

Draft Fenland Infrastructure Delivery Plan

(June 2022)

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1. Introduction

Role

- 1.1. The Draft Fenland *Infrastructure Delivery Plan* (IDP) outlines the key infrastructure requirements needed to support growth in Fenland. This IDP will help to coordinate infrastructure provision and ensure that funding and delivery timescales are closely aligned to that in the Local Plan. It is a living document which will be updated regularly to incorporate changes in project progress or the availability of funding.
- 1.2. This document draws on technical studies, and detailed infrastructure plans and strategies from a wide range of Council services and external infrastructure providers to identify what infrastructure is required and how and when infrastructure will be delivered. In addition, it reflects discussions held during various stakeholder meetings with service and infrastructure providers throughout 2021 and 2022.
- 1.3. The aim of this IDP is not to include every infrastructure project being planned in Fenland or to provide an exhaustive list of funding opportunities; its primary role is to set out the main infrastructure projects necessary to help deliver the policies in the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.4. This IDP has been prepared alongside the emerging Local Plan and forms a part of its evidence base. At present, this IDP is in *draft* form, and will be finalised once it has been subject to formal consultation alongside the Draft Local Plan and once certain technical studies have reached completion.

Purpose

- 1.5. The main purpose of this IDP is to identify *strategic* infrastructure items which are necessary to support the scale of development being planned for, including the timing and phasing of when such infrastructure items will be needed, and the likely indicative costs of provision and potential sources of funding.
- 1.6. The IDP identifies infrastructure items required to support the *scale of development being planned for*. It is not intended to address pre-existing deficiencies in current infrastructure.
- 1.7. This IDP addresses *strategic* infrastructure needs. Delivery of this infrastructure is necessary to meet the strategic or cumulative needs of Local Plan growth across the district, or within a specific locality or geographic area. Generally, infrastructure which is highly site-specific in nature is not included within the IDP (for example, on-site open space, site highway access improvements, etc.). Requirements for site-specific infrastructure will normally be indicated in a site's corresponding Local Plan policy or will be specified through planning conditions or obligations during the planning application process.
- 1.8. It is intended that this IDP will improve lines of communication between the Council and key delivery agencies, including identifying opportunities for integrated and more efficient service delivery and better use of assets. The IDP is a 'live' document which will be used as a tool for guiding and coordinating the delivery of infrastructure.
- 1.9. This IDP will inform other corporate strategies and decisions relating to investment across Fenland. Through identifying where infrastructure is required the Council and other service providers, developers and communities are able to plan, fund and coordinate with increased certainty for the growth as set out in the emerging Local Plan. As Fenland is in a two-tier local authority area, the Council's role in facilitating and securing the delivery of infrastructure will vary for different projects.
- 1.10. This IDP identifies funding mechanisms available for infrastructure delivery to inform capital planning and help infrastructure providers apply for funds from elsewhere. Where delivery is uncertain, the Council will work with its partners to implement contingency measures to secure infrastructure to meet the

needs of new development. However, the FIDP does not in itself take decisions on the funding or delivery of infrastructure. Existing governance arrangements are in place to take such decisions.

Local Plan

- 1.11. At the time of publication of this version of the IDP, the Local Plan is at a 'draft' stage (Regulation 18). Comments on this IDP are welcomed, as part of the draft Local Plan consultation.
- 1.12. The content of this IDP has been informed by technical evidence, feedback from previous stages of Local Plan public consultation (i.e. the 'Issues & Options' consultation Oct-Nov 2019), and engagement with service providers.
- 1.13. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (para. 16) expects plans to be "shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and... infrastructure providers". In addition, engagement on infrastructure matters is a requirement of the Duty to Cooperate, set out at NPPF para. 24.
- 1.14. The draft Local Plan proposes a strategic vision and policies to guide the direction of future development in Fenland to 2040. In particular the Local Plan (Policy LP2) identifies that over the period 2021 to 2040, 10,525 new homes will be delivered, with draft policy LP3 identifying a minimum requirement for 18,000 additional jobs over the plan period.
- 1.15. This growth will be distributed across the district, principally through the development of Local Plan's site allocations. Generally, the Local Plan makes site allocations for settlements classified by the settlement hierarchy as 'Market Towns', 'Large Villages', 'Medium Villages' and 'Small Villages A & B'.
- 1.16. In addition to the development of site allocations, the Local Plan supports other forms of development, such as small-scale infill and windfall development at existing settlements, employment development within existing employment areas, and certain opportunities for development in the countryside - such as affordable housing exception sites, dwellings for rural workers, and the re-use and conversion of non-residential buildings. It is therefore likely that over the course of the plan period, new development will take place in all settlements in Fenland.
- 1.17. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of dwellings (units) and employment land (hectares) from site allocations. The remainder of the growth requirement will be met from additional committed sites and windfall development.

Table 1: Local Plan growth distribution from site allocations

Settlement	Dwellings (Units)	Employment Land (Ha)	Pitches (Units)	Renewable Energy (Ha)
Benwick	7	0	0	0
Benwick, Open countryside	5	0	0	0
Chatteris	1,827	51.59	0	0
Chatteris, Open countryside	9	0	0	0
Christchurch	64	0	0	0
Christchurch, Open countryside	2	0	0	0
Church End	2	0	0	0
Coates	430	4.78	0	0
Coldham	11	0	0	0
Collet's Bridge	10	0	0	0
Doddington	355	0	0	0
Doddington, Open countryside	6	0	0	0
Eastrea	12	0	0	0
Elm	287	0	0	0
Elm, Open countryside	10	0	6	273.078
Friday Bridge	238	0	0	0
Gorefield	53	0	0	0
Gorefield, Open countryside	2	0	0	0
Guyhirn	59	0	0	0
Leverington	202	0	0	0
Leverington, Open countryside	2	0	0	0
Manea	220	0	0	0
Manea, Open countryside	8	0	0	0
March	2,746	53.91	0	0
March, Open countryside	10	2.28	0	0
Murrow	12	0	0	0
Newton	6	0	0	0
Newton-in-the-Isle, Open countryside	3	0.35	0	0
Parson Drove	48	0	0	0
Parson Drove, Open countryside	2	0	0	0
Pondersbridge	2	0	0	0
Ring's End	9	0	0	0
Tholomas Drove	13	0	0	0
Turves	8	0	0	0
Tydd St Giles	9	0	0	0
Tydd St Giles, Open countryside	35	0	0	0
Whittlesey	886	9.71	0	0
Whittlesey, Open countryside	14	13.05	0	0
Wimblington	223	0	0	0

Wimblington, Open countryside	3	0	0	0
Wisbech	1,287	89.72	0	0
Wisbech St Mary	248	0	0	0
Wisbech St Mary, Open countryside	24	0	0	0
Wisbech, Open countryside	9	0	0	0
Total	9,418	225.39	6	273.078

1.18. To deliver sustainable development it is essential that growth is supported by the provision of new infrastructure and investment in existing infrastructure. The provision of infrastructure to meet growth needs is a requirement of Local Plan policy LP19.

Infrastructure themes

1.19. For the purposes of planning, Section 216 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended)¹ provides a definition of infrastructure which includes a list of examples (this list is not intended to be exhaustive). A more extensive description of differing types of infrastructure is provided at NPPF para. 20.

1.20. This IDP categorises infrastructure items and projects into a range *themes*. These themes have been informed by the 2008 Act and NPPF's definitions of infrastructure, and have been selected as they are relevant to Fenland's infrastructure needs:

- Transport
- Education
- Health
- Emergency Services
- Community Facilities
- Sports Facilities and Open Space
- Green Infrastructure
- Utilities

Excluded themes

1.21. Affordable Housing was formerly specified in the 2008 Act as an example of 'infrastructure'. This was later omitted from the definition by the CIL Regulations. For the purposes of this IDP, affordable housing is not considered to be 'infrastructure'. In the context of infrastructure provision, affordable housing requirements are of relevance as both may have effects on the viability of development. The SHMA provides details of housing needs including affordable housing.

National Policy context

1.22. National policy's presumption in favour of sustainable development, places a requirement on Local Plans to align the provision growth and infrastructure. The provision of infrastructure is interminably linked with sustainable development. Accommodating additional growth in Fenland will inevitably result in a need for additional infrastructure. However, the scale and nature of the infrastructure will vary depending on how growth is distributed across Fenland by the Local Plan's growth strategy.

¹ [Planning Act 2008 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

- 1.23. National policy indicates that Local Plans should set out the strategic priorities for the area, including the provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat); and community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure) (para. 20).
- 1.24. The Council has a duty to cooperate on strategic issues that cross administrative boundaries (para. 24). Local Planning Authorities should also engage with their local communities and relevant bodies including Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Nature Partnerships, the Marine Management Organisation, county councils, infrastructure providers, elected Mayors and combined authorities (para. 25).
- 1.25. Identifying infrastructure needs is an iterative process, with this IDP marking the first stage. Throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, the Council will develop a greater understanding of infrastructure needs. Following the plans adoption, the need for infrastructure should be regularly reviewed through updates to the IDP.
- 1.26. Para 41. states the more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, including the need to deliver improvements in infrastructure and affordable housing, the greater the benefits. The NPPF places a responsibility on statutory planning consultees to take the same early, pro-active approach, and provide advice in a timely manner throughout the development process to ensure their role in the planning system is effective and positive.
- 1.27. At para. 34, the NPPF indicates that plans should set out the contributions expected from development, and should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure (such as that needed for education, health, transport, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure). National policy notes that such policies should not undermine the deliverability of the plan. The Council commissioned the *Local Plan & CIL Viability Assessment (2019)* to inform preparation of the plan.
- 1.28. The Council can use planning obligations and planning conditions to secure the provision of infrastructure from new development. However, national policy requires that the use of planning conditions be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects (para. 55); and planning obligations must only be sought where they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development (para 56). It is therefore vital that the Local Plan is underpinned by up-to-date evidence of infrastructure needs.
- 1.29. It is likely that developer contributions alone will not be sufficient to meet the full cost of infrastructure necessary to support growth identified by the emerging Local Plan. Additional sources of funding will be required, for example from the Council's capital budget, from central government grants, and through direct provision of infrastructure by service providers and technical stakeholders. The devolution of statutory powers and functions to the Combined Authority for Cambridgeshire presents a significant opportunity to access infrastructure funding.

Development Viability

- 1.30. Fenland District Council commissioned an assessment of development viability in the district, the *Local Plan & CIL Viability Assessment (2019)*².

² Available at: [https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/16705/FDC-Viability-Assessment--HDH-2019-12-19-/pdf/FDC_Viability_Assessment_\(HDH_19-12-19\).pdf](https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/16705/FDC-Viability-Assessment--HDH-2019-12-19-/pdf/FDC_Viability_Assessment_(HDH_19-12-19).pdf)

- 1.31. Through testing a range of site typologies, the viability assessment illustrates that development viability is relatively low across Fenland. The findings of the study are in many ways unsurprising as low development viability has been a major constraint to development, affordable housing delivery and infrastructure provision in recent years.
- 1.32. Poor development viability has significant implications for the funding of strategic infrastructure. For example, CIL Examiners generally require a buffer of between 30% and 50% between the Residual Value and the Benchmark Land Value. However, the viability assessment indicates that such a buffer does not exist in Fenland, and concludes *on this basis there is limited scope to introduce CIL* (p184).
- 1.33. The viability assessment report identifies geographic differences in development viability, with the area to the north of where the A47 crosses the River Nene (by the Rings End Roundabout at Guyhirn) being a lower value area, and the remainder of the District being a higher value area (p173). The Local Plan's spatial strategy has responded to these geographic differences in viability by directing the majority of growth to settlements in the south area.
- 1.34. The viability assessment indicates that most greenfield sites can bear up to £15,000/unit in developer contributions. In the northern parts of the District the scope to bear developer contributions is limited (p181). Once provision of affordable housing requirements is taken into account on greenfield sites in the south of the District, at a policy rate of 20% affordable housing there is scope for £2,000/unit, and at 10% affordable housing there is scope for approximately £5,000. Without affordable housing there is scope for £15,000 or so on greenfield sites in the south of the District. (p184)
- 1.35. The relatively limited scope to support developer contributions has implications for the delivery of infrastructure and affordable housing. The viability assessment report notes that *should higher levels of developer contributions be required to provide the infrastructure to support new development then it may be necessary to consider a lower affordable housing target* (p183). Consequently, to ensure the Local Plan's spatial strategy is deliverable whilst ensuring housing needs are met, it should seek to utilise available capacity in existing infrastructure wherever possible.
- 1.36. The north/south divide in development viability identified by the viability assessment implies that the Local Plan should direct new development toward the south of the district, where development viability is greater. Crucially, this would disperse new development away from Fenland's largest settlement, the market town of Wisbech.
- 1.37. The reality of development viability in Fenland is that developer contributions will not be sufficient to meet the infrastructure needs arising from Local Plan growth in full, and other sources of funding will be required.

Prioritisation

- 1.38. The scope of this IDP is infrastructure projects which are considered necessary to meet growth needs. Additionally, infrastructure can be prioritised to reflect its relationship to the delivery of growth and wider sustainability objectives. Each infrastructure item or project is assigned to one of the following prioritisation categories:
- **Critical** - Infrastructure that must happen to enable growth i.e. the first element required to unlock any future works, without which development cannot proceed.
 - **Essential** - Infrastructure that is considered necessary in order to mitigate impacts arising from the operation of the development. These projects are necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms.

- **High priority infrastructure** - Infrastructure that is required to support wider strategic or site-specific objectives which are set out in planning policy or is subject to a statutory duty.
- **Desirable infrastructure** - Infrastructure that is necessary to create a sense of place, and/or meet the wider needs of a community to ensure its vitality is maintained.

Timescales

1.39. Consideration must also be given to the likely timing of infrastructure provision. The Council may secure the phasing of development through planning condition or obligation. The need for infrastructure is interminably linked with the rate of growth. This IDP identifies an approximate timetable for delivery of infrastructure. The required phasing for the delivery of each infrastructure project is indicated using the following categories:

- **Short term** (within 0 – 5 years);
- **Medium term** (within 6 – 10 years);
- **Long term** (within 11 – 15 years);
- **Late plan period** (16 - 20+ years).

Funding

1.40. At paragraph 34, the NPPF requires plans to set out the contributions expected from development. This should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure (such as that needed for education, health, transport, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure).

1.41. Crucially such policies should not undermine the deliverability of the plan and therefore should be informed by evidence of costs and development viability.

1.42. There is a general expectation that developers will contribute toward the delivery of relevant infrastructure either through direct provision, or through contributing financially toward the provision of local and strategic infrastructure.

1.43. Where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition, Fenland District Council commonly uses planning obligations to secure funding from new development, subject to meet the following national policy tests (NPPF, para. 57):

- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- b) directly related to the development; and
- c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

1.44. The provision of infrastructure to directly meet the needs of and/or mitigate the impacts of growth is an example of appropriate use of planning obligations.

1.45. In addition, to 'Section 106', planning obligations, Section 278 agreements are used to secure works to the public highway. A Section 278 Agreement is an agreement made between a developer and a Highway Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council in Fenland's case) to enable works to be carried out on the public highway to facilitate development. This normally happens through the planning application process, (although is a separate matter from that process), and enables the necessary infrastructure to the public highway to make that development acceptable in highway terms. The works are normally funded by the developer and S278 Agreements will continue to be an important way of ensuring that the appropriate highway infrastructure is provided as part of the development.

- 1.46. For the avoidance of doubt, Fenland District Council is not a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Authority. The Council initially investigated the potential for introducing CIL in 2013, and has recently re-explored the opportunity for CIL through the Local Plan & CIL Viability Report (Dec 19). As previously discussed, following a detailed assessment of the local market and development viability, the report concluded there is 'limited scope to introduce CIL' at present. CIL is therefore not available as a mechanism for funding infrastructure in Fenland.
- 1.47. Whilst developer contributions play a crucial role, it is recognised that such resources are unlikely to meet the full cost of required infrastructure. The Council commissioned viability modelling to inform the preparation of its Local Plan. The results of this assessment are published in the Local Plan & CIL Viability Report (Dec 19)³.
- 1.48. The viability assessment was undertaken at an early stage of Local Plan preparation, and prior to updating the IDP. In this base analysis it was assumed that the typical contribution (carried forward from a previous study) of about £2,000/unit will continue. A range of higher rates of developer contributions were tested through the viability assessment. However, the viability report concludes that should higher level of developer contributions be required to provide the infrastructure to support new development, then it may be necessary to consider a lower affordable housing target⁴.
- 1.49. Due to the relatively limited scope for new development to support the delivery of necessary infrastructure, funding from other sources will be essential to the implementation of the Local Plan. Other sources of funding and infrastructure delivery could include:
- Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council – such as through capital funding, prudential borrowing and New Homes Bonus revenue;
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority;
 - Greater Cambridgeshire & Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership;
 - Central Government;
 - National bodies such as Natural England, Historic England, Environment Agency;
 - Utilities providers such as Anglian Water Services;
 - Service providers such as the NHS or Clinical Commissioning Group;
 - Parish & Town Councils and/or
 - Charities and voluntary sector.

Document structure

- 1.50. Following this introductory section, subsequent chapters explore the various infrastructure themes through a review of existing available evidence and the identification of specific infrastructure items or projects. A summary table of all infrastructure items/projects is provided at Appendix 1.

2. Transport Infrastructure

Relevant evidence: Interim Local Plan Transport Assessment Report; Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Local Transport Plan & related project documents; Market Town Transport Strategies; Wisbech Access Study; Market Town Masterplans; TIP.

³ Document library reference PE02-02

⁴ Para. 12.76

National Planning Policy & Guidance

- 2.1. Through their strategic policies, the National Planning Policy Framework requires Local Plans to make sufficient provision for transport infrastructure (paragraph 20).
- 2.2. At para. 104, the NPPF requires transport issues to *be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making, so that:*
 - a) *the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;*
 - b) *opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*
 - c) *opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*
 - d) *the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and*
 - e) *patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.*
- 2.3. A key role of this IDP is to identify infrastructure necessary to mitigate the potential impacts of development, bring about technological change, encourage a modal shift, and lessen environmental impacts and deliver net gains.
- 2.4. The circular *Department for Transport’s Circular 02/2013: The Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development*⁵ remains in effect, but is broadly aligned with the NPPF in terms of requirements for an evidence base to inform plan-making, promotion of sustainable transport and increase capacity on the transport network.

Issues & Options consultation responses

- 2.5. In October and November 2019, the Council consulted on its *Issues and Options Consultation Document*. Transport was a recurring theme throughout many consultation responses, and is clearly a significant local issue. Specifically, question 22 explored a range of matters related to transport (*Should the Local Plan place a strong emphasis on encouraging walking, cycling and public transport or does the rural nature of Fenland mean the private car will always need to be accommodated as a priority?*).
- 2.6. There were 78 responses to this question, with strong support for encouraging more walking, cycling and public transport, which are presently lacking, but with recognition that the rural nature of the district means that cars will always be needed. However, it was acknowledged that the need for cars could be reduced if other forms of transport were improved. Comments covered the following topics:
 - Encourage alternative transport methods however recognise the need for private cars, rural areas will always need to use cars owing to lack of public transport.
 - Reliance on cars is not good for the elderly or young especially.
 - Need for more reliable and frequent bus service.
 - Bus services should be increased
 - Improvements in cycle routes.
 - Should encourage a mixed transport economy, including HGVs.
 - Many elderly people unable to walk far or cycle etc. Buses currently are too infrequent to be of any real use. The car is essential. Many longer journeys can only be done by train so car is needed to get to stations.
 - Climate change and carbon emission reduction means this is essential.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-road-network-and-the-delivery-of-sustainable-development>

- Direct development to settlements which are or can be made accessible by walking, cycling and public transport e.g. March is well served by rail
- New homes can help keep rural bus services viable.
- Public transport and walking and cycling is particularly poor in Chatteris with knock-on effects including loss of local amenities.
- Public transport will have to be subsidised to improve services, heavy investment in public transport is needed before the car is not needed.
- Road pollution is a major worry in towns. A bypass for Whittlesey should be given priority.
- Should place greater importance on creating and enhancing the rights of way network for non-motorised user routes, which includes walking, cycling and equestrian as outlined in the Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- Refer to the Local Transport Plan.
- The Active Travel Initiative should incorporate all non-motorised users for journeys for all purposes
- A sustainable transport network with good cycle, walking and affordable and regular public transport will encourage uptake and help reduce people's reliance on car travel and bring significant health and environmental benefits.
- Such a policy as it would encourage healthy lifestyles, and improve overall health
- The NICE physical activity and environment guidance concludes that people are more likely to walk or cycle if there is an attractive streetscape with well-maintained and unobstructed pavements.
- Should place a strong emphasis on alternative means of transport for health benefits, enjoyment of natural surroundings and to mitigate the effects of climate change
- Due to the nature of the roads (poorly maintained, too fast drivers) cycling and walking is currently very dangerous. Doubt this will ever change.
- For mobility issues – have free charging points for mobility scooters.
- Towns should have a circular frequent cheap bus service joining the estates to the town centre, doctor's surgeries, leisure centre, bus station and rail station etc.
- Should make it easy and pleasurable to take exercise and get about it should be safe and fit for purpose in 2020, not what was acceptable 50 years ago. FDC should make good provision for safe off road paths for all non-motorised users including equestrians
- No reason why both cannot be achieved by locating new development in locations where users have a range of travel options

Cross-boundary effects on neighbouring authorities

- 2.7. It is possible that growth may result in effects on the transport beyond the district's administrative boundary, and is an important consideration for preparation of the Local Plan's growth strategy. The potential for cross-boundary impacts were raised during the Issues & Options consultation.
- 2.8. Huntingdonshire District Council questioned how *the A141 improvements highlighted by the Combined Authority study connect and support the strategic transport routes in place and its potential implications on growth in the area; and the potential scaled growth in Chatteris and Whittlesey and any cross boundary implications that may arise for Huntingdonshire.*
- 2.9. East Cambridgeshire District Council highlighted the potential impacts Fenland's growth may have on the A142/A10 junctions in the vicinity of Ely, noting *the scale of growth you identify along the Chatteris – Doddington – Wimblington – March corridor (especially any growth beyond what you have already committed via existing permissions and allocations), the greater the likelihood will be that we would expect evidence to be provided by you to demonstrate what the impact of such growth would be on the East Cambridgeshire highway network, and whether such impact was of significant harm.*
- 2.10. These are *strategic matters* in the context of the Duty to Cooperate. The Combined Authority's A141 study and progress on A142/A10 improvements are discussed in the following review of evidence base documents.

Available transport evidence

- 2.11. Fenland District Council, with its partners Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, has commissioned or prepared an extensive base of local transport issues and infrastructure requirements.
- 2.12. The government's planning practice guidance (PPG) (Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 54-001-20141010) notes the importance of undertaking an assessment of the transport implications in developing Local Plan so that a robust transport evidence base may be developed. It notes a *robust transport evidence base can facilitate approval of the Local Plan and reduce costs and delays to the delivery of new development, thus reducing the burden on the public purse and private sector.*
- 2.13. The guidance places particular importance on identifying opportunities for encouraging a shift to more sustainable transport usage through the evidence base. This section explores various evidence relating to transport matters in Fenland.
- 2.14. In addition to existing available evidence, the Council has commissioned a Transport Assessment to identify effects of growth and inform preparation of the Local Plan. The Interim Local Plan Transport Assessment Report will be published as part of the consultation on the Draft Local Plan.

Local Plan Transport Assessment Interim Report

- 2.15. The Council has commissioned a *Transport Assessment* to identify effects of growth, through testing of various growth options to inform preparation of the emerging Local Plan. This technical study will form a part of the Local Plan evidence base and at present the study is on-going.
- 2.16. The first output of the study is the *Interim Report* (IR). The IR sets a baseline through gathering data on various transport issues and sets out its methodological approach for modelling of growth options. The IR identifies a number of key junctions which will be subject to transport modelling:
- A141 Isle of Ely Way / A142 Isle of Ely Way / Bridge Street / A141 Fenland Way / Doddington Road
 - B1099 Wisbech Road / A141 / Whittlesey Road (Peas Hill Roundabout)
 - B1099 Dartford Road / B1101 Station Road / B1099 Broad Street
 - A605 Eastrea Road / Cemetery Road / Blunt's Lane Roundabout
 - A605 Syers Lane / Broad Street / A605 Whitmore Street / Orchard Street
 - A1101 Churchill Road / Weasenham Lane
 - A47 / B198 Cromwell Road Roundabout
 - A47 / A1101 Elm High Road Roundabout
 - Freedom Bridge Roundabout
 - B198 Cromwell/Weasenham Lane Signals
- 2.17. Publishing the IR for consultation alongside the Draft Local Plan will illustrate to key stakeholders and transport service providers the effects of Local Plan growth on the transport network through identifying those junctions which will require investment to provide additional capacity to meet demands. The scale, scope and cost of infrastructure required to meet growth needs will be explored through the 'final' Local Plan Transport Assessment Report and are therefore not available at time of preparing of this Draft IDP.. Consequently, this Draft IDP does not identify specific requirements for additional transport infrastructure. However, it is anticipated that future iterations of the IDP will include a full schedule of transport infrastructure requirements.

Local Transport Plan 2020

- 2.18. The devolution deal agreed with Central Government in 2017 gave the Mayor and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority power over certain transport functions, with the combined authority taking over the role of the Local Transport Authority from Cambridgeshire County Council (and Peterborough

City Council). One of the key responsibilities of the Local Transport Authority is the development of a new Local Transport Plan.

- 2.19. The Local Transport Plan⁶ (LTP) was approved by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority on 29 January 2020, and covers the county of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Unitary Authority area.
- 2.20. The LTP's vision is *to deliver a world-class transport network for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough that supports sustainable growth and opportunity for all*, and sets out objectives to deliver three goals: *Economy, Society and Environment*.
- 2.21. The LTP's overarching strategy notes that the region it covers is both large and diverse: *Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is home to some 850,000 residents and 42,000 business, in an area covering some 340,000 hectares*. The area has a diverse geography with a wide range of communities from the cities of Peterborough and Cambridge, to large market towns and a network of rural villages and hamlets.
- 2.22. The LTP's strategy aims to support the Combined Authority's strategic ambition to become the UK's capital of innovation and productivity, doubling the size of its economy. The LTP notes transport network must provide access to a wide range of sites and amenities, all of which are important for effective social functioning. It must connect current housing and employment sites and provide additional capacity for the transport network to accommodate extra journeys from more households and to more jobs.
- 2.23. The LTP identifies that many rural areas have poor public transport connectivity, reducing the opportunities to access employment opportunities, key services, and amenities. For people without the use of a car, including young people, those on low income or for people with disabilities, these challenges are exacerbated.
- 2.24. Due to the distinct differences between different parts of the Combined Authority area, the LTP provides local strategies for each local authority area in the region. The LTP's local strategy for Fenland identifies a number of 'transport challenges'.
- 2.25. As the most rural and economically deprived district within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, limited accessibility to Fenland acts to constrain the local economy and hinders development. Fenland is not linked to the wider national highway network by dual carriageway. The district's road network primarily consists of rural, single-carriageway A-roads, many of which suffer from slow average journey times, particularly associated with slower agricultural traffic, and with a poor safety record.
- 2.26. Several key junctions, particularly within Wisbech, act as 'pinch points' on the network, and suffer from severe peak-time traffic congestion, which hinder the town's potential growth. Reflecting the low-lying Fenland landscape, some routes suffer from regular flooding, such as North Bank near Whittlesey, or require specific maintenance due to being constructed on peat soils. High-quality walking and cycling infrastructure is limited or entirely absent, which means that walking and cycling are often unattractive, contributing towards congestion from short car trips and poor air quality.
- 2.27. Fenland also lacks good wider public transport accessibility, particularly by rail. While March is directly served by the rail network, with an hourly service between Stansted Airport, Cambridge and Peterborough (continuing to Birmingham) and more infrequent services to Ipswich, the largest town of Wisbech lacks direct access to the rail network. Residents within Wisbech must therefore either drive to March, or travel to Peterborough, to access the rail network, resulting in additional car journeys on the highway network.
- 2.28. Although frequent bus services operate on key inter-urban corridors between Peterborough, Wisbech and Kings Lynn, and Peterborough, Whittlesey, March and Chatteris, services elsewhere are less frequent and

⁶ <https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/documents/transport/local-transport-plan/LTP.pdf>

irregular, and recent reductions in financial support have significantly reduced weekend and evening services, making it harder for those without access to a car to travel easily around Fenland. Fenland Association for Community Transport (FACT), in partnership with the Fenland Transport and Access Group, operate dial-a-ride services five days a week linking to areas not served directly by the bus network, but there is limited integration between these services and the wider public transport network, which acts to limit the ease with which rural residents can make longer journeys elsewhere (such as to Peterborough).

- 2.29. Lack of transport integration between different bus, rail and community transport services can therefore make it difficult for residents without access to a car to travel to key educational and healthcare services, such as Peterborough City Hospital, which can act to increase the risk of social exclusion and reduce opportunities for our young people to travel elsewhere for education or training.

