



Combined Authority Board

04 September 2024

Title:	Review of Investment Concept Papers
Report of:	Janice Gotts, Executive Director Resources
Lead Member:	Mayor Dr Nik Johnson
Public Report:	Yes
Key Decision:	No
Voting Arrangements:	Simple majority of voting members

Recommendations:

A	To approve the concept paper for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Impact to be developed as a formal business case.
B	To approve the concept paper for Delivery of Digital Connectivity Strategy 2025-2029 to be developed as a formal business case.

Strategic Objective(s):

The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):

X	Achieving ambitious skills and employment opportunities
X	Achieving good growth
X	Increased connectivity
X	Enabling resilient communities
X	Achieving Best Value and High Performance

1. Purpose

1.1	To approve the concept papers for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Impact, and Delivery of Digital Connectivity Strategy 2025-2029 to be developed as a formal business case for consideration, recognising that the funding is to be identified.
-----	--

2. Proposal

2.1	The Single Assurance Framework (SAF) is a tool that enables the CPCA to develop and deliver successful programmes and projects and explain the clear rationale through concept papers and business cases on how its strategic objectives will be delivered.
2.2	The SAF has been live since June 2024 and the Investment Panel and Investment Committee have been established to support its delivery.

2.3	The first step for new project or programme delivery is the development of a concept paper. A concept paper is the Combined Authority's entrance document into the SAF and it aims to provide the required information to enable early assessment and consideration of an investment proposal. It is, therefore, a short document with high level information.
2.4	Concept proposals are initially reviewed by the officer led Investment Panel which consists of members of the Corporate Management Team (CMT) as well as officers from enabling services such as legal, finance and procurement. Service expert leads are invited to present proposals and respond to questions and provide clarifications before the concepts are taken forward. The next stage is for proposals to be presented to the Investment Committee for noting, and any further comment, prior to being considered by the CPCA Board. The Board will determine if the concept is a priority and should be developed into a formal business case, which will include identifying the potential funding routes.
2.5	The concepts within this report have previously been presented to the Investment Panel at its meeting on 29 July 2024, sponsored by the relevant Executive Director. They will be considered by the Investment Committee on 29 August for comment which can be reported back to the Board, however, the Investment Committee meeting had not yet taken place at the time of writing this report and any feedback will, therefore, be provided directly at the Board.
2.6	At present neither of the concept proposals have specific funding identified in the Authority's MTFP and therefore they are being developed as pipeline projects and in anticipation of funding becoming available; this may include reprioritisation of the current programme. If the projects are confirmed as priorities by the Board, then work will continue to identify potential funding opportunities for consideration as part of the business case.
2.7	<p>Below is a description for each project. The more detailed concept papers are attached to the report as Appendices A and B respectively.</p> <p>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Impact (£0.996m revenue):</p> <p>This is a business mentoring, coaching and supporting growth programme for the social enterprise, charity and third sector across the CPCA area, combining economic and social impacts.</p> <p>At present the social enterprise ecosystem is considered as disjointed and is not able to facilitate full development and sustainability of social and third sector enterprises. Therefore, the potential for sustainable solutions to local social and environmental problems through trade and community wealth building is not being fully realised.</p> <p>It is proposed that a social enterprise ecosystem tied together under the Social Enterprise East of England (SEEE) strategy with a consortium of trusted organisations serving the varied support needs of diverse stakeholders/beneficiaries including enterprising charities grow a trading activity through the range of social enterprises to social impact businesses. The regional pilot which was recently undertaken demonstrated this is a highly effective way to support this sector and area of the economy which informs and frames this new project concept as a new project to start and scale up support from the pilot programme. This new project will draw continuity off the pilot, from a day-to-day management point of view but this new project concept will be managed, monitored and evaluated, particularly as the pilot was funded via other programmes and this will be a new project that takes the learning from the pilot.</p> <p>The anticipated performance is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 375 organisations complete intensive training. Made up of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 200 organisations complete start and growth programmes – 175 directly supported ventures on a geographical basis (Fenland, Peterborough, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire but not duplicating any existing support in Cambridge City) plus SEEE and Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) i.e. approx. 25 per district/support organisation. • Across the 375 organisations the approximate split is 125 new social enterprises created; 125 existing social enterprises grow or survive; 125 charity/community organisations grow or survive • Specific KPIs can be mapped across all key outcomes for onward reporting including founders/leaders with increased skill set and confidence; employment increase/safeguarding,

new products/services developed, investment readiness and funds raised; social/environmental impact achieved.

