



# Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee

**11 December 2024**

Title:	Place & Connectivity Directorate Monthly Highlight Report: December 2024
Report of:	Judith Barker, Executive Director – Place & Connectivity
Lead Member:	Councillor Bridget Smith, Lead Member, Communities and Environment
Public Report:	Yes
Key Decision:	No
Voting Arrangements:	No vote required

## Recommendations:

A	Note the content of this report.
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## Strategic Objective(s):

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

x	Enabling resilient communities
x	Achieving best value and high performance

## 1. Purpose

1.1	This report provides a general update on the key activities of the Place and Connectivity Directorate in relation to Environment and Sustainable Communities, which are not covered in the other reports to this Meeting.
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## 2. Updates regarding National Government

2.1	The Secretary of State for Energy Security & Net Zero is hosting a Mayoral Roundtable 5 December 2024. The theme is 'How local places can support the government's 2030 and net zero goals'. The meeting is expected to cover the Local Power Plan, Great British Energy and MCA devolution asks on retrofit funding. Making Britain a clean energy superpower by 2030 is one of the Government's 5 missions.
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2.2	The Great British Energy Bill completed its passage through the House of Commons on 29 October 2024 and had its Second Reading in the House of Lords on 18 November. The Bill enables Great British Energy (headquartered in Aberdeen) to become a publicly-owned and operationally independent energy company. The government's Local Power Plan will see Great British Energy partner with local communities to develop renewable energy projects. This is intended to generate up to eight gigawatts of energy through these projects, which will get a total of £3.3 billion over the course of this parliament. The government has proposed that some of the profits from these local energy projects will go back to the community.
2.3	On 12 November 2024, during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) the UK government announced a new climate target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by 81% by 2035, compared to 1990 levels. The previous target was 78%. The target forms part of the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). This updated figure is based on the Climate Change Committee's advice on the UK's Seventh Carbon Budget that will be published in February 2025.
2.4	The Budget in October was structured around seven pillars for "Rebuilding Britain": Economic and Fiscal Stability; Investment and Infrastructure Planning; Place (regional growth focus); People; Industrial Strategy and Trade; Innovation; and Net Zero.

### 3. Regional Updates

3.1	<p><b>Fens Climate Change Risk Assessment published</b></p> <p>A groundbreaking risk assessment for the Fens has been published. Commissioned by the Future Fens Integrated Adaptation sponsors (the Environment Agency, Water Resources East, Anglian Water and the CPCA) this was conducted by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of East Anglia. It provides a stark and place-specific view of the complex and escalating challenges posed to the Fens. The Fens Climate Change Risk Assessment (<a href="#">external link</a>) shows the impact a range of rising temperatures will bring, including intensified flooding, severe droughts, biodiversity loss, and drastic disruptions to agriculture.</p> <p>Unlike national assessments, this location-specific study provides targeted analysis and tailored solutions unique to the Fens. Doing so offers a critical foundation for adaptive strategies that can be refined and implemented at both local and regional levels, driving forward the vision of a resilient, sustainable Fens for generations to come.</p> <p>The Future Fens Integrated Adaptation (FFIA) programme embodies this, bringing together key partners such as the Environment Agency, Water Resources East, the Peterborough and Cambridge Combined Authority, Lincolnshire County Council, and Norfolk County Council. This collaboration is essential for adapting to the mounting challenges detailed in the assessment.</p> <p>Significant activity is already underway, for example the Environment Agency's Fens 2100+ programme. That programme brings together flood risk management authorities and representatives from agricultural communities to develop a Fens-wide flood resilience investment strategy.</p>
3.2	<p><b>Infrastructure Delivery Framework – partner workshops</b></p> <p>A CPCA workshop was held with Place Directors on 20<sup>th</sup> November in response to the need to work collectively to develop major infrastructure asks to complement the Local Growth Plan. The purpose of the workshop was to build consensus on infrastructure priorities so they can evolve into an ask to government, private and other sources. The aim is to move towards agreement to interventions at scale, which can then be evolved into a compelling narrative to support our collective ambitions</p>

The Workshop focused on “brainstorming” the Why, the What, the Where and the How questions to identify those infrastructure investments that are considered necessary to address constraints on Cambridgeshire and Peterborough’s ambitions for sustainable economic growth.

The Workshop focussed on 4 key themes:

### **Transport and Connectivity**

Investment in transport infrastructure to improve connectivity is necessary to enable the efficient movement of goods, services, and people. This enhanced connectivity is essential for supply chain resilience, reducing delays, and lowering transport costs, all of which increase the competitiveness of our industries. For example, improving access to key ports and airports can streamline trade, particularly for industries such as manufacturing, logistics, and export-driven sectors.

In addition to transport, investing in digital infrastructure is vital for a thriving, modern local economy. High-speed broadband, 5G networks, and digital platforms are fundamental to supporting the transition to a knowledge-based economy, where innovation and data-driven solutions can drive productivity across sectors. Enabling industries to access cutting-edge technologies, can accelerate the adoption of advanced manufacturing practices and create new growth opportunities.

### **Water**

The East and South East of England are among the most water-stressed regions in the country, presenting significant challenges for supporting the area’s growth. The [Regional Water Resources Plan](#) lays out the pressing obstacles that hinder sustainable expansion in the East. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, areas with high growth potential, are at the forefront of this water-scarcity issue. The Environment Agency has already raised concerns over major housing developments due to limited water availability, putting future projects at risk. While substantial water infrastructure investments are in the pipeline, these will not be operational until at least the mid-2030s, leaving a crucial gap.