Recent progress

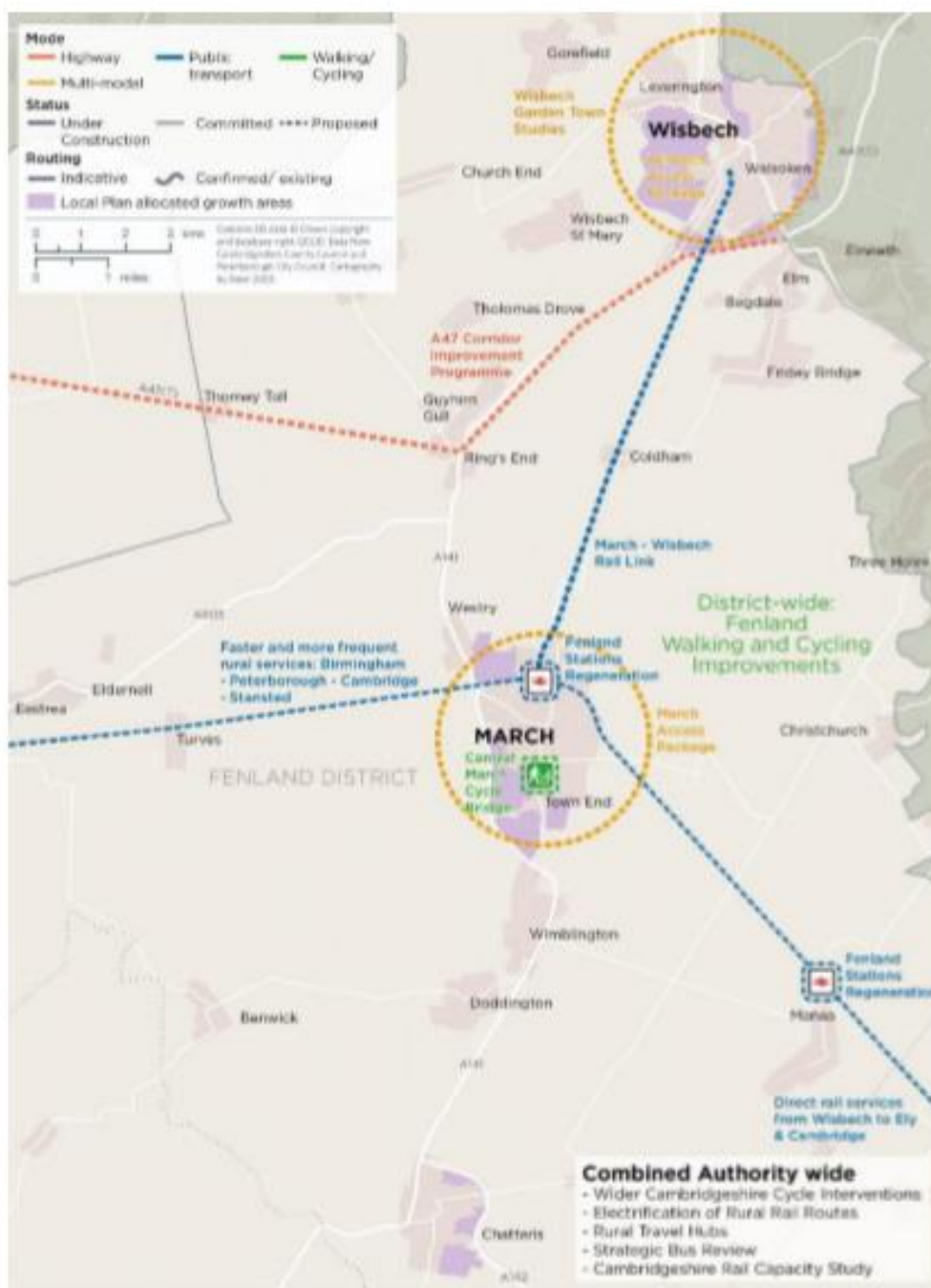
- 2.30. The Combined Authority has recently allocated £10.5 million for a package of improvements to the road network in and around Wisbech to help stimulate housing and economic growth, in addition to the £1.5 million approved to fund a study into a potential future rail link between Wisbech and March.
- 2.31. The Combined Authority has committed £9 million of investment into March, Manea and Whittlesea railway stations to aid their regeneration: the first of these projects has been delivered in the form of 70 new solar-powered 'cats eyes' providing an illuminated walkway to Whittlesea railway station.
- 2.32. Infrastructure improvements are also being delivered to better connect Fenland to Peterborough, the nearest major urban centre. Removal of the level crossing at Kings' Dyke - long the cause for delays between Peterborough and Whittlesey – and replacement with a new road bridge is under construction, supported by over £30 million of funding from the Combined Authority, and is expected to be open by the end of 2022. The Hereward Community Rail Partnership, established in 2012, has continued to work to promote the rail service and local stations between Ely and Peterborough, engage with train operating companies to improve services, and support station groups such as the Friends of March Station.

Combined Authority's approach

- 2.33. Improving accessibility to Fenland by both road and public transport is central to the LTP strategy. Better links to Peterborough, Greater Cambridge and the rest of the country will help to make Fenland a more attractive place to live and work, encouraging investment and much-needed additional jobs, while creating new opportunities for residents to travel to employment, education or training elsewhere.
- 2.34. Construction to reopen the rail link to Wisbech will transform accessibility of the town by rail, with residents and businesses in Wisbech able to reach Cambridge in approximately 45 minutes, directly connecting them to opportunities within Greater Cambridge.
- 2.35. Accompanied by the rail link is a package of improvements to the A47 between Peterborough, Wisbech and Kings' Lynn, including a much-needed upgrade to the Guyhirn Roundabout. In the longer-term, the Combined Authority will continue to explore the case to dual the route, further reducing journey times and improving safety and reliability along this key link for commuters and freight. Local junction improvements within Wisbech will also help to relieve congestion and provide additional highway capacity to support the town's growth. Key to our strategy is developing a more integrated, seamless public transport network that provides a genuine alternative to the private car, and ensures access to opportunity for all. Plans for the bus network include continued support for our key interurban routes between Wisbech and Whittlesey, March, Chatteris, Peterborough and King Lynn, working in partnership with operators to review levels of service at evenings and weekends, in line with the recommendations of the Strategic Bus Review. We will also continue to support the demand-responsive FACT network to provide vital links for rural hamlets and villages not directly served by the bus network, recognising the key role that such links play in connecting our communities.

- 2.36. The CA will work to ensure that it is easier for passengers to make journeys involving a combination of bus, rail and/or demand-responsive services. New rural travel hubs will offer improved interchange between transport modes, acting as a gateway to our public transport network, combined with better integrated ticketing and timetabled connections. This will help ensure that our residents can travel easily to destinations without having to rely on a car, and will simultaneously reduce pressure on our highway network. New, high-quality active travel infrastructure – focused around new development in Wisbech and along upgraded highway corridors – will help to make walking and cycling a safer, more attractive option for local journeys. Moreover, we will seek opportunities to improve interchange between public transport and active modes, particularly for short-distance journeys within and between Fenland market towns and villages.
- 2.37. More journeys on foot and by bike will help to alleviate traffic congestion and improve air quality, whilst allowing those without access to a car – such as teenage children – more independence and opportunity to travel. Continued support for electric vehicles, in partnership with local districts and national government, will help to reduce carbon emissions towards net zero and improve local air quality.
- 2.38. Projects to deliver the LTP's local strategy for Fenland are summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Summary of LTP projects for Fenland



East / West Corridor

- 2.39. The A47 is both a nationally and internationally strategic link. Internationally, it is part of the TEN-T Trans European Network Route, making it a part of the European Union’s strategic transport network. Nationally, it is a key route into East Anglia, connects Norwich and Norfolk with the East Midlands and the A1, and carries a large amount of heavy goods traffic.
- 2.40. On a more local scale, the section of the A47 within the Combined Authority area provides direct access between Peterborough, Wisbech and Kings Lynn. Beyond these settlements, the area is lowly populated and is largely agricultural. Consequently, the A47 is a key commuter route for people travelling into and out of these settlements for employment.

- 2.41. The long-distance regional trips (and particularly heavy good vehicles) generate a consistent flow of traffic along the route, and when this is mixed with commuter traffic the local network comes under substantial strain and congestion is common, particularly on the approaches to key junctions such as the A47 / A141 Guyhirn Roundabout and the A47 / A1101 Elm High Road Roundabout. The high proportion of heavy goods vehicles travelling along the single carriageway section between Thorney and Wisbech often creates queues of vehicles unable to safely overtake, which reduces journey time reliability and can lead to increased driver frustration and risk taking.
- 2.42. To address these issues, the Combined Authority is working in partnership with Highways England to assess the viability of the A47 dualling/capacity improvements proposal between the A16 Peterborough and Walton Highway. A Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) has been prepared by the Combined Authority⁷.
- 2.43. The A47 was not included in Highways England's plans for road improvements between 2020 and 2025. However, Highways England has agreed to fund an assessment of the A47 between the A16 and the Walton Highway east of Wisbech. The renewed work will use Highways England's established Project Control Framework (PCF) process to review existing evidence, including that already delivered by the Combined Authority. It will also assess current and future network conditions, and review and identify options for improving the A47 between Peterborough and Wisbech. The review will also be informed by other road proposals including options for the A47/A1101 roundabout junction already being developed by Highways England⁸.

Wisbech Rail

- 2.44. Construction of a new link to Wisbech will transform accessibility to the town. Options for rail and other high order transit such as tram/Light Rail Transit and Bus Rapid Transit are being considered by the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council, working closely with Network Rail and Fenland District Council. Residents and businesses in Wisbech would benefit from being able to reach Cambridge directly, connecting them to the opportunities within Greater Cambridge, including well-paid, skilled roles in the knowledge economy, and education and training opportunities at The University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University and Cambridge Regional College. It will also play a key role in supporting the ambition for Wisbech Garden Town, helping to secure the viability and delivery of additional development.
- 2.45. The Full Business Case for Wisbech Rail was completed in December 2020⁹. On the current timetable, as long as the project is approved at each stage, work is likely to begin in 2023 and be functionally completed in 2026, with direct services to Cambridge possible by 2028.

Local projects

- 2.46. Plans to re-open the March to Wisbech rail line will be complemented by bus, walk and cycle, and road improvements in Wisbech to help realise the ambition and plans for a Garden Town. Funding has been secured from the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Growth Deal to deliver this package over the next five years.
- 2.47. A package of enhancements to railway stations within Fenland is currently being delivered at Manea, March, and Whittlesea rail stations. Short platform lengths currently prevent longer, higher capacity trains from calling at the stations, as well as reducing the frequency of trains able to stop. In addition to platform lengthening, we will fund station enhancements to improve the quality of station and waiting facilities, as well as improving access to, from and at the stations, following continued engagement with the Hereward Community Rail Partnership.

⁷ <https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/documents/transport/A10/SOBC/Key-SOBC-Documents/A10-Dualling-and-Junctions-SOBC-rev2-compressed.pdf>

⁸ <https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/news/more-progress-for-a47-upgrades-as-transport-committee-hear-latest-news/>

⁹ <https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/documents/transport/transport-business-cases/Wisbech-Rail-FBC.pdf>

Cross-boundary matters

- 2.48. During the Issues & Options consultation, Huntingdonshire District Council raised concerns about potential impacts of traffic arising from Fenland's growth on the A141, and East Cambridgeshire highlight issues at the A142/A10 junction.

A141 Huntingdonshire

- 2.49. The LTP notes that additional highway capacity and improved accessibility is required at major development sites around Alconbury and Huntingdon, in order to support the delivery of much-needed homes and jobs. The Combined Authority is investing in improved access to development sites, particularly around the heavily congested A141 Huntingdon Northern Bypass corridor, helping to create faster, more reliable journeys by car. To support growth, a number of local schemes are proposed, supported by the Combined Authority, including

- capacity and junction enhancements to the A141 around Huntingdon;
- safeguarding of an alignment for the possible future re-routing of the A141 Huntingdon northern bypass; and
- multi-modal accessibility to and from Alconbury Weald, with high-quality bus infrastructure linking this new development to Huntingdon, and the potential for a future CAM route to serve the site.

A142 East Cambridgeshire

- 2.50. When considering the A142, it is necessary to view issues in the context of the wider A10 corridor. The A10 forms the main road link between Ely and Cambridge. The A10 enables travel between Fenland, East Cambridgeshire, West Norfolk and Cambridge, and directly serves a number of key centres of economic activity along the route, and on the northern fringe of Cambridge such as The Cambridge Science Park and neighbouring innovation centres and business parks on the northern fringe.
- 2.51. The LTP notes that the A10 is very busy, particularly at peak times, when there is extensive congestion. There is limited capacity to accommodate further travel demand on this key corridor, which will impede further economic and housing growth if not addressed.
- 2.52. The Combined Authority's *A10 Ely to Cambridge capacity improvements project* includes a package of transport options designed to address these challenges and support growth, with the longer-term aspiration of dualling the A10 entirely between Ely and Cambridge. This includes a series of enhancements to junctions along the route, including at the Witchford Road and Cambridge Road roundabouts to support employment development at the Grovemere and Lancaster Way Business Parks close to Ely. These improvements, in particular at the Witchford Road 'BP' roundabout, will provide a safe route for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians to cross the A10, helping to provide attractive alternatives to the private car.
- 2.53. Further work is planned to prioritise specific capacity and safety improvements to the western section of the A142, between Ely and Chatteris, where a high proportion of fatal collisions are a local concern, following a study earlier this year.
- 2.54. The A142 has recently seen some improvement through the construction of the Ely Southern Bypass. Funding was provided by Cambridgeshire County Council and the Combined Authority for a new road connecting the A142 at Angel Drove to Stuntney Causeway, including bridges over the railway line and the River Great Ouse and its floodplains. The bypass opened to traffic in October 2018 and has eased congestion in and around Ely by providing a new link between Stuntney Causeway and Angel Drove to the south of the city.

Market Town Transport Strategies

- 2.55. As part of the Third Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan (LTP3), Cambridgeshire County Council and Fenland District Council jointly produced a collection of Market Town Transport Strategies (MTTS) for Fenland's market towns.
- 2.56. Since the approval of the *Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Local Transport Plan* in January 2020, LTP3 is now superseded. However, at the present time the MTTSs have not been updated.
- 2.57. The MTTSs identify existing transport issues and potential future issues arising from growth identified by the Fenland Local Plan 2014, much of which has not yet been implemented or received planning approval. The MTTSs therefore remain valid and relevant evidence and Cambridgeshire County Council and other service providers continue to progress projects identified by the MTTSs.

Wisbech MTTS 2014

- 2.58. The Wisbech MTTS¹⁰ identifies existing, and potential future transport issues in Wisbech and its surrounding area (such as neighbouring parishes / villages). This takes into account growth identified by the Fenland Local Plan 2014, and has been informed by traffic modelling at specific hotspots on the transport network. It identifies an action plan of specific projects, many of which have been allocated funding by the Combined Authority and are being implemented through the Wisbech Access Strategy.

Access to services and public transport within Wisbech

- 2.59. Wisbech is reasonably well served in terms of facilities available within the town. However many of Wisbech's commercial and industrial areas are found to the southwest of the town and majority of residential areas are found in the north of the town.
- 2.60. Wisbech has a high proportion of households without access to a car. Many of the wards to the north of Wisbech, where the residential areas are located, are the areas where no access to a car is highest. This is a real issue for residents, as with limited public transport services, there is limited accessibility to the employment and leisure facilities to the south of the town.
- 2.61. Walking and cycling routes are considered incoherent and are perceived by many as unsafe and consequently regarded as a barrier.

Public Transport in Wisbech

- 2.62. A range of bus services start and finish at the Horsefair Bus Station giving good access for local residents at certain times of day to specific locations such as Peterborough, Kings Lynn and March. However, depending on the location in Wisbech, accessing the Horsefair Bus Station may be difficult. The circular Town bus service only covers the north west area of Wisbech and consequently not all the housing areas. In addition it does not connect with the south of the town including the industrial and commercial areas. Some parts of the town's residential areas have little or no public transport making access to the Bus Station difficult without a car.

Walking and Cycling in Wisbech

- 2.63. Walking and cycling routes many are considered by residents to be incoherent and possibly unsafe. A lack of recreational cycle routes to the town centre discourages the development of a cycling culture in the area. The topography of Wisbech is well suited to walking and cycling but movement is hindered by barriers created by the road network, including the volume and nature of the traffic in the town. Certain parts of the road network in the town, such as the A1101 Churchill Road and the Freedom Bridge roundabout can be intimidating for cyclists to use.

¹⁰ <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-funding-bids-and-studies/wisbech-access-strategy#:~:text=The%20Wisbech%20Access%20Strategy%20is%20a%20package%20of,as%20set%20out%20in%20the%20Fenland%20Local%20Plan.>

Rural Accessibility to Wisbech

- 2.64. Access to Wisbech from its rural hinterland and villages is heavily reliant upon the use of a private car, with public transport provision limited, and with cycling and walking not always being a suitable or viable option, especially for longer journeys.

Traffic, Congestion and Safety to Wisbech

- 2.65. Wisbech town centre experiences heavy levels of traffic. This is largely a result of there only being two river crossings in Wisbech, an issue which is escalated by the public's reliance on the private car to access services and facilities within Wisbech but also the high number of HCV vehicles using the routes to travel into and through Wisbech to access the strategic highway network and other major routes.

Wisbech MTTs Action Plan

- 2.66. The issues summarised above are existing issues affecting users of Wisbech's transport network. Such issues are highly significant to future Local Plan growth as they have the potential to constrain where growth can take place and the scale of growth which can be accommodated. Without investment in infrastructure, those transport issues will be exacerbated.
- 2.67. To identify the impacts of growth identified by the Local Plan 2014 (3,000 dwellings and 30ha employment land) and Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council's adopted Core Strategy which makes provision for a minimum of 550 houses in the east of Wisbech.
- 2.68. The results of the traffic modelling showed that unless solutions to the impacts of the additional housing and jobs are addressed their impacts would be too great with increased congestion and traffic in and around Wisbech. However, the modelling demonstrated that with mitigation measures the impacts associated with the new houses and jobs can be reduced. The impact of the mitigation measures showed reductions in congestion, delays and journey times when compared with doing nothing or only doing minimum or minor levels of change.
- 2.69. The MTTs identifies the following infrastructure projects for the Wisbech area:
- Technical study of options for new link road and/or river crossing
 - Study to identify options as part of making the case for delivery of a new link road and/or river crossing to the north and west of the town.
 - Connecting the A1101 to the B198 Cromwell road
 - Upgrade Broad End Road junction with A47 An initial feasibility study is required to identify whether a roundabout or other improvement is the preferred option;
 - A47 junctions package Package of improvements to junctions from A141 to A198 Lynn road junction;
 - Updating Traffic modelling studies to explore options for improving movement around Freedom Bridge roundabout Consider options for reconfiguring operation of the Freedom Bridge roundabout;
 - New road at Bolness Road/New bridge lane;
 - Traffic Management/signals/UTMC system Lynn Road, Churchill Road and Cromwell Road up to the Freedom Bridge;
 - Improve HCV route signage;
 - Feasibility study to investigate establishment of lorry parks on the edge of Wisbech, to be considered alongside link road solution;
 - Investigate measures to improve traffic flow and safety on the A1101 Leverington Road;
 - Investigate measures to improve traffic management in the residential areas of Peatlings Lane and West Parade;

- Address access issues to the College of West Anglia Isle Campus;
- Speed reduction measures around Railway Road, Fundrey Road, Victoria Road and Queens Road;
- Parking study -restricting parking at peak times near junction of North Brink and Chapel Road;
- Consider introduction of 'home zone' type measures in Waterlees Ward specifically Bath Road/St Michaels Ave, Ollard Avenue area;
- Investigate operation of Old Market / Chapel Road junction;
- Investigate introduction of advisory 20mph signage near schools;
- Ensure County wide road safety programmes address issues in Wisbech and surrounding areas and engage fully with schools and the wider community;
- Extend town bus service - Provide an additional bus route, linked to the 66 town bus service in order to cater for areas not currently served;
- Consider improvements to bus services for all residents in strategy area where commercially viable;
- Investigate options to improve Bus Station facilities and access arrangements;
- Improve bus stops across;
- Communications Strategy for current public and community transport services;
- Work with healthcare providers to make patients aware of travel options and improve access to services;
- Support the Wisbech-March Rail Study work;
- Walking/cycling audits Walking and cycling audits from NE Wisbech to SE Wisbech;
- Footpath and cycleway along the line of March-Wisbech rail line;
- Walking/cycling route Agricultural College Site area/Meadowgate Lane to Town Centre - 3 crossings across the A1101 identified for improvement;
- Port Area and Waterlees Ward to Town Centre walking/cycling route Links with the Freedom Bridge toucan crossing, off road along Nene Parade and the north side of Nene Quay and will enable cyclists to access the town centre at the Hill St junction;
- Investigate options for Pedestrian / Cyclist bridge over the river – options to include Hill Street – Foyer Centre area;
- Project to assess existing footpaths and where appropriate designate existing footpaths as shared use and encourage developers to construct new shared use footpaths and cycleways where appropriate;
- Review provision of cycle shelters in Wisbech;
- Joint partnership working to expand community transport services CCC and FDC to work with Community Transport providers as well as Lincolnshire councils; and
- Identify locations for improved rural interchanges (at locations such as Guyhirn, for example) between services, including buses, community transport and taxis.

Wisbech Access Strategy

2.70. The Wisbech Access Strategy identifies a package of individual transport schemes that aim to improve the transport network in Wisbech, and is therefore closely linked to the LTP and Wisbech MTTs. Schemes have been tested to make sure that they are the best solutions to address the current problems on the transport network and will also support future housing and job growth (set out in the Fenland Local Plan 2014). Projects include:

Short term to 2021:

- New Bridge Lane/Cromwell Road Signals
- Southern Access Road
- Weasenham Lane junction improvement

- A47/Elm High Road roundabout improvements
- A47/Broad End Road Roundabout

Medium term to 2026:

- Western Link Road – Southern section
- New River Crossing
- A47/Cromwell Road roundabout upgrade
- Freedom Bridge Roundabout Improvements
- Wisbech Bus Station including new access
- Relocated A47/Elm High Road Roundabout
- Weasenham Lane/Elm High Road roundabout

Long term to 2031:

- Western Link Road – Northern section

2.71. The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority has provided £10.5m of funding to enable the delivery of those ‘short term’ schemes. The short-term package can therefore be delivered within the current budget available. The short-term package prioritises schemes in known accident locations and in places that are currently congested and maximises access arrangements and network capacity to deliver the housing and employment sites in the Fenland Local Plan.

2.72. The medium-term package seeks to add in additional network capacity in places where there is congestion and accidents. The full package offers flexibility in respect of which schemes are built when and relates to the timing that additional funding can be secured. The full package delivers very significant benefits in comparison to the other options considered.

March MTTs 2013

2.73. The March Market Town Transport Strategy¹¹ seeks to address existing shortcomings relating to transport within the town, and plans ahead for to meet the needs of Local Plan 2014 growth (4,200 homes being built in the period 2011-2031 with 30ha of new employment space).

2.74. In 2010/11 Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council jointly commissioned the County Council’s highway consultants to develop a highway model for the March network, in order that it could be used to inform decisions relating to the scale and location of new development in March.

2.75. A number of the schemes in the March MTTs bear a direct relationship with proposed new development in March. For such schemes, developers of the proposed allocations are expected to deliver these schemes or contribute towards their delivery. This is in order to help mitigate the impacts of growth and enhance accessibility. Major developments are also required to develop and implement a travel plan to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes. Schemes linked to key destinations such as the town centre, railway station, Neale-Wade Community College and Hostmoor Avenue industrial & retail area are considered to be directly relevant to a majority of the areas in March.

¹¹ <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-plans-and-policies/market-town-transport-strategies>

Walking in March

- 2.76. The MTTs identifies a number of locations in the town where a lack of footpath provision deters or hinders people from walking, such as on Norwood Rd, Elwyn Rd, City Rd and Estover Rd. Lack of lighting on the A141 bridge between Hostmoor Avenue and B1099 Wisbech Rd and on the B1101 between March and Wimblington also act as barriers to walking.
- 2.77. While March has the Hereward Way path running through the town centre and a number of paths leading out from the town there is scope to improve the quality and quantity of paths leading into the countryside

Cycling in March

- 2.78. While a reasonable amount of cycling infrastructure has been installed in the town, and the proportion of students cycling to Neale-Wade Community College and some of the primary schools is high, this proportion is not replicated throughout the rest of the town for non-educational trip purposes.
- 2.79. There is an opportunity to increase the number of people cycling in the town, by providing a comprehensive network of cycle routes that connect the key areas of the town.

Highway Safety in March

- 2.80. Key areas of concern for highway safety in March are:
- Junction of A141 with Gaul Rd
 - B1101 Wimblington Rd
 - The A141 junctions with Hostmoor Avenue and the access road leading to the Cobblestones pub and future retail development
 - A141 roundabout with Wisbech Rd, Whittlesey Rd and Meadowlands
 - Broad St, Station Rd and Dartford Rd

Public transport in March

- 2.81. March has a number of bus routes and services. However the MTTs identifies a number of issues affecting bus services, including:
- Bus stops frequently being blocked by parked cars in the town centre;
 - The left turn from Broad St into Dartford Rd is too tight for some buses;
 - Delays caused to buses travelling through the town centre;
 - Inability for buses travelling from the south to turn around in the town centre;
 - Lack of bus station facility in the town centre; and
 - Lack of a bus interchange facility at the railway station and inability of buses to turn around at the station.
- 2.82. Due to its central location in Fenland, March is an important station for the whole district and is comfortably the busiest of the three railway stations in Fenland, with services from Birmingham to Stansted Airport, Liverpool to Norwich, and Peterborough to Ipswich. The station has seen substantial growth in the number of passengers.
- 2.83. Key issues and improvements relating to the March's rail station include:
- Improve the quality of the car park at the rail station, including marking out bays, improving the surfacing & lighting and consideration of CCTV

- Increasing the amount of car parking available at the station
- Improve interchange facilities for bus, taxi and community transport providers
- Introduce additional cycle parking at the station, including secure cycle parking
- Closely monitor the situation with regard to current and future delays caused by the level crossing barriers being down.
- Address the issues relating to on-street parking in the vicinity of the railway station.

2.84. Improvements in the frequency of rail services which stop at March – earlier in the morning, throughout the day and later into the evening – will be sought by the Local Authorities working together with the relevant rail operators and Department for Transport to negotiate additional services for March.

2.85. A further aspiration included in the rail development strategy is the potential to reintroduce the March to Wisbech Rail Line, known as the Bramley Line.

Traffic congestion in March

2.86. The March MTTTS identifies the following road links as experiencing delays in peak periods:

- All approaches to the Broad Street junction with Station Rd & Dartford Rd;
- Southbound approaches to the A141 roundabout with B1099 Wisbech Rd;
- Northbound & southbound approaches to High St junction with Burrowmoor Rd;
- Northbound & southbound approaches to High St junction with St Peter's Rd;
- B1101 Wimblington Rd outside Neale-Wade Community College; and
- B1101 Station Rd / Elm Rd level crossing.

March MTTTS Action Plan

2.87. To address the issues identified above, the March MTTTS identifies the following transport projects:

- Elwyn Rd shared use path
- Estover Rd footpath to playing fields
- Norwood Rd bridge shared use route
- Nighthall Drive to Marwick Rd footpath
- Station Rd pedestrian crossing
- City Rd footpath near police station
- Improve old railway path across Stow Fen
- Improve paths along river to east of town
- Improve Shepperson's Bridge
- Paths to west of town: create Burrowmoor Rd loop
- Paths to west of town: Nene North Bank
- Gault Bank surface improvements
- Solar-powered stud lights on A141 Bridge
- Town centre definitive map project
- Creek Rd level crossing footpath
- Promote walking routes around March
- Improvements to/from railway station
- Neale-Wade Community College to Wimblington
- Southwest March to town centre
- Neale-Wade to town centre / Wigstones Bridge

- Improvements to Hostmoor Ave retail park / industrial estate
- To/from south of Barkers Lane development
- To/from north of Estover Road development
- National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 63
- Town Centre
- Promotion & encouragement of cycling 24 59 6
- Cycle bridge(s) over river and/or railway line
- Upwell Rd speed reduction measures
- Burrowmoor Rd school warning signs
- Introduce new junction at intersection of Gaul Rd with A141
- A141 speed reduction northwest of March
- A141 further safety measures northwest of March
- A141 / Twenty Foot Rd safety measures
- Speed reduction on Wisbech Rd
- March Railway Station Area Masterplan
- Short term measures to address parking and safety issues in the vicinity of the railway station
- Lobby for more rail services stopping at March
- Investigate opening March-Wisbech rail line
- Bus station in City Rd area
- Town centre taxi arrangements
- Promotion of public and community transport
- Assist public and community transport providers to introduce improved services to key destinations
- More cycle parking at station, including secure parking
- Town centre improvements
- Town centre parking strategy
- Steps leading down to the river from Broad St
- Study to identify measures to mitigate future impact of traffic at key junctions, including consideration of the potential benefits and costs of an eastern access road and northern link road
- Northern link Rd (upgrade Hundred Rd & link to Longhill Rd)
- HGV park in vicinity of Hostmoor Ave
- Smaller scale improvements in town centre
- Small scale parking / access improvements (locations to include Gordon Ave, Prince's Walk)
- Capacity & safety improvements to A141/Hostmoor Ave and A141/B1099 Wisbech Rd Peas Hill roundabout

2.88. On 06 March 2020, a number of 'quick win' schemes were approved to receive funding from the Combined Authority, along with other sources including the Local Highway Improvement fund, and Cambridgeshire County Council.

- 2.89. The Whittlesey Market Town Transport Strategy¹² addresses some of the existing shortcomings of transport within the town, and also plans ahead for known developments that will take place.
- 2.90. The Whittlesey MTTs assumes housing growth comprising a minimum of 1,100 new homes between 2011 and 2031, and additional employment growth. This is broadly aligned with the Fenland Local Plan 2014 which identifies employment growth of 1,000 homes and 5ha of employment land.

Walking and cycling in Whittlesey

- 2.91. The MTTs indicates that, although the topography of Whittlesey is well suited to walking and cycling, cycling rates in particular are not high. Supporting people to make short journeys on foot or by pedal cycle may encourage them to use local shops, rather than travelling further afield to larger supermarkets, which will in turn benefit the economy of Whittlesey.
- 2.92. The A605 is a particular barrier to cycling due to the volume and nature of traffic using it, therefore existing routes within the town are signposted along quieter routes which often don't offer cyclists the most direct route to their desired destination. Another shortcoming in terms of cycling and cycling facilities around the town is the lack of cycle parking. This is especially noticeable in the centre of the town around the market square and could be perceived as a barrier to using the bike for short journeys because there is nowhere secure to leave a bike.
- 2.93. The dominance of the A605 through the centre of the town also acts as a barrier towards the amount of walking within Whittlesey and the surrounding villages, despite there being three pedestrian crossings along the built-up stretch of the road. As there are a number of schools close to the A605, these issues are particularly relevant to children (and their parents) who wish to access those schools, and who find the A605 traffic issues and the narrow pavements along it to be a barrier to walking/cycling to school.