The concept paper, in full, is attached at Appendix A.

Delivery of Digital Connectivity Strategy 2025-2029 (£2.25m in year 1; £4.75m for years 2-4, mainly capital):

This project is to implement the refreshed Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Digital Connectivity Strategy 2025-2029 by working with [Connecting Cambridgeshire](#). The strategy aims to deliver a future-facing, long-lasting digital infrastructure, ensuring that residents and businesses have the necessary access to digital connectivity. This builds on the Strategy 2021/2025. The Strategy will be presented to Transport and Infrastructure Committee in September 2024 and is aligned with the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan adopted in November 2023. The focus of the concept paper and budget work is on year 1 (2025/26), with indications of the requirements for years 2-4 also included but to be considered as part of the MTFP review process in due course.

The strategy aims to deliver comprehensive digital connectivity across three key themes, and the project is seeking funding to support these initiatives in 2025/26 :

- Digital Infrastructure – aims to provide comprehensive digital connectivity to all communities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, meeting the connectivity needs of both residents and businesses. This initiative prioritises future-proof technologies such as full fibre, 4G, and 5G, alongside other advanced wireless communication solutions.
- Innovation – fostering and showcasing innovative solutions that deliver diverse benefits for residents, visitors, and businesses. It aims to attract both commercial and government investment to stimulate innovation and promote data-driven decision-making across the region. A key component involves testing and trailing innovative solutions to ensure their effectiveness and scalability. This workstream is committed to closely collaborating with industry partners to test cutting-edge technologies and enable pilot opportunities. By doing so, we aim to refine and validate these innovations before they are scaled up or fully rolled out.
- Inclusion – empowering our residents and businesses to develop the skills and confidence they require to make the most of the digital connectivity available to them while raising awareness of the advantages of online access, promoting affordable connectivity, and ensuring access to necessary devices.

The benefits of the investment are summarised below.

- Number of new startups and small businesses enabled by digital connectivity would lead to increase in Gross Value Added (GVA).
- Decrease in daily commuting distances
- Improved access to services
- Increase in the number of households with access to digital devices
- Percentage of the population with basic to advanced digital literacy skills
- Efforts to improve digital connectivity ensure that underserved and remote areas have access to high-speed internet, reducing social and economic disparities.

The concept paper, in full, is attached at Appendix B. The Service is seeking agreement to funding for 2025/26 by reviewing the budgets from other underspending within Place and Connectivity areas. This will ensure this vital work is continued and allow time for longer term planning. It does not commit the Authority to future funding beyond 2025/26. However, the digital connectivity strategy, if approved, will require further investment for years 2-4 which may take the total sum required to c£7m and will need to be considered as part of the planning for the Authority's MTFP.

2.8 Future Business Case Governance Route subject to the approval of the Concept Paper

The governance route for business case approval is dependent on the financial value of the project as follows:

Project Costs

- above £5m – the proposal will be considered by Investment Committee for comment before being presented to the CPCA Board for approval

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • between £1m and up to £5m – the proposal will be presented to the Investment Committee for approval • up to £1m – the proposal will be presented to the Chief Executive for approval and Investment Committee and the Board will be informed of any decisions at its next available meeting. <p>All items will be considered by the Investment Panel in the first instance before proceeding to the next stage of approval.</p> <p>Currently the projects within this report, if approved, will remain as part of a planned development pipeline until the business case is developed and approved, including the identification of appropriate funding.</p>
--	---

