

## DECISION NOTICE - OFFICER/ MAYORAL

To grant a permission or a licence, affect the rights of individuals, to award a contract or incur expenditure over £250k, to amend budgets, or apply a Key Decision over £500k.

DECISION INFORMATION		
1. DECISION TITLE	Market Towns Phase 1 - Cromwell Museum	
2. DECISION No.	ODN016-2024	
3. DECISION DATE	20/12/2024 (meeting 19/12/2024)	
4. FORM AUTHOR	Domenico Cirillo Domenico.Cirillo@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk	
5. DESCRIPTION OF DECISION	<p>Chief Executive Officer approval of Change Request to amend the scope of a project, of which the project cost is under £1m, through the Single Assurance Framework.</p> <p>The Change Request was reviewed by the Investment Panel on 12<sup>th</sup> December and recommended to be sent to the CEO for approval, subject to completion of actions agreed.</p> <p>All actions raised at the Investment Panel on 12<sup>th</sup> December have been addressed.</p>	
6. AUTHORITY FOR DECISION	Chief Executive Officer, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority	
7. DECISION TYPE	Officer	
8. DECISION OWNER	Rob Bridge, Chief Executive	
9. KEY DECISION INFORMATION	FORWARD PLAN DATE	N/A
	FORWARD PLAN NUMBER	
	DATE OF DECISION	
	DATE REPORT PUBLISHED	
	APPROVAL HYPERLINK	
	IMPLEMENTATION DATE	
	EXEMPT INFO/ ANNEX	
DECISION OVERVIEW		
10. SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS	<p>This Change Request is seeking approval to amend the project scope to allocate the remaining funds of £299,354 towards the acquisition of property (7-8 Market Hill Huntingdon) to enable the expansion of Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon, as opposed to expansion of the existing space.</p> <p>This option delivers Market Town programme objectives, represents a more impactful expansion of the museum than redeveloping the existing space and delivers additional benefit for the same level of CPCA investment. This change in project scope will also lead</p>	

	<p>to increased benefit of 3,306 sqft (307 sqm) of new additional museum space for the town and will further strengthen the cultural offer for residents and visitors.</p> <p>There will be a need to ensure that CPCA’s legal position is protected should the property be sold at some point in the future and/or no longer used for the agreed purpose. CPCA legal colleagues have been briefed and will be instructed to support to ensure the required legal safeguards and security measures (including charges on the property) are in place before the purchase completes.</p> <p>Huntingdon Town Council are aware of this requirement and have informed their solicitors of the need to include this in the legal documents / deeds. HDC also have draft Heads of Terms in place with the Town Council and have confirmed their agreement to clauses protecting CPCA/HDC position.</p>
<p>11. PROJECT BACKGROUND</p>	<p>In March 2023, the CPCA Board approved £330,000 grant funding towards the expansion of the Cromwell Museum on Huntingdon High Street. This investment was required to ensure the space was fit for purpose with appropriate on-site visitor facilities (such as washroom/toilet provisions). A total of £30,646 has been expended to date on initial concept designs and associated due diligence.</p> <p>Since this approval was granted, a subsequent opportunity has arisen to pivot from the original scope and to secure a vacant high street unit (opposite the existing museum). This option allows the museum to expand by moving into a secondary space rather than extending the existing site and operating from the 2 locations.</p> <p>The acquisition and conversion of the 7 to 8 Market Square is a much-improved project, as compared to the original proposal to expand into the Pizza Express building. Whilst Pizza Express was identified as being potentially available due to the leasehold coming up for renewal, and the tenant not confirming their intentions in a timely manner, the property was ultimately not available for consideration. The updated project (acquisition) not only potentially brings back into active use a long vacant property, but the existing Museum building will be retained to continue providing a hub for learning, community engagement and events in the heart of the town – it’s an expansion as envisaged but uses two buildings that are opposite rather than adjacent, giving us more options and more impact on the Market Square.</p> <p>The existing Cromwell Museum has seen consistent growth in footfall over the last seven years (excluding the pandemic and its aftermath), achieving 13,261 visitors last year in its small premises—the highest figure in 25 years. In 2023/24, the Museum welcomed 13,261 visitors, with 53% from Cambridgeshire, 36% from across the UK, and 11% from international destinations. Over 1,000 schoolchildren either visited the Museum or benefited from an outreach program last year, marking a record high.</p> <p>The Cromwell Museum contributed £398,708 to the local economy last year, based on figures from the Association of Independent Museums' Economic Impact Assessment. The Museum also generates significant positive media coverage for Huntingdon, with 12 features in national newspapers and magazines, four appearances on local and national television, and four articles on the BBC website in the past year.</p> <p>As the primary visitor attraction in the town, the Cromwell Museum has been described as a "national museum in a matchbox" (Radio 4). This year, it has already attracted 11,500 visitors in the eight months since April, projecting a total of 15,000 visitors by year-end. Following the reopening of an expanded Museum, visitor numbers are expected to double in the first year and stabilize at an average of 25,000 annually (not including café users).</p> <p>The Cromwell Museum anticipates employing at least five additional full-time equivalent (FTE) staff to complement the existing 2.5 FTE team. Volunteer participation, currently at 46 individuals contributing 2,600 hours annually, is expected to grow to 75 volunteers contributing approximately 4,000 hours. With increased footfall and employment, the Cromwell Museum expects to boost its economic impact on the town to over £1 million annually. The overall project is estimated to cost £5 million, with over half anticipated</p>

from national funding sources, bringing significant external investment into the area. Additionally, the project is poised to garner widespread attention due to the enduring interest in Cromwell, likely securing national media coverage.

