information and assistance via our Open for Business Newsletter and individual case work enabling them to continue to trade as they continue to navigate the complexities of the pandemic landscape. A series of support- based workshops and seminars is also being devised.
- We continue to work with multiple regional stakeholders to ensure skills, training and support for career or industry changers and young people is both readily available and second to none as the business landscape continues to change and evolve post Covid. Future proofing with a focus on the jobs of today and tomorrow and a digital first approach to upskilling continues to be key. 2021 and beyond funding and investment will be required to support our ambitions.
- South Cambridgeshire is a council proud to be green to our core. We have set ourselves ambitious internal and external environmental targets, with a specific focus on ensuring we support and help businesses with their sustainability agendas. We are working with industry and university leaders in South Cambridgeshire and beyond to ensure a zero-carbon future by 2050 is realised. This includes supporting Parish Councils and community group projects to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and move toward the zero-carbon target. Furthermore, SCDC has ambitious, low-carbon development plans at the heart of the joint Area Action Plan for the exciting new urban quarter at Cambridge North East. Improvements to our cycle infrastructure also continue.

- Fully recognising evolving physical workspace requirements in a post pandemic context, we are working with a wide range of stakeholders to support rethought, repurposed and greener use of premises e.g. meanwhile space, village “hub” small/shared business suites/collaborative centres.
- The South Cambs Visitor Economy is an important GVA contributor to the region, with many micro and SME businesses in the retail, leisure, travel, tourism and hospitality businesses residing in our area. As High St and local recovery activity continues, we are working closely with Greater Cambridge public and private partners to continue to promote and market South Cambridgeshire as a must visit destination. This includes campaign activity targeted at local, regional, UK wide, international domestic, business and student audiences.
- Promoting local has never been more important. This includes ensuring local contracts and procurement processes are live, open, transparent and readily accessible to local businesses. 42% of all South Cambridgeshire District Council 2019 contracts went to local (Cambridgeshire or bordering authority) companies, with the average number of bidders per tender also increasing YOY to 7 bidders per contract. Our new business support team will further liaise with local businesses to ensure they are all aware of our tender processes and the contracts available.
- Overall, a focus on quality of life, quality of place, social inclusion and environmental sustainability are also key themes for our Council as expressed in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

## **East Cambridgeshire**

East Cambridgeshire has achieved strong economic growth over the past five years. To enable economic growth we have built excellent relationships within the business community through the Councils own ‘Enterprise East Cambs’ team. We have reached out directly to commercial stakeholders, investors and businesses from micro/start-up ventures to SMEs and much larger organisations. As a result we have guided commercial opportunities into both existing and emerging sectors as well as attracting overseas investments.

East Cambs is a distinct and flourishing mixed sub-economy within the CPCA area. This is underpinned by its rating as great place to live, work and visit. Utilising these foundations East Cambs District Council has further unlocked growth by successfully facilitating interventions in transport infrastructure; commercial space development (Enterprise Zone); extending support services to local businesses; housing development; education and leisure facilities.

The District’s location as a destination for visitors has been building upon Ely’s iconic Cathedral and riverside, which are themselves set alongside the City’s historic backdrop of small independent shops and an award winning central market place.

Covid-19 lockdown has impacted heavily on most areas of the District’s economy but has also sharpened our resolve to rebuild through established business networks and collaboration with the CPCA.

Focus is now directed towards a strong Council led recovery from the pandemic aimed at previously planned growth and regeneration. Our agreed Market Town plans are built on this and will provide a financial catalyst for short, medium and long term recovery.

### ***District Level Actions***

- East Cambridgeshire District Council's Corporate Priorities; Sound Financial Management, Improving Transport, Housing, Cleaner, Greener East Cambridgeshire and Social & Community Infrastructure, provide the foundations that enable people to live and work locally.
- East Cambridgeshire is committed to delivering multimodal transport solutions, recognising that the car is not the only way to get around the district, the Council is working with various stakeholders to work to secure the following for road and rail:

#### **Rail**

- Soham Railway Station
- Ely Area Capacity Enhancement (maintaining that a road and rail solution is necessary)
- A half hourly passenger rail service from Ipswich to Cambridge
- Improvements to the Eastern section of the East West Rail Link

#### **Road**

- Improvements to the A14/A142 junction at Exning
- Improvements to the A10/Witchford Road (BP) and A10/A142 (Lancaster Way) roundabouts
- Improvements to the A10
- The Council is currently working on both a Bus Services plan that it will submit to the Combined Authority for consideration and is also developing a Cycling/Walking Strategy that will enable the Council to secure the much needed investment in East Cambs to improve, and in many areas provide, walking and cycling routes that benefit not only the residents of the district but the businesses too.
- Digital connectivity across the district will be important for both social and economic recovery. The Council will need to work closely with CPCA and Connecting Cambridgeshire to ensure that the whole district is well served by both Broadband and 4G/5G coverage
- The Council is also working on a social recovery strategy which in turn will assist with economic recovery with specific actions taken by the Council:
  - Worked directly with businesses and stakeholder networks to disseminate information and ensure funding support and practical advice is available and taken up.

