

Dear Councillor

**CABINET - MONDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2022**

I am now able to enclose for consideration at the above meeting the following Overview and Scrutiny comments that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

**Agenda Item  
No.**

- 4. HUNTINGDONSHIRE UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUNDING** (Pages 3 - 4)  
To receive a report providing an overview of the proposed activities to be delivered through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Executive Councillor: S Wakeford.

- 5. MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME - WINTER UPDATE** (Pages 5 - 6)  
To receive an update on activity across the strands of the Market Town Programme, including an update on funding opportunities.

Executive Councillor: S Wakeford.

- 6. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT** (Pages 7 - 8)  
To receive a report seeking endorsement of the Infrastructure Funding Statement 2021/22 including an update on the infrastructure delivery up to March 2022.

Executive Councillor: T Sanderson.

- 7. GREATER CAMBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP - MAKING CONNECTIONS CONSULTATION** (Pages 9 - 10)  
To seek approval for submission of a formal response to Greater Cambridge Partnership's Making Connections Consultation.

Executive Councillor: S Wakeford.

- 8. FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23, QUARTER 2** (Pages 11 - 12)  
To receive details of the Council's projected financial performance for 2022/23.

Executive Councillor: B Mickelburgh.

**9. TREASURY MANAGEMENT 6 MONTH PERFORMANCE REVIEW**  
(Pages 13 - 14)

To receive an update on the Council's treasury management activity for the first 6 months of the year, including investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

Executive Councillor: B Mickelburgh.

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUNDING

### 3. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY.

- 3.2 The Panel discussed the Huntingdonshire UK Shared Prosperity Funding Report at its meeting on 7th December 2022.
- 3.3 Councillor Gardener queried whether the Active Travel Feasibility Studies was purely for cycleways, in response to which the Panel heard that all active travel suggestions were encouraged. The Panel heard about a specific example of the cycleway alongside the A1 from Brampton to Alconbury which did not link into Alconbury village, following which the Panel were assured that the lack of integration had been previously flagged with the County Council.
- 3.4 It was observed by Councillor Corney that the £150,000 earmarked for studies would not stretch far across the district, who then enquired whether any partnership working with local walking and cycling groups had been considered to ensure studies were not duplicated. The Panel heard that the Executive were keen to achieve viable routes for residents and partnership opportunities would be considered.
- 3.5 It was clarified to the Panel that the Council would be looking to support local businesses decreasing their utility costs following an observation from Councillor Cawley regarding the wording of the report.
- 3.6 The Panel heard that the Council would look to support local businesses through specialist advice and were developing an action plan to maximise funding opportunities to businesses in both the short and long term.
- 3.7 Councillor Gray stated that whilst broadly supportive of the thrust of what is overall hoped to be achieved, he had concerns over the lack of detail contained within the report, expressly concerns that all proposals were completely underdeveloped. It was further stated that greater detail alongside the business plans would be desirable before authority be delegated to others for decision making. The Panel were informed that external funding brought challenges of tight timescales but that this was something that the Executive were happy to reflect upon and come back with.
- 3.8 The Panel request that the Cabinet consider adding the following recommendation to their report
- To provide an update on the Huntingdonshire programme of activity to both the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet within three months.
- 3.9 With the addition of this recommendation, the Panel were happy to encourage Cabinet to endorse the remaining recommendations within the report.

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## MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME WINTER UPDATE

### 6. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 6.2 The Panel discussed the Market Towns Programme – Winter Update at its meeting on 7th December 2022.
- 6.3 Following an enquiry from Councillor Pickering on the Wayfinding project, who expressed concerns that the project may become a white elephant, the Panel heard that the project was one of the last remaining accelerated projects and is linked to other planned projects allowing cohesion between multiple schemes. It was further stressed that the Joint Administration felt merit in continuing this project whilst also extending the project to include St Neots, it was felt that the project would help provide useful signposting for residents and visitors whilst providing each town with its own brand. Councillor Pickering further enquired about anticipated maintenance costs which may be associated with the project in the medium to long term and the Panel was advised that partnership working and advertising revenue would be sought to fund anticipated costs. Councillor Harvey observed that Huntingdon had previously had digital signage which was often broken, and further questioned what appetite there was for such a board given the use of smart phones. Councillor Gardener agreed with the comments made by other Panel members and suggested that the funding could be spent on other matters given the current economic climate. The Panel heard that the previous administration had shelved the Wayfinding project but that the Joint Administration felt the project had value and had thereby reinstated it.
- 6.4 Councillor Corney requested clarification surrounding the various funding pots available for the projects identified in Ramsey and the Panel heard that the intention was to combine the funding available to give the projects the best opportunity to succeed.
- 6.5 Councillor Wells thanked Officers for their support with the work in St Ives, and requested updated timescales following the consultation extension. The Panel heard that the deadline had been extended to allow for the received responses to be given full consideration. It was further advised that minimal amends were anticipated for Ramsey and Huntingdon but amends were expected for St Ives to incorporate further information following the analysis of the responses.
- 6.6 Councillor Gardener observed that due to the number of feasibility studies having been undertaken in St Neots recently, the available funding could have been impacted and thereby not able to fulfil what originally hoped.
- 6.7 Following questions from Councillor Gardener, the Panel heard that the Council were working closely with St Neots Town Council to ensure cohesion between the Priory Centre project and the potential purchase of the Oast House property by St Neots Town Council.