2.9	<p>The appropriate approval mechanism for each project is summarised in the table below, based on the current estimated project cost. However, it is important to note that the estimated project cost between concept and business case stage may change as further work is done on defining and designing the project. If the value changes, then potentially this will impact on the approval route.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Project name</th> <th>Cost of project (CPCA contribution if different)</th> <th>Revenue or Capital</th> <th>Business Case Governance route</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Impact</td> <td>£0.996m</td> <td>Revenue</td> <td>a) Investment Panel b) Chief Executive Approval</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Delivery of Digital Connectivity Strategy 2025-2026</td> <td>Funds requested, at present, are up to £2.25m which will be sought from other Place and Connectivity budgets, noting that there is a further £4.75m to be requested for years 2-4. <i>Please also see comments in paragraph 2.7.</i></td> <td>Capital in the main, however, there may be some revenue implications as the detail is worked through.</td> <td>a) Investment Panel b) Investment Committee c) CPCA Board (<i>when considering the overall request</i>)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Project name	Cost of project (CPCA contribution if different)	Revenue or Capital	Business Case Governance route	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Impact	£0.996m	Revenue	a) Investment Panel b) Chief Executive Approval	Delivery of Digital Connectivity Strategy 2025-2026	Funds requested, at present, are up to £2.25m which will be sought from other Place and Connectivity budgets, noting that there is a further £4.75m to be requested for years 2-4. <i>Please also see comments in paragraph 2.7.</i>	Capital in the main, however, there may be some revenue implications as the detail is worked through.	a) Investment Panel b) Investment Committee c) CPCA Board (<i>when considering the overall request</i>)
Project name	Cost of project (CPCA contribution if different)	Revenue or Capital	Business Case Governance route										
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Impact	£0.996m	Revenue	a) Investment Panel b) Chief Executive Approval										
Delivery of Digital Connectivity Strategy 2025-2026	Funds requested, at present, are up to £2.25m which will be sought from other Place and Connectivity budgets, noting that there is a further £4.75m to be requested for years 2-4. <i>Please also see comments in paragraph 2.7.</i>	Capital in the main, however, there may be some revenue implications as the detail is worked through.	a) Investment Panel b) Investment Committee c) CPCA Board (<i>when considering the overall request</i>)										

2.10	<p>Strategic Objectives</p> <p>Whilst the projects outlined within this report can be considered to be relevant to all the objectives of the Combined Authority the main impact is identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Impact project is sponsored by the Economy and Growth Business Service, and the project’s primary strategic objective is Delivering Good Growth. • The Delivery of Digital Connectivity Strategy 2025-2029 project is sponsored by the Place and Connectivity Digital Service, and the project’s primary strategic objective is Improving Connectivity.
------	---

3. Background

3.1	The SAF is a set of systems, processes and protocols designed to provide the Combined Authority with a consistent approach for appraisal, assurance, risk management and performance throughout the lifecycle of projects and programmes. The SAF sets out key processes for ensuring accountability, probity, transparency and legal compliance and for ensuring value for money is achieved across its investments.
3.2	The SAF seeks to set out the framework and processes the Combined Authority will utilise to provide confidence to itself, Government, stakeholders and partners that it has robust systems in place to best enable its projects and programmes to realise the benefits they seek to deliver. The development of concept papers and business cases to support project investment is key to the SAF.
3.3	The SAF was approved at CPCA Board in November 2023. This noted that the process had also been approved by Government. It was agreed at the Board that the SAF process would go live from June 2024 following work on embedding the SAF and developing the new governance arrangements.

4. Appendices

4.1 Appendix A. [Concept Paper for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Impact](#)

4.2 Appendix B. [Concept Paper for Delivery of Digital Connectivity Strategy 2025-2029](#)

5. Implications

Financial Implications

5.1 The financial implications are set out in the report. Should the projects be prioritised to proceed then the funding must be identified within the detailed business case.. Initially this will be through a review of the existing investment programme to identify capacity/underspends or projects which can be paused or removed. A review of alternative funding sources will also be considered where available.

Legal Implications

5.2 There are no significant legal implications in this report. The Single Assurance Framework, section 5.4.2 makes clear that the 'Concept Paper provides a consistent entry point into the Single Assurance Framework that intends to provide the required information to enable early assessment, prioritisation and consideration by the Corporate Management Team, the Investment Panel and by the Combined Authority Board'.

Public Health Implications

5.3 There are no significant Public Health implications in this report.

Environmental and Climate Change Implications

5.4 There are no significant Public Health implications in this report. Digital connectivity does enable a lower carbon economy but reducing the number of journeys and need for travel.

Other Significant Implications

5.5 Not applicable.

Background Papers

5.6 Single Assurance Framework Board report 29th November 2023 [Single Assurance Framework Cover Report](#)
Appendix A - Single Assurance Framework [Appendix A Single Assurance Framework](#)
Appendix B - Investment Committee Terms of Reference [Appendix B Terms of Reference](#)