- Distributed over £15m of business support grants and other relief and will continue to channel Government support to the District's business communities.
- Played a leading role in re-opening our market towns and communities working with partners at all levels. This includes rapid deployment of new signage, website portal and digital communications aimed at readying and then promoting places that are safe to visit, e.g. shopping.
- Accelerated our established programme of digital inclusion with public wi-fi coverage upgraded in Ely (Aug 20) and installation of a brand new network in Littleport (Sept 20).
- Launched a new interactive 'Explore East Cambs' website (July 20) to signpost the District's facilities as safely open to visitors or local interests alike.
- Worked with our commercial tenants to support their recovery through providing advice and softened rental terms on an individual basis. Developed ongoing engagement with our business community to assess regular Covid-19 support requirements. (Next round of businesses survey, interview and webinar Sept to Oct 20).
- Started to engage with an exceptional talent of local entrepreneurs, specialists and stakeholders as part of the next stage of our market town recovery plans.
- Continued to signpost and direct support to the business community, including training, regulatory and environmental/safety advice. Acted as a conduit to CPCA and Government to champion the local concerns and needs of recovering businesses.

## **Fenland**

Fenland is a dynamic district with a tradition of embracing change and growth. Helping people into work and encouraging innovation and enterprise are key to improving Fenland's economic vitality. Fenland's strengths include its strong entrepreneurial culture, excellent business networks, strategic location for food production, storage & logistics and the quality of life.

Fenland has a mixed economy where the majority of the business base is micro and small businesses. It seeks to build upon the internationally recognised brands of food production, world class precision engineering and manufacturing with supply chain linkages across automotive, aerospace, defence, healthcare and electronic sectors and new and emerging renewable energy sector. These form examples for attracting in a new generation of value-adding businesses which will help create future employment for Fenland.

The infrastructure needs to be improved to retain and attract employers, and the district needs to keep its presence and appeal to potential investors. Existing Fenland businesses need space to expand, and new businesses moving into the district or new business enterprises need suitable sites or premises from which to operate. Without the right level of provision, enterprise development is stifled or encouraged to look out of the area.



The food, packaging and warehousing sectors are major employers in the area and could be the first to adopt Industry 4.0 technologies especially in relation to skills. Funding is required to take innovation and apply it to businesses. There is a large amount of funding focused on developing new technology but successful projects should have an element of support to take the innovations to be incorporated by local businesses. This would put CPCA businesses at the forefront of new technologies

There is a need to mitigate against companies who are reticent to take on young people as they cannot take the time out of the business to provide the training and support. Local piloting of a New National Retraining Scheme should include a pilot in the Fenland food sector, a major employer in 'the fens'.

Fenland has built a new Economic Growth Team with staff that have extensive experience and it has established a 'business focused', frontline service to better support and address the needs of local businesses. There is a need to ensure that the team and its local expertise are closely aligned with the proposed inward investment service.

The Fens sector proposals need to be developed. This will include food, drink, agriculture and advanced engineering. With a deeper analysis into supply chains and target overseas companies that may be affected by Brexit and post Covid supply chains and so would wish to have a UK presence. International investment can and is attracted into the Fens, but it is essential that the offer is created and communicated to overseas Posts. Greater information and intelligence sharing is needed on what sectors are looking to invest in the UK post Covid-19.

International Investors are large employers in the Fens, particularly in food production, warehousing and logistics. The Fens needs to remain competitive as these operations are in competition with other UK and international operations. The circular economy is more than biological waste streams and in the context of business, these should also be seen as technical in design, manufacture and remanufacture. Companies should be supported to adopt CE and training in technical cycles should be provided to Fenland businesses. There is a lack of commercial property for rent in Fenland and for a company or developer to build a new facility the return on investment can be marginal, this results in limited speculative development coming forward. Funding is required to cover the gap in rental costs and build price. There is interest in property from companies looking to expand but the demand cannot be met.

