

Council leaders welcome multi-million-pound investments in Fenland

District council leaders have welcomed a multi-million-pound investment boost from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) which will bring jobs, economic growth and much-needed new homes to Fenland.



The investment includes a £7.5m commitment to stimulate local business productivity and invest in skills training, as well as £1.3m for the development of up to 40 new homes.

The Board of the Mayoral Combined Authority agreed funding for key projects at its meeting this week, when approval was also given to Fenland's four 'Growing Fenland' Masterplans for Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech.

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Mayor James Palmer said "I'm proud that the Mayoral Combined Authority I lead is reversing the long decades of under investment in our Fenland towns. I'm determined that nobody should be left behind and our Masterplans for Growth are all about ensuring these communities share the economic success we're building across the whole region - and have a real say in how their unique and historic towns evolve to embrace new opportunity."

Created as part of the CPCA's Market Town Masterplans for Growth programme, the bold regeneration plans were developed by Fenland District Council with representatives from local authorities, businesses, schools and the community in each of the towns.

The plans will now be used to bid for a share of a £5m pump-prime funding earmarked by the CPCA to implement market town plans across Cambridgeshire.

Investments agreed by the Board for Fenland include:

- £3m from the Local Growth Fund for a construction training/incubator in Wisbech - a new facility on the College of West Anglia site to facilitate construction skills around modern methods of construction.
- £3.1m from the Local Growth Fund to create a Manufacturing Launchpad in Chatteris.
- £997,032 from the Local Growth Fund to develop new business space at Fenland District Council's South Fens Business Centre in Chatteris.
- £400,000 from the Local Growth Fund to develop skills facilities at March Community Centre.
- £1.3m from the Affordable Housing Programme (non-grant) to acquire a residential development site in Manea for up to 40 new homes, possibly including eleven affordable homes.

Leader of Fenland District Council, Cllr Chris Boden, said the funding was fantastic news for the district and demonstrates confidence in Fenland's economic future.

"I'm delighted our district is set to benefit from millions of pounds of investment," he said. "It will help our businesses to thrive, give our people the skills they need and generate new jobs, while paving the way for attracting further investment.

"It will also enable the construction of quality new homes which might otherwise not have been developed; helping to support Fenland's housing growth objectives."

Cllr Ian Benney, the Council's Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, added: "It's great to see the CPCA inject regional growth investment into some of Fenland's key economic projects. It's exciting news for the district as it will provide local people with new skills training opportunities and give firms the support they need to scale up, become more productive and increase their local and global reach."