Adding to the complexity, parts of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough also grapple with severe flood resilience issues. As sea levels rise and climate change accelerates, existing flood protection schemes for essential economic assets in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are under significant strain, with the Internal Drainage Boards managing many of these critical assets. Without strategic investment in both water supply and flood mitigation infrastructure, developers and occupiers may lack confidence in the long-term security of their investments in our area.

### **Energy**

Current electricity supply and distribution frameworks are largely geared toward developments explicitly designated in Local Plans, leaving little flexibility to support prospective developments that are highly likely to emerge. This constraint hampers the ability of Distribution Network Operators to proactively invest in infrastructure to meet future demands – an issue that is particularly pronounced in high-growth regions where rapid development continuously drives up energy requirements.

The situation becomes even more complex with the rise of major proposals for sustainable energy generation, which present additional challenges to the traditional investment model for energy distribution. To meet the evolving demands of these high-growth areas and to facilitate the transition to renewable energy, the approach to energy infrastructure planning needs to be more agile, anticipatory, and responsive to both current and future needs.

Energy infrastructure investment, particularly in renewable energy sources and smart grids, is also vital for ensuring industries can operate sustainably, reduce their carbon footprint, and meet evolving regulatory standards, while also ensuring energy security and affordability.

### **Climate & Environment**

Our Local Growth Plan will take environmental and climate change considerations in setting out its ambitions for sustainable economic growth. To help achieve this it is vital to align work on the Plan with the work needed to refresh the current Climate Action Plan for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. As with the Local Growth Plan, the Review of the Climate Action Plan will be co-produced and co-owned to ensure full alignment.

### **Next Steps**

The workshop outputs are feeding into the Local Growth Plan Infrastructure Workstream. They are also being considered in relation to the review of the Climate Action Plan. These key infrastructure asks will form part of our Investment Pipeline which also contains development specific project interventions and initially commenced as part of our preparation for UKREiiF. This pipeline will continue to be developed in partnership with our constituent local authorities and other partners and agencies and is now an integral part of our emerging Local Growth Plan.

### **3.3 Update on the Affordable Housing Programme**

Delivery of 1033 units out of a total of 1444 is complete, with 411 units remaining. A report on the Programme is scheduled for the next Committee meeting. Progress to date on schemes is summarised as follows:

#### Stanground, Peterborough

CPCA and Cross Keys Homes have finalised the Stanground GFA update, with the grant from the Garages site being used at the Stanground site to help fund the site completion. This was completed on the 25th of October 2024. The services have been supplied, and the completion of the site is anticipated to be around the end of the financial year – March 2025.

#### Wisbech Road, March with Sage Housing

This site progress is improving, with services in, power (electricity) and heating is on in homes, drying out the doors, skirting board etc. 12 units at the entrance of the site are Shared Ownership and are due to complete build by early December and then occupied before Christmas. Sales will be completed by no later than 20th December 2024.

#### Northminster, Peterborough

The units received in Block A (131 units), which were handed over at the end of September 2024, have been well received from new tenants. The next part of the development is anticipated to be completed by the end of December.

#### Heylo

To increase the number of affordable housing units, Heylo were asked to acquire further “off the shelf accommodation” with the use of clawback monies, as they were currently finalising their deal with Allison Homes. Heylo contacted Allison Homes for more “off the shelf accommodation,” with the use of clawback monies. Allison Homes were able to provide Heylo with 8 more units in Peterborough – these are:

- 2 at Abbey Park, Thorney - 2 x 3b/5p
- 2 at Harriers Rest, Wittering – 2 x 3b/4p
- 4 at Fletton Folly, Peterborough – 5 x 3b/5p.

These eight units are in construction and are in prime development areas across Peterborough. Fletton Folly has remain unchanged and will be delivered.

The other 4 units noted are being changed to: -

- 2 units at Haddon Peake, Great Haddon – Peterborough CC
- 2 units at Hampton Water – Peterborough CC

The units details are below: -

- Haddon Peake – 2 shared ownership properties  
2 x 3b6p
- Hampton Water – 2 shared ownership properties  
2 x 3b4p

Allison Homes had some staff changes and Heylo started having difficulty securing the agreed units. Therefore, Heylo approached Countryside/Bovis Homes and acquired these units in exchange/swap and these units are ready. The grant requirements remain the same.

	<p>Peterborough City Council have confirmed their agreement on the changes made.</p> <p><u>Managing the Programme</u></p> <p>At the 25 October meeting further detail was requested on action steps for ongoing projects facing quality and completion challenges. Quality control and completions measures are in place. The Affordable Housing Programme Manager (AHPM) conducts site visits to check any issues of delivery including quality control. The AHPM meets regularly with project managers on these projects to understand issues arising eg. from services provision (utilities), material delivery, adverse weather. This includes regular progress reports on all sites. All of these play a part of the quality-controlled measures and are checked with Audit. The next report on the Programme will set out any actions needed.</p>
3.4	<p><b>Forward Agenda items</b></p> <p>The next Committee is scheduled to receive reports on the Affordable Housing Programme, the Locally Determined Contributions project update and Climate Communications plan. A presentation will be provided by Natural Cambridgeshire. The Work Programme is an item on the Agenda today.</p>

## 4. Appendices

4.1	None
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## 5. Implications

Financial Implications	
5.1	None
Legal Implications	
5.2	None
Public Health Implications	
5.3	Climate and infrastructure developments can have major positive and negative impacts on public health.
Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
5.4	None.
Other Significant Implications	
5.5	None
Background Papers	
5.6	None