The CPCA will introduce a new £500,000 Innovation Grant Scheme to help our highest potential businesses enlist external expertise that in turn secures UK & European R&D Grant Funding of £1m upwards for the development of new and innovative products and services. Accommodated within the Business Growth Service, this Grant scheme will fund up to 50% of external R&D Grant Application writing experts. Due to the rich creative spirit within our economy, we have the ambition to increase this fund five-fold over the next three years. This needs to be focused on Fenland companies new to grant applications and not those already experienced in the process.

Fenland has a transport infrastructure deficient across modes. We are also a vastly rural area with around 20,000 people living in villages and small settlements. 20% of all households also do not have access to a car and there is a distinct lack of regular or integrated bus services. Fenland has a sustainable transport policy and continues to work with a range of project partners across a number of transport projects that are ongoing and need to be joined up with economic recovery.

### ***District Level Actions:***

- Wisbech Access Strategy – a range of road, walking, cycling and public transport schemes linked to the growth in the Fenland Local Plan. The short term phase is approaching the end of detailed design and are expected to be constructed during 2021 and 2022. Out dated evidence for the medium and long term needs reviewing and brining up to date to secure funding for the medium and long term
- March Area Transport Study – a range of road, walking, cycling and public transport schemes linked to the growth in the Fenland Local Plan. Feasibility study work has been completed and a range of schemes have been identified. Additional funding has recently been approved to complete the Outline Business Case work
- Wisbech Rail – A revised business case and Network Rail GRIP3 study has recently been completed generating a positive BCR. Discussions are ongoing with government to secure additional funding for a future stage
- Market Town Transport Strategies (MTTS) – there are four of these strategies covering all modes of travel. Each strategy includes an action plan with a range of proposals and schemes. These schemes then form part of the County Council Transport Infrastructure Plan (TIP) List. This is reviewed annually to secure funding for schemes
- Fenland Railway Station Masterplans – This is a programme of improvements for Manea, March and Whittlesea Railway Stations. The projects are about to go into detailed design and construction with expected completion in around 12 months-time
- Fenland Transport Strategy – This is a developing strategy which is intended to cover the whole of Fenland. It covers all modes and has a central theme of accessibility. It is expected that the action plans in the MTTS will be transferred to this strategy and also updated. The strategy is being developed over the next 12 months.
- Kings Dyke Level Crossing – this project will be open to traffic by December 2022
- A47 dualling – A business case has been developed for this project including to Highways England Stage 0. Having been assessed the Stage 0 work has achieved green status meaning it can move forward to stage 1 option development. However, additional funding needs to be found
- A47 Guyhirn Roundabout - This is a Highways England scheme to upgrade the roundabout where the A47 meets the A141. This is a planned project which will start on site in 2021 and be complete in 2022.

## **Huntingdonshire**

The Council is working under the banner of “We are Huntingdonshire” with recovery and response part of our successful partnership work.

The recovery work is evidence based and we are working with our community to address the challenges people are facing and also the impact on the place. This has included directing individuals and businesses to where they can get much needed support to return to some degree of normality.

A Community Impact Assessment of Covid-19 was undertaken, which is part of any recovery process and this was discussed and agreed by the Council at the end of July. This drew together a variety of national, regional and local information and early economic studies that had been undertaken in the district or commissioned by others to assess the impact of Covid-19. The recovery plan has been considered against a backdrop of the ongoing response which to large extent is being driven by external factors.

### ***District Level Actions:***

Several priorities have been identified and whilst the focus of this document is the economic recovery this is dependent on people as well as places, these priorities are set out below:

#### **People**

- Retaining the community involvement and engagement that was central to the recovery work
- People seeking out initial support within their local community
- Reducing the ongoing effects of Covid-19 through early intervention to minimise for example unemployment levels and homelessness
- Enabling people to make better choices on their health and well-being

#### **Place**

- Creating safe and attractive environments, particularly in our main towns
- Effective business intelligence and engagement to enable growth
- Improving infrastructure to enable more people to work remotely and travel sustainably
- Retraining and creating new pathways to meet growing business demand and support people back into work.

Recovery at the district level is about co-ordination. We are Huntingdonshire is about working in partnership with the agencies and organisations that serve our area. This includes identifying the opportunities, understanding the challenges and effectively engaging our resident and business communities. Having the flexibility to adapt our recovery plans and priorities within a frequently changing external environment.