Public transport in Whittlesey

- 2.94. Whilst there is a reasonable level of bus services connecting Whittlesey to Peterborough and other market towns, the main bus services only run along the A605. The length of walk to the bus stop combined with the limited services that travel into housing estates mean that many people find they are spending a lot of money to get a taxi into town to visit local shops or services, when they could be using bus services.
- 2.95. Whilst Whittlesey is fortunate in having a railway station, the frequency with which trains stop at the station makes it difficult to plan efficient journeys, especially those that require connections. The frequency of services is a significant barrier to the use of Whittlesea Rail Station. The station itself is poorly served in terms of facilities as it is not manned and waiting facilities are minimal. Connectivity with the rest of the town is also poor, with no bus serving the station and no cycle parking. Despite this, the station does appear to be reasonably well used, especially by those travelling to Peterborough or onwards to destinations such as London which suggests that if the service and facilities were improved, more people might be persuaded to use the train for some journeys

HCVs

- 2.96. The A605 bisects the town through the centre. It forms part of Cambridgeshire's Strategic Advisory Freight route and as such, traffic from Heavy Commercial Vehicle's (HCV) is quite heavy through the town.

¹² <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-plans-and-policies/market-town-transport-strategies>

Whittlesey experiences greater proportions of HCV traffic compared with other market towns in Cambridgeshire.

Road safety

2.97. There are two accident cluster sites within the Whittlesey Town Council Area, one on Eastgate and one north of Whittlesey town on the B1040, in the vicinity of North Bank.

Whittlesey MTTs Action Plan

- 2.98. The Whittlesey MTTs identifies the following action plan of transport infrastructure projects to address existing issues identified above and meet needs arising from growth:
- Ensuring that any new developments are permeable and have appropriate provision for access to/from the key locations in the strategy area via sustainable modes of transport.
 - Provision of a hopper bus linking key areas of the strategy area
 - Better publicise opportunities for accessing Peterborough City Hospital especially via the community car scheme and bus services
 - Investigate options that help address severance issues caused by the A605, particularly options suggested via consultation (see grey boxes below) and those which improve access to schools and any new development.
 - Junction improvements for pedestrians and cyclists at junction of Hallcroft Road and West End, including urban realm improvements.
 - Pedestrian/cycle improvements to A605 Roundabout at Broad Street/Orchard St/Whitmore Street.
 - Pedestrian/cycle improvements to Cemetery Road/A605 Roundabout.
 - Develop and produce walking/cycle map for Whittlesey
 - Improve facilities for pedestrians (including those who use scooters, pushchairs, wheelchairs etc). Specific schemes have been outlined below (see grey boxes below), but additional schemes may come forward and may include dropped kerbs, crossing facilities, signage, benches etc.
 - A605 crossing between Belmans Road and Victory Avenue
 - Improve walking leisure routes including improvements and enhancements to the Hereward Way and Nene Way long distance paths and routes around the Brick Pits and Kings Dyke areas and to Coates. Types of measures include signposting, way-marking, gates, sections of surfacing, as well as events (eg health walks) and information relating to walking.
 - Work with police to tackle issue of cars parking on pavements
 - Investigate options for providing other cycle infrastructure, for example new cycle routes Whittlesey and between Whittlesey, Coates and Eastrea. Specific schemes have been outlined below (see grey boxes below), but additional schemes may come forward and are likely to focus on the following:
 - Improving routes to employment sites
 - Making improvements to east-west travel in Whittlesey which allow cyclists (and pedestrians) to avoid the A605
 - Improving routes to schools
 - Improving cycle leisure routes
 - Improve cycle access to Park Lane school by improving cycle access over the junction of Hallcroft Road and West End.
 - Improve cycle access to the McCains site (by connecting it to the NCN63)
 - Carry out feasibility work to look at widening the footway next to the A605 for shared use and/or creating other cycle provision.
 - Add cycle contraflow facilities on Horsegate Lane
 - Crossing improvements at junction of Orchard Street/Gracious Street

- Provide cycle parking in key locations in Whittlesey, including at new developments (other potential locations include the town centre, the One Stop Shop)
- Complete surfacing works on NCN63 (between Stonald Road and Millenium Bridge) to provide consistent, high standard surfacing
- Investigate with local bus companies the possibility of rerouting some services to serve roads off the A605
- Provision of a hopper bus linking key areas of the strategy area
- Improve information, signs and timetables relating to public and community transport
- Develop a press and publicity strategy for current public and community transport services, including raising awareness of the 'hail and ride' services operating in Whittlesey.
- Investigate bus stop provision and/or improvements in the following locations highlighted through public consultation and outlined below (see grey boxes below). Additional schemes may also come forward
- Provision of bus stop/improvements at Eastrea Road at east end of Whittlesey
- Provision of bus stop/improvements at Stonald Road if a service is provided
- Provision of raised kerb in Whittlesey's Market Square and/or reversal of one way system to allow existing raised kerb to be used
- Improving information about bus services and community transport and working with operators to review existing service routes and times
- Investigate options for improved public and community transport, with a focus on links to Peterborough (particularly in the evenings), links to Eastrea and Coates, and links to and through new developments
- Launch and develop the Fenland Community Rail Partnership
- Develop a programme of events for Whittlesea Station and set up formal station adoption group
- Improve facilities at Whittlesea Station (eg shelters, lighting, cycle parking, security, platform access).
- Ongoing programme of promotions and publicity relating to rail travel.
- Ongoing discussions with Department for Transport (DfT) and Train operating companies regarding improving service frequencies, and participation in relevant rail franchise consultations and discussions.
- Improve access, links and signage to Whittlesea Station.
- Provide bridge over the platforms at Whittlesea Station
- Lengthen platforms at Whittlesea Station so longer trains can be accommodated
- Explore proposals for a parkway station for Peterborough at Whittlesea Station (to include an extension to the car park).
- Work with local employers to help people access work and using walking, cycling and public transport and encourage them to work with the Travel for Work Partnership to implement Workplace Travel Plans.
- Ensure any new employment sites in and around Whittlesey have appropriate provision for sustainable transport.
- Support improvements to Broadband and wi-fi internet provision, as this can enable remote access to services.
- Initial study work relating to the feasibility of a scheme to improve the crossing at King's Dyke.
- Engage with Network Rail to investigate a possible funding package to improve the crossing at King's Dyke (and potentially other level crossings). Investigate replacement of Station Road level crossing manned barriers with automatic barriers.

- Improve signs directing HCV's to industrial areas and work with police to look at enforcement of the current HCV ban.
- Ensure new developments mitigate transport impacts on the network appropriately
- Ensure new developments in the area contribute to retaining Whittlesey's character and sense of place.
- Investigate improvements which could be made to the Market Square in Whittlesey whilst retaining bus service provision in this area.
- Continue with the principles of the safer routes to schools projects. Some schemes identified by school working parties working with the CCC Road Safety Team have been identified, these are outlined below
- Provision of cycle parking, parent waiting facilities, signage and railings at New Road Primary School.
- Investigate options to lower speed limit on the A605 and in other areas where this is supported by local residents and schools
- Improve signage alerting drivers to vulnerable road users at key sites. Some sites mentioned in consultation are outlined below. Others may come forward.
- Stonald Road – signs requested to alert drivers to elderly people
- Signs requested to alert drivers to students travelling to Sir Harry Smith Community College
- Investigate and safety and access improvements which can be made to the Eastgate area
- Investigate options for providing Residential Travel Planning in new developments, in line with emerging draft Residential Travel Plan guidance being prepared by CCC in partnership with the District Council.
- Improve accessibility using 'active' travel (eg walking and cycling) – see section on 'improving walking and cycling facilities'
- Continue to monitor traffic levels in and around Whittlesey
- Improve pavement conditions and undertake routine pavement maintenance within the constraint of available budgets.
- Continue with routine maintenance of roads within the constraints of the budgets.

Chatteris MTTs 2010

2.99. The Chatteris Market Town Transport Strategy¹³ covers Chatteris and the nearby villages of Manea, Doddington and Benwick which look to Chatteris for services, and in the case of Manea, provide rail links for the town.

2.100. The Chatteris MTTs identifies the following main issues to be tackled:

- Lack of a bus station: Chatteris is a local centre and interchange for a number of services however it is felt that the lack of a bus station makes changing between services more difficult and the current location of bus stops causes problems with buses manoeuvring around the town.
- Lack of public transport information: Stakeholders and members have both raised the issue that public transport information can be difficult to access and understand. There is also a lack of awareness regarding the recent service changes. This lack of information is possibly reducing service up take.
- Lack of a direct bus service to Huntingdon: It was raised by members that there is no longer a direct service to Huntingdon and passengers are now required to change at Warboys. This connection can

¹³ <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-plans-and-policies/market-town-transport-strategies>

be unreliable which inconveniences those wishing to access facilities in Huntingdon, in particular Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

- Lack of public transport access to Manea Station from Chatteris.
- Lack of safe cycling routes through the town, particularly to Mepal Outdoor Centre was raised as an issue.
- Pedestrian environment in some areas is inadequate, with a need for enhanced footpaths and crossing facilities
- Problems with school run parking on Larham Way creating congestion and road safety problems.

2.101. In addition to those issues listed, the MTTTS identifies road safety issues at the junction of New Road and A142, and at rural roads around the town which see comparatively high levels of serious and fatal accidents.

Chatteris MTTTS Action Plan

2.102. To address existing transport issues and meet growth needs, the Chatteris MTTTS identifies the following transport projects in its action plan:

- Provision of bus maps, easy-read timetables and publicity
- Footway improvement on King Edwards Road
- Footway improvement on St Martins Road
- Signed on-road cycle route along Eastwood to the town centre and High Street avoiding London Road
- Provision of sheffield stands
- Improved lighting on Wood Street
- Investigation of feasibility of improvements to the footpath to Kingsfield School
- Provision of RTPi
- Furrowfields bus interchange
- Crossing over A141
- Investigation of cycle facilities in New Road area
- Pedestrian Island on Wenny Road
- Improved lighting on Railway Lane
- Bus stop improvements
- Improved lighting on King Edward Road
- High Street review and improvements
- Off road cycle and pedestrian path linking the South of Chatteris to the Mepal Outdoor centre
- Off road route linking Cromwell Community College to The Elms across the recreation ground
- Pedestrian and traffic counts at Park Street/East Park Street junction
- Pedestrian and traffic counts on Bridge Street near the Co-op
- Signalisation of the junction at West Park Street/Huntingdon Road/Victoria Road junction
- Link to the south to Somersham along the old railway bed
- Review of signing on the rural road networks
- Provide a continuous footpath on prospect way
- Link to the north of the town providing access to the industrial area north of the ring road and travelling out towards Doddington. This includes a safe crossing over the A142 onto Dock Road
- Cycle map and promotional material

Market Town Masterplans

- 2.103. The Combined Authority approved four *Growing Fenland Market Town Masterplans* for March, Wisbech, Chatteris and Whittlesey at its January 2020 board meeting (the same meeting as the Local Transport Plan received approval).
- 2.104. The purpose of the masterplans is to identify important priorities and programmes to bring about the economic and social regeneration of the towns. The scope of the masterplans is therefore far broader than transport issues. However, transport is a recurring theme in each of the masterplans, and each identifies transport improvements necessary to bring about change in each market town.
- 2.105. The draft Local Plan is broadly aligned with the market town strategies. However it is important to note that these documents serve different purposes. The market town strategies are by their nature aspirational, whereas the Local Plan principally addresses core statutory functions and must meet the strict legal tests.
- 2.106. However, the provision of transport improvements to deliver the vision and ambitions of the market town strategies in many cases is likely to be beneficial to supporting Local Plan growth. Likewise, the Local Plan can play an important role in supporting the implementation of the Market Town masterplans.

Wisbech: Market Town Masterplan – transport interventions

- 2.107. The first objective of the Wisbech Market Town masterplan is to *Provide immediate connectivity to key employment centres*.
- 2.108. The masterplan identifies Wisbech lack of a rail station, the single carriageway A47, and virtually non-existent cycle infrastructure as significant constraints to accessing employment, leading to economic impacts.
- 2.109. The masterplan notes that the A47 needs to be fully dualled to open up employment opportunities. In the longer term a rail link to the town will mean young professionals, who are increasingly unlikely to drive, will base themselves in the town, and further ahead, Wisbech may be able to become part of the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM) network, which is initially being developed in the south of the county.
- 2.110. The masterplan suggests that dualling of the A47 and provision of rail services should be the priority. However, it notes that such projects will take some time to be delivered and identifies the following shorter term solutions (which are untested in terms of feasibility or viability):
- A shuttle bus service to key transport hubs. Both March and Watlington stations are within 25 minutes' drive from Wisbech. These enjoy quick connections to Cambridge (and Peterborough, in the case of March). A shuttle service which was designed to coincide with train departures would make public transport commuting a feasible option.
 - Testbed for the Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM). The technology for the Cambridge Autonomous Metro will need to be trialled. According to the Strategic Outline Business Case, the CAM will use "high-quality, zero-emission 'trackless metro' vehicles, powered by electric batteries recharged overnight and at route termini throughout the day, without the need for overhead wires". This technology could be trialled to connect Wisbech on the course of one of the old railway line connections. This would help as a proof of concept both for the CAM, and also for future connectivity to Wisbech.
- 2.111. The Wisbech Market Town Masterplan therefore accords with LTP in that it prioritises improvements to the A47 and provision of rail services. The provision of additional public transport services is a matter which could be explored through the development of individual development sites, such as major settlements / urban extensions.

March: Market Town Masterplan – transport interventions

- 2.112. The March masterplan’s vision is that March will be a ‘destination’ market town where people want to live and work. The March masterplan notes that traffic dominates the centre of town, and supports the March Area Transport Study in the re-designing of traffic flow through the town centre to encourage walking, cycling and improve air quality. In addition, the masterplan will encourage the use of electric vehicles for those living, working or visiting the town centre by provide charging points within town centre car parks, thereby lessening air pollution from fossil fuels.
- 2.113. The masterplan proposes the formation of a ‘car club’ for March. Pooled access to vehicles offers an affordable and flexible way for younger, older and lower income people to get around without owning their own car. This is particularly beneficial to people who are looking to study and gain work experience out of town but are currently frustrated by bus and rail services that are inconvenient.
- 2.114. To accord with other Local Plan and LTP objectives, Local Plan growth may play a role in supporting improvements to March town centre. In addition, the provision of electric vehicle charging points is a matter being explored through the Local Plan as a potential policy requirement for new development.

Whittlesey: Market Town Masterplan – transport

- 2.115. The masterplan seeks to enable Whittlesey’s economy to continue to grow sustainably, encourage more people to visit and enjoy the town’s rich heritage and cultural offer, and enable residents to access opportunities to improve their CV and boost their career.
- 2.116. To deliver this vision, the Growing Fenland masterplan for Whittlesey identifies a package of necessary transport improvements, which includes improvements to bus and train services, provision of a park and ride scheme, a new bridge over the King’s Dyke level crossing, and the delivery of a new relief road from Coates to the Morrisons / Cardea Roundabout.
- 2.117. The relief road identified by the Growing Fenland masterplan would ensure HCVs can access industrial sites from the east rather adding to the congestion of residential routes, particularly along Inhams Road and Station Road. For many local people it has been a long-held aspiration to see a bypass to Whittlesey, providing access to the industrial area to the south of the town.

Chatteris: Market Town Masterplan – transport interventions

- 2.118. The masterplan notes that Chatteris “looks in all directions” – with workers commuting to March, Ely, Huntingdon, and to a lesser extent, Cambridge and Peterborough.
- 2.119. This central location is a real strength for the town, but currently public transport options let Chatteris down. Buses are infrequent, and some key destinations (such as Peterborough) require changing, leading to lengthy journeys (over two hours). This makes commuting via public transport difficult. Levels of cycling to work are also low. As a result, Chatteris is very car dependent.
- 2.120. To deliver health, environmental and social benefits, the masterplan proposes the creation of new cycle infrastructure, namely a cycle lane on the old course of the railway line joining Chatteris to Somersham; a cycle lane connecting Chatteris to Sutton – which would link to the continuing cycle lane to Ely; and new cycle parking facilities in the centre of town.
- 2.121. There may be opportunities for Local Plan growth to support the provision of cycle infrastructure in Chatteris, as doing so would also support the sustainability objectives of the Local Plan and LTP.

Fenland Rail Development Strategy 2011-2031

- 2.122. The 'Getting on track' Fenland Rail Development Strategy 2011-2031 (FRDS) sets out a strategy and action plan for rail development in Fenland from 2011 - 2031. It includes plans for local station management, including greater community involvement; investment at stations to provide 'better stations' through improved facilities; and lobby for improved rail services at Fenland's stations.
- 2.123. The FRDS indirectly supports Local Plan growth through recognising the important role rail travel plays in supporting the sustainability of new development, and through improve rail facilities and services for all users.

Wisbech rail link

- 2.124. The Wisbech – March line was closed for passenger services in 1968 and closed for freight in 2000. Closure of the line left Fenland's largest town without direct access to the rail network. It has been a long-held aspiration to re-instate the rail line between Wisbech and March, commonly known as the 'Bramley Line'.
- 2.125. Prior to devolution, a number of studies and reports were commissioned to assess the feasibility of re-instating the rail link:
- In 2009, the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) published the report titled 'Connecting Communities: Expanding Access to the Rail Network', which investigated the potential of reopening the March to Wisbech rail line along with a number of other potential re-openings.
 - In 2012, Cambridgeshire County Council commissioned a 'Stage 1' study which investigated the potential patronage and revenue generated by rail services between March and Wisbech.
 - The stage 2 report published in 2014 explored the capital costs of re-opening the line reinstating the line and providing new stations, and provided an outline assessment of the key benefits.
 - The stage 3 report, also published in 2014, investigated the wider economic benefits that a station would bring to Wisbech and the surrounding area.
 - In July 2015, Cambridgeshire County Council submitted an outline business case to Network Rail's 'GRIP2' (*Governance for Railway Investment Projects*) management and control process for delivering projects on the railway.
- 2.126. Wisbech remains one of the largest towns in the UK without a rail connection, with an estimated population of 32,000 in the town itself from the 2011 Census, and a wider catchment, which views Wisbech as the main local centre, estimated at approximately 50,000 people. As previously discussed, reinstatement of the Wisbech rail link is a key strategic priority of the Combined Authority's LTP.
- 2.127. The Combined Authority is funding and sponsoring a study into the March - Wisbech Transport Corridor, as part of 'GRIP 3b', to develop a full business case and single option design for reinstating rail services between March and Wisbech, which should consider onward connections and connectivity to Cambridge and Peterborough.
- 2.128. On 06 March 2020, an interim report and Options Assessment Report (OAR) were presented to the Combined Authority's board. The OAR identified a number of options for the scheme. These options were assessed against their ability to support the achievement of the scheme's objectives, an appraisal of the scheme's economic impacts and a high-level assessment of the deliverability of each option.

- 2.129. The OAR concluded that the preferred option (DS2) should be a National Rail-based option, with a new station in Wisbech in a central location which offers regular, direct services (2 trains per hour) between Wisbech and Cambridge.
- 2.130. Current estimate of construction of approximately £218.5m. Whilst the capital cost appears high, the OAR calculates that this option offers high value for money (cost benefit of 2.0 – 2.5). The Combined Authority is working with Department for Transport to ensure that the Wisbech Rail project is considered for the government's recently announced 'restoring railways' funding.
- 2.131. The preferred Wisbech Station location should be as close to the town centre as possible and land south of the Purina site has been identified but is subject to further assessment, design and consultation.
- 2.132. The initial findings, with the preferred option which will be included in the Full Business Case were presented to the Combined Authority Board on 03 June 2020. The CA board has now delegated the approval of the Final Business Case report to its Transport Committee.
- 2.133. The earliest time for completing the scheme, assuming funding can be secured, would be around 4.5 years from completion of the current study. In practice, given the relationship to other transport projects and uncertainty around funding options, sponsor approvals and the timetable for receipt of the required statutory consents, the project is likely to take longer to deliver than this.
- 2.134. The OAR report identifies the absence of rail at Wisbech as having a significant effect on the sustainability of Fenland's largest town. A lack of intra-regional connectivity, and alternatives to the private car, is likely to be a contributory factor in a number of the observed outcomes for Wisbech and its surrounding area, as it constrains access to employment, services and opportunities, particularly existing higher value jobs which are currently too distant to render them attractive alternatives; diminishes its attractiveness for inward investment; stymies markets for businesses already located in the area; and promote a high degree of car dependency, with associated adverse externalities from car use, in an area where highway supply is also constrained and subject to a lack of resilience. Analysis of travel-to-work journeys for Wisbech shows the town is effectively severed from Cambridge and Peterborough.
- 2.135. Through giving greater local control over infrastructure decision-making and spending, devolution has likely increased the prospect of the Wisbech rail project being delivered. Development of a new rail link is critically important for the Local Plan as it will significantly improve the sustainability of the town and travel options for new development, and will increase the likelihood of inward investment in an area which has been shown to have limited development viability by the Local Plan Viability Assessment Report.

Cross-boundary projects

A141 Huntingdonshire

- 2.136. There is existing congestion in the Huntingdon area, which with known growth already allocated in Huntingdonshire's Local Plan and the prospect of future growth, this is set to worsen. As a result, the A141 Huntingdon Capacity Study (Combined Authority Funded), St Ives Area Transport Study (CCC Funded but delivered jointly with CA) and the Huntingdon Third River Crossing study (Combined Authority funded) were approved and commissioned to consider opportunities to overcome both current and future challenges. The Huntingdon Third River Crossing is a key project for the purposes of the Combined Authority's Business Plan 2019/20.
- 2.137. In January 2020, the Combined Authority's Transport Committee approved funding and a change to the scope of the A141 Huntingdon Capacity Improvements study and St Ives Area Study to consider the impact of a Third River Crossing at Huntingdon

A142 / A10 Ely to Cambridge corridor

- 2.138. The A10 between Ely and Cambridge is heavily congested and has safety issues. The Ely to Cambridge corridor has nevertheless been identified as a focus for significant growth, linking Greater Cambridge to the wider Cambridgeshire area. These include:
- A new town north of Waterbeach,
 - Cambridge Fringe North East (CNFE),
 - Developments on the Cambridge Science Park and neighbouring innovation centres and business parks.
- 2.139. The Combined Authority Board of 27 March 2019 approved a budget of £500,000 to develop a business case for A10 Junction Improvements and Dualling between A14/A10 Milton Roundabout and A142 Witchford Roundabout South of Ely. The business case was published in July 2020. The CPCA are currently working on the Outline Business Case and the Preliminary Design. Subject to receiving approval at each stage, work is likely to begin in 2026 and be fully completed in 2028.
- 2.140. The project is relevant to growth in Fenland as (noted by East Cambridgeshire District Council in their issues & options consultation response), additional vehicular traffic from new development may place greater demands on the A142 and its junctions as vehicles use the A142 to join the A10 to travel south toward Cambridge.
- 2.141. In addition, a project to increase capacity at two roundabouts south-west of Ely: the A142 / Lancaster Way Enterprise Zone roundabout and the A142 / A10 'BP' roundabout, are being supported through funding from the Combined Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council CIL funds and developer contributions.

Cambridgeshire Transport Investment Plan

- 2.142. Working in partnership with Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council maintains and publishes the Transport Investment Plan (TIP). The TIP sets out the transport infrastructure, services and initiatives that are required to support the growth.
- 2.143. The schemes included in the TIP are those that the County Council has identified for potential delivery to support growth. These range from strategic schemes identified through the County Council's transport strategies, to those required to facilitate the delivery of Local Plan development sites for which Section 106 contributions will be sought, through to detailed local interventions.
- 2.144. The TIP is reviewed and updated annually by the 'TIP Officer Group'. Area-based workshops are held each year with various project managers that are responsible for the delivery of schemes in the TIP. The workshops provide general updates to existing schemes in the TIP and also provide an opportunity to add schemes that have been identified by the various project managers through local dialogue or discussion with local Members.
- 2.145. The Fenland projects of the TIP have been incorporated into this IDP and will be updated through consultation with technical stakeholders to ensure it reflects growth identified in the emerging Local Plan. In addition, there may be infrastructure projects beyond Fenland's boundary which may be necessary to mitigate impacts of Fenland's growth, for example at the A141 in Huntingdonshire and A142 / A10 in East Cambridgeshire.
- 2.146. Projects identified by the TIP can be viewed on Cambridgeshire County Council's interactive map: <https://my.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/?tab=maps>.

Draft Local Transport & Connectivity Plan

- 2.147. The CPCA is currently updating the Local Transport Plan. At time of preparing this Draft IDP, the *Draft Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP)* which sets out the Combined Authority's proposed long-term strategy to improve transport in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough has been published for public consultation¹⁴.
- 2.148. The Draft LTCP sets out a vision and a framework to deliver a modern, integrated transport system for the people and businesses of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The document is an update to the first Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough published in 2020. The strategy has been reviewed and rewritten in consultation with the two Local Highway Authorities (Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council), the five District Councils (City of Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire, and South Cambridgeshire), the Greater Cambridge Partnership, National Highways and Network Rail, and included engagement with a wide range of consultees in the public, private and third sector including sub-regional transport bodies, industry representative groups and community organisations.

Travel behaviours following pandemic

- 2.149. The Draft LTCP is being prepared following the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides a number of interesting observations about the effects of the pandemic on travel behaviours and the transport network.
- 2.150. The Draft LTCP notes transport is unlikely to return to as it was prior to the pandemic and there could be long-term impacts on many communities. While many of the drivers of travel that influence people's decisions will continue to exist post-Covid (where we choose to live and work, family, social and personal factors will remain unchanged for many), there could be an acceleration of some trends, with working from home, online services and access to technology reducing the need to travel, while changes in retailing could lead to greater shifts from bricks and mortar operations.
- 2.151. Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, commuting patterns were adapting as working from home was becoming more common, and the growth in online shopping led to greater prevalence of home deliveries. Transport was also the cause of high levels of air pollution damaging people's health and the sector was the biggest contributor to carbon emissions in the local area. There may be fundamental shifts in behaviours and choices and, coupled with widespread public concern around the safety of public transport due to the spread of infection and the expected economic downturn, passenger demand could be affected.
- 2.152. The LTCP suggests the pandemic may have a profound long-term impact on transport policy and travel patterns. For example, when people travel locally, they may do so differently as a result of the virus. The LTCP suggests that the avoidance of crowded public transport to prevent virus transmission during the pandemic may have engrained a lasting paranoia of close contact travel. Data suggests that people are returning to travelling by car faster than they are returning to public transport, with levels of car trips now approach similar levels to pre-pandemic.
- 2.153. Without action to promote sustainable travel choices, the lasting impacts on the public transport network could be significant, with a long-term reduction in demand – possibly accompanied by a shift in travel behaviour towards active modes and the private car. This could exacerbate climate change, air pollution and congestion issues. For longer distance trips, private modes of transport may grow in popularity where these are available. A reduction in public transport use in favour of the private car may cause rising congestion and pollution, while making public transport less attractive. Such long term impacts

¹⁴ <https://yourltcp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Draft-LTCP.pdf>

on travel behaviours could have significant implications for transport infrastructure requirements to meet demands of Local Plan growth.

Draft LTCP's vision

- 2.154. The vision and objectives are aligned with the overall ambitions of the CPCA, setting out goals around productivity, connectivity, climate, environment, health and safety.
- 2.155. However, there is a clear prioritisation of economic growth. The LTCP recognises that the strategy is required to facilitate economic growth, and that deficiencies in the transport network have a cost to the region's economy.

Major projects

- 2.156. The map image from the Draft LTCP illustrates the location of the LTCP's major projects for Fenland:

Figure 2: Map of Draft LTCP Major Projects for Fenland (p66, Draft LTCP)



- 2.157. The Draft LTCP suggests that, in Fenland, both strategic and local projects are to be retained, thereby providing a continuation of those projects identified by LTP 2020. Namely, this includes:

- East / west A47 corridor improvements;
- New Wisbech rail link;
- Fenland rail station regeneration;
- Wisbech Access Study package of multi-modal transport schemes;
- March Area Transport Study package of interventions around the town; and

- Community Rail Partnership and local rail improvements.

2.158. The Draft LTCP indicates its overarching strategy for Fenland is to improve “accessibility to and within Fenland by all modes and for all people. ... Better links to key service centres such as Peterborough, Greater Cambridge, Kings Lynn, and the rest of the country will make Fenland a more attractive place to live and work. This will also create new opportunities for residents to travel to employment, retail, leisure, education, or training elsewhere. We will look to support the investment in infrastructure with a simultaneous push to making transport and travel choices more accessible for residents in Fenland, many of whom either cannot travel easily or need help and encouragement in using these travel choices. Connectivity to the transport network, both physically and in terms of accessibility for all users is a primary area in need of development in Fenland.”

Summary of transport issues

2.159. There is an extensive existing transport evidence base available, and good track record of joint working and project delivery in Fenland.

2.160. Devolution has been particularly beneficial to the Cambridgeshire area, through enabling the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to facilitate the delivery of many projects. The emerging Local Transport Plan (the draft LTCP) provides a continuation of those projects identified by the LTP 2020 and supported by the CPCA and other stakeholders.

2.161. However, Fenland’s transport network has some significant constraints, which if not addressed will likely be a constraint to growth, compound existing issues, and potentially adversely impact on neighbouring authority areas.

2.162. The Combined Authority is actively coordinating a number of strategic transport projects which address existing issues, and will facilitate growth in Fenland, notably:

- The re-opening of Wisbech’s rail station and rail line to March, providing rail services between Wisbech and Cambridge;
- The regeneration of March, Whittlesey and Manea stations;
- Improve east / west connectivity along the A47 through junction improvements and longer-term aspirations to dual the route;
- Addressing existing constraints in the road network around the market towns, notably the package of highway improvements delivered through the Wisbech Access Strategy; the King’s Dyke level crossing works at Whittlesey; and other junction improvements;
- Implement strategies to deliver a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport in the market towns; and
- Address barriers to transport in rural areas.