- 6.8 Councillor Gray observed the tight deadlines for the Priory Centre project and queried the confidence of the administration in delivering the project on time. The Panel were advised that the project would be focusing on realistic deliverables and the team had established working relationships with partners to ensure funding was secure and not jeopardised.
- 6.9 Following the discussion, the Panel observed that whilst they were generally in support of the recommendations they would like to see more detail on the Wayfinding project which it did not support.

## INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT

### 4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

- 4.2 The Panel discussed the Infrastructure Funding Statement at its meeting on 7th December 2022.
- 4.3 Following an enquiry from Councillor Gray on the delays relating to the allocated CIL funds, the Panel were advised that due to the economic climate and international supply issues, capital projects were experiencing delays nationally.
- 4.4 Councillor Pickering queried the funding marked for land north of St Neots and the Panel heard that this was section 106 money relating to the Loves Farm development, further detail would be sought on this and communicated to the Panel.
- 4.5 Following the discussion the Panel were happy to encourage Cabinet to endorse the recommendations within the report.

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## **GREATER CAMBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP – MAKING CONNECTIONS CONSULTATION**

### **4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

- 4.2 The Panel discussed the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership “Making Connections” Consultation at its meeting on 7th December 2022.
- 4.3 Councillor Gray complemented the Officer on the proposed response which was felt to strike to the heart of the issues and concerns shared by all. Following a question from Councillor Gray regarding the development of further park and ride sites within the district, the Panel heard that the Executive Councillor agreed with the sentiment that there is a need to remain realistic about what may be achievable within the district and within the reach of the Greater Cambridge Partnership. The Panel were assured that the enquiry regarding development and infrastructure of park and ride sites was noted and the response would be adjusted to strengthen this suggestion.
- 4.4 Councillor Martin expressed concerns over the proposed charging within the area of the Addenbrookes hospital site, particularly that those using this route are potentially at a loss of income from illness or caring for a relative, additionally it was observed that those accessing this site for long term treatment may be unable to use public transport alternatives due to vulnerable health. This sentiment was echoed by Councillors Cawley and Gardener who added that they had jointly spoken to over 25 Parish Councils who also shared these concerns. The Panel heard that whilst sympathetic to these concerns, the Executive Councillor was not clear on an alternative option for this site due to the continued growth of the area and the impact this would have on its infrastructure.
- 4.5 Following an observation from Councillor Corney that more could be made of connecting rural areas, and request to expand the response to have more emphasis on including routes from both the north and west of the district to Huntingdon. the Panel heard that the response was aiming to be realistic in its expectations of what would be achievable.
- 4.6 Councillor Gardener suggested that improvements to local bus routes with regular and reliable services from rural areas into the towns would assist in connecting residents to Cambridge without the need for additional park and ride infrastructure. The Panel heard that the public transport responsibility lies with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, as they are the Transport Authority and following a number of transport related consultations recently it remains important that we continue to share feedback and concerns from the Council. It was observed that communication between the GCP and CPCA on this matter would be helpful.
- 4.7 Following the discussion, the Panel observed that they were generally in support of the response but would like to see stronger wording regarding

waiving charges for those accessing the Addenbrookes sites and the development of park and ride sites within the district.

## FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022/23 QUARTER 2

### 5. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 5.2 The Panel discussed the Finance Performance Report 2022/23 Quarter 2 Report at its meeting on 7th December 2022.
- 5.3 Following questions from Councillors Pickering and Gray relating to the drop in parking revenues and whether this trend was expected to continue, the Panel were advised that this was linked to the delay in the Civil Parking Enforcement Act but that further detail would be sought and communicated to the Panel.
- 5.4 Councillor Gray observed that the figures relating to One Leisure were concerning and questioned the Executive Councillor on his confidence in the plan to increase fees and charges across the leisure centres. The Panel were advised that One Leisure had been heavily affected by the increase in energy costs and the recent rise in minimum wage, but that significant debate had been had surrounding the increase to fees and charges. Councillor Gray reflected that this report had been published after the decision on fees and charges had been taken and thereby queried how the Cabinet had been able to make the decision without the supporting information. The Panel were assured that by applying the proposed fees and charges to the Quarter One figures, the Cabinet had been able to forecast the impact this would have. The Panel were further assured that the figures would continue to be monitored so that further action could be taken to remedy lost revenue and footfall through commercial strategies or alternative pricing structures in the future.
- 5.5 Following a question from Councillor Blackwell relating to the reduction in Court Fees linked to Housing Benefit, the Panel were advised that the Officer would investigate the detail on the subject and communicate that back to the Panel.
- 5.6 Following the discussion, the Panel observed that they were generally in support of the recommendations being endorsed but requested that the Executive Councillor for Leisure attend a future meeting of the Panel to help answer questions on the financial details behind the decision to raise One Leisure fees and charges.

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## TREASURY MANAGEMENT 6 MONTH PERFORMANCE REVIEW

### 6. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 6.2 The Panel discussed the Treasury Management 6 Month Performance Review at its meeting on 7th December 2022.
- 6.3 Following a question from Councillor Harvey on lost income due to the early repayment of the Luminus loan, the Panel heard that anticipated income from interest payments on the loan had been reduced, however the early repayment option had been a clause in the original loan. It was further advised that some financial benefit had been received by repaying the loan to PWLB early and this would be shown in the next update of the report.
- 6.4 Councillor Gray questioned the figures shown in Table 6, specifically what the amount £2.8 million related to as it was thought to be too low for the whole portfolio. Following the meeting it was confirmed that the figure of £2.8 million was for the six month period of April to September 2022, rather than a full year forecast.
- 6.5 Following the discussion, the Panel were in agreement that the Cabinet be encouraged to endorse the recommendations within the report.

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