FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL
PRESS RELEASE

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Have your say on exciting plans for Fenland’s market towns

Fenland residents are being invited to have their say on ambitious plans to reinvigorate the district’s market towns and secure increased investment in their futures.

Draft Masterplans have been produced for March, Whittlesey and Chatteris, which aim to enhance the economic prospects of each town and maximise their potential as vibrant places to live, work and relax.

The plans have been created through the Growing Fenland project and are some of the first to come forward under the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority’s county-wide Masterplan for Growth initiative.

Fenland District Council has been working closely with the Combined Authority and leading economic analysts Metro Dynamics since the Masterplans were commissioned last year.

Now, following several months of engagement with Growing Fenland town teams, county and town representatives and other key organisations, Metro Dynamics has produced interim Masterplans for each of the towns.

The next stage of the Growing Fenland project is to seek residents’ views on the draft plans to determine which ideas for investment should be taken forward and included in the final masterplan documents.

A public consultation has now been launched, with feedback being sought via online surveys and face-to-face consultation at local events taking place in the Fenland area.

The online surveys are available at: www.fenland.gov.uk/growingfenland and will be live until Friday, July 5. A Growing Fenland representative gathered feedback at the March Summer Festival last weekend, and will also be seeking views at Whittlesey’s Music on the Square events and the Chatteris Midsummer Festival.

The Masterplan for Wisbech is still being developed and consultation received through the ‘I Heart Wisbech’ project will help to inform the draft report.

Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, James Palmer, said: “Our market towns contribute hugely to what makes Cambridgeshire and Peterborough a special place to live and work, but they need more support.

“The Masterplans will inject some fresh strategic thinking into these Fenland towns, setting out directly what kinds of targeted investment is needed to maximise their potential.

“We know the pressures on our high streets currently, so whether it is better transport, improved accessibility, or more skills training, these Masterplans will be a platform from which a vibrant, healthy future can secured.
“People value what their market towns have to offer and their future is a subject close to the hearts of many, so I would encourage everyone in the Fenland area to have their say. Your input will make our work even better.”

Councillor Ian Benney, Fenland District Council’s Portfolio Holder for Growth, said: “Each town in Fenland is unique, with its own particular qualities and opportunities, as well as challenges. That’s why each town has its own masterplan, providing clear, bespoke strategies to build on their individual assets and support long-term sustainable growth.

“Local communities have been instrumental to developing these interim plans and we now need their input again to ensure the improvements put forward address the needs of local residents and businesses alike.

“The masterplans will ultimately be used to attract additional funding from the Government and private sector to make the towns’ ambitions a reality.”

Mike Emmerich, Founding Director of Metro Dynamics, said: “As we’ve been working on the plans, we’ve been struck by the huge opportunities which exist in the Fenland market towns. There is a chance to work with the Combined Authority to create jobs in high-value industries, improve transport links and support residents to access the skills training they need. Local engagement will ensure we can reflect the needs of each community in the plans.”

In addition to the four masterplans, the Growing Fenland project will also develop a Fenland-wide strategy to address some of the wider issues that are common across all four towns.

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For more information contact Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226