2.163. In addition, the Combined Authority is coordinating transport infrastructure projects outside of Fenland’s administrative area, on parts of the transport network which may potentially be impacted by growth in Fenland, notably:

- A package of highway improvements around Huntingdon, St Ives, and Alconbury to reduce congestion and create additional capacity to accommodate growth, including through the creation of a third river crossing at Huntingdon;
- Improvements to the A10 corridor between Ely and Cambridge, including a current project to increase capacity at the A142 Lancaster Way roundabout and A142/A10 ‘BP’ roundabout at Ely/Witchford, with longer term aspirations to reduce congestion and improve safety along the A142 between Chatteris and Ely.

- 2.164. The Market Town Transport Strategies covering each of the four market towns were drawn up alongside the previous iteration of the LTP, yet remain in force. The MTTs provide a detailed assessment of the market towns and their surrounding areas and include an extensive action plan of projects necessary to address existing issues in the transport network, deliver a 'modal shift' to sustainable forms of transport, and create additional capacity to accommodate Local Plan growth.
- 2.165. The projects identified in the MTTs continue to be implemented by service providers, and are kept under review annually by District and County Council officers, with updates of progress published in the TIP.
- 2.166. The LTP and MTTs were prepared to reflect growth in the *current* adopted Local Plan (and in neighbouring district's Local Plans). Therefore, the documents relate to existing planned-for growth and may not reflect transport infrastructure needs likely to arise from growth identified by the emerging Local Plan
- 2.167. The Council has commissioned the *Local Plan Transport Assessment*. Work on the LPTA is presently on-going, with publication of an interim report alongside the Draft Local Plan. The LPTA will explore the effects of growth and is expected to identify specific infrastructure projects and requirements necessary to meet needs likely to arise from Local Plan growth.
- 2.168. Since the LPTA is at a relatively early stage of preparation, it does not make such recommendations at this time. It is possible that the LPTA will identify alternative or additional infrastructure requirements and mitigation measures from those detailed in the LTP and MTTs. **Consequently, this draft IDP has chosen to remain silent on transport infrastructure requirements until the Local Plan Transport Assessment reaches completion. As such, no transport infrastructure projects are included in the IDP summary table in Appendix 1.**
- 2.169. The 'final' version of the IDP which will be submitted as part of the Local Plan evidence base will be updated to include transport infrastructure requirements, following completion of the Local Plan Transport Assessment project.

Education Infrastructure

Related evidence: Cambridgeshire County Council's Planning Obligations Strategy; and Cambridgeshire 0-19 Education Organisation Plan

2.170. National planning policy places great importance on the need to deliver education provision. At para. 95, the NPPF states:

It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities...

2.171. The NPPF goes beyond requiring a sufficient supply of school places, instead requiring sufficient choice of school places. This requirement for 'choice' implies sufficient additional spare capacity to provide families with options regarding the school their children attend. Para. 95 continues:

...Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and

b) work with schools promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.

2.172. National policy makes clear that education provision should be treated as a main priority through the planning process, and notably should the planning system should 'widen choice in education'.

2.173. In addition to the requirements of national policy, there are a number of different pieces of legislation which place requirements on local authorities to make provision for education. The Education Act (1996) (s14) places local planning authorities under a general duty to provide a school place for every child living in their area of responsibility who is of statutory school age and whose parents want their child educated in the state-funded sector. The Education and Inspections Act (2006) places additional duties on local authorities to ensure fair access to educational opportunity, to promote choice for parents and to secure diversity in the provision of schools.

2.174. The Academies Act (2010) made it possible for all publicly funded schools in England to acquire Academy Status, including primary and special schools. Becoming an academy provides schools with increased autonomy over their curriculum, budget and staffing. The Education Act (2011) changed the arrangements for the establishment of new schools by introducing a presumption that when local authorities set up new schools, they will be academies (including free schools). It also made changes to the legislation relating to school land, to increase the Secretary of State's ability to make land available for free schools.

2.175. In Fenland in recent years, there have been some notable examples of planning applications which have faced an impasse during the determination process due to insufficient school capacity being available in the locality. However, it is clear that granting planning permission in the absence of sufficient education provision being available to meet the needs of the development would conflict with national policy i.e. the development would result in adverse impacts not outweighed by the benefits of the scheme, and risks failing to satisfy certain statutory duties as discussed above.

- 2.176. As indicated by national policy, preparation of the Local Plan presents an opportunity to ensure a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities.
- 2.177. The availability of existing education infrastructure is an important consideration for the Local Plan’s growth strategy. Through preparation of the draft Local Plan, including the settlement hierarchy and assessment of site submissions, the Council has had regard to the availability of education provision. Notably, through the site assessment process, Cambridgeshire County Council’s education team were consulted on individual site submissions. The County Council provided details of available school capacity now and in future years, taking into account projected demographic changes, and identified opportunities for expansion of existing education facilities.
- 2.178. It is important to note that the Local Plan covers a plan period which extends 19 years. All new development will not come forward at the same time, but will occur over the course of the plan period. In addition, households will have differing educational needs depending on their characteristics and number and ages of children. However, it is documented that new developments often have greater needs for school places than the existing community – for example, it is not uncommon for a household to move to a new home and start a family.
- 2.179. Research from Cambridgeshire County Council confirms this phenomenon. Between 2006 and 2012, Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group undertook surveys of a range of new development types, including new towns, substantial extensions and infill developments over the Cambridge sub-region (Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire, Forest Heath, and St Edmundsbury)¹⁵. Table 6 summarises the percent of the population in different age groups in existing and new developments in Fenland and across the wider Cambridge sub-region.

Table 2: Comparison of population age group – existing population and new developments

Age group	Under 16	17-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Fenland existing development	19%	15%	19%	20%	27%
Fenland new developments	22%	22%	26%	13%	18%
Change +/-	3%	7%	7%	-7%	-9%
Cambridge Sub-Region existing development	19%	18%	21%	19%	23%
Cambridge Sub-Region new developments	26%	14%	36%	14%	10%
Change +/-	7%	-4%	15%	-5%	-13%

- 2.180. The table shows that in Fenland district, new developments typically have a younger population than existing development – the three ‘youngest’ age group categories have a higher percentage of the population than existing development, and the two ‘older’ age groups were lower in new developments. Across the Cambridge sub-region, the population of new development is skewed toward younger age groups, with the effect most pronounced in the 30-44 years age group.
- 2.181. In addition, Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group undertook a community survey of Love’s Farm in 2017-18. Love’s Farm is a 160-acre new development site located to the east of the railway station in St Neots in neighbouring Huntingdonshire district. The development comprises over 1400 homes, a primary school, shops, open space and community facilities. The first homes were occupied in 2009, with the main part of the site completed in 2017. The survey identified a high proportion of residents of working age, particularly aged between 25 and 44 years.

¹⁵ <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/NDS-summary.pdf>

- 2.182. Similarly, Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group's community surveys of the Clay Farm (Great Kneighton), Glebe Farm, Ninewells and Trumpington Meadows developments, located on the Southern Fringe of Cambridge, show that those new developments have a greater proportion of the population in younger age groups than the existing resident population of Cambridge¹⁶.
- 2.183. Available school capacity is also sensitive to demographic trends in the wider community. A falling birth rate in a locality will naturally result in the number of available school places increasing.
- 2.184. Due to the relatively high level of growth which the Local Plan must make provision for, it is unlikely that needs arising from new development within the district's existing education infrastructure will be met. The provision of new schools and expansion of existing schools will be required over the course of the plan period to meet needs arising from Local Plan growth.
- 2.185. There is a general presumption that where a development generates a need for additional education infrastructure, the cost of creating new school places will be met by the developer and delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. The Local Plan's spatial strategy can play an important role in reducing potential costs of education infrastructure - for example, by directing growth to settlements with available surplus school capacity, or concentrating growth in a specific location to enable multiple sites to 'pool' funds to deliver new schools.

Cambridgeshire County Council's role

- 2.186. As Local Children's Services Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council has responsibility for planning and commissioning services, including education provision for children and young people in Cambridgeshire. The County Council has a number of statutory duties to ensure sufficient places in the county for children between the ages of 5 and 16 years. The County Council also works with other partners to ensure a sufficient supply of 16 – 19-year places and for young people up to the age of 25 requiring Special Educational Needs provision. In addition, the County Council has a statutory duty to ensure a sufficient supply of pre-school places (e.g. Day Care and/or Nursery provision) for children aged three and four. There is also a duty to ensure free places for eligible two-year olds.
- 2.187. Cambridgeshire County Council's Planning Obligations Strategy⁵ sets out the County Council's approach to delivering education infrastructure. There is a clear expectation from the Department for Education (DfE) that, where additional capacity is a direct result of housing development, the capital funding required to deliver this should be sought via developer contributions. Typically, FDC uses planning obligations to secure financial contributions from new development.
- 2.188. Cambridgeshire County Council has undertaken analysis to determine child yield multipliers for new developments. These multipliers are used to calculate the demand for school places arising from a development and are set out in the County Council's Planning Obligations Strategy¹⁷.
- 2.189. The pupil yield from new housing development will be compared to the existing capacity in the education system. However, it is not simply a mathematical calculation and, using the judgement of the County Council's officers, will take account of the profile of pupil ages likely to arise from new housing and in which year groups there may be spare places.
- 2.190. Where additional development takes place in existing communities which is not of a volume to require a new school or early years or childcare setting, but will have an impact on existing education and

¹⁶ <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Southern-Fringe-Survey-Report-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁷ Available at: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/developing-new-communities/planning-obligations-strategy>

childcare provision, additional places may be required through expansion of existing facilities to meet this additional demand.

2.191. It is important to reiterate that whilst growth will create a need for additional capacity in education infrastructure, such additional school places will not all be needed at the same time throughout the plan period.

Primary education – current provision

2.192. Fenland has 32 schools serving primary-school age children (i.e. aged 4-11) which are under the control of either the County Council or an Academy Trust, across 19 settlements:

- Benwick Primary School (Benwick)
- Cromwell Academy (Chatteris)¹⁸
- Glebelands Primary Academy (Chatteris)
- Kingsfield Primary School (Chatteris)
- Townley Primary School (Christchurch)
- Coates Primary School (Coates)
- Lionel Walden Primary School (Doddington)
- Elm CofE Primary School (Elm)
- Friday Bridge Community Primary School (Friday Bridge)
- Gorefield Primary School (Gorefield)
- Guyhirn CofE VC Primary School (Guyhirn)
- Leverington Primary Academy (Leverington)
- Manea Community Primary School (Manea)
- All Saints Interchurch Academy (March)
- Burrowmoor Primary School (March)
- Cavalry Primary School (March)
- Westwood Primary School (March)
- Murrow Primary Academy (Murrow)
- Alderman Payne Primary School (Parson Drove)
- Kinderley Primary School (Tydd St Giles)
- Alderman Jacobs School (Whittlesey)
- Park Lane Primary & Nursery School (Whittlesey)
- New Road Primary School (Whittlesey)
- Thomas Eaton Primary Academy (Wimblington)
- Clarkson Infants School (Wisbech)
- Elm Road Primary School (Wisbech)
- Orchards Church of England Primary School (Wisbech)
- Peckover Primary School (Wisbech)
- Ramnoth Junior School (Wisbech)
- St Peter's CofE Aided Junior School (Wisbech)
- The Nene Infant & Nursery School (Wisbech)
- Wisbech St Mary CofE Academy (Wisbech St Mary)

2.193. Schools for children with special educational needs have not been included in the above list. In addition, not all schools serve the full age range from 4 years to 11 years. For example, infant schools

¹⁸ The Cromwell Academy in Chatteris provides all through primary and secondary provision.

commonly provide education for children aged 4 to 7, with junior schools providing education for ages 7 to 11.

Site assessment

- 2.194. Cambridgeshire County Council provided details of available school capacity during the technical sites consultation carried out as part of the site assessment process carried out in February to May 2020 and September to November 2020. This information directly informed the assessment of site submissions. Capacity at 2027/28 was used as a benchmark as this reflects the information supplied by Cambridgeshire County Council. For the avoidance of doubt, in the data supplied by Cambs County Council, the catchment forecasts did not take into account the cumulative effects of new growth identified by the draft Local Plan – since at that time, the Local Plan’s overall strategy for growth was unknown.
- 2.195. It was assumed that those settlements projected to have available school capacity may have the potential to accommodate new development without the need for additional infrastructure provision. Locating development in areas with surplus capacity may reduce the ‘burden’ on developers of funding education infrastructure costs, and therefore may enable development to be delivered more expediently (as it is not dependent on the delivery of school places and development viability is unaffected). In addition, in areas where the number of school age children is declining, new development can help to sustain existing schools by providing a footfall of pupils. This highlights the importance of delivering new family homes to the sustainability of rural settlements.
- 2.196. During the site assessment it was assumed that those settlements which are projected to have no available capacity at 2027/28 would require the provision of additional education infrastructure (such as expansion of an existing primary school or construction of a new primary school) to enable new development to be delivered sustainably. The site assessment therefore took into consideration whether a school has opportunity for expansion.
- 2.197. Where a settlement was projected to have no available capacity, and where school sites are constrained and cannot support the expansion of existing facilities, or where there is no primary school present in the settlement, construction of a new primary school would be necessary to enable development to proceed sustainably.

Primary education - current planned infrastructure provision (0-19 Education Organisation Plan 2021-22)

- 2.198. Cambridgeshire County Council 0-19 Education Organisation Plan 2021-22¹⁹ (EOP) sets out the County Council’s responsibilities for education provision, describes the county’s existing education provision and identifies where additional education infrastructure is required.
- 2.199. In forecasting future education requirements, the EOP takes into account demographic changes and planned growth. For Fenland district, the education organisation plan takes account of the current adopted Local Plan 2014 which, it notes, sets out a broad level of growth of 11,000 new homes for the district in the period up to 2031, mainly to be built as urban extensions to the existing market towns.
- 2.200. Whilst projected growth is high, the education organisation plan identifies demographic factors which may affect education provision. The number of births has fallen over recent years, and the impacts of Brexit particularly in those areas of the district where inward migration from the EU has been high.

¹⁹ <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/education-organisation-plan-2021-222.pdf>

Benwick and Manea

- 2.201. The EOP identifies a need to replace temporary accommodation at Benwick Primary School. At Manea the scale of expansion is linked to further housing development coming forward with plans to expand it from 210 to 330 places. This will be considered for inclusion within the Council's Capital Programme when funding can be made available. The need for these works relates to current pressures and are not directly related to meeting needs arising from new housing development.

Chatteris

- 2.202. The EOP indicates there are no current pressures in Chatteris.
- 2.203. There is a significant amount of housing planned in the town although this has progressed more slowly than had been expected. A further expansion of Cromwell Community College, to include an additional form of entry in both the primary and secondary phases, should accommodate children from the two major development sites with outline planning consent.

Friday Bridge

- 2.204. The catchment population of Friday Bridge has exceeded the capacity of the school for several years. In the past, it has been possible to accommodate children at other local schools. However, there is housing development coming forward to the south of Wisbech town which may limit these options in the future. As a result, a case was approved by the Council's Capital Programme Board to carry out a feasibility study into a modest expansion of Friday Bridge Primary School to 1FE/210 places.

March

- 2.205. EOP identifies no current pressures in March.
- 2.206. The potential for future growth in March is identified in the Fenland Local Plan with additional housing identified in the south, south-west and south east of the town. This is likely to require the provision of new primary schools within these major housing development areas. Pre-application discussions have begun with the developers of the March West site, but the other sites are some way from coming forward.

Whittlesey

- 2.207. The EOP identifies no current pressures in Whittlesey, and no requirements for major housing development.

Wisbech

- 2.208. The EOP identifies no current pressures in Wisbech.
- 2.209. The potential for future growth in Wisbech is identified in the Fenland Local Plan. This is likely to require the provision of new primary schools within the major housing development areas both to the east and west of the town. Potential sites are already identified. There is also an active bid submitted for a garden town to be built near Wisbech.

Primary education – summary of current infrastructure requirements

- 2.210. The EOP 2021/22 suggests that pressure on primary school capacity has decreased since 2020.
- 2.211. There are no current pressures in the market towns (as indicated by the EOP 2021/22), and the 2020 data suggests there is some additional capacity in primary schools in Chatteris, Whittlesey and Wisbech which could potentially be utilised by new development. However, to accommodate growth identified by the current adopted Local Plan, the EOP 2021/22 identifies a need for additional primary education provision in Chatteris, March and Wisbech.
- 2.212. The precise nature of required investment in primary schools will vary depending on the specific details of the Local Plan's spatial strategy. It is likely that all or most market towns will require the provision

of new primary schools and/or expansion of existing primary, and may require additional primary education provision in some Fenland villages.

Secondary education – current provision

2.213. There are four secondary schools in Fenland serving children aged 11-16 or 11-18. These are:

- Cromwell Community College, Chatteris (Primary + Secondary School + Sixth Form);
- Neale-Wade Academy, March (Secondary School + Sixth Form);
- Sir Harry Smith Community College, Whittlesey (Secondary School + Sixth Form); and
- Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech (Secondary School).

2.214. Whilst the secondary schools are located in the four market towns, they serve a wider area. Table 3 lists the secondary school catchment for all settlements in Fenland (arranged alphabetically by settlement).

Table 3: Secondary school catchment by settlement

Settlement	Secondary Catchment
Benwick	Cromwell Community College, Chatteris
Chatteris	Cromwell Community College, Chatteris
Christchurch	Neale-Wade Academy, March
Church End	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Coates	Sir Harry Smith Community College
Coldham	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Collet's Bridge	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Doddington	Cromwell Community College, Chatteris
Eastrea	Sir Harry Smith Community College, Whittlesey
Elm	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Foul Anchor	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Friday Bridge	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Gorefield	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Guyhirn	Neale-Wade Academy, March
Leverington	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Leverington	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Manea	Cromwell Community College, Chatteris
March	Neale-Wade Academy, March
Murrow	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Murrow	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Newton-in-the-Isle	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech

Parson Drove	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Pondersbridge	Sir Harry Smith Community College, Whittlesey
Rings End	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Tholomas Drove	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Turves	Sir Harry Smith Community College, Whittlesey
Tydd Gote	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Tydd St Giles	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Whittlesey	Sir Harry Smith Community College, Whittlesey
Wimblington	Cromwell Community College, Chatteris
Wisbech	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech
Wisbech St Mary	Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech

2.215. Cambridgeshire County Council's Planning Obligations Strategy SPD indicates that the County Council supports secondary schools up to 12 forms of entry, i.e. 1,800 places. There may therefore be opportunities to expand existing secondary schools to provide additional places to meet the needs of Local Plan growth. However, a 12FE school would require a total site area of 12.5ha, including 7ha of playing field area. Therefore, the opportunity to expand will be influenced by the characteristics of the individual school and its site.

Secondary education - current planned infrastructure provision

2.216. Whilst the EOP identifies a requirement for a 1FE/150 place expansion of Sir Harry Smith Community College, Whittlesey, the County Council has revised its forecasts and is now planning for a 2FE/300 place expansion in the foreseeable future. The EOP notes that a feasibility study has been carried out and a scheme included in the Capital Programme, although this is on pause until the rate of local housing developments increases.

Early years education

2.217. The Childcare Act (2006) places a duty on local authorities to secure sufficient and suitable quality education and childcare places to enable parents to return to work or to undertake education or training which could lead to employment. The Education Act (2011) altered this to include an entitlement of 570 hours of free early education per year for eligible two-year olds. This was in addition to the 570 hours of free early education already in place for all three and four-year olds.

2.218. Whilst local authorities are not expected to provide childcare directly, they are expected to work with local private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector providers to meet local need. Where this cannot be achieved, the local authority can put in place steps as provider of last resort.

2.219. The Childcare Act (2016) extended the previous entitlement and since September 2017, children aged 3 and 4 from working families, subject to their parents meeting certain eligibility criteria to 30 hours of free childcare per week (per week 38 weeks per year).

- 2.220. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered early years' providers must follow the EYFS, including childminders, preschools, nurseries and school reception classes.
- 2.221. Cambridgeshire County Council's established policy is to include early years accommodation in new primary schools, typically a class base for each form of entry. It is unlikely that this will be sufficient to enable the Council to fulfil its statutory duties. Consequently, the availability of other types of provision will be necessary to give access to the range of provision necessary to meet the statutory entitlement and additional hours through private, voluntary and independent pre-school settings.
- 2.222. On major development sites the Council would also seek to have these sites secured through the allocation of land in Use Class E to facilitate the delivery of private providers. This provision should be in accessible locations, and should reflect different patterns of accessing provision, including families opting for a setting close to their employment and not just homes. To reflect this, opportunities to secure sites within the town centre, local centres and employment hubs should be encouraged.
- 2.223. No current pressures in early years childcare are identified by the EOP, nor future requirements to meet future major housing growth.

Post-16 education

- 2.224. The EOP indicates that in Fenland, most school leavers attend a FE College. This differs from all other Cambridgeshire districts in which most school leavers attend sixth form.
- 2.225. The EOP states that there is no requirement for further expansion of post-16 education facilities. Sir Harry Smith Secondary School in Whittlesey is understood to be exploring a potential expansion of sixth form capacity in line with a 2FE expansion of its 11-16 places.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

- 2.226. The Children and Families Act (2014) aims to ensure that all children, young people and their families are able to access the right support and provision to meet their needs. This includes children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 2.227. The EOP indicates there has been a significant and growing need for social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) provision in Wisbech as current provision is in premises deemed unsuitable. As a result, there is a need to relocate and expand existing provision. A capital scheme has been identified to co-locate purpose built SEMH provision with a new secondary school in Wisbech. The new secondary school, which has been approved by the DfE to pre-opening stage, will be delivered by the ESFA. The SEMH provision will be delivered by the Council.

Cambs County Council assessment of Growth Strategy

- 2.228. To inform this IDP, Fenland District Council supplied Cambridgeshire County Council (the Local Education Authority) with details of its proposed strategy for growth. Cambs County Council undertook an assessment of proposed growth against school catchment forecasts, using 2025/26 as a baseline. The forecasts considered a range of factors relating to demographics and new development - including existing planned growth, number of children living in catchment, migrations between catchments, estimates of pupil yield and other factors such as birth rates.
- 2.229. The assessment identified those schools which are projected to have a surplus or deficit of school places as a consequence of Local Plan growth. Additional education infrastructure requirements have been identified based on this assessment and are set out in the IDP projects table in Appendix 1. For most projects, cost assumptions are consistent with Department for Education's Scorecard Costs which are based on costs at first quarter of 2020 (unless specific project costs are available). As projects are further developed, these costs will be revised.
- 2.230. It should be noted that since the data is based on various different assumptions, the forecasts cannot truly predict reality. For example, development may progress more slowly or quickly than expected, and the pupil yield of developments may vary from the baseline assumptions. In addition, the catchment forecasts are based on geography (i.e. assume that children will attend their local school) and do not account for parental choice (i.e. where a family chooses to send children to schools outside of their catchment). Consequently, the requirements for education infrastructure should be reviewed regularly.
- 2.231. To facilitate single year group teaching, the County Council's policy is to establish new primary schools with whole forms of entry (210 primary places or 150 secondary places = one form of entry (1 FE)). Therefore, additional infrastructure requirements are expressed as whole forms of entry or whole schools, as applicable.

Primary education

- 2.232. Table 5 sets out the projected surplus/deficit of **primary** school places expected to arise from Local Plan growth and summarises the infrastructure required to meet identified needs.

Table 4: Forecast surplus/deficit of primary school places and summary of primary education infrastructure requirements (Source: Cambs County Council)

Settlement	School	Surplus / deficit of school places at 2025/26	Summary of infrastructure requirements
Benwick	Benwick	56	No need for additional primary education infrastructure.
Chatteris	Chatteris Primaries	-506	Additional primary education infrastructure needed to meet growth needs: - 210 / 1FE expansion of Cromwell Primary School; and - Construction of a new 2FE primary school OR expansion of existing primary schools
Christchurch	Townley	33	No need for additional primary education infrastructure.
Coates	Coates	-177	Significant deficit of available primary school places. No opportunity for expansion of existing primary school. The following additional primary education infrastructure is required to meet growth needs: - Construction of a new primary school, to provide additional capacity and enable the re-location of the existing Coates Primary School.
Doddington	Lionel Walden	-136	Deficit of primary school places. Due to the close proximity to Wimblington, Thomas Eaton Primary School could accommodate some pupils. Lionel Walden Primary School has potential for expansion. However this would require additional adjacent land. The following additional primary education infrastructure is required to meet growth needs: - Expansion of Lionel Walden Primary School, utilising land adjacent to existing school site.
Elm	Elm	-12	Marginal deficit. No need for additional primary education infrastructure.
Friday Bridge	Friday Bridge	-116	The following additional primary education infrastructure is required to meet growth needs: - 210 / 1FE expansion of Friday Bridge Primary School
Gorefield	Gorefield	14	No need for additional primary education infrastructure.
Guyhirn	Guyhirn	1	No need for additional primary education infrastructure.
Leverington	Leverington	-166	Deficit of school places and no opportunity to expand Leverington Primary School. Need for additional places would need to be met by primary schools in nearby Wisbech.

Manea	Manea	-153	The following additional primary education infrastructure is required to meet growth needs: - 0.5 FE expansion of Manea Primary School
March	March Primaries	-776	The following additional primary education infrastructure is required to meet growth needs: - A new 2FE primary school located at the 'March West' strategic development site; and - Expansion of Neale Wade Academy to provide an 'all-through' school.
Murrow	Murrow	54	No need for additional primary education infrastructure.
Parson Drove	Alderman Payne	-35	No need for additional primary education infrastructure. Marginal deficit in available school places. Close proximity to Murrow means that other available capacity in locality.
Tydd St Giles	Kinderley	-7	Marginal deficit. No need for additional primary education infrastructure.
Whittlesey	Whittlesey Primaries	-37	Marginal deficit. No need for additional primary education infrastructure.
Wimblington	Thomas Eaton	47	No need for additional primary education infrastructure.
Wisbech	Wisbech Primaries	245	No need for additional primary education infrastructure.
Wisbech St Mary	Wisbech St Mary	2	No need for additional primary education infrastructure.

2.233. The draft Local Plan directs the majority of growth to Fenland's market towns. This is expected to generate a need for new primary school places in Chatteris and March, in the form of new primary schools and expansion of existing primary school facilities.

2.234. To accommodate proposed Local Plan growth in Fenland's rural area, existing primary schools will require expansion at Doddington, Friday Bridge and Manea.

2.235. Coates primary school site is constrained without opportunity for expansion. To accommodate Local Plan growth identified for Coates will require the construction of a new primary school. This will provide additional capacity to meet growth needs and include re-location of the existing school.

2.236. In summary, the following primary education infrastructure is necessary to meet growth needs:

- Expansion of Cromwell Primary School (Chatteris) 1FE / 210 places;
- Construction of a new 2FE primary school OR expansion of existing primary schools (Chatteris) 2FE / 420 places;
- Construction of a new primary school, to provide additional capacity and enable the re-location of the existing Coates Primary School (Coates) 2FE / 420 places;
- Expansion of Lionel Walden Primary School, utilising land adjacent to existing school site (Doddington) 1FE / 210 places;
- Expansion of Friday Bridge Primary School (Friday Bridge) 1FE / 210 places;
- Expansion of Manea Primary School (Manea) 0.5 FE / 105 places;
- New primary school located at the 'March West' strategic development site (March) 2FE / 420 places; and
- Expansion of Neale Wade Academy to provide an 'all-through' school (March) 2FE / 420 places.

Secondary Education

2.237. Table 6 sets out the projected surplus/deficit of primary school places expected to arise from Local Plan growth and summarises the infrastructure required to meet identified needs.

Table 5: Forecast surplus/deficit of secondary school places and summary of primary education infrastructure requirements (Source: Cambs County Council)

Settle-ment	School	Surplus / deficit of school places at 2025/26	Summary of infrastructure requirements
Chatteris	Cromwell	-443	The following additional secondary education infrastructure is required to meet growth needs: - 2FE expansion of Cromwell Community College
March	Neale Wade	-515	The following additional secondary education infrastructure is required to meet growth needs: - 2FE expansion of Neale Wade Academy (dependent on securing additional land from adjacent development).
Whittlesey	Sir Harry Smith	-215	The following additional secondary education infrastructure is required to meet growth needs: - 2FE expansion of Sir Harry Smith Community College (no room for further expansion beyond current plans on current site so may need to look at an annexe option).
Wisbech	Thomas Clarkson	-551	Deficit of places and school does not have opportunity to expand. The following additional secondary education infrastructure is required to meet growth needs: - New secondary school for Wisbech. DfE has approved the creation of a new 'free' school for Wisbech and is currently at the pre-implementation stage of planning.

2.238. Fenland's secondary schools are located in each of the market towns and serve the surrounding rural area. Each secondary school will result in a deficit of school places as a result of Local Plan growth requiring expansion of existing schools – with the exception of Thomas Clarkson Academy at Wisbech, which is not suitable for further expansion.

2.239. Additional capacity at Wisbech can be met through the construction of a new secondary school. The Department for Education, with the support of Cambridgeshire County Council, is actively progressing a project to construct a new 'free' school in Wisbech.

2.240. In summary, the following secondary education infrastructure is necessary to meet growth needs:

- Expansion of Cromwell Community College (Chatteris) 2FE / 300 places;
- Expansion of Neale Wade Academy (March) 2FE / 300 places;

- Expansion of Sir Harry Smith Community College (Whittlesey) 2FE / 300 places; and
- New DfE Free School (Wisbech) 4FE / 600 places.

Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Infrastructure

2.241. Health and Social Care incorporates a broad range of social infrastructure, including GP surgeries, healthcare centres, dentists, pharmacies, optometrists, community and acute hospitals, children's centres, care and extra homes and day care centres, mental health and wellbeing services, and child social care and adult social care services.

Responsibilities

2.242. Cambridgeshire County Council has a number of statutory responsibilities relating to Public Health, namely:

- Supporting mental health and wellbeing;
- Supporting children and young people;
- Children's centre provision;
- Children's social care; and
- Adult social care.

2.243. Cambridgeshire County Council's *Draft Planning Obligations Strategy*²⁰ (POS) indicates the County Council has a central role in promoting good mental health and wellbeing. To achieve this, residents must have access to preventative services and early intervention to support their wellbeing as well as access to traditional health services (GP and hospitals etc.). In conjunction with partners and the community, the County Council has a responsibility to improve knowledge and reduce stigma and discrimination of poor mental health. In addition, the County Council must ensure that early intervention services are provided to avoid issues escalating, which can often lead to substance misuse, crime, domestic violence and suicide. To promote general wellbeing, in partnership with NHS and Public Health, the County Council must provide preventative services such as drug and alcohol abuse prevention and sexual health advice. Creating a new community where all residents are physically and mentally healthy is essential for the sustainability of the community.

