



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Agenda Item No: 3.3

St Neots – Future High Streets Fund Scheme: Combined Authority Co-Funding Business Case

To:	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board
Meeting Date:	24 November 2021
Public report:	Yes
Lead Member:	Mayor Dr Nik Johnson
From:	John T Hill, Director for Business & Skills
Key Decision:	No
Forward Plan ref:	n/a
Recommendations:	<p>The Combined Authority Board is recommended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) accept the Business Case produced for Combined Authority match funding towards the St Neots Future High Streets Fund Scheme.b) Authorise the Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer to complete the funding agreement with the grant recipient.
Voting arrangements:	<p>A simple majority of all Members present and voting.</p> <p>To be carried, the vote must include the vote of the Mayor, or the Deputy Mayor when acting in place of the Mayor.</p>

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This Key Decision relates to a recommendation to accept the Business Case received from Huntingdonshire District Council in support of £3.1m of Combined Authority funding approved towards the St Neots Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) Scheme.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 29 April 2020, the Combined Authority Board approved to recycle the £3.1m capital funding to Huntingdonshire District Council to provide co-funding to the St Neots FHSF Scheme.
- 2.2 Unfortunately, due to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic and the extended lag in receiving confirmation from MHCLG, commencement and delivery of the Scheme's projects have been delayed. On 28th July 2021, the CA Board subsequently approved a change request from Huntingdonshire District Council to extend the Combined Authority grant funding period to March 2024. This was subject to the Board receiving the full business case for the CPCA match funding.
- 2.3 The Combined Authority has a process set out in the Assurance Framework for considering new investments. A proportional approach is applied to projects, thus those that fell under the Market Towns Programme (which are generally low value) were approved via a light touch application form-based approach. Given the increase in overall funding, it is proportionate to apply a higher standard and for the CA Board to have sight of the business case to support its decision.
- 2.4 The St Neots Future High Street Fund Scheme will contribute to the regeneration of St Neots Town Centre through a range of investments that will include residential development, office space re-configuration and the refurbishment of a range of community and arts provision at the Priory Centre. This will be supported by a number of connectivity interventions including enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure as well as adjustments to car parking facilities and revamped wider public realm.
- 2.5 The total cost of the Scheme is £8,521,894, with £928,676 of funding secured from Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) under the FHSF Programme, £3.1m from Combined Authority under the Market Towns Programme, £993,218 from Huntingdonshire District Council and £3.5m from Highways England. The final Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) for the overall Scheme is assessed at 1.61, which aligns with the strong strategic value of the Scheme.
- 2.6 Huntingdonshire District Council and partners have already completed feasibility work and business cases developed for both Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Combined Authority. The Scheme includes six transformational projects for the town of St Neots:
1. Pedestrian and cycling improvements to St Neots Road Bridge.
 2. St Neots High Street improvements.
 3. Market Square improvements, including removal of car parking, improved public realm and connectivity enhancements.

4. Redeveloping the Priory Quarter to provide a high-quality event and cultural space and act as anchor for the redevelopment of the northern parts of the town centre.
 5. Regeneration of the Old Falcon Inn to bring it back into productive use and protect its heritage status.
 6. A new Waterfront Route including a riverside promenade to create a new attraction which utilises the riverfront of the Great Ouse for leisure and recreation.
- 2.7 The Combined Authority co-funding is being utilised to support delivery of the first three of the six projects listed under 2.6 above.
- 2.8 Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) is the Council's delivery partner, and a Project Board has been established. The funding agreements for the Scheme have been drafted for sign off and project delivery is about to commence. The overall Scheme is scheduled for completion by March 2025.

Significant Implications

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The £3.1m is fully budgeted and profiled over the next 3 financial years to March 2024 as set out within the previous CA Board on 28th July 2021.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 The Combined Authority maintains the legal agreement with Huntingdonshire District Council as the Scheme's lead delivery body.

5. Other Significant Implications

- 5.1 None.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix 1 - St Neots Future High Streets Fund Scheme – CPCA Co-Funding Business Case.
- 6.2 Appendix 2 - St Neots Future High Streets Fund Scheme – Engagement Plan.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 [Combined Authority Board 29 April 2020](#) (Item 4.2)
- 7.2 [Combined Authority Board 28 July 2021](#) (Item 3.4)