

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

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Work to start on March's Broad Street regeneration

The next stage of March town centre's multi-million pound regeneration is set to get underway this month.

Leading transport infrastructure provider Octavius will begin work on the Broad Street transformation project in late June, following the completion of major underground gas and water main upgrades undertaken by Cadent Gas and Anglian Water over the past few months.

It's the next step in a programme of inter-related schemes being delivered by various partners to transform and futureproof the town centre for years to come.

The primary build of CityFibre's £5million super-fast broadband investment – offering service to over 8,500 homes in the town – was completed in March and the March Market Place refurbishment works were finished in April.

Now Octavius is ready to start work on the Broad Street project, which will transform the existing road layout and create a new public realm area with new seating, trees and planters, new street lighting and new zebra crossings to improve pedestrian safety.

The two existing northbound lanes and traffic lights will be replaced with a single lane in each direction and a new mini roundabout, improving traffic flow and reducing delays at all approaches to the junction. This will also improve air quality in Broad Street.

Work will take around 12 months to complete, with the new roundabout and road open in Spring 2024, and the public realm works to follow. The changes will include:

- Sensitively relocating the Grade 2 listed ornamental fountain.
- Creating a new stepped seating area overlooking the river.
- Refurbishing the stepped access around the War Memorial and the steps leading to the river.
- New planters, constructed of monolithic stone, and tree pits, incorporating root systems and uplighters.
- The provision of two new bus stops and four new zebra crossings.
- New street lighting, architectural lighting and pop-up power supplies.
- Drainage improvements.
- Installation of new signs and road markings.

The old Barclays Bank, recently purchased by Fenland District Council with funding from the Government's Future High Streets Fund for redevelopment, has been let to Octavius for use as a site office during the works. Being based on site will ensure greater efficiency and less disruption and also offers cost savings across the Broad Street scheme.

The Broad Street regeneration works are part of Cambridgeshire County Council's March Area Transport Study (MATS), a wider programme of transport interventions to address existing capacity and safety problems across March and mitigate for future growth.

The works are being delivered with £3.6million of funding from the Government's Future High Streets Fund, awarded to Fenland District Council and over £6million from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority – £2million from the Combined Authority's Market Towns Programme, and a further £4.2million from the Combined Authority's major funding for March in the March Area Transport Study (MATS).

Cllr Chris Seaton, Fenland District Council's Portfolio Holder for Transport and lead member of the March Future High Streets steering group, said: "I've said it before, but this really is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for March to reverse the decade of decline that has affected high streets up and down the country, and revitalise its town centre now and for generations to come.

"There's been a huge amount of investment from a number of partners to bring this transformation to the fore, and I'm excited to see it progress further in the coming months."

Cllr Steve Count, district and county ward member for March, member of Cambridgeshire County Council's March Area Transport Study (MATS) Group and member of the March Future High Streets steering group, said: "This combination of schemes is all about supporting our much-loved town to thrive and prosper in future and making the best of its assets, like the fountain and the riverside, so I'm delighted that the next stage on Broad Street is ready to go.

"I'd like to thank local residents and businesses for their ongoing support and patience during these works; we know there is some disruption, but we will continue to ensure work progresses with the minimum of inconvenience."

Cllr Jan French, Deputy Leader of Fenland District Council, town, district and county ward member for March, Chair of March Area Transport Study (MATS) Group and member of the March Future High Streets steering group, said: "This is an exciting time for March, with the Market Place improvements and huge investment in digital connectivity and major utilities upgrades already completed, and now major changes to transform the town centre beginning to take shape.

"Regeneration of this scale is incredibly complex, even more so with the challenges more widely in the construction industry. But by working with all our community partners, council officers and appointed specialists we will continue to develop and drive forward plans to ensure March town centre is a place that people want to live, work, and invest in."

Gavin Pritchard, Managing Director Highways at Octavius, said: "We're delighted to be working with Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council on this scheme that will transform March town centre. We will be working closely with businesses and the local community to keep disruption to a minimum whilst we deliver an environment everyone can be proud of."

For more information, visit: www.fenland.gov.uk/MFHSE

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Notes to Editors

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