



CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY BOARD	AGENDA ITEM No: 3.5
5 AUGUST 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME – APPROVAL OF MASTERPLANS FOR EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE (ELY, SOHAM AND LITTLEPORT)

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) is working closely with Town Councils, District Councils' and local partners across Huntingdonshire, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire to deliver 11 key market town masterplans. The Market Towns Programme is supported by revenue investment from the CPCA for each market town to commission new research and analysis required to deliver the bold growth ambitions.
- 1.2. The purpose of this paper is to request that the Combined Authority Board approve market towns Masterplans produced for the East Cambridgeshire towns of Ely, Soham & Littleport.

<u>DECISION REQUIRED</u>	
Lead Member:	Mayor James Palmer
Lead Officer:	John T Hill, Director for Business & Skills
Forward Plan Ref: KD2020/018	Key Decision: Yes
The Combined Authority Board is recommended to: (a) approve the East Cambridgeshire Market Town Masterplan Action Plans produced for Ely, Soham, and Littleport.	Voting arrangements Simple majority of all Members

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. A third of our population lives in market towns, with nearly as many again living in surrounding areas and although links with our core cities are vital – investment and attention has often favoured cities and forgotten the role that market towns play for our region. Alongside this under-investment towns are facing many external pressures like the declining town centres and high streets, an ageing population, and a reduction of in-town job opportunities leading to more outward commuting.
- 2.2. The CPCA is committed to the future prosperity and success of every market town in the county and is investing in making this a reality by supporting market towns as economic and social hubs. This approach gives each town its own starting point, and the evidence base in order to tailor and customise interventions to meet the distinctive needs of each local economy.
- 2.3. There is no one-size-fits-all solution – and the CPCA is providing investment that adds value by helping towns clarify and reassess their priorities for future growth. In this way the identity and role of each town will be brought to prominence and enable each town to grow their economies and contribute to the overall doubling of our gross value added (GVA) over the next 25 years.
- 2.4. The strategic need, economic and commercial case for the projects will be examined and a programme of proposed interventions will be presented to the Combined Authority Board for each town. The CPCA are providing additional capital investment to mobilise each town masterplan and to act as a funding catalyst to securing additional investment
- 2.5. Following this process, the CPCA retains a strategic partner role – ensuring that county-wide decisions meet the needs of each town masterplan, and lobbying Government for further resource to deliver high-growth towns (and to promote the concept of place-based interlinked growth strategies).
- 2.6. This focus on market towns has been heralded by Government, by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Commission, and by other partners as a bold and progressive step towards inclusive growth.
- 2.7. Following a successful pilot scheme undertaken in St Neots, the Combined Authority Board agreed to provide funding to create masterplans for a further 10 key market towns within the CPCA area at the Board meeting held on 28 March 2018. The other 10 market towns are: St Ives, Huntingdon, Ramsey, March, Wisbech, Chatteris, Whittlesey, Ely, Littleport, and Soham.
- 2.8. With the aim of bringing jobs, infrastructure and growth, the masterplans would enable each town to become and remain "vibrant and thriving places" whilst helping to boost the local and regional economy. A commitment of £50k revenue support was made by the CPCA to produce a masterplan for each of the key towns.

East Cambridgeshire Market Town Masterplans

- 2.9. Following the successful St Neots pilot project, a procurement exercise was undertaken at the end of last year to appoint economic specialists to help deliver a Masterplan for Ely, Soham and Littleport. Consultants were appointed having demonstrated substantial masterplanning experience in working with other market towns. They also have in depth knowledge of the local area having been the lead consultant for producing the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER).
- 2.10. Market Town Masterplans for Ely, Littleport and Soham were developed as a series of living documents, developed and updated by East Cambridgeshire District Council, in partnership with the Combined Authority and other stakeholders throughout their evolution – collating research and data in relation to various factors including:
- Population demographics
 - Retail information (including vacancy rates on the High Street)
 - Transport connectivity and commuter information
 - Occupation categories
 - Housing numbers and planned developments
 - Access to the countryside
 - Educational attainment
 - Job opportunities
 - Health stats
- 2.11. Key interventions, within each plan, have been selected for the purpose of contributing to the Combined Authority’s regional goal of doubling Gross Value Added over the next twenty-five years.
- 2.12. The localised understanding of Covid-19 recovery within the market towns has also been integrated as a key priority, to expedite delivery of targeted investment and to drive economic growth whilst celebrating the unique character and strengths of each individual town and local area.
- 2.13. Funding opportunities will be sought from the CPCA and other sources to deliver the proposals outlined in the masterplans. Delivery will be further improved through attracting external funding to deliver the outlined projects whilst linking with other initiatives being delivered in the local area.
- 2.14. On 18 June 2020, the East Cambridgeshire District Council’s Finance & Assets Committee approved the masterplans for Ely, Littleport and Soham for submission to the Combined Authority Board for approval.
- 2.15. As part of the development of the masterplans the Council has taken a holistic approach to increasing the economy of each respective area. Recognising the importance of engaging with the relevant stakeholders to achieve delivery, the Council is committed to undertaking wider consultation through the implementation process of the respective plans.

2.16. The final Masterplan reports are attached as Appendices 1 to 3.

3.0. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1. There is £10m CPCA capital within the Medium Term Financial Plan (Market Towns Pump Priming) to support delivery and implementation of each market town Masterplan. The development of these masterplans has been funded from CPCA revenue budget.

4.0. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1. Market Towns Programme is a key priority within the Combined Authority's Business Plan 2019-20 and the Constitution reserves decisions on the adoption, withdrawal or amendment of each market town Masterplan to the Combined Authority Board.

5.0. OTHER SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0. APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix 1 – Ely Market Town Masterplan.

6.2 Appendix 2 – Soham Market Town Masterplan.

6.3 Appendix 3 – Littleport Market Town Masterplan.

<u>Background Papers</u>	<u>Location</u>
Combined Authority Board 28 March 2018 reports, decision summary and minutes	CA Board 28 March 2020