The remaining CPCA funds of £299,354 to be used towards the purchase of the property. Huntingdonshire District Council and Huntingdon Town Council have gone through a long due diligence process and detailed surveys in support of the purchase and have recently had an offer accepted in principle for the property of £207,000 (this was negotiated down due to urgent works identified as part of the initial due diligence work). The difference between the property purchase price and grant value (£92,354) will be used towards immediate remedial work and contingency.

HDC, in collaboration with the Cromwell Museum, has conducted a comprehensive due diligence process, exceeding the typical scope for property purchases of this nature. Given the project's aim to acquire and restore a long-term vacant property, it was essential for all parties to fully understand the associated risks and challenges. Although this process required additional time, it has proven invaluable. The due diligence identified critical remedial work necessary to prevent further deterioration of the building and its structure. As a result of this assessment, the purchase price was reduced by £100,000, allowing these funds to be redirected toward essential repairs and safeguarding the property.

In addition to highlighting structural issues, the due diligence and accompanying reports outlined opportunities and potential facilities for an expanded Cromwell Museum. These findings will form the foundation of funding applications to the Heritage Lottery Fund and other prospective funding sources.

This is a long-term project as the building will require additional investment to convert the additional space into a museum. This has been estimated in the region of £3.5 million and will be subject of a funding application to Heritage Lottery Fund. The Cromwell Museum and Huntingdon Town Council, with support from HDC, are engaged in positive negotiations with the HLF. If a bid is unsuccessful in any round, we plan to revise and resubmit, a common approach for similar projects that have ultimately achieved significant success. As such, we anticipate that securing funding for the museum works may take up to three years rather than the initially projected two.

In addition to the HLF bid, we are actively pursuing other funding sources. For example, we have a confirmed meeting with the Wolfson Foundation in March, are engaging with private donors, preparing an application for CIL funding through the Town Council, and exploring a diversified funding strategy to avoid overreliance on a single source.

The property to be acquired through this project is a prominent building in Huntingdon Market Square. Its active use and appearance directly impact the wider town centre. This project not only aims to expand the visitor economy and develop Huntingdon's tourism offering but also seeks to regenerate a key part of the town. The property, which has been vacant for four years, is deteriorating, and bringing it back into use will address this issue.

HDC have not committed any funds towards the purchase, however, the priority for the authority is to deliver a substantially improved visitor economy through an expanded and internationally significant Cromwell Museum. Should funding delays or shortfalls occur, HDC will collaborate with all partners—CPCA, Huntingdon Town Council, and the Cromwell Museum—to explore alternative delivery mechanisms, potentially including commercial investment and mixed-use development. In all scenarios, HDC will investigate opportunities to allocate CIL funding and other resources to support the project

The property will be purchased by Huntingdon Town Council and leased on a peppercorn 99-year lease to the Cromwell Museum, as per the existing Museum premises (which will be retained). The peppercorn lease on the existing museum building is the presentation of a literal peppercorn each year (i.e. free as in-kind support from the Town Council). It was suggested at the Council meeting that approved the purchase that this would be on the same basis.

	The grant is awarded to HDC under the Market Towns Programme, and they in turn will fund the purchase and then reclaim the costs from the CPCA. Completion and expenditure of CPCA funding remains profiled by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025.	
12. FINANCE INFORMATION	VALUE OF DECISION	£299,354
	BUDGET CODE	CX1600/CX1601
	BUDGET DESCRIPTION	Capital
	FUNDING TYPE	Grant
	FUNDING APPROVAL	Yes
	FUNDS AVAILABLE	Yes
	OTHER COMMENTS	
13. PROCUREMENT CONSIDERATIONS	DIRECT AWARD JUSTIFICATION	N/A
	REGULATION RISKS	N/A
	VFM JUSTIFICATION	Explained within the project background
14. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	LEGAL RISKS	The use of the capital funding towards the purchase of an asset needs to be protected adequately. Following a meeting with HTC's solicitor, HDC and CPCA a legal charge has been agreed as the form of security. This will enable the CPCA to have a first ranking position amongst creditors should the building need to be sold. Without this security, the public funding cannot be protected and clawback of grant funding would be difficult. A draft legal charge is currently being negotiated.
	CONTRACT/GRANT INFORMATION	The CPCA have a grant funding agreement with HDC, however, given the change in the project, there will be some minor variations need to the GFA.
15. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST/ MITIGATION		
16. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION		
17. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION		
<b>DECISION APPROVAL/ CONSULTATION</b>		
PROCUREMENT	NAME	Chantel Allott
	DATE	06/01/2025
	COMMENT	As per comments above in section 13. As this a Grant Funding it is not captured by the procurement regulations
FINANCE	NAME	Bruna Menegatti
	DATE	20/12/2024
	COMMENT	Approved

LEGAL	NAME	Reena Roojam
	DATE	19/12/2024
	COMMENT	Approved as per comments
CHIEF OFFICER/ DIRECTOR	NAME	Richard Kenny
	DATE	20/12/2024
	COMMENT	Approved via email
OVERALL APPROVAL		
DECISION MAKER (CEO)	NAME	Rob Bridge
	DATE	20/12/2024
	COMMENT	Reviewed in meeting 19/12/2024 and approved 20/12/2024