2.244. The POS indicates that new communities are recognised as having higher needs, which escalate more quickly than in more established communities and are therefore considered a vulnerable group. Much of the research into new towns or new communities has established clear links between loneliness, poor mental health and antisocial behaviours with a lack of community cohesion and social networks which is greatly influenced by lack of access to community facilities and supportive services. The *Draft Planning Obligations Strategy* indicates that, to promote good mental health and wellbeing, residents must have access to preventative services and early intervention to support their wellbeing as well as access to traditional health services (GP and hospitals etc.).

2.245. The County Council has a statutory duty to provide Children's Centre services to communities. Centres must provide a single point of information and access to services for children aged 0-5 and their families, either in situ or through outreach work.

2.246. The POS indicates that, for development of a significant scale which is allocated in a local plan, the County Council will engage with the developer and relevant LPA during the pre-application period to scope the need for particular services and facilities. The types of buildings and services that typically may be required to support vulnerable people including provision of specialist accommodation (e.g. residential care facilities, supported living accommodation, etc.) within large scale developments; and funding to support residents wellbeing.

²⁰ https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/imported-assets/Planning_Obligations_Strategy_V1_2.pdf

- 2.247. Therefore, it is likely that new development identified by the emerging Local Plan will be required to contribute to the provision of health, social care and wellbeing services and facilities.

Local Authority Health Profile for Fenland

- 2.248. Public Health England's Local Authority Health Profiles are part of a series of outputs which summarise the health of the population. The Health Profile for England focuses on national health trends. Local Health provides health information for small areas within local authorities, enabling users to explore differences at a more local level.

- 2.249. The latest available Local Authority Health Profile for Fenland has a reporting date of 2019²¹. The health profile shows that the health of people in Fenland is varied compared with the England average. About 18.2% (3,255) children live in low income families.

Health inequalities

- 2.250. Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average. Life expectancy is 8.6 years lower for men and 3.2 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Fenland than in the least deprived areas.

Child health

- 2.251. In Year 6, 20.6% (197) of children are classified as obese. The rate for alcohol-specific hospital admissions among those under 18 is 25 per 100,000 persons. This represents 5 admissions per year. Levels of GCSE attainment (average attainment 8 score) and breastfeeding are worse than the England average.

Adult health

- 2.252. The rate for alcohol-related harm hospital admissions is 741 per 100,000 population, and is worse than the average for England. This represents 763 admissions per year. The rate for self-harm hospital admissions is 232 per 100,000 population, worse than the average for England. This represents 220 admissions per year.
- 2.253. Estimated levels of excess weight in adults (aged 18+) and physically active adults (aged 19+) are worse than the England average. The rates of new sexually transmitted infections and new cases of tuberculosis are better than the England average. The rate of killed and seriously injured on roads is worse than the England average. The rate of statutory homelessness is better than the England average.
- 2.254. Table 7 compares values for Fenland, the East of England region, and England against various health indicators.

²¹ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/13/ati/201/are/E07000010>

Table 6: Public Health England Local Authority Health Profile 2019 (Fenland)

Indicator	Age	Period	Count	Value (Fenland)	Value (Region)	Value (England)	Change from previous	Significance of local value compared to goal
1 Life expectancy at birth (male)	All ages	2016 - 18	n/a	78.6	80.3	79.6	↑ Increasing (not significant)	Significantly worse
2 Life expectancy at birth (female)	All ages	2016 - 18	n/a	82.2	83.7	83.2	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Significantly worse
3 Under 75 mortality rate from all causes	<75 yrs	2016 - 18	1,158	387.8	302.1	330.5	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Significantly worse
4 Mortality rate from all cardiovascular diseases	<75 yrs	2016 - 18	245	80.8	63.4	71.7	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Not significantly different
5 Mortality rate from cancer	<75 yrs	2016 - 18	435	142.9	126	132.3	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Not significantly different
6 Suicide rate	10+ yrs	2016 - 18	28	10.4	9.96	9.64	↑ Increasing (not significant)	Not significantly different
7 Killed and seriously injured (KSI) rate on England's roads	All ages	2016 - 18	167	55.2	46.7	42.6 \$	Could not be calculated	Significantly worse
8 Emergency hospital admission rate for intentional self-harm	All ages	2018/19	220	232.2	173.1	193.4	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Significantly worse
9 Emergency hospital admission rate for hip fractures	65+ yrs	2018/19	145	604.2	563.5	558.4	↑ Increasing (not significant)	Not significantly different
10 Percentage of cancer diagnosed at early stage	All ages	2017	249	52.1	54.7	52.2	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Significance not tested
11 Estimated diabetes diagnosis rate	17+ yrs	2018	n/a	85.3	76.7	78.0	↑ Increasing (not significant)	Significantly better
12 Estimated dementia diagnosis rate	65+ yrs	2019	843	54.8 *	65.7 *	68.7 *	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Significantly worse
13 Hospital admission rate for alcohol-specific conditions	<18 yrs	2016/17 - 18/19	15	24.9	23.4	31.6	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Not significantly different
14 Hospital admission rate for alcohol-related conditions	All ages	2018/19	763	741.1	633.6	663.7	↑ Increasing (not significant)	Significantly worse
15 Smoking prevalence in adults	18+ yrs	2018	15,728	19.4	14	14.4	↑ Increasing (not significant)	Not significantly different
16 Percentage of physically active adults	19+ yrs	2017/18	n/a	59	65.4	66.3	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Significantly worse
17 Percentage of adults classified as overweight or obese	18+ yrs	2017/18	n/a	68.5	62.1	62	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Significantly worse
18 Teenage conception rate	<18 yrs	2017	37	23.2	16.0	17.8	↑ Increasing (not significant)	Not significantly different
19 Percentage of smoking during pregnancy	All ages	2018/19	102	10.9 ~	9.68 \$	10.6	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Not significantly different
20 Percentage of breastfeeding initiation	All ages	2016/17	832	65.3	76.1	74.5	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Significantly worse
21 Infant mortality rate	<1 yr	2016 - 18	11	3.30	3.36	3.93	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Not significantly different
22 Year 6: Prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity)	10-11 yrs	2018/19	197	20.6	18.0	20.2	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Not significantly different
23 Deprivation score (IMD 2015)	All ages	2015	n/a	25.4	-	21.8	Could not be calculated	Significance not tested

24 Smoking prevalence in adults in routine and manual occupations	18-64 yrs	2018	n/a	40.7	25.7	25.4	↑ Increasing (not significant)	Not significantly different
25 Percentage of children in low income families	<16 yrs	2016	3,255	18.2	14.1	17	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Significantly worse
26 Average GCSE attainment (average attainment 8 score)	15-16 yrs	2018/19	39,789	42.3	47	46.9	↑ Increasing (not significant)	Significantly worse
27 Percentage of people in employment	16-64 yrs	2018/19	47,200	76.2	78.4	75.6	↓ Decreasing (not significant)	Not significantly different
28 Statutory homelessness rate - eligible homeless people not in priority need	Not applicable	2017/18	11	0.25	0.65	0.79	↑ Increasing (not significant)	Significantly better
29 Violent crime - hospital admission rate for violence (including sexual violence)	All ages	2016/17 - 18/19	110	39	33.6	44.9	↑ Increasing (not significant)	Not significantly different
30 Excess winter deaths index	All ages	Aug 2017 - Jul 2018	86	24	30.9	30.1	↑ Increasing (not significant)	Not significantly different
31 New STI diagnoses rate (exc chlamydia aged <25)	15-64 yrs	2018	338	552	614.9	850.6	↑ Increasing (not significant)	Significantly better
32 TB incidence rate	All ages	2016 - 18	13	4.31	5.65	9.19	↑ Increasing (not significant)	Significantly better

2.255. As indicated in the table, Fenland performs significantly worse against the goal value for many indicators, these are:

- Life expectancy at birth (male)
- Life expectancy at birth (female)
- Under 75 mortality rate from all causes
- Killed and seriously injured (KSI) rate on England's roads
- Emergency hospital admission rate for intentional self-harm
- Estimated dementia diagnosis rate
- Hospital admission rate for alcohol-related conditions
- Percentage of physically active adults
- Percentage of adults classified as overweight or obese
- Percentage of breastfeeding initiation
- Percentage of children in low income families
- Average GCSE attainment (average attainment 8 score)

2.256. Fenland performs significantly better than the goal value for the following indicators:

- Estimated diabetes diagnosis rate
- Statutory homelessness rate - eligible homeless people not in priority need
- New STI diagnoses rate (exc chlamydia aged <25)
- TB incidence rate

2.257. The data paints a concerning picture of Fenland as an area of significantly poor public health, and serves to reinforce the importance of delivering investment in health, social care and wellbeing infrastructure over the forthcoming plan period.

Fenland's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2021

- 2.258. Fenland District Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2021²² describes Fenland *as a district with clear health inequalities when compared to the rest of Cambridgeshire. Health issues such as smoking prevalence, excess weight, coronary heart disease and alcohol related issues are worse than the Cambridgeshire average in some of Fenland's wards.*
- 2.259. Fenland's self-reported good or very good health was 77.8% compared with 84.2% for Cambridgeshire and 81.7% for England. After adjustment for population age differences, Fenland has statistically significantly fewer people reporting good or very good health compared with England as a whole.
- 2.260. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy identifies the link between health and deprivation and notes the prevalence of deprivation in Fenland. Cambridgeshire has sixteen Lower Super Output Areas in the 20% most deprived nationally, of which 12 (75%) are in Fenland. Eight of the top ten most deprived LSOAs in Cambridgeshire are in Fenland. Four LSOAs in Fenland are in the 10% most deprived nationally, all of which are in Wisbech.
- 2.261. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy identifies three priorities for the council, these are:
- Priority 1- Collaborative working- Contribute to support local Health and Wellbeing projects and outcomes in partnership with others.
 - Priority 2 – Lifestyle factors: focussing resources on vulnerable groups and wards in deprivation to tackle lifestyle factors and effects on coronary heart disease, diabetes, smoking, physical inactivity, alcohol and obesity.
 - Priority 3 – Mental Health including building community resilience, aspirations and general wellbeing.

Existing provision of health infrastructure in Fenland

- 2.262. *Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)* is responsible for planning, organising and buying NHS funded healthcare for people living in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area who are registered with a GP practice. Local GP practices are organised in clusters called "Local Commissioning Groups" to commission (buy) health services for their local population.
- 2.263. *Cambridgeshire Community Services* provide universal services, such as health visitors, child health services and school nursing, targeted services such as Children's Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy through to specialist care in hospitals and in the community for children and young people with the most complex needs. Services are offered to children from birth up to 19 years of age.
- 2.264. *Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT)* deliver many of the NHS services that are provided outside of hospital and in the community, such as physical and mental health, and specialist services.
- 2.265. The CPFT provides child and adolescent mental health services for children and young people up to age 17 who are experiencing emotional and behavioural problems and their families. They also support young people up to the age of 18 who have a learning disability and associated mental health problems. CPFT have a First Response Service (FRS) for people of any age who are distressed, worried about their mental health or experiencing something that makes them feel unsafe. It provides 24-hour access, seven days a week, 365 days a year, to mental health care, advice and support.

²² https://fenland.gov.uk/media/16517/Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy/pdf/Health_and_Wellbeing_Strategy_2018-21.pdf?m=637164212528170000

Hospital services

- 2.266. There are two hospitals in Fenland, North Cambridgeshire Hospital (located in Wisbech) and Doddington Hospital. Both hospitals offer a range of outpatient services and are part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust.
- 2.267. Both hospitals provide Minor Injury Units, but neither hospital offers A&E or urgent care services. Such services can be accessed at hospitals outside of Fenland including Peterborough City Hospital, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital in Huntingdon and The Queen Elizabeth Hospital at King's Lynn, Norfolk.

GP services

- 2.268. The following Fenland settlements offer health centres providing GP services which serve residents of the settlement and surrounding rural areas:

- Chatteris – George Clare Surgery
- Doddington – Doddington Medical Centre
- Manea – Manea Surgery
- March – Cornerstone Surgery; Riverside Practice; Mercheford House
- Parson Drove / Church End – Parson Drove Surgery
- Whittlesey – Jenner Health Centre; New Queen Street Surgery
- Wimblington – Wimblington Surgery
- Wisbech – North Brink Practice; Trinity Surgery; New Horsefair Clinic (community paediatrics)

Dental services

- 2.269. The NHS website²³ indicates that there are seven dental practices in Fenland, of which 3 are located in March, 2 in Wisbech, 1 in Whittlesey and 1 practice in Whittlesey.

Mental health and wellbeing support services

- 2.270. There are a broad range of support services available across Fenland which support issues relating to mental health, wellbeing, disability and social care. These services are principally located in Fenland's market towns.

- **Mental health - self-referral:**
 - CPSL Mind: The Good Life Service - *March*
 - Evolve - Community Counselling Charity - *March*
 - Insight (IAPT) - *March*
 - Lifeline - *March*
 - Mental Health, Health Trainer Service - Healthy You - *Wisbech*
 - NHS CPFT Psychological Wellbeing Service (IAPT) - *March*
 - Wellbeing (Project Catalyst) - Care Network Cambridgeshire - *March*
- **Mental Health - referral via a GP:**
 - NHS CPFT Adult Locality Team - Fenland - *Wisbech*
 - NHS CPFT Perinatal Mental Health Team - *Wisbech*
 - NHS CPFT Personality Disorder Community Service - *Wisbech*
 - NHS CPFT Primary Care Mental Health Service - *Wisbech*
 - Supporting New Mums - CPSL Mind - *Wisbech, March, Chatteris*
- **Mental Health - crisis support:**
 - NHS CPFT First Response Service (FRS) - *March*

²³ <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist/>

- Samaritans Peterborough and District - *Wisbech, March, Chatteris*
- **Children & Young Adult Support:**
 - Centre 33 - *Wisbech*
 - Wisbech Therapeutic Farm- People and Animals CIC - *Wisbech*
 - YMCA Trinity Group - *Wisbech, March*
 - Young People's Counselling Service - *Wisbech*
- **Older People's Support:**
 - Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough - *Wisbech, March, Chatteris*
 - Care Network Cambridgeshire - *Wisbech*
 - Community Navigator - Care Network Cambridgeshire - *March*
 - Dementia Connect Service - Alzheimer's Society - *Wisbech, March, Chatteris*
 - Help at Home - Care Network Cambridgeshire - *March*
- **Befriending and Social Support:**
 - Age UK CAP Befriending and Social Opportunities – *Wisbech, March, Chatteris*
 - Community Navigator - Care Network Cambridgeshire - *March*
 - Healthy Fenland - Care Network Cambridgeshire - *March*
 - Wellbeing (Project Catalyst) - Care Network Cambridgeshire - *March*
- **Carer Support:**
 - Age UK CAP Carer Support - *Wisbech, March, Chatteris*
 - Al-Anon - *Wisbech*
 - Cam Sight - *Wisbech*
 - Caring Together - *March*
 - Centre 33 - *Wisbech*
 - Dementia Connect Service - Alzheimer's Society - *Wisbech, March, Chatteris*
 - Headway Cambridgeshire - *Chatteris*
 - Help at Home - Care Network Cambridgeshire - *March*
 - Making Space - *March*
 - Pinpoint - *Wisbech, March*
 - Positive People Care - *Wisbech, March*
 - Rethink Carer Support - *March*
- **Disability Services:**
 - Age UK CAP Practical Services - *Wisbech, March, Chatteris*
 - Cam Sight - *Wisbech*
 - Headway Cambridgeshire - *Chatteris*
 - Help at Home - Care Network Cambridgeshire - *March*
 - Little Miracles - *Wisbech, March*
- **Physical Health Support:**
 - Diabetes Health Trainer Service - Healthy You - *March*
 - Eastern European Health Trainer - Healthy You - *Wisbech*
 - Healthy You - *March*
 - Mental Health, Health Trainer Service - Healthy You - *Wisbech*
 - Regain Control - Care Network Cambridgeshire - *March*
- **Bereavement Services:**
 - Cruse Bereavement Care - *Wisbech, March, Chatteris*

- The Ayshea Sanders Sanctuary - Bereavement Peer Group - *Whittlesey*
- **Domestic & Sexual Abuse:**
 - Choices - *Wisbech*
 - Refuge - *Wisbech, March*
- **Drug and Alcohol Services:**
 - Al-Anon - *Wisbech*
 - Alcohol Reduction Health Trainer - Healthy You - *Wisbech*
 - Alcoholics Anonymous - *Wisbech, Whittlesey*
 - Narcotics Anonymous (NA) - *Wisbech*
 - Wisbech and Fenland Recovery Service - CGL Cambridgeshire - *Wisbech*
- **Housing, Finance, Training:**
 - ACCESS - Supporting Migrants in East Anglia - *Wisbech*
 - Cambridgeshire Employment Service - Richmond Fellowship - *Wisbech*
 - Citizens Advice Rural Service - *Wisbech*
 - CLAS - Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme - *March*
 - Food Aid - *Wisbech, March, Whittlesey*
 - New Horizons - *Wisbech, March, Chatteris*
 - P3 - *Wisbech*
 - Warm Home Scheme - PECT - *Wisbech*
 - Wisbech Therapeutic Farm- People and Animals CIC - *Wisbech*
- **Advocacy:**
 - Healthwatch Cambridgeshire - *March*
 - The SUN Network - *Wisbech*
 - VoiceAbility Cambridgeshire and Peterborough - *Wisbech*
- **Faith-based Support:**
 - Cambridgeshire Workplace Chaplaincy – *Wisbech*

Future health needs

2.271. The CCG, local authorities and partners have prepared a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment²⁴ (JSNA) which describes the future health, care and wellbeing needs of local people and identifies what plans need to be made so that services can meet their needs. As part of the JSNA, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG prepared a study of new housing Developments and the built environment²⁵ across Cambridgeshire. The study forecasts a 25% increase in the size of Cambridgeshire's population over a 20-year period. Linked to the expected changing demographic shape of the county are key considerations for health and social care service providers, local authorities, developers, the voluntary and community sector.

2.272. A common theme across Cambridgeshire districts is the rapid growth of the older population, and its increasing share of the total population over the next 20 years. The over 65s are forecast to grow by almost 80% between 2013 and 2036, within this the over 90s to grow by more than 250%, from 5,600 to 19,700. Therefore, over the course of the plan period demand for health services are expected to increase due to demographic factors i.e. as a result of an ageing population.

²⁴ <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/jsna/published-joint-strategic-needs-assessments/>

²⁵ New Housing Developments and the Built Environment JSNA 2015/16: <http://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/New-Housing-Developments-and-the-Built-Environment-JSNA-2015.pdf>

- 2.273. At the time of writing this Growth Study, there is little available data on the capacity of Fenland's health services. The JSNA indicates Cambridgeshire and Peterborough health system has been identified as one of the 11 most challenged health economies in England.
- 2.274. It is reasonable to assume that there is unlikely to be significant excess capacity within services, and that over the course of the plan period additional investment and provision of infrastructure will be required to meet growth needs. For example, in the case of GP services, General Practices are small to medium-sized businesses whose services are contracted by NHS commissioners to provide generalist medical services in a geographical or population area, usually as a GP partnership. The NHS is funded from general taxation. GP partners are jointly responsible for meeting the requirements set out in the contract for their practice and share the income it provides. It is reasonable to assume that most GP practices provide adequate levels of services to meet their contractual requirements as to do otherwise would risk creating inefficiencies or breaching contract terms.
- 2.275. It is a common public objection to new development that health services have insufficient capacity to meet the needs. However, surgeries are broadly linked to the number of patients, and are in effect 'market-led'. Therefore, it is likely that most planning proposals will not require a developer contribution towards healthcare facilities.
- 2.276. The exception to this is the planning of very large, strategic-scale development sites (such as urban extensions and new communities) which in themselves would generate demand for a new doctor's or dentist's surgery. Such proposals are expected to provide space for such facilities within their concept plan. To determine whether a site should provide such a space, the developer would be required to research local capacity/demand, and provide such evidence with the planning application.
- 2.277. The study identifies, of the larger new communities in Cambridgeshire, feedback from some frontline practitioners, including housing, children's social care and family workers, report that they are seeing higher needs in the initial years in new communities. From data available, in three of the four new communities studied, there are higher referral rates to higher tier children's services, expected/average referrals to lower tier children's services and very low use of adult social care.
- 2.278. The study suggests there are two main effects on the local health system which could be attributed to new developments. The first being the pressures the increase in the population has on the health system, typically new developments see an increased birth rate and demand for maternity services. This suggests that the development of new communities have different health service requirements than the existing population.
- 2.279. The second is how the design of the build of a new development can affect the preventative health agenda by encouraging healthy lifestyles and enabling people to remain independent and remain in their own homes for longer. This implies that good design in new developments can reduce the demand for health services.

Coordination and engagement

- 2.280. The study recommends preparation of a joint strategy to develop a way to engage and attract the leisure market into new communities early in the development. This could be through ensuring the units are built early, opening units at discounted/nil business rate, allowing locals to use the units as pop up shops etc. During the pre-application stage of the planning process, services and the community should be engaged and a working group of people centred support established so that there is a clear co-ordinated effort and communication channels between services and the planning of the new community. This will enable co-ordinate response to planning applications through

2.281. The study also recommends that, during the pre-application stage of the planning process, services and the community should be engaged and a working group of people centred support established so that there is a clear co-ordinated effort and communication channels between services and the planning of the new community. This will enable co-ordinate response to planning applications through to service/support delivery. Where possible these groups should be led by the community whether this is parish council, residents association etc. with support from the local authority.

2.282. Research undertaken through the study suggests that engagement between Planning Authorities, CCG and NHS England need to be strengthened, with NHS England and the CCG needing robust cases when seeking Section 106/CIL contributions with a defined need and costed solution. In addition, all health partners including Primary Care Practices are consulted on planning applications. Health partners should come together at the earliest opportunity to discuss needs at strategic sites.

Engagement with Clinical Commissioning Group

2.283. In March 2022, Local Plan Team officers met with the Strategic Premises & Estates Manager for Primary Care at Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group to discuss future health provision requirements to meet health needs. The SPEM identified that primary care service in Fenland are experiencing acute pressure for the following reasons:

- Many existing primary care services are over-subscribed at present. One example given was a GP practice in a Fenland market town with one GP serving 5,000 patients. This far exceeds the recommended ratio of 1 GP to 1,800 patients.
- As previously discussed, Fenland has a poorer health profile than the regional and national average. As a result of the area's health and demographic characteristics, Fenland residents tend to have higher demand for primary care services than other areas within the CCG region.
- Healthcare services experience difficulties in attracting and retaining healthcare staff. It is possible that availability and affordability of housing could be a factor.
- Population increases as a result of new development increases demand for primary care services. However, due to poor development viability in the area health is not being prioritised in planning obligations. In addition, Fenland is unable to support a Community Infrastructure Levy.
- Strategic changes in the way healthcare is administered means more services are delivered at the local level (as opposed to by hospitals). This places further pressure on primary care services at the community level.

2.284. The NHS has a presumption that the delivery of health infrastructure will be met through developer contributions. Fenland's Local Plan viability assessment suggests that there is limited scope for planning obligations (in addition introduction of a CIL is not feasible). Funding of primary care infrastructure via developer contributions is therefore likely to be challenging over the plan period.

2.285. To provide efficiencies, there may be opportunities to co-locate health and wellbeing services at existing community facilities. The SPEM provided examples of good practice at Melbourn Community Hub, located in South Cambridgeshire, which offers health and wellbeing services including:

- Dementia Friends Café – advice and information provided by the Alzheimer's Society;
- Everyone Health – delivers a range of health and wellbeing services, such as free health checks;
- HomeStart – organisation supporting families with post-natal depression, isolation, physical health problems, bereavement and many other issues;
- Mind – Mental health charity;
- NSPCC – Children's charity'
- Positive Parenting – Parenting techniques from NSPCC;

- Relate – Charity providing relationship support services; and
- Citizens Advice Bureau - an independent organisation providing advice to assist people with legal, debt, consumer, housing and other problems.

Emergency Services Infrastructure

Policing

- 2.286. Police services in Fenland are provided by Cambridgeshire Constabulary. The constabulary's headquarters is located in Huntingdon. Within Fenland's administrative area, police stations are located in March and Wisbech.
- 2.287. Neighbourhood policing teams consist of a dedicated Sergeant, Police Constables (PCs) and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) under the command of an Inspector. The teams are supported by additional officers from across the wider area, including Neighbourhood Support Teams.
- 2.288. March's neighbourhood policing team covers areas including March, Wimblington, Doddington, Benwick, Chatteris, Pondersbridge, Whittlesey, Coates, Turves and Manea. Wisbech's neighbourhood policing team covers areas including Wisbech, Elm, Friday Bridge, Coldham, Guyhirn, Murrow, Wisbech St Mary, Leverington, Tydd Gote, Parsons Drove and Newton.
- 2.289. Other local policing initiatives include the Fenland Community Safety Partnership. Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are made up of representatives from the police, local authorities, fire and rescue services, health and probation services. They are known as 'responsible authorities'. Other non-statutory bodies are also invited to be members e.g. residential social landlords.
- 2.290. CSP members work together to protect local communities from crime and anti-social behaviour. They work out how to help people feel safe and how to deal with local issues such as antisocial behaviour, drug or alcohol misuse and re-offending.
- 2.291. Helped by partners and the local community, they assess local crime priorities every year and consider how best to deal with them. Current work themes focus on:
- supporting victims
 - reducing offending
 - supporting safer and stronger communities.
- 2.292. In addition to the constabulary, as territorial police force, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has an elected police and crime commissioner. The primary role of the Commissioner is to support and challenge the Chief Constable to provide effective and efficient policing services for the area. Police and Crime Commissioners:
- Work with a range of partner agencies;
 - Award crime and disorder reduction grants to organisations who support their police and crime objectives;
 - Publish an annual Police and Crime Plan;
 - Set local police and crime objectives;
 - Ensure the police are accountable to the public by engaging with their communities;
 - Hold the Chief Constable to account (Hire and, if necessary, dismiss);
 - Set the policing part (precept) of council tax; and
 - Publish an Annual Report.

2.293. The *Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 2024*²⁶ sets out the Commissioners priorities for policing in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area. The Police and Crime Plan identifies the following five policing priorities for Fenland:

1. Anti-social behaviour
2. Road safety – speeding
3. Aggressive / dangerous and inconsiderate driving / parking
4. Drug related crimes (use, dealing, county lines)
5. Local issues of crime and disorder

2.294. The Police Settlement Grant accounted for approximately 56% of Cambridgeshire’s overall funding for policing in 2021/22, with the remainder provided by the policing part of council tax.

2.295. The Police and Crime Plan includes a commitment for the Commissioner to work with the Chief Constable’s team to develop a medium-term financial strategy which plans the budgets for the next four years. Day-to-day expenditure is captured within the revenue budget and is the amount of money the Constabulary requires to provides its services. The capital budget is normally for spending in relation to the purchase, construction or improvement of assets such as buildings.

Engagement with Cambridgeshire Constabulary

2.296. In February 2022, officers from the Local Plan Team met with staff from Cambridgeshire Constabulary, who confirmed that March police station requires investment to enable its refurbishment or relocation. There may be opportunities to achieve these aims through the Local Plan’s policies for the regeneration of March’s town centre.

2.297. The constabulary confirmed that additional policing resources will be required over the plan period to meet the needs of an increasing population.

Ambulance services

2.298. Fenland is served by the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust. The trust was formed July 1, 2006 with the merger of ambulance services covering Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, East Anglia and Essex, and is one of the largest ambulance services in the UK.

2.299. The trust attends more than one million emergency calls a year and its patient transport service make nearly 1.5 million patient journeys to and from routine hospital appointments. Trust Headquarters is at Melbourn, Cambridgeshire and there are local offices in Bedford, Chelmsford and Norwich.

Fire and rescue

2.300. Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service are responsible for delivering fire and rescue services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, operating from 28 fire stations, 27 of which are operational. The Fire Service Headquarters is based in Huntingdon and houses the senior management team, the combined fire control room, central operational teams and many of our support staff, who work in a variety of professional roles to support frontline activity. The fire and rescue service are accountable to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority and its responsibilities as an emergency service are set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

2.301. In Fenland, the following appliances and fire stations are located at:

- Chatteris station – one fire engine

²⁶ <https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021-2024-PCC-plan-A4-WEB-VERSION-FINAL-2.0-1.pdf>

- Manea station – one fire engine;
- March station – two fire engines;
- Whittlesey station – one fire engine; and
- Wisbech station – operates two fire engines.

2.302. The Fire Authority's Policy and Resources Committee are responsible for making recommendations to the Fire Authority on the annual budget and precept, the Authority's objectives and priorities, and the main Service planning policies, including the Integrated Risk Management Plan.

2.303. It is possible that Local Plan growth may generate a requirement for additional emergency services infrastructure. The Council will consult relevant stakeholders on the emerging Local Plan to ensure future resource requirements are factored into future financial and resourcing strategies.

3. Community Facilities

3.1. Community facilities can include a wide range of facilities and spaces which the public can use including libraries, village halls, community centres, provision of children's pre-school services, venues for community and adult learning, performance and creative spaces, etc.

Libraries

3.2. The market towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech each offer libraries. The following Fenland villages and towns are served by mobile libraries:

- Benwick
- Chatteris
- Christchurch
- Coates
- Coldham
- Doddington
- Elm
- Friday Bridge
- Gorefield
- Guyhirn
- Leverington
- Manea
- March
- Murrow
- Newton
- Parson Drove
- Rings End
- Tydd St Giles
- Whittlesey
- Wisbech
- Wisbech St Mary

3.3. Cambridgeshire County Council has a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964) to provide 'a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof'. New housing development may place additional demand for existing library services, and may require investment through developer contributions toward the provision of:

- Sites for new libraries;
- A new library building (covering full building and finishes);
- Library fit out and new stock;
- Upgrading an existing library or lifelong learning facility (including extension to floorspace);
- A mobile service, community provided or 'pop up' service; and/or
- A revenue stream for the provision of new services for a period of time.

3.4. The County Council's Planning Obligations Strategy²⁷ sets out service levels for libraries, based on the size of the catchment population. In summary, these service levels are:

- Catchment population > 4,000 = Community Library (180 sqm floorspace);

²⁷ https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/imported-assets/Planning_Obligations_Strategy_V1_2.pdf

- Catchment population > 7,000 = Key Library (350sqm, including community meeting / activity space and facilities for partner services);
- Catchment population > 14,000 = Hub Library (1,000sqm of library operational space plus 200sqm of staff space, and additional requirement for partner services and community facilities.);
- Catchment population > 50,000 = Central Library (4,000 sqm);

3.5. These service levels illustrate that increases in population, for example as a result of Local Plan growth, can generate additional need for library service provision. In addition, it is possible that a strategic-scale development, such as a new urban extension, could generate a need for a new library to serve the needs of residents of the development.

3.6. It is therefore expected that new development will contribute to new library service provision. This may include static and mobile or micro-library provision. The County Council's Planning Obligations Strategy sets the level of developer contributions for new library service provision and is based on national guidance. These standard charges have been used for the basis of S106 agreements in place for the major developments in Cambridgeshire.

3.7. Current levels of provision are linked to existing population levels and demographics of the catchment areas. Contributions towards library service provision, therefore, are based on the principles that additional resources and facilities (books, public access computers and the furniture, fittings and equipment to house them) will be necessary on a one-off basis in all cases to meet the information, learning and reading needs of the new residents.

3.8. Beyond that, the modification or extension of existing accommodation or the provision of new accommodation needed to make those additional resources and facilities available will be determined by the positioning and scale of the new housing developments in relation to the size / physical capacity and the location of existing library accommodation.

3.9. Fenland District Council will engage with Cambridgeshire County Council on its spatial strategy to identify library service provision requirements.

Strategy for library provision

3.10. Based on the *180 sqm community library per 4,000 population* standard it is estimated that a development of approximately 1,780 dwellings or more would generate a requirement for a small community library to meet the needs of residents of the development.

3.11. This 1,780-dwelling threshold has been calculated based on the average household occupancy rate for Fenland (2.2477 persons per dwelling) and assumes a 'small' community library of 180 sqm floorspace. It is important to note occupancy rates will vary depending on the size, mix and type of dwellings provided by a specific development proposal.

3.12. No site allocation identified by the Local Plan exceeds the 1,780 dwelling threshold. Therefore, no individual development site generates a requirement for a new library.

3.13. Cumulative growth in March (2,755 dwellings) exceeds the threshold for a 'whole' community library, generating a need for additional library provision equivalent to approximately *1.5 community libraries*.

- 3.14. March benefits from a good existing library facility in an accessible location in the town centre. Cambridgeshire County Council has confirmed that its preferred approach is to direct investment to this existing facility, rather than provide additional library services in the town.
- 3.15. Fenland's low development viability and limited opportunities for capital investment from Cambridgeshire County Council severely curtail the ability to deliver additional library provision. Elsewhere, irrespective of funding source, opportunities for the construction of new bricks-and-mortar libraries are likely to be extremely limited.
- 3.16. In this context, the most appropriate strategy for to meet future demands from library provision is to provide investment into existing library services. For the purposes of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, no specific projects are identified. However, this investment could provide for the expansion of facilities located at Fenland's existing libraries and mobile library services. The level of provision should maintain the standards set out in Cambridgeshire County Council's Planning Obligations SPD.

Community centres and village halls

- 3.17. Community halls provide indoor space available for a range of uses, activities, clubs and classes for the community they serve. Such facilities may be multi-functional and may be co-located with other facilities, such as schools, gyms, libraries, etc.
- 3.18. In Fenland, community halls are located in the following settlements:
- Benwick
 - Chatteris
 - Christchurch
 - Doddington
 - Eastrea
 - Elm
 - Gorefield
 - Leverington
 - March
 - Manea
 - Murrow
 - Newton
 - Parson Drove
 - Tydd St Giles
 - Whittlesey
 - Wimblington
 - Wisbech
 - Wisbech St Mary
- 3.19. It is likely that Local Plan growth will increase demand for community hall space. The emerging Local Plan could support provision of community halls by requiring new development ensure provision of 111 m² per 1,000 people.
- 3.20. The *Housing Needs of Specific Groups* (October 2021)²⁸ report projects Fenland's population will increase by 18,270 people from 2020 to 2040. Using the above metric, this would equate to a need for 2,027.97sqm of additional community hall space to meet the needs arising from population increase
- 3.21. Sport England has produced guidance on the construction of sports halls²⁹. This guidance is useful in placing the potential floorspace figure into context. Sport England indicate that a 'small' hall of 10m x 10m (100 square metres) is suitable for a range of sporting and community activities, for example:
- aerobics
 - keep fit
 - martial arts
 - boxing
 - table tennis
 - darts matches
 - drama workshops
 - clinics
 - club meetings

²⁸ <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/housing/local-housing-knowledge/our-housing-market/shma/>

²⁹ <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/village-and-community-halls.pdf>

- luncheon clubs
- playgroups
- craft shows
- whist drives

3.22. It should be noted that the 100sqm hall refers to the floorspace area of the main hall, and not the overall area of the building which would likely also include additional rooms, such as toilet kitchen facilities, store, a lobby or reception, etc.

3.23. Based on a population increase of 18,270 persons, the need for additional community hall space is equivalent to 20.28 new 'small' community halls.

Strategy for community hall provision

3.24. Based on the *111 sqm per 1,000 population* standard, it is estimated that a development of approximately 400 dwellings or more would generate a requirement for a small community hall to meet the needs of residents of the development.

3.25. This 400-dwelling threshold has been calculated based on the average household occupancy rate for Fenland (2.2477 persons per dwelling) and assumes a 'small' community hall has a 100 sqm floorspace. It is important to note occupancy rates will vary depending on the size, mix and type of dwellings provided by a specific development proposal.

3.26. The following site allocations (without planning consent at time of writing³⁰) have a capacity greater than 400 dwellings and would therefore require on-site provision of community halls:

- Land South of Chatteris, Chatteris CP - 1,000 dwellings (Site ref: 40384) - *generating a requirement for community hall provision equivalent to 2.5 small community halls.*
- Land north of Knight's End Road and East of the A141, March CP - 1,200 dwellings (Site ref: 40285) - *generating a requirement for community hall provision equivalent to 3 small community halls.*

3.27. The Local Plan allocates *cumulative* growth in excess of 400 dwellings to the following settlements:

- Chatteris – 1,698 dwellings - *generating a requirement for community hall provision equivalent to 4.2 small community halls.*
- Coates – 429 dwellings - *generating a requirement for community hall provision equivalent to 1.1 small community halls.*
- Leverington – 425 dwellings - *generating a requirement for community hall provision equivalent to 1.1 small community halls.*
- March – 2,661 dwellings - *generating a requirement for community hall provision equivalent to 6.6 small community halls.*
- Whittlesey – 875 dwellings - *generating a requirement for community hall provision equivalent to 2.2 small community halls.*
- Wisbech - 971 dwellings - *generating a requirement for community hall provision equivalent to 2.4 small community halls.*

3.28. The Local Plan allocates sites for development in the following settlements *Christchurch, Coldham, Collet's Bridge, Doddington, Eastrea, Elm, Friday Bridge, Gorefield, Guyhirn, Manea, Murrow, Newton, Parson Drove, Rings End, Tholomas Drove, Tydd St Giles, Wimblington, and Wisbech St Mary.* Total growth

³⁰ North and south of Eastrea Road (strategic allocation), Whittlesey CP - 452 dwellings (Site ref: 40012) has been excluded as the site has permission and is under construction.

in those settlements is less than 400 dwellings and therefore does not generate a need for a 'whole' small community hall. Depending on the extent of community hall provision, it may be necessary to secure a planning obligation for the expansion of an existing community hall in those settlements.

4. Sports Facilities and Open Space

Indoor sports

- 4.1. Fenland's main indoor sports facilities are located at the four leisure centres, managed on Fenland District Council's behalf. These are Hudson Leisure Centre in Wisbech, George Campbell Leisure Centre in March, Manor Leisure Centre in Whittlesey and Chatteris Leisure Centre. In addition, the following schools provide sports hall and sports facilities which are available for community use: Neale Wade Academy (March), Sir Harry Smith Community College (Whittlesey), Thomas Clarkson Academy (Wisbech).
- 4.2. The *Fenland District Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 – 2031*³¹ (ISFS) identifies needs of Fenland's existing indoor sports facility portfolio, and future need for provision, driven by increased population, and identifies gaps in the existing facility network. The nature of the Fenland, with four main market towns – March, Wisbech, Whittlesey, and Chatteris, means that the geographical location of provision is important to facilitating and encouraging participation, given the impact of accessibility.
- 4.3. The ISFS notes that improving the quality of provision is particularly important given that less than a quarter of Fenland residents currently take part in sport and physical activity at least once a week on a regular basis, and *obesity is a significant challenge for 63.8% of the adult population and 18.9% of children*.
- 4.4. The ISFS identifies the following principles which should underpin future sport and leisure facility development in Fenland. These are to:
 - Ensure residents of Fenland have good quality, accessible, affordable and sustainable, with the minimum provision being sustainable, strategic-sized sports hall, 25m pool and a fitness suite.
 - Replace ageing facilities where new provision is needed; all new provision should be designed and developed based on Sport England and NGB guidance, and be fully inclusive
 - Rationalise existing provision where new fit for purpose facilities can replace/improve existing buildings
 - Invest in existing provision to improve quality
 - Invest strategically to ensure economic viability and sustainability of provision
 - Where possible, provide facilities (formal and informal) closer to where people live; access to informal provision is important in the rural areas
 - Aim to ensure that more facilities on education sites provide opportunities (on a formal basis) for community access
- 4.5. The ISFS identifies a need for some additional provision, across a range of facility types, as well as more generic needs in terms of improvement to the quality of existing facilities, and the accessibility and operational management of provision. In summary these needs are:
 - Sports Halls - Badminton, and netball NGBs support the need for additional sports hall capacity in Fenland. There is a lack of sports halls capable of accommodating indoor netball, basketball, and volleyball in Fenland. There are no sports halls larger than 4 badminton court size in Fenland. Improvement in the quality of some ageing facilities; the medium-term priority (5-10 years) is the Hudson Centre.
 - Swimming pools - There is an under supply of current and future swimming pool provision in Fenland. The ASA has identified the need for increased swimming pool provision in Fenland. In

³¹ [https://fenland.gov.uk/media/16524/Fenland-Indoor-Facility-Strategy/pdf/Fenland Indoor Facility Strategy.pdf?m=637164918985500000](https://fenland.gov.uk/media/16524/Fenland-Indoor-Facility-Strategy/pdf/Fenland%20Indoor%20Facility%20Strategy.pdf?m=637164918985500000)

addition, there is a need to start planning now for investment in existing pool facilities, George Campbell and the Hudson Leisure Centres, both of which are ageing.

- Gymnastic facilities - Increased access to sports hall facilities for club use. Additional dedicated gymnastic club facilities.
- Informal facilities - Cycling and walking routes; safe cycling routes

- 4.6. In taking into account future demands, the ISFS considers population growth to 2031 from new development planned for through the *adopted* Local Plan 2014. Further growth to 2040 through the emerging Local Plan will likely further increase need for indoor sports facilities.
- 4.7. In general Fenland has a very poor level of sports hall supply which impacts on resident's ability to participate in sporting activities. Residents also suffer from the fact that the supplies in neighbouring authorities are also broadly very poor and the location of the supply that does exist does not always meet their needs.
- 4.8. Four of the five sites identified by the ISFS are on school sites. This can be a positive in terms of location, often offering the opportunity for residents to walk to the sites but it does limit their availability during the day and means that individual's discussions and agreements need to be developed to secure community access as all the schools now operate independently.
- 4.9. Each of the market towns has access to a 3-court hall or large but each town has an indicated level of undersupply which is seen at its greatest in Wisbech and March. The ISFS identifies a significant current undersupply of sports halls, equivalent to 41% of current supply.
- 4.10. A number of the facilities are ageing and the ISFS data suggests that older facilities are less likely to be accessed by users due to the quality of the experience. Whilst some of the facilities have enjoyed refurbishment they are still likely to be facilities that do not drive participation due to their condition.
- 4.11. The ISFS identifies there is a need to retain sports hall and swimming pool provision in March and Wisbech to meet current and future demand; these are the largest areas of population now, and will also have high population growth in the future. The issue is that future provision could be new, or refurbishment and extension of existing facilities. The age, design and condition of these two facilities suggests that replacement would be a better long term option than refurbishment.
- 4.12. There is a need to retain existing sports hall provision in Chatteris as a minimum; there is already unmet demand in that area for 1.7 courts. Existing provision consists of community access to a 4 court hall on a school site (Cromwell Community College). There is some potential to increase access at this site, but the population growth will increase demand for provision, so the need for additional courts needs to be considered.
- 4.13. The ISFS strategy analysis indicates that there is a need for capital investment in Fenland's existing facility network, or replacement of this, to address both current and future needs. Whilst some of this investment relates to additional facility provision, there is also a need for significant investment in existing ageing stock; increased participation is more likely to be achieved if the environment in which people take part is fit for purpose.
- 4.14. In relation to getting more people active, it is important to highlight the following issues:

- Many of Fenland’s existing facilities are already full (Sports halls operating at capacity: Wisbech, March); swimming pools operating at capacity – (George Campbell and Hudson)
- Much of the existing facility portfolio is ageing and of average quality
- Increasing population will put additional demands on the capacity of existing facilities
- Increasing participation levels will increase demand on existing facilities.

4.15. Table 8 provides a summary of priority investment needs, as identified by the ISFS.

Table 7: Priority Investment Needs for Existing Sports Hall Provision

TOWN	FACILITIES REQUIRING REPLACEMENT (DUE TO AGE/CONDITION)	NEED FOR ADDITIONAL PROVISION - FACILITY TYPE	
		SPORTS HALLS (BADMINTON COURTS)	SWIMMING POOLS
MARCH	George Campbell Leisure Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Hall – medium term • Additional water space: medium to long term 	6 or 8 court sports hall	Additional water space needed to meet demands of population growth
WISBECH	Hudson Leisure Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Hall – medium term • Additional water space: medium to long term 	6 or 8 court sports hall	Additional water space needed to meet demands of population growth
CHATTERIS	N/A	4 court sports hall	
WHITTLESEY	The Manor Leisure Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity Hall • Swimming Pool 	N/A	N/A

Sport Facility Calculator (Sport England)

4.16. The *Housing Needs of Specific Groups* (October 2021) report projects Fenland’s population will increase to 121,020 people at 2040 – an increase between 2020 and 2040 of 18,270 persons.

4.17. Based on this population estimate, Sport England’s *Sport Facility Calculator*³² indicates the following sports facility requirements to meet the needs of the new population, as identified by the SHMA³³:

³² <https://www.activeplacespower.com/>

³³ <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/CWS-Housing-Needs-of-Specific-Groups-Oct21.pdf>

Table 8: Sports Facility Requirements (Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator)

Sports facility type	Needs of total population at 2040 (121,020 persons)	Needs of population arising over plan period 2020-2040 (18,270 persons)
Sports Halls		
Demand adjusted by	0%	0%
Courts	33.62	5.07
Halls	8.4	1.27
vpwpp (visits per week in the peak period)	9,896.00	1,494
Cost	£21,093,482	£3,184,415
Swimming Pools		
Demand adjusted by	0%	0%
Square meters	1,284.32	193.89
Lanes	24.18	3.65
Pools	6.04	0.91
vpwpp	7810	1,179
Cost	£23,142,162	£3,493,698
Indoor Bowls		
Demand adjusted by	0%	0%
Rinks	2.25	0.34
Centres	0.37	0.06
vpwpp	351.00	53
Cost	£854,919	£129,064
Artificial Grass Pitches		
Demand adjusted by	0%	0%
Pitches	3.29	0.50
vpwpp	2438	368
Cost if 3G	£3,278,167	£494,864
Cost if Sand	£2,981,649	£450,130

Strategy for indoor sports provision

- 4.18. Each of Fenland's four market towns provides a leisure centre, with some additional public access to sports facilities available at secondary schools.
- 4.19. The ISFS identifies a number of significant existing issues relating to sports facility provision in Fenland irrespective of the additional demands created by Local Plan growth - notably current under-provision of sports hall supply / capacity; severe public health issues relating to lifestyle and low levels of activity; and the need for refurbishment of existing facilities.
- 4.20. The majority of new development will take place in Fenland's market towns. The market towns also serve a wider hinterland of villages, which will also experience growth over the plan period. Therefore, additional need for sports facility provision is not confined to any specific location but will be generated across the district.
- 4.21. It is therefore considered that the most appropriate strategy to meet additional needs for sports facility provision arising from Local Plan growth, is to refurbish and expand existing leisure centres located at Fenland's market towns, as per the priority investment needs identified in Table 8.
- 4.22. At present, the *Fenland District Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 – 2031* remains the most up-to-date strategy for the provision of indoor sports facilities. The Council is committed to commencing a review of this strategy in 2023, which is expected to provide more detailed costing and options for the refurbishment and expansion of existing centres.
- 4.23. Therefore, at time of preparing this IDP, the cost and extent of works required to meet Fenland's growth needs are difficult to quantify and cannot reasonably be distinguished from the need for greater investment to meet the needs of the existing population. However, through update of the ISFS it is anticipated that future iterations of the IDP will provide greater clarity on indoor sports requirements.
- 4.24. Fenland's indoor sports centres are owned by Fenland District Council, with the day-to-day running leased to private contractors. Investment in the centres is therefore likely to be met by the Council's capital programme. In addition, it is expected that investment in existing leisure centres will require a partnership approach, for example through grant funding from organisations such as Sport England.
- 4.25. There are also likely to be opportunities for the market to provide additional sporting facilities through the change of use or construction of new buildings – for example, health and fitness suites, studios for aerobics, yoga or pilates, ice rinks, climbing centres, ten pin bowling, and trampoline parks can often be accommodated within existing buildings such as former industrial or retail units.

Open Space

- 4.26. Fenland District Council commissioned a review of open space provision to inform the emerging Local Plan. The primary purpose of the open space study is to develop open space standards which new development will be required to satisfy.
- 4.27. Setting local open space standards for Fenland forms a key aspect of ensuring sustainable growth in the district. Open spaces come under increasing pressure as the population increases, both for recreation and alternative uses.
- 4.28. The importance to open space for the health and wellbeing of local communities is well recognised. The quality of open space is as important as the quantity of open space that communities have easy access to. Changing social and economic circumstances, changing work and leisure practices have placed new demands on open space. They must serve more diverse communities with a wide range of needs and expectations. If well managed and planned for, open space may help to address some inequalities relating to health and wellbeing. High quality and high value open spaces are multifunctional and can also support a range of wider environmental benefits and objectives.
- 4.29. The emerging Local Plan's proposed policy approach will normally seek to secure the provision of public open space on-site as per the standards recommended in the open space study. In certain circumstances, financial contributions may be secured to increase the quantity or quality of open space provision in proximity of the site (off-site provision).
- 4.30. Access to open space is particularly important when considered in the context of deprivation. Fenland is ranked as the 2nd most deprived local authority in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and the most deprived district in Cambridgeshire. Four LSOAs in the district are among the 10% most deprived areas in England (located in March and Wisbech). In general, the north east of the district is most deprived when compared to the rest of the district. The divide between urban and rural deprivation is relatively small and within the range of two deciles. In all domains, rural LSOAs are less deprived or the same as urban ones.
- 4.31. Life expectancy is 8.6 years lower for men and 3.2 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Fenland than in the least deprived areas. Under 75 mortality rate from all causes and the prevalence of cardiovascular conditions is worse for Fenland, when compared to Cambridge and England.
- 4.32. 20.6% of year six children are obese. This is slightly higher than the region (18%) and statistically similar to England as a whole (20.2%). Estimated levels of excess weight for adults (68.5%) are worse compared to the region (62.1%) and England (62%). A lower percentage of adults (aged 19+) are physically active (59%) than the region (65.4%) and the England average (66.3%). The recorded prevalence rate of depression is statistically higher than the England average.
- 4.33. Sport England Active Lives Survey asks people over 16 across England about their participation in sport and physical activity. A review of the 2019-20 results indicate that 33.6% of residents are considered to be 'inactive' (undertake less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week). This compares to 25.5% 'inactive' for England and 24.7% for Cambridgeshire. 54.9% of residents are considered to undertake at least 150 minutes of physical activity a week, compared to 62.8% for England.
- 4.34. 8.6% in Fenland did not participate in sport in the year preceding the 2019-2020 survey. This compares to 6.4% for England and 5.6% for Cambridgeshire. When asked whether they feel they have the opportunity to be physically active, 75% within Fenland either agree or strongly agree, compared to 81.7% (Cambridgeshire) and 79.9% (England).

- 4.35. Access to public open space is an important local issue, with responses to the Issues & Options consultation (Oct-Nov 2019) noting that overall, Fenland is poorly serviced in terms of accessible and well-connected green spaces.
- 4.36. The open space study's analysis of existing provision highlights that there is significant variation in the quantity of open space across the district. Through the Local Plan, it will be important to ensure that development works to address deficiencies across the district and provides sufficient quantity of new open space to meet the needs of growth and development.
- 4.37. It is unlikely that existing deficiencies can be fully addressed through new on-site provision from new development alone, meaning that in addition to securing open space through the planning system further consideration will need to be given to the delivery of new strategic scale open space provision in key areas of deficiency.
- 4.38. In addition to issues of health, deprivation and existing quantity and accessibility of open spaces, the open space study is particularly sensitive to Fenland's marginal development viability. However, the potential impact of open space requirements on viability will likely be an ongoing consideration. The study notes that for smaller, higher density proposal sites, off site contributions may be more appropriate than on site provision to mitigate potential effects on development viability.
- 4.39. The Local Plan proposes the following quantity standards, set out in Table 9, and reflect the recommendations of the Open Space Study.

Table 9: Quantity standards for Public Open Space

Public Open Space Typology	Hectares per 1,000 population
Neighbourhood Parks & Gardens	0.9
Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space	1.8
Informal Parkland and Amenity Space	0.34
Neighbourhood Playgrounds	0.55
Allotments	0.21

- 4.40. The open space study also identifies accessibility standards. These standards reflect the generally accepted principle that people are willing to travel varying distances to reach different types of open space. Visitors are generally willing to travel further to sites which have a wider 'offer' and range of facilities. Larger sites will generally provide more variety in terms of opportunities for recreation, access to nature and act as a more significant 'destination' for potential visitors.

Table 10: Accessibility standards for POS typologies

Neighbourhood Parks & Gardens	Within 300m of small local site (< 2ha)
	Within 400m of local site (>= 2ha)
Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space	Within 300m of small local (< 2ha)
	Within 2km of local (>= 2ha)
Informal Parkland and Amenity Space	Within 480m of site
Neighbourhood Playgrounds (as primary typology)	Within 100m of Local Area for Play (LAP)
	Within 400m of Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)
	Within 1000m of Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)
	Within 700m of Other Play
Allotments	Within 650m of allotment site

- 4.41. Using the same datasets employed in the open space study, this IDP attempts to provide a more fine-grained assessment of existing provision at the scale of individual parishes, and accessibility of site allocations to various open space typologies.
- 4.42. Provision of allotments have been excluded since the allotment site data provided by the open space study is incomplete.
- 4.43. Table 11 identifies the:
- need for public open spaces of differing typologies using the recommended open space quantity standards, and based on Cambridgeshire County Council’s 2018-based population estimates³⁴; and
 - actual supply of public open space by typology in each parish, using the same spatial dataset employed in the open space study.

³⁴ The Open Space Study uses the same dataset at ward level.

Table 11: Need based on estimated parish population and actual supply of Public Open Space

Parish	2018-population estimate	Need for public open space based on recommended quantity standards & 2018-population estimate (ha)					Actual supply of public open space by parish and typology (ha)				
		Neighbourhood Parks & Gardens	Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space	Informal Parkland and Amenity Space	Neighbourhood playgrounds	Total POS	Neighbourhood Parks & Gardens	Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space	Informal Parkland and Amenity Space	Neighbourhood playgrounds	Total POS
Benwick CP	1,170	1.05	2.11	0.40	0.64	4.20	0.39	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.39
Chatteris CP	11,000	9.90	19.80	3.74	6.05	39.49	11.27	0.00	5.31	0.00	16.58
Christchurch CP	850	0.77	1.53	0.29	0.47	3.05	2.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.10
Dodding-ton CP	2,340	2.11	4.21	0.80	1.29	8.40	5.99	1.00	0.07	0.00	7.06
Elm CP	4,090	3.68	7.36	1.39	2.25	14.68	1.49	9.02	4.66	0.04	15.21
Gorefield CP	1,260	1.13	2.27	0.43	0.69	4.52	3.08	0.00	0.07	0.00	3.15
Levering-ton CP	3,520	3.17	6.34	1.20	1.94	12.64	5.37	0.00	1.58	0.00	6.95
Manea CP	2,650	2.39	4.77	0.90	1.46	9.51	2.47	0.00	0.97	0.00	3.44
March CP	23,300	20.97	41.94	7.92	12.82	83.65	27.81	2.37	7.69	0.01	37.89
Newton-in-the-Isle CP	780	0.70	1.40	0.27	0.43	2.80	1.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.41
Parson Drove CP	1,500	1.35	2.70	0.51	0.83	5.39	2.22	0.00	0.76	0.00	2.99
Tydd St. Giles CP	1,250	1.13	2.25	0.43	0.69	4.49	1.83	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.83
Whittlesey CP	17,050	15.35	30.69	5.80	9.38	61.21	13.08	13.77	5.33	0.16	32.33
Wimblington CP	2,240	2.02	4.03	0.76	1.23	8.04	2.47	11.53	0.20	0.00	14.20
Wisbech CP	24,450	22.01	44.01	8.31	13.45	87.78	13.76	0.00	8.37	0.00	22.13
Wisbech St. Mary CP	3,820	3.44	6.88	1.30	2.10	13.71	1.39	0.00	0.33	0.00	1.73
Total	101,260	91.13	182.27	34.43	55.69	363.52	96.13	37.69	35.35	0.21	169.39

Population data rounded to nearest 10

4.44. For simplicity, Table 12 indicates for each parish if *actual supply* of public open space exceeds *need* - based on population and the quantity standards.

Table 12: Summary of existing surplus/deficit by typology and parish

Existing surplus/deficit of public open space by parish and typology (ha)					
Parish	Neighbourhood Parks & Gardens	Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space	Informal Parkland and Amenity Space	Neighbourhood playgrounds	All POS
Benwick CP	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit
Chatteris CP	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Deficit
Christchurch CP	Surplus	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit
Doddington CP	Surplus	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit
Elm CP	Deficit	Surplus	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus
Gorefield CP	Surplus	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit
Leverington CP	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Deficit
Manea CP	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Deficit
March CP	Surplus	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit
Newton-in-the-Isle CP	Surplus	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit
Parson Drove CP	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Deficit
Tydd St. Giles CP	Surplus	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit
Whittlesey CP	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit
Wimblington CP	Surplus	Surplus	Deficit	Deficit	Surplus
Wisbech CP	Deficit	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Deficit
Wisbech St. Mary CP	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit
Total	Surplus	Deficit	Surplus	Deficit	Deficit

4.45. As illustrated in the table, no parishes satisfy the quantity standards for all typologies. Benwick, Whittlesey and Wisbech St Mary parishes have an open space deficit in all typologies. Two parishes (Elm CP and Wimblington) offer a total quantity of public space (n.b. excluding allotments) which exceeds the overall need; however, there are deficits within some typologies. Consequently, all parishes have a need for additional open space provision to ensure the quantity standards are met.

4.46. Increases in population as a result of Local Plan growth, *if not supported by provision of additional open space*, would result in a greater deficit of open space provision. The open space study provides further analysis on the effects of Local Plan growth on open space provision.

4.47. Even at an individual parish level, not all public open spaces will be accessible to all residents. For example, the proximity from some homes to public open spaces exceed the accessibility standards. It is important to note that in practice, access to public open spaces can also be constrained by physical barriers, such as major roads, rail, or inaccessible land.

4.48. Table 14 explores the accessibility of proposed site allocations to open spaces of differing typologies.

Table 13: Accessibility of proposed site allocations to Public Open Spaces by typology

Settlement	Parish	Site Ref	Address	Neighbourhood Parks & Gardens		Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space		Informal Park-land & Amenity Space	Neighbourhood Playgrounds (as primary typology)			
				With-in 300m of Small Local site	With-in 400m of Local site	With-in 300m of Small Local site	With-in 2km of Local site		With-in 100m of LAP	With-in 400m of LEAP	With-in 1000m of NEAP	With-in 700m of Other Play
Chatteris	Chatteris CP	40054	26 Bridge Street	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Chatteris	Chatteris CP	40057	Land West Of 15 Fairbairn Way	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Chatteris	Chatteris CP	40072	Land West And South Of 74 West Street	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Chatteris	Chatteris CP	40211	Land south of Salisbury House, Blackmill Road	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Chatteris	Chatteris CP	40288	Land Westside of Fenland Way	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Chatteris	Chatteris CP	40325	Land rear of 2-8 Gibside	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Chatteris	Chatteris CP	40326	Land East of 80 The Elms	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Chatteris	Chatteris CP	40367	Womb Farm	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Chatteris	Chatteris CP	40384	Land South of Chatteris	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓

Chatteris	Chatteris CP	40447	Womb Farm	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	✓
Chatteris	Chatteris CP	40499	Land on the west side of 92 London Road	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Chatteris	Chatteris CP	40505	22 London Road	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Chatteris	Chatteris CP	40519	Land East Of 133 High Street Chatteris Cambridgeshire	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Christchurch	Christchurch CP	40028	Christchurch Memorial Hall	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓
Christchurch	Christchurch CP	40059	CFC Disposals Ltd	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓
Christchurch	Christchurch CP	40369	Land adjacent to the fern	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X
Christchurch	Christchurch CP	40463	Land north west Syringa House	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓
Doddington	Doddington CP	40079	Land North And East Of 1-3 Wimblington Road	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓
Doddington	Doddington CP	40140	Land west of Turf Fen lane and south of Newgate St	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Doddington	Doddington CP	40143	Land off Wood Street Ph3	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓
Doddington	Doddington CP	40173	Land off Wood St Ph2	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓

Doddington	Doddington CP	40235	Land north of Benwick Road	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	X	✓
Doddington	Doddington CP	40426	Land south of Benwick Road	✓	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X
Doddington	Doddington CP	40427	Land south of Wimblington Road	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓
Doddington	Doddington CP	40444	28 Wimblington Road	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓
Coldham	Elm CP	40135	Land north of March Road	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Collett's Bridge	Elm CP	40137	Collett's Bridge Lane	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Elm	Elm CP	40053	33 And Land North Of 17-31	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X
Elm	Elm CP	40083	Land West Of Cedar Way Accessed From Grove Gardens	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Elm	Elm CP	40322/4030 CP		✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Friday Bridge	Elm CP	40127	Well End	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Friday Bridge	Elm CP	40305	Land at Rookery Farm	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Friday Bridge	Elm CP	40319	Land East of Flint Way	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓

Open countryside	Elm CP	40520	Land North West Of Nemphlar Begdale Road Elm Cambridgeshire	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Rings End	Elm CP	40241	6 March Road	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Gorefield	Gorefield CP	40104	Land at Gote Lane	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X
Gorefield	Gorefield CP	40514	Land North Of 3A-15	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X
Gorefield	Gorefield CP	40521	Dennicks Yard Back Road Gorefield Cambridgeshire PE13 4PE	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X
Leverington	Leverington CP	40067	Land East Of 88 Sutton Road	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Leverington	Leverington CP	40133	Land east of Woodgate Road	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	✓
Leverington	Leverington CP	40503	Land north East of 53 The Chase	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Leverington	Leverington CP	40373/4049		X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	✓
Manea	Manea CP	40038	Land North Of 28 - 30 High Street	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Manea	Manea CP	40048	Lavender Mill Bungalow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X
Manea	Manea CP	40076	Land East Of 11 - 21 Park Road	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓

Manea	Manea CP	40185	Land to rear of No.15 Westfield Road	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Manea	Manea CP	40223	West Field	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Manea	Manea CP	40522	18 Westfield Road Manea March Cambridgeshire PE15 OLN	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
March	March CP	40020	Land West of Old Council Depot	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
March	March CP	40031	Site Of Former Kingswood Park Residential Home	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	✓
March	March CP	40036	Land East of Davern Workwear Ltd	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓
March	March CP	40037	Davern Workwear Ltd	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓
March	March CP	40041	Land East Of Berryfield	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓
March	March CP	40043	Land Rear Of 36 High Street	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	✓
March	March CP	40050	Former Highways Depot	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓
March	March CP	40052	321 Wisbech Road	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X
March	March CP	40073	Site Of Former Gas Distribution Centre	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓

March	March CP	40077	Land North Of The Green And North Of 145-159 Wisbech Road	✓	×	×	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
March	March CP	40082	Land North And West Of Elliott Lodge	✓	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓
March	March CP	40093	Land North West Of 12 Knights End Road	×	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	✓
March	March CP	40105	Rear of 131-137 Upwell Road	×	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	✓
March	March CP	40115	Land at Mill Hill	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
March	March CP	40126	Land east of Berryfield	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓
March	March CP	40190	Land to the rear of number 81	×	×	×	✓	✓	×	×	×	✓
March	March CP	40194	Land Southeast of 433 Wisbech Road	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×
March	March CP	40252	Land north east of March	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓
March	March CP	40262	Area behind high street shops directly south of the river in March	✓	✓	×	✓	×	×	✓	×	✓
March	March CP	40263	Land to the west of Hereward Hall	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
March	March CP	40264	Land to the east of Norwood Road	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓

March	March CP	40285	Land north of Knight's End Road and East of the A141	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
March	March CP	40315	Hereward Hall	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
March	March CP	40316	Queen's Street Close Car Park	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
March	March CP	40382	Land south of Knight's End Road and West of Wimblington Road	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
March	March CP	40430	Westry Hall	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
March	March CP	40434	Land fronting Elm Road and south and west of Highfield House	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
March	March CP	40446	Land west of 85 Wimblington Road	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
March	March CP	40511	Nelson House, 22 Norwood Road	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
March	March CP	40517	15 Station Road	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
March	March CP	40523	72 - 74 High Street March Cambridgeshire	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
March	March CP	40524	W H Feltham And Son Cawood Close March Cambridgeshire	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
March	March CP	40525	Land South West Of 1 To 23 Springfield Avenue March Cambridgeshire	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓

Newton	Newton-in-the-Isle CP	40368	Land adjoining Parrock View	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parson Drove	Parson Drove CP	40302	Land at Swanbridge Farm	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Parson Drove	Parson Drove CP	40451	Land south of Brewery Close and Ingham Hall Gardens	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Parson Drove	Parson Drove CP	40504	Land east of The Silverings 114	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tydd St Giles	Tydd St Giles CP	40364	Hockland Road plot	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Coates	Whittlesey CP	40070	Land South East Of 208 Coates Road	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Coates	Whittlesey CP	40198	Minuet Phase 2	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	X
Coates	Whittlesey CP	40265	Land north of March Road	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Coates	Whittlesey CP	40328	Land South of 104-178 March Road	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	X
Eastrea	Whittlesey CP	40033	Land South Of Jones Lane	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	X
Whittlesey	Whittlesey CP	40012	North and south of Eastrea Road (strategic allocation)	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓
Whittlesey	Whittlesey CP	40042	Land North Of Whittlesey East Of East Delph	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓

Whittlesey	Whittlesey CP	40300	Land at Eastrea Road	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	X
Whittlesey	Whittlesey CP	40335	Land rear of 98-112 Drybread Road	✓	X	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓
Whittlesey	Whittlesey CP	40526	158 Stonald Road Whittlesey Peterborough Cambridgeshire PE7 1QP	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X
Whittlesey	Whittlesey CP	40527	Land North And South Of Grosvenor House Grosvenor Road Whittlesey Cambridgeshire	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Whittlesey	Whittlesey CP	40528	Land West Of 36 Peterborough Road Whittlesey Cambridgeshire	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X
Wimblington	Wimblington CP	40060	Land East Of 38 March Road	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Wimblington	Wimblington CP	40074	Land North Of 37 - 45 King Street	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X
Wimblington	Wimblington CP	40087	Land North Of 3A - 9 Bridge Lane	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wimblington	Wimblington CP	40152	Land north of King St	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X
Wimblington	Wimblington CP	40278	Land east of March Road	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X
Wimblington	Wimblington CP	40529	Land North Of Stoneleigh 22A Eaton Estate Wimblington Cambridgeshire	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X
Wisbech	Wisbech CP	40017	Land at 35 North End	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓

Wisbech	Wisbech CP	40022	Aware House Learning Development Aids Ltd	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Wisbech	Wisbech CP	40025	Land East Of 46 Old Lynn Road	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Wisbech	Wisbech CP	40056	The College Of West Anglia	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Wisbech	Wisbech CP	40158	Land at Meadowgate	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X
Wisbech	Wisbech CP	40163	Chrysanthemum House	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X
Wisbech	Wisbech CP	40337	Site at 5 North Street	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Wisbech	Wisbech CP	40338	Nene Waterfront	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Wisbech	Wisbech CP	40366	Former Pike Textiles	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Wisbech	Wisbech CP	40371	Land off Halfpenny Lane	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X
Wisbech	Wisbech CP	40506	11-12 High Street	X	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Wisbech	Wisbech CP	40509	Wisbech Vehicle Exchange	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Wisbech	Wisbech CP	40513	Site Of Old British Gas Depot	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓

Wisbech	Wisbech CP	40530	134A Ramnoth Road Wisbech Cambridgeshire PE13 2SW	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X
Guyhirn	Wisbech St Mary CP	40147	Land at Gull Drove	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Guyhirn	Wisbech St Mary CP	40207	Land to the rear of Neneside	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Guyhirn	Wisbech St Mary CP	40303	Land at Selwyn Lodge Farm	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X
Murrow	Wisbech St Mary CP	40150	Front Road	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tholomas Drove	Wisbech St Mary CP	40307	Land at Willock Farm	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wisbech St Mary	Wisbech St Mary CP	40045	Land North Of Orchard House	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Wisbech St Mary	Wisbech St Mary CP	40103	Trafford Farm	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Wisbech St Mary	Wisbech St Mary CP	40171	Land at Sunset, Station Road	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Wisbech St Mary	Wisbech St Mary CP	40424	Station Road next to Grantchester House	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wisbech St Mary	Wisbech St Mary CP	40518	Land north of The Barn, High Road	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wisbech St Mary	Wisbech St Mary CP	40531	Land West Of Sunset Rooms Station Road Wisbech St Mary Cambridgeshire	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X

4.49. The table shows that the majority of site allocations lack accessibility to one or more open space typologies. This illustrates the importance of on-site provision of open space – since without on-site open space provision, sites would lack adequate access to open space.

4.50. The following proposed site allocations are within proximity of open spaces falling within all typologies (*Neighbourhood Parks & Gardens, Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space, Informal Parkland & Amenity Space, Neighbourhood Playgrounds (as primary typology)*).

- March CP: 40020 - Land West of Old Council Depot
- March CP: 40036 - Land East of Davern Workwear Ltd
- March CP: 40037 - Davern Workwear Ltd
- March CP: 40041 - Land East Of Berryfield
- March CP: 40050 - Former Highways Depot
- March CP: 40126 - Land east of Berryfield
- March CP: 40252 - Land north east of March
- March CP: 40263 - Land to the west of Hereward Hall
- March CP: 40264 - Land to the east of Norwood Road
- March CP: 40315 - Hereward Hall
- March CP: 40316 - Queen's Street Close Car Park
- March CP: 40434 - Land fronting Elm Road and south and west of Highfield House
- March CP: 40511 - Nelson House, 22 Norwood Road
- March CP: 40523 - 72 - 74 High Street March Cambridgeshire
- March CP: 40524 - W H Feltham And Son Cawood Close March Cambridgeshire
- Whittlesey CP: 40527 - Land North And South Of Grosvenor House Grosvenor Road Whittlesey Cambridgeshire

4.51. Whilst these proposed site allocations benefit from good accessibility to a broad range of open spaces, this does not mean that additional provision is not required. For example, as indicated in Table 12, March has an *existing* deficit of Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space, Informal Parkland and Amenity Space, Neighbourhood Playgrounds; and Whittlesey parish has a deficit in all typologies. Therefore all sites, will need to provide additional open space provision.

4.52. The presence of existing open space may provide opportunities to co-locate facilities. For example, where there are existing accessible open spaces in proximity of a site, it may be preferable to concentrate investment at these open spaces. Co-locating facilities can promote efficiency in terms of maintenance, and promotes sustainability by providing high quality open spaces.

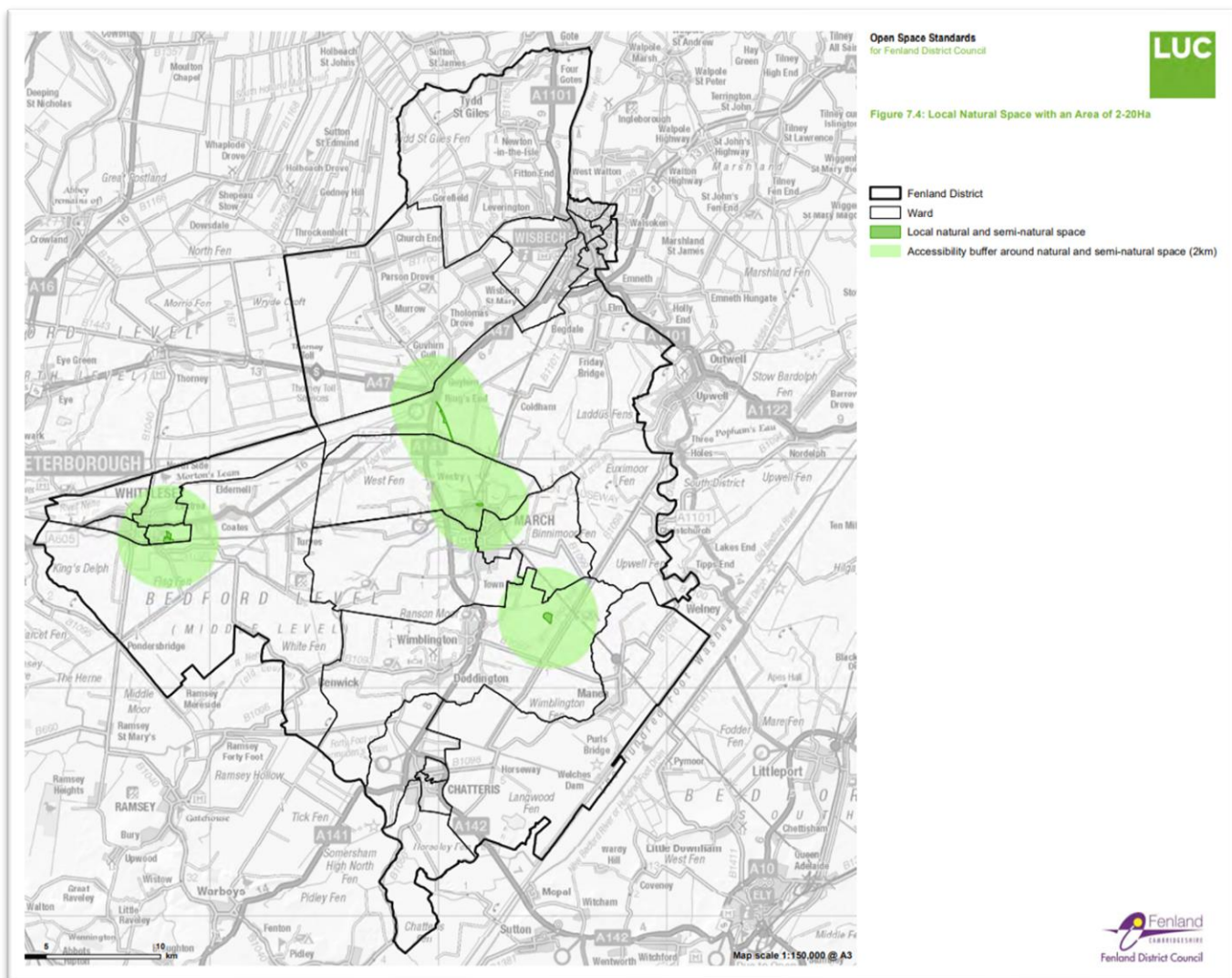
4.53. The NPPF states that planning obligations may only be sought where they meet a number of *Tests*, including that the obligation must be *directly related to the development*.

4.54. The accessibility of proposed site allocations to existing public open spaces is therefore particularly relevant in securing financial contributions to enhance the quality of existing open spaces – since the open space where the investment is to be made must be accessible from the development site to ensure the *directly related* test is met.

4.55. In summary, all major residential developments should make provision for open space in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policy, drawing on the quantity and accessibility standards as recommended by the open space study.

- 4.56. Special consideration needs to be given to the provision of *Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces*, since such open space provision is typically strategic in scale and cannot normally be delivered by a single development site. Therefore, delivery of strategic *Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces* will require coordination between a number of different delivery partners.
- 4.57. Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces are often multi-functional, providing not only space for recreation and leisure but serving other purposes such as *Green Infrastructure*, flood mitigation, etc.
- 4.58. The open space study indicates that, based on the proposed standard, there is currently a shortfall of 1.43ha of Natural and Semi-Natural Open Space per 1,000 head of population. By 2040, there is due to be a shortfall of 1.48ha of Natural and Semi-Natural Open Space per 1,000 head of population. A deficit is identified in all analysis areas – *central, north, south, and west*
- 4.59. Access to ‘Local’ Natural and Semi-Natural Open Space is variable across the key settlements when applying the 2km accessibility standard and most areas do not have good access to this type and size of open space. Areas around March, Whittlesey and Ring’s End benefit from access to ‘Local’ sites. Access to the countryside through good quality recreational routes may in some instances mitigate poor access to Natural and Semi-Natural Open Space, through PROW or other recreational routes.
- 4.60. Figure 2 illustrates the areas with access to ‘Local’ Natural and Semi-Natural Open Spaces. As indicated on the map, there are particular deficiencies in access to ‘Local’ Natural and Semi-Natural Open Spaces in areas to the south of the district, such as Chatteris, Manea, Doddington and Wimblington, and in the north at Wisbech and surrounding villages.
- 4.61. For the purposes of this IDP, most open space provision required to meet the needs of development is considered ‘site-specific’. Open space provision will be secured through applying the standards recommended by the open space study. However, the following *strategic* open space requirements for Natural & Semi-Natural Open Spaces are identified (the geography corresponds to the analysis areas indicated by the open space study):
- ‘Local’ Natural and Semi-Natural Open Spaces (>2ha) in *central* analysis area – see *March Country Park (GI)*;
 - ‘Local’ Natural and Semi-Natural Open Spaces (>2ha) in *north* analysis area – see *Wisbech Country Park (GI)*;
 - ‘Local’ Natural and Semi-Natural Open Spaces (>2ha) in *south* analysis area; and
 - ‘Local’ Natural and Semi-Natural Open Spaces (>2ha) in *west* analysis area.

Figure 3: Access to Local Natural & Semi-Natural Green Space



4.62. The following ‘Green Infrastructure’ section identifies projects which will play a role in meeting’s the district’s needs for natural and semi-natural green space.

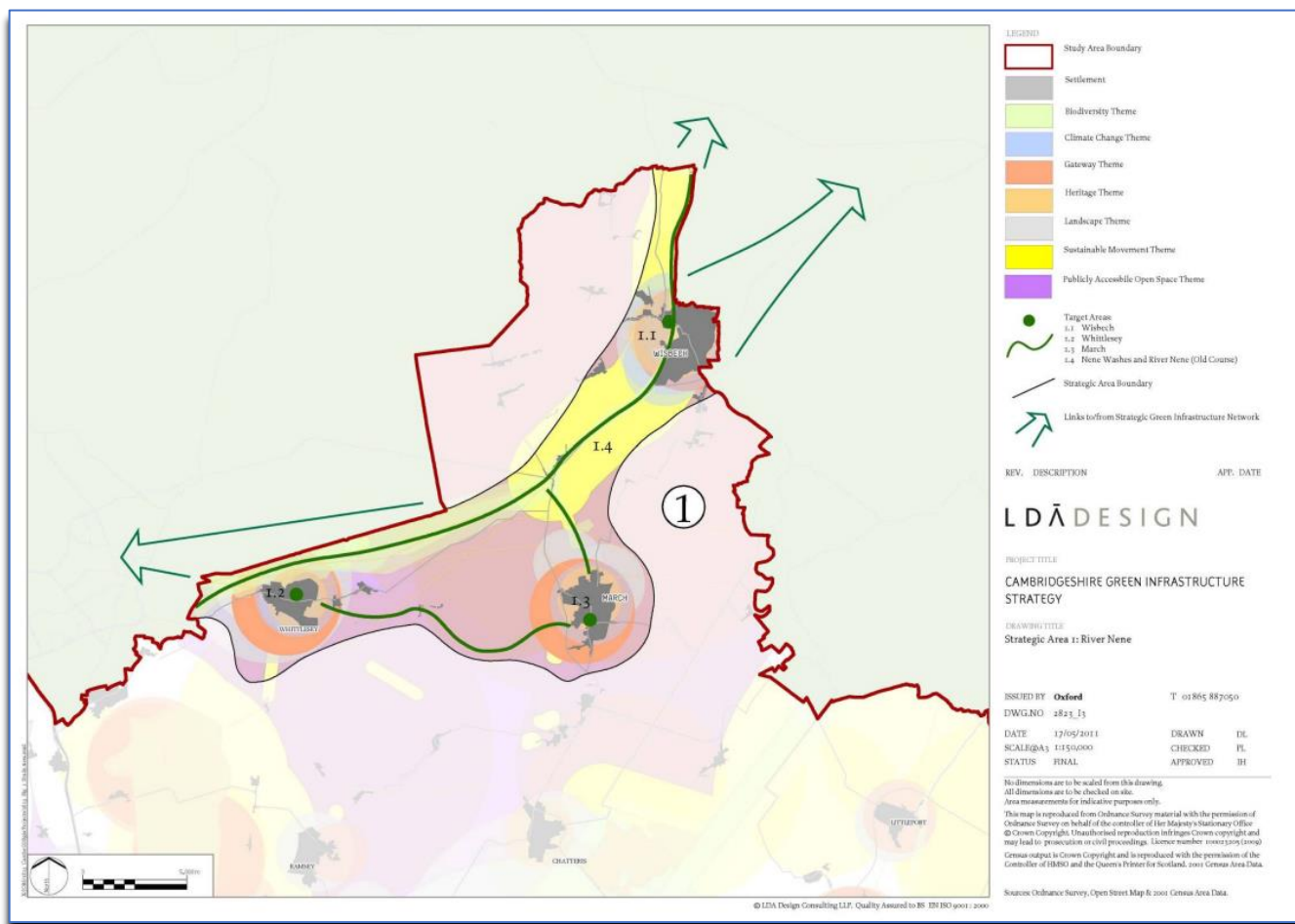
4.63. In addition, the Public Rights of Way network plays an important function in enabling movement through the countryside and to access natural spaces. In February 2022 FDC officers met with Cambridgeshire County Council’s Asset Information Definitive Map Manager and Asset Information Definitive Map Officer. From this engagement it was concluded that the Local Plan should:

- Improve routes and connections;
- Seek opportunities to create new bridleways and PROw around development sites to improve wider connections;
- Amenity value, support health and wellbeing;
- Retain green/natural character of PROw and not urbanise them; and
- Utilise opportunities to improve quality of routes to accommodate cycles and meet needs of people with disabilities (i.e. remove stiles)

Green Infrastructure

- 4.64. Green Infrastructure enhances biodiversity through creating, improving and connecting habitats. Where Green Infrastructure is has public access, it enables people to get closer to nature and provides natural and semi-natural open spaces for activities such as leisure walks, cycling and horse-riding.
- 4.65. The Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011)³⁵ seeks to create a multi-functional network of green infrastructure across the county. 'Strategic Area 1: River Nene' traverses the northern area of Fenland District, following the course of the River Nene, and encompasses the three market towns of Whittlesey, March and Wisbech and adjacent rural areas. The area includes statutory designated habitats, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, and Ramsar sites. Figure 3 shows the location of Strategic Area 1 and illustrates the locations of main themes.

Figure 4: GI Strategic Area 1: River Nene



- 4.66. The GI study identifies a number of Green Infrastructure themes, for investment in this strategic area:
- Biodiversity: through enhancing and protecting the nationally and internationally important nature conservation areas and the local network of drains and ditches that form an important network of water-based habitats.

³⁵ <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/media/2557/green-infrastructure-strategy.pdf>

- **Climate Change Adaptation:** by provision of urban cooling measures such as tree planting, local flood alleviation and green space creation.
- **Gateways:** developing gateways that act as nodes linking the market towns and strategic movement routes, navigable waterways and housing growth. Enhancing the navigable waterways to allow access to Green Infrastructure sites and the wider countryside and linking to adjacent major population growth in Peterborough
- **Heritage:** by using historic assets which are associated with the market towns and the network of medieval drains and other linear archaeological features.
- **Landscape:** contributing to landscape character through growth and regeneration of the market towns and through improving and maintaining the Nene Washes.
- **Publicly Accessible Open Space:** at present the area has a total deficiency in ANGSt at the 100ha plus and 500ha plus standards and a significant deficiency in ANGSt at the 2ha plus and 20ha plus standards.
- **Rights of Way:** by improving the Rights of Way network to allow access to Green Infrastructure sites and the wider countryside and linking to adjacent major population growth in Peterborough.

4.67. A number of strategic green infrastructure projects are identified for Strategic Area 1. These are:

- **Fens Adventurers Partnership: Green Fen Way:** The Green Fen Way project aims to make significant improvements to countryside access networks (both Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and permissive paths) in the Fens Adventurers area with the aim of benefiting rural tourism and businesses. The project will provide an important legacy for future projects to build on and will help to redress the balance of funding towards the Fens.
- **Fens Waterways Link:** The Fens Waterways Link (FWL) will enhance river navigation to connect the Cathedral Cities of Lincoln, Peterborough and Ely as well as King's Lynn, Denver, March, Ramsey, Huntingdon and Cambridge. Total cost £63.6m
- **Wisbech Country Park:** The objective is to overcome lack of accessible open space in Wisbech. The proposed location is around land owned by the National Trust and other parties in the west part of Wisbech and / or around the Sea Bank Scheduled Ancient Monument to the north west. However, at this stage the Local Development Plan is still being prepared and due to the uncertainty of large scale housing development occurring on the west side of Wisbech, a final site has yet to be identified. An Area of Search close to or within the existing settlement boundary of Wisbech should identify the preferred location for the country park in the near future.
- **March Country Park:** The objective is to overcome lack of accessible open space in March. An opportunity to provide an extension to West End Park as part of the College of West Anglia (COWA) proposals has previously been identified. However, at this stage, the Local Development Plan is still being prepared and a final site has yet to be identified. An Area of Search close to or within the existing settlement boundary should identify the preferred location for the country park in the near future.
- **Nene Washes and River Nene (Old Course):** Management of Nene Washes

4.68. The aims of the GI Strategy, and the projects identified by it, are not directly linked to growth – once implemented, the GI Strategy will deliver benefits to existing and future residents up to and beyond 2031.

4.69. However, there is a relationship with growth. For example, an increase in population increases the demand for access to natural and semi-natural green spaces. Natural England's Accessible Natural

Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) requires that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace:

- of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home;
- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home;
- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.

4.70. The GI Strategy recognises that implementation of the strategy will involve a range of differing funding sources and delivery mechanisms:

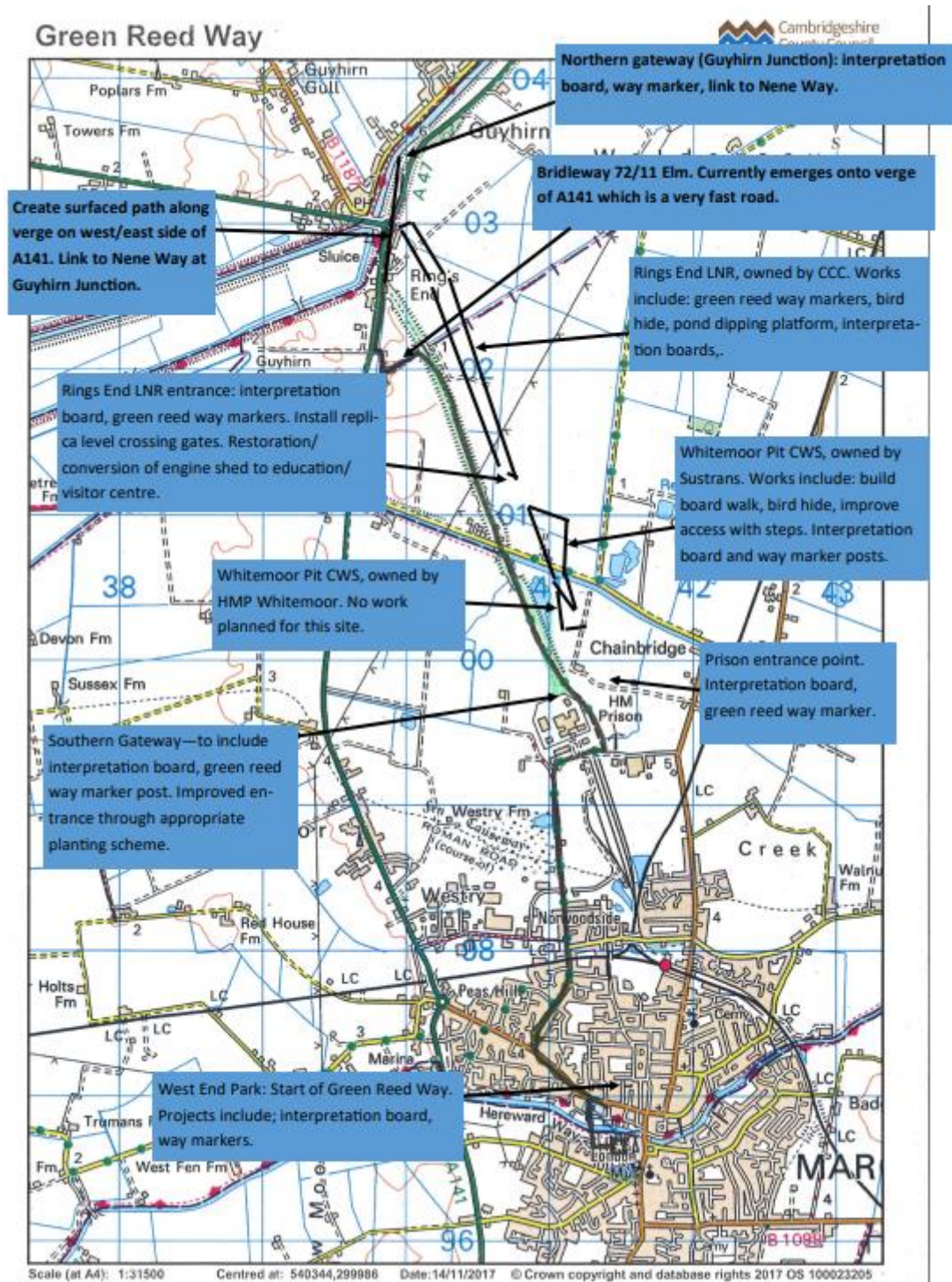
- Through the planning system, such as via s106 agreements.
- Higher level stewardship and entry level stewardship grants and English Woodland Grant Schemes made to farmers, landowners and land managers.
- Businesses and organisations may choose to financially support local Green Infrastructure improvements, for example as part of their corporate social responsibility programmes.
- A financial endowment is a transfer of money or property donated to an institution or Trust, which may come with stipulations regarding its usage.
- Charitable donations from private donors in larger or smaller sums can provide significant funding for organisations;
- The Landfill Communities Fund (formerly the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme) enables landfill site operators to claim tax credit for contributions they make to approved environmental bodies for spending on projects that benefit the environment.
- Tax Increment Financing will enable local authorities to borrow against future increases in business rates as a result of new development, to fund infrastructure and capital projects.
- Habitat Banking - revenues from development schemes requiring off-site mitigation of habitat loss are collected into a central fund and invested in specific habitat creation projects.
- Carbon Offsetting - this is a means of compensating for all or part of unavoidable carbon emissions made by businesses, organisations and individuals.
- EU funding - or replacement central government scheme in light of Brexit.
- Local Authority capital and revenue programmes
- With regard to those programmes that focus on public open space, publicly owned land, leisure services and highways/rights of way, etc there could be potential to support the delivery of the Strategic Network.
- Public agency revenue funding - for example, schemes such as Environmental Stewardship (ELS/HLS) and the English Woodland Grant Scheme.
- Lottery funds - the National Lottery funds environmental and Green Infrastructure projects through Lottery Funders.
- Third Sector inputs could include:
 - Voluntary contributions as part of community action
 - Third sector funds, e.g. RSPB, Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust, National Trust, British Horse Society
 - Charitable trusts
 - Community initiatives, e.g. co-operatives, community woodlands, community woodlands

Linear Parks

4.71. It is anticipated that the need for a Country Park at March will be met through the Green Reed Way Linear Park project. The Green Reed Way project will utilise and enhance the existing Public Rights of Way

network to improve connectivity between existing habitats and nature conservation sites, such as Local Nature Reserves and County Wildlife Sites. The project is being led by Cambridgeshire County Council.

Figure 5: Green Reed Way Linear Park project



4.72. Cambridgeshire County Council is exploring similar opportunities for linear park projects at Chatteris, Wisbech, Whittlesey, and Doddington and Wimblington. It is anticipated that such projects will contribute toward the provision of natural and semi-natural open spaces.

Utilities

Electricity & Gas

- 4.73. National Grid is required to put in place strategic improvements to the network that will satisfy expected growth in a realistic timescale. The Asset Management Plan (AMP) is prepared in advance of each five-year period to enable additional demand from expected growth to be met. The Council will consult National Grid during preparation of the Local Plan to ensure its investment plan reflects future demands.
- 4.74. Demand for electricity is likely to increase significantly over the plan period, due to regulatory requirements to reduce fossil fuel use – for example, through the adoption of electric vehicles and the move away from gas boilers.

Telecommunications

- 4.75. *Connecting Cambridgeshire*³⁶ the digital connectivity programme led by Cambridgeshire County Council, is rolling out superfast (and faster) broadband access to as many homes and businesses as possible that could not get it otherwise. Combined with commercial provision, the superfast broadband rollout has already reached over 98% of homes and businesses, which is above the national average, with plans to reach over 99% coverage.
- 4.76. The superfast broadband rollout is continuing with a further phase to fill remaining gaps in coverage – using the latest fibre to the premise (FTTP) technology to bring gigabit-capable connections through a combination of commercial and public investment. Take up of faster broadband across Cambridgeshire has been among the highest in the country – now over 70% with growing demand for gigabit-capable full fibre, offering future proof speeds of up to 1000Mbps.
- 4.77. Mobile coverage for voice and data (2G and 4G services) is below the England average in all areas of the county except the main cities causing widespread concern amongst businesses and communities across the region. The Connecting Cambridgeshire programme aims to improve network coverage so that people can make reliable mobile phone calls and use 4G across the whole geography of the county, including A and B roads, and rail services by 2022. Connecting Cambridgeshire is working with telecoms operators to improve broadband and mobile coverage across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- 4.78. Digital infrastructure is vital to quality of life for residents and to realising Fenland's aspirations for economic growth. There are currently a number of projects being run and supported by the Connecting Cambridgeshire team, these include:

Superfast Broadband & Full Fibre rollout

- 4.79. **Superfast Broadband (SFBB) Phase 4** - this project delivers superfast broadband (30mbps and above) to properties that would not be considered commercially viable and therefore would not be supplied with a superfast connection if left to the market. This ensures that superfast broadband is available to as many residents as possible.
- 4.80. **Public Access Wi-Fi & Public Sector Building Use (PSBU)** - this project is delivering free Wi-Fi to town halls and public buildings to allow residents and business to access services that they may not have otherwise been able to. The project is also delivering gigabit capable connections to public buildings that meet a number of requirements. It is anticipated that by delivering these services to public buildings that it will not only improve connectivity for users of the building but it will make the surrounding area more commercially viable to providers to build off the network that supplies the public buildings.

³⁶ <https://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/superfast-broadband/>

- 4.81. **Public Sector Asset Re-use (PSAR)** - This project is aimed at speeding up the delivery of gigabit capable broadband by opening up fibre ducts owned by Cambridgeshire County Council and the University of Cambridge to commercial providers via a joint venture called Light Blue Fibre. This reduces the amount of physical digging required by commercial providers to deploy their network therefore reducing cost, time and disruption to the public. The project is also deploying new fibre ducts to extend and join up the County Councils fibre duct network.
- 4.82. **Fibre ducting in transport schemes policy** - This Cambridgeshire County Council policy was developed by the Connecting Cambridgeshire team to ensure that fibre ducts are included in major transport schemes. Installing ducts whilst footway/cycleway/road are already being constructed or renewed significantly reduces the disruption and cost of deployment compared to retrospectively installing ducts that require the infrastructure to be dug up and reinstated. This is particularly important where schemes join between towns and villages as from a commercial perspective the ducts do not add much value in between locations as they do not provide many connections to properties. These council owned ducts can then be made commercially available via LBF.
- 4.83. **Enabling Digital Delivery (EDD) team** - The Enabling Digital Delivery team is the Connecting Cambridgeshire programmes barrier busting team. The team are responsible for working across all stakeholder groups to understand their requirements and develop processes and solutions to overcome any issues they may be arise in the deployment of digital infrastructure. The team is also responsible for project managing the installation of fibre ducts in appropriate schemes.
- 4.84. **Rural Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (& top up)** - The DCMS funded Rural Gigabit Voucher scheme allows residents and businesses in rural locations to apply for a voucher to cover all or part of the cost to deliver gigabit capable services to their property. This can be used with any commercial provider signed up to the scheme and vouchers can be pooled together by residents and businesses in any given area. Connecting Cambridgeshire in partnership with the CPCA have also agreed local funding to top up these vouchers further to cover even more of the cost of the rollout.
- 4.85. **Outside/In programme** - The government are investing £5bn in rolling out gigabit capable broadband to the hardest to reach and therefore most costly areas of the UK to deploy broadband. It is anticipated that by building the network out to the hardest to reach places that it will make more locations commercially viable in-between the urban centres and the hard to reach rural locations that are being deployed to as part of this project.

Mobile Improvements

- 4.86. **Mobile coverage improvements** - This work centres on an independent mobile coverage survey commissioned by the Connecting Cambridgeshire team. The survey identified locations with poor coverage by at least one of the four main mobile network operators (MNOs) and a list of 20 locations was created where mobile coverage needed to be improved most urgently. The team are liaising directly with MNOs to seek solutions to these areas of poor coverage. The team are also liaising with developers and MNOs to encourage the rollout of improved mobile coverage on new developments where it is needed.
- 4.87. **Shared Rural Network (SRN)** - The SRN project is a government project to invest £1billion in conjunction with the four main MNOs to increase 4G coverage to 95% of the UK landmass by focussing on poorly served rural areas. The Connecting Cambridgeshire team will be monitoring and feeding in to this project to support improvements required in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Commercial rollout

- 4.88. **Gigabit Capable Broadband rollout** - The team are supporting commercial providers rolling out gigabit capable broadband across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough working with planners, street works and asset management teams. There are currently multiple providers rolling out gigabit capable services across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. Other providers are upgrading their entire network to provide gigabit capable services. The following commercial gigabit-capable providers are known to be working in Cambridgeshire: *Openreach, Virgin Media, City Fibre, Gigaclear, County Broadband, Cambridge Fibre, Hyperoptic, Air Broadband and Bridge Fibre.*
- 4.89. **Mobile mast application process** - in recent months a number of planning applications have been received for masts in Cambridge & Peterborough to allow the rollout of 5G. A majority of these planning permissions have been refused due to the increased mast height required for 5G and the team are working with planning authorities and the MNO's supply chain to ascertain how applications can be supported to increase approved planning applications.

Potential future developments and requirements in digital connectivity

- 4.90. The rollout of gigabit capable broadband is fundamental to improving reliability and performance of personal and business internet as well as being a prerequisite for 5G connectivity that itself will facilitate the rollout of innovative new technologies that rely on ultrafast and low latency (minimal delay) communications. Key areas that are expected to benefit from the improved digital connectivity include:
- 4.91. Home working & Education – there is an increasing need to have more reliable and balanced upload and download speeds as more people work from home requiring them to upload content as well as download. Full fibre can more easily accommodate this requirement.
- 4.92. Future services in transport including both autonomous vehicles & traffic management as well as Healthcare will all require reliable, high speed and low latency communications to ensure that they can operate safely and react to changing situations in almost real time. This connectivity can be delivered through gigabit capable services and 5G.
- 4.93. Research & Development will require high speed and low latency communications to allow researchers to collaborate around the globe enabling them to share information in as close to real time as possible.
- 4.94. Agritech and environmental monitoring will require connectivity that can cover large areas and provide data in near real time.
- 4.95. Mobile coverage which traditionally operates using a macro-cell solution consisting of relatively large masts with aerials on top and most often located in verges, fields & on rooftops will need to be supported by a new deployment method known as small/micro-cells particularly in the case of 5G. Small/micro-cells are small aerials that can be located on existing street furniture such as street lighting columns and buildings. These will be required for the latest 5G technology that due to the wavelength on which it operates cannot transmit as far as other mobile technologies or pass through or reflect off objects as easily and therefore requires a denser network of aerials.
- 4.96. As more devices get connected to the internet there must be sufficient capacity for this data to be sent. This increase in data requirements can be future-proofed by deploying full fibre and 5G technologies that have a much higher bandwidth and are therefore able to carry more data at any given time.

Summary of key Government policies

- 4.97. The Government intends to deliver nationwide gigabit-capable broadband as soon as possible, and aims for the majority of the population to have 5G coverage by 2027. Details of these can be found at the Digital Connectivity Portal³⁷.
- 4.98. **The Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review**³⁸ highlights the importance that both fixed and mobile networks will play in enabling economic growth. In particular that full fibre and 5G are the long term solutions to the speed, resilience and reliability that will be required by consumers and businesses. The review details a number of ways on how wider rollout can be achieved including reducing barriers and encouraging commercial investment.
- 4.99. **The Digital Economy Act 2017** set's out the Government's role in defining the strategic priorities and outcomes in relation to telecoms and includes the creation of a broadband Universal Service Order to give all premises in the UK a legal right to request a minimum standard of broadband connectivity which is initially expected to be 10mbps however Ofcom will be empowered to increase the minimum broadband speed requirements.
- 4.100. **The Electronic Communication Code** provide a set of rights to providers by which they can install and maintain apparatus on, under and over both public and private land. Effectively ensuring that all properties and areas can be provided with connectivity without being unnecessarily hindered by both public and private land owners.

Strategy for digital infrastructure provision

- 4.101. There is a relationship between the provision of digital infrastructure and the delivery of transport infrastructure projects. As discussed above, Cambridgeshire County Council's *Fibre ducting in transport schemes policy* ensures that any major highway scheme that takes place in Fenland will be assessed to identify if it is appropriate for fibre ducting. For example, fibre ducting has been installed under the new King's Dyke crossing to futureproof this section of road and support connectivity to future developments. Several small sections of ducting to be installed in Wisbech as part of the major highway works taking place in the town. This 'dig once' approach reduces costs, provides efficiency, and reduces disruption by avoiding the need to retrospectively install digital connectivity infrastructure. The ducts are available on a commercial basis to full fibre providers via Light Blue Fibre.
- 4.102. Gigabit Capable commercial rollout is taking place in the following locations:
- **CityFibre** have began rolling out full fibre in **March** and have announced **Whittlesey** and **Yaxley** as planned locations.
 - **Netomnia** are currently rolling out full fibre in and around **Wisbech**.
- 4.103. The free to use 'Cambs Wi-Fi' project is planned to be rolled out in March and Whittlesey town centres (at present it is available at public libraries and council offices), with the potential to be made available in the rural area at some village halls.
- 4.104. For the purposes of this IDP, the following digital infrastructure projects to be delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council are identified:

³⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/digital-connectivity-portal#:~:text=The%20Digital%20Connectivity%20Portal%20provides,improving%20connectivity%20in%20local%20areas.&text=The%20Government%20intends%20to%20deliver,have%205G%20coverage%20by%202027>

³⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-telecoms-infrastructure-review>

- Superfast Broadband & Full Fibre rollout
 - Superfast Broadband (SFBB) Phase 4
 - Public Access Wi-Fi & Public Sector Building Use (PSBU)
 - Public Sector Asset Re-use (PSAR)
 - Fibre ducting in transport schemes policy
 - Enabling Digital Delivery (EDD) team
 - Rural Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (& top up)
 - Outside/In programme

- Mobile Improvements
 - Mobile coverage improvements
 - Shared Rural Network (SRN)

- Commercial rollout
 - Gigabit Capable Broadband rollout
 - Mobile mast application process

Waste management

4.105. Most forms of development and activities create waste. In planning for sustainable communities it is important to ensure that these wastes are managed appropriately in order to avoid harm to human health and the environment, and maximise resource recovery.

4.106. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan was adopted in 2021 and plans for future minerals extraction and waste management needs. The MWLP indicates that overall, the plan area is relatively well placed in terms of moving towards achieving net self-sufficiency. Therefore, no site specific allocations for new waste management facilities are identified in the MWLP given the following factors:

- the indicative future waste management needs of the plan area (to achieve net self-sufficiency) are comparatively low;
- the potential for the existing material recycling capacity to be greater than captured;
- other recovery capacity associated with permitted but not operational sites considered likely to come forward in the near future;
- and that hazardous wastes are generally produced in lower quantities and managed at a wider scale. However, the Plan's indicative capacity needs do not form a ceiling;
- where justified and in line with the wider aims and policies of this plan the Councils would be supportive of opportunities for additional capacity to be approved for a range of waste management methods where this will drive waste up the waste management hierarchy.

4.107. Cambridgeshire County Council has confirmed that Fenland district is currently well served for Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) with sites in March, Whittlesea and Wisbech. However the sites are aged and not constructed to the latest best practice standards and may need expanding/refurbishment over the course of the plan period, depending on the rates of population growth and increases demand for the service. The March HRC site has limited planning life remaining, so the County Council has recently started a project with a view to relocating and reconstructing the site to allow continued HRC provision for residents in March and surrounding communities. The County Council is also in the process of updating its HRC strategy with a view to identifying and prioritising the HRC sites across the whole Cambridgeshire network where improvements are required.

- 4.108. The County Council also owns a Waste transfer station in March where waste collected by district council colleagues is bulked up for onward transfer to treatment and reprocessing sites so the County Council has the transfer station infrastructure to meet current local authority needs.
- 4.109. Cambridgeshire County Council's waste partnership 'RECAP' is proposing to undertake an assessment of future waste infrastructure requirements for the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in light of forthcoming legislation changes which are likely to mandate changes to the ways that waste is collected from 2025 onwards however we are still awaiting clarity from government on the specifics of the changes and funding arrangements (due later this year) before that work can commence.

Flood risk, water supply and wastewater

- 4.110. The Council commissioned the Fenland Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment & Outline Water Cycle Study (SFRA & WCS) to identify risk from flooding and effects on the water environment and water-related infrastructure.

Flood Risk

- 4.111. Fenland is vulnerable to flooding from a variety of sources, with much of the area lying within Flood Zone 3. The market towns of March, Whittlesey, and Chatteris, around half of Wisbech, and many of the villages are located on 'islands' of high ground above surrounding lower-lying land. There is pumped drainage to most of the district, and flood defences are in place to minimise flood risk to existing development and agricultural land. Due to the historic drainage of the area, the majority of the land is at a lower level than the arterial drainage channels, creating a significant residual risk if the flood defences were to be breached or overtopped.
- 4.112. An assessment of the risk of flooding for all proposed development sites has been carried out as part of the SFRA & WCS. This assessment includes the Sequential Test, through which the locations of the sites are reviewed against the Flood Zones Map, to enable development to be steered towards areas at lowest risk of flooding.
- 4.113. The SFRA & WCS makes the following policy recommendations for the Local Plan:
- Sequential approach to development: It is recommended that the sequential approach is adopted for all future developments within Fenland District. New development and re-development of land should wherever possible seek opportunities to reduce the overall level of flood risk at a site.
 - Sequential and Exception tests: Much of Fenland District is at high risk of flooding from tidal, fluvial and surface water sources. Proposed development sites will need to satisfy the Sequential Test, in accordance with the NPPF, and sites located in areas at risk of flooding will also need to pass the Exception Test. Fenland District Council should use the information in this SFRA to inform decisions on which development sites to take forward in their Local Plan.
 - Site-specific Flood Risk Assessments: For developments that cannot be located in Flood Zone 1, more detailed assessment is needed to verify flood extent to inform the sequential approach within the site and demonstrate (where necessary) if the Sequential and Exception Tests are satisfied. The latest climate change allowances should be taken into account. Residual risk (overtopping, breach and pump failure), and the impact on floodplain storage must be considered.
 - Surface water management and SuDS: Developers should consult the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD which provides guidance on the approach that should be taken to design new developments to manage and mitigate flood risk and include sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

- Flood resistance and resilience: Resistance and resilience measures will be required if buildings are situated in the flood risk area. Developments should comply with the Environment Agency’s guidance on finished floor levels. Safe access and egress to a locally identified refuge area will need to be demonstrated at all development sites. Flood warning and evacuation plans should be prepared for those areas known to be at risk of flooding.

4.114. The WCS & SFRA indicates that there is no requirement for additional strategic flood management infrastructure to meet growth needs. Therefore, for the purposes of this IDP, no flood management infrastructure is required.

4.115. However, the WCS & SFRA also notes that flood management infrastructure throughout Fenland District is expensive to maintain and replace and has a high carbon cost. As such it may not be sustainable in the long term, and should be explored in future iterations of the IDP.

Water resources and supply

4.116. Fenland District is located within the South Fenland Water Resource Zone. Water is abstracted from a combination of groundwater in the Norfolk Chalk aquifers and the River Nar. Based on Anglian Water’s Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP, 2019), the existing water resources and associated supply infrastructure in the South Fenland WRZ will not be able to accommodate the forecast supply demand for each of the potential Growth Options without demand management and improved transfers between Resource Zones.

4.117. The WRMP sets out a strategy for water resources and supply which redresses the deficit and allows sufficient headroom for uncertainties in development type and capacity. However, Fenland District is located within an area under considerable water availability stress. Lowering consumption levels is therefore a priority to offset resource development, and Anglian Water aims to use a combined strategy of smart metering, water efficiency and leakage reduction to reduce demand. A scheme is also proposed to improve the clean water network transfer capability between Ruthamford North and Sound Fenland, to improve supply security and to transfer water to Resource Zones to the east. The WRMP also identifies the potential for a new reservoir in the adjacent North Fenland Water Resource Zone which could have a positive impact on water supply in the district in the longer term.

4.118. For the purposes of this IDP, the following infrastructure projects and measures are identified to reduce demand for, and increase supply of water:

- Smart metering, water efficiency and leakage reduction to reduce demand.
- Improvements to the clean water network transfer capability between Ruthamford North and Sound Fenland, to improve supply security and to transfer water to Resource Zones to the east.
- Potential for a new reservoir in the North Fenland Water Resource Zone to increase water supply in Fenland district.

Wastewater collection, treatment and water quality

4.119. Fenland is served by ten Water Recycling Centres (WRC). The current growth risk assessments for these WRCs indicates that further capacity is likely to be required within the current Asset Management Plan period (2020-2025). However, no additional investment in the WRCs is likely other than that currently planned for 2020-2025. Anglian Water has confirmed that when growth locations, numbers and phasing are confirmed then this would be factored into future WRC investment plans, which would be confirmed by Ofwat as the regulator of Anglian Water.

4.120. Improvements to the foul sewer network are generally funded/part funded through developer contribution via the relevant sections of the Water Industry Act 1991. The cost and extent of the required network improvement are investigated and determined on a case-by-case basis when Anglian Water is approached by a developer. Developments which come forward before 2025 would fund sewer network improvements to make the most efficient and lowest carbon solution use of existing WRC headroom.

4.121. At a more strategic level, the required infrastructure upgrades will be assessed once growth locations and expected build rates per site are established and adopted in the Local Plan. Anglian Water has provided details of expected investments to provide further capacity within the existing foul sewerage network during the 2020-2025 period. In addition, AW supports the use of SuDS to remove the need for surface water to be managed via the public sewer network.

4.122. For the purposes of this IDP, the following infrastructure item is identified:

- Implementation of infrastructure upgrades for the collection and treatment of wastewater and enhancement of water quality, as identified by Anglian Water's WRMP.

Appendix 1: Summary of Infrastructure Projects

NB. Transport infrastructure projects are not included in this Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Such requirements will be incorporated into the IDP on completion of the Local Plan Transport Assessment.

Ref	Theme	Type	Project	Relevant evidence/strategy	Settlement	Units	Est. Cost	Timescale	Prioritisation	Poten funding source
CF01	Community Facilities	Community halls	Provision of community hall(s) to serve site <i>Land South of Chatteris</i> , 1,000 dwellings (Site ref: 40384)	Village and Community Halls Design Guidance Note, Sport England	Chatteris	Equivalent to 2.5 small halls	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Developed contribution
CF02	Community Facilities	Community halls	Additional community hall provision at Chatteris	Village and Community Halls Design Guidance Note, Sport England	Chatteris	Equivalent to 4.2 small halls	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Developed contribution
CF03	Community Facilities	Community halls	Additional community hall provision at Coates	Village and Community Halls Design Guidance Note, Sport England	Coates	Equivalent to 1.1 small halls	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Developed contribution
CF04	Community Facilities	Community halls	Additional community hall provision at Leverington	Village and Community Halls Design Guidance Note, Sport England	Leverington	Equivalent to 1.1 small halls	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Developed contribution

CF05	Community Facilities	Community halls	Provision of community hall(s) to serve site <i>Land north of Knight's End Road and East of the A141</i> , 1,200 dwellings (Site ref: 40285)	Village and Community Halls Design Guidance Note, Sport England	March	Equivalent to 3 small halls	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Develop contri
CF06	Community Facilities	Community halls	Additional community hall provision at March	Village and Community Halls Design Guidance Note, Sport England	March	Equivalent to 6.6 small halls	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Develop contri
CF07	Community Facilities	Community halls	Additional community hall provision at Whittlesey	Village and Community Halls Design Guidance Note, Sport England	Whittlesey	Equivalent to 2.2 small halls	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Develop contri
CF08	Community Facilities	Community halls	Additional community hall provision at Wisbech	Village and Community Halls Design Guidance Note, Sport England	Wisbech	Equivalent to 2.4 small halls	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Develop contri
CF09	Community Facilities	Libraries	Expansion of library facilities at existing Fenland libraries and mobile library services	CCC Planning Obligations SPD	All / Multiple	To maintain population standards set out in CCC Planning Obligations SPD	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Camb Count Develop contri

CF10	Education	Primary Education	Expansion of Cromwell Primary School	Cambs County Council (LEA) assessment of Growth Strategy	Chatteris	1FE / 210 places	£ 3,662,610.00	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Critical	Develop contribution to Cambs County
E02	Education	Primary Education	Construction of a new 2FE primary school OR expansion of existing primary schools	Cambs County Council (LEA) assessment of Growth Strategy	Chatteris	2FE / 420 places	£ 8,699,460.00	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Critical	Develop contribution to Cambs County
E03	Education	Primary Education	Construction of a new primary school, to provide additional capacity and enable the re-location of the existing Coates Primary School.	Cambs County Council (LEA) assessment of Growth Strategy	Coates	2FE / 420 places	£ 8,699,460.00	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Critical	Develop contribution to Cambs County
E04	Education	Primary Education	Expansion of Lionel Walden Primary School, utilising land adjacent to existing school site.	Cambs County Council (LEA) assessment of Growth Strategy	Doddington	1FE / 210 places	£ 3,662,610.00	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Critical	Develop contribution to Cambs County

E05	Education	Primary Education	Expansion of Friday Bridge Primary School	Cambs County Council (LEA) assessment of Growth Strategy	Friday Bridge	1FE / 210 places	£ 3,662,610.00	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Critical	Develop contribution to Cambs County
E06	Education	Primary Education	Expansion of Manea Primary School	Cambs County Council (LEA) assessment of Growth Strategy	Manea	0.5 FE / 105 places	£ 1,831,305.00	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Critical	Develop contribution to Cambs County
E07	Education	Primary Education	New primary school located at the 'March West' strategic development site	Cambs County Council (LEA) assessment of Growth Strategy	March	2FE / 420 places	£ 12,060,840.00	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Critical	Develop contribution to Cambs County
E08	Education	Primary Education	Expansion of Neale Wade Academy to provide an 'all-through' school.	Cambs County Council (LEA) assessment of Growth Strategy	March	2FE / 420 places	£ 8,699,460.00	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Critical	Develop contribution to Cambs County
E09	Education	Secondary Education	Expansion of Cromwell Community College	Cambs County Council (LEA) assessment of Growth Strategy	Chatteris	2FE / 300 places	£ 7,203,900.00	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Critical	Develop contribution to Cambs County

E10	Education	Secondary Education	Expansion of Neale Wade Academy	Cambs County Council (LEA) assessment of Growth Strategy	March	2FE / 300 places	£ 7,203,900.00	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Critical	Develop contribution to Cambs County
E11	Education	Secondary Education	Expansion of Sir Harry Smith Community College	Cambs County Council (LEA) assessment of Growth Strategy	Whittlesey	1FE / 150 places	£ 7,203,900.00	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Critical	Develop contribution to Cambs County
E12	Education	Secondary Education	New DfE Free School at Wisbech	Cambs County Council (LEA) assessment of Growth Strategy	Wisbech	4FE / 600 places	£ 23,000,000.00	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Critical	Develop contribution to Cambs County

GI01	Green Infrastructure	Green Corridors	Fens Adventurers Partnership: Green Fen Way	Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011)	All / Multiple	N/a	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Develop contributions Fenland Council Cambridge County National Charities voluntary sector
GI02	Green Infrastructure	Green Corridors	Fens Waterways Link	Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011)	All / Multiple	N/a	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Charities voluntary sector National Cambridge County Fenland Council
GI03	Green Infrastructure	Green Corridors	Nene Washes and River Nene (Old Course)	Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011)	All / Multiple	N/a	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Develop contributions Cambridge County

GI04	Green Infrastructure	Open space	March Country Park - Green Reed Way Linear Park Project	Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011)	March	N/a	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Essential	Developing contribution to Cambridge County
GI05	Green Infrastructure	Open space	Wisbech Country Park	Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2011)	Wisbech	N/a	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Essential	Developing contribution to Cambridge County
SFOS01	Sports Facilities and Open Space	Indoor sports facilities	Refurbishment and expansion of Chatteris Leisure Centre, with additional provision of: - 4 court sports hall	Fenland District Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 – 2031	Chatteris	1	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Developing contribution to Cambridge County
SFOS02	Sports Facilities and Open Space	Indoor sports facilities	Refurbishment and expansion of George Campbell Leisure Centre, with additional provision of: - 6 or 8 court sports hall - Additional water space needed to meet demands of population growth	Fenland District Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 – 2031	March	1	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Developing contribution to Cambridge County

SFOS03	Sports Facilities and Open Space	Indoor sports facilities	Replacement of existing facilities at Manor Leisure Centre, including: - Activity Hall - Swimming Pool	Fenland District Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 – 2031	Whittlesey	1	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Develop contribution to Cambridgeshire County
SFOS04	Sports Facilities and Open Space	Indoor sports facilities	Refurbishment and expansion of Hudson Leisure Centre, with additional provision of: - 6 or 8 court sports hall - Additional water space needed to meet demands of population growth	Fenland District Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy 2016 – 2031	Wisbech	1	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	High priority	Develop contribution to Cambridgeshire County
SFOS05	Sports Facilities and Open Space	Open space	‘Local’ Natural and Semi-Natural Open Spaces (>2ha) in south analysis area.	Fenland Open Space Study 2021	All / Multiple	N/a	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Essential	Develop contribution to Cambridgeshire County
SFOS06	Sports Facilities and Open Space	Open space	‘Local’ Natural and Semi-Natural Open Spaces (>2ha) in west analysis area.	Fenland Open Space Study 2021	All / Multiple	N/a	£ -	Medium term (within 6 – 10 years)	Essential	Develop contribution to Cambridgeshire County

U01	Utilities	Digital Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superfast Broadband & Full Fibre rollout <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Superfast Broadband (SFBB) Phase 4 - Public Access Wi-Fi & Public Sector Building Use (PSBU) - Public Sector Asset Re-use (PSAR) - Fibre ducting in transport schemes policy - Enabling Digital Delivery (EDD) team - Rural Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme (& top up) - Outside/In programme • Mobile Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobile coverage improvements - Shared Rural Network (SRN) • Commercial rollout <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gigabit Capable Broadband rollout - Mobile mast application process 	Connecting Cambridgeshire	All / Multiple	N/a	£ -	Short term (within 0 – 5 years)	Essential	Camb Count
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U02	Utilities	Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart metering, water efficiency and leakage reduction to reduce demand. • Improvements to the clean water network transfer capability between Ruthamford North and Sound Fenland, to improve supply security and to transfer water to Resource Zones to the east. • Potential for a new reservoir in the North Fenland Water Resource Zone to increase water supply in Fenland district. 	Water Resource Management Plan (Anglian Water)	All / Multiple	N/a	£ -	Short term (within 0 – 5 years)	Essential	Utilities provided
U03	Utilities	Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of infrastructure upgrades for the collection and treatment of wastewater and enhancement of water quality, as identified by Anglian Water’s WRMP. 	Water Resource Management Plan (Anglian Water)	All / Multiple	N/a	£ -	Short term (within 0 – 5 years)	Essential	Utilities provided