

REPORT TITLE: Cambridge Delivery Company: Update Report

To:

Leader

Strategy and Resources Committee 2025

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

1.	Recommendations
1.1	It is recommended that the Leader: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Notes the update on the progress of the Cambridge Delivery Company implementation</i>
2.	Purpose and reason for the report This report seeks to update Members of Strategy and Resources Committee on the recent developments with Central Governments project for the growth of Cambridge
2.1	The item is for noting and to update members on the progress of the project.
3.	Alternative options considered
3.1	The report does not require a decision. The purpose of the report is to keep members of the Committee informed on the progression of this national project.
4.	Background and key issues
4.1	In July 2023, the previous government outlined an ambition for significant housing and jobs growth in Cambridge. Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government appointed Peter Freeman, Chair of Homes England to establish the Cambridge Delivery Group with the purpose of exploring and advising the Government on how the ambition could be realised. In Autumn 2023 the Cambridge

	Water Scarcity Group chaired by the former Chief Executive of the Environment Agency and Chair of Water Resources East Dr. Paul Leinster was established focusing on water supply issues facing the Greater Cambridge area.
4.2	On 15 th May 2024, Homes England registered the Cambridge Growth Company with Companies House with 6 registered Directors, including Peter Freeman and officers from within Homes England and Civil Servants from within the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The establishment of the Cambridge Growth Company effectively replaced the “Cambridge Delivery Group” as the entity overseeing the governments ambitions since the projects inception. Its purpose is to take forward the the Governments ambitions for Cambridge outlined in more detail below, including considering longer term delivery options.
4.4	On 24 th August 2024, Matthew Pennycook, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government wrote to all leaders in Cambridgeshire to advise that Cambridge remained a “key priority” for the new Government.
4.5	<p>In a letter dated 30th October 2024, Matthew Pennycook confirmed Peter Freemans appointment as Chair of the Cambridge Growth Company for an initial period of 18 months. The letter outlined the immediate priorities for the Cambridge Growth Company as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development acceleration: enable and accelerate developments which align with the government’s ambitions for Cambridge and unlock development on stalled sites. • Developing the evidence base to support development of an infrastructure-first growth plan and a long-term delivery vehicle: work with experts to assess infrastructure requirements, including transport, and lay the foundations for a long-term delivery vehicle. • Cross-government engagement: identify solutions to complex constraints and support cross government engagement to unblock existing development and provide the right incentives for successful development in the long-term. • Cambridge Growth Company business plan: responsibility for overseeing the effective delivery of the Cambridge Growth Company’s business plan and other

	associated documents.
4.6	The Autumn 2024 budget on 1 st November announced £10m of funding to unlock future economic growth in the area through the Cambridge Growth Company. It is understood that this funding will be used to commission new studies and to employ dedicated staff to deliver the Company's objectives.
4.7	Through engagement between Local Leaders and Peter Freeman, the Cambridge Growth Company has established an Advisory Council. The first meeting of the Advisory Council took place in November 2024. The advisory Council comprises the Leaders of the City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and the County Council together with the Mayor of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. There are two other members of the Advisory Council at this time, Dr Paul Leinster and Baroness Sally Morgan.
4.8	In December 2024, the Cambridge Growth Company published an invitation to tender (ITT) for specialist consultancies to assist it in the development of the evidence base to underpin its work. It is anticipated that an appointment of a consultancy team will take place early in 2025, with work on the development of the evidence base taking some 12-14 months to complete.
4.9	<p>Programme update.</p> <p>Following a national procurement exercise to appoint consultants to support the Cambridge Growth Company in the realisation of the Governments objectives, a team of multi-disciplinary consultants have been appointed. Officers from the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service have met with the successful consultant team with the initial meeting focused on the advising on the Councils evidence base to the Joint Local Plan. Planned further engagement will initially focus on defining the relationship between the Cambridge Growth Company's work programme, and the Joint Local Plan and Local Transport Plans. The consultants preliminary programme suggests that spatial growth options and an infrastructure delivery plan will emerge around December/January with stakeholder engagement planned for the second half of 2025.</p>
	The Cambridge Growth Company has also begun to recruit additional officers into posts within the company following the allocation of resources in the Autumn budget. To date, a Head of Public Affairs and Engagement (Steve McAdam) has been appointed, whilst recruitment is ongoing for roles in Planning and Programme management roles.

4.10	<p>Water Scarcity Group</p> <p>Established in Autumn 2023, the Water Scarcity Group meets approximately monthly. With Cambridge Water's Water Resources Management Plan published on 14th March, the group continues to oversee the delivery of a range of programmes aimed at ensuring future water supply for the Greater Cambridge area is available to support planned growth, and the growth beyond the Lolca Plan that the government aspires to. Following the receipt of objections to recent planning applications from Anglian Water based upon water treatment capacity, the remit of this Group has also now expanded to include foul water treatment matters. Both water supply and treatment were raised with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Steve Reed, at a round table with Water Scarcity Group members held at Cambridge Guildhall on 13th March.</p>
4.11	<p>Next steps</p> <p>With the appointment of a significant consultant team complete, the Council is expecting a deepening engagement between officers of the Council and the Cambridge Growth Company in the next few weeks. The Advisory Group is also scheduled to meet in March ahead of this Committee and a verbal update will therefore be provided on the outcome of that meeting.</p>
4.12	<p>Corporate plan</p>
4.13	<p>The Cambridge Growth Company project is a government sponsored programme and does not directly relate to delivery of the City Councils corporate plan. As they become more defined, the growth proposals (and means of implementation) of the Cambridge Growth Company nevertheless have the potential to support, complement or otherwise impact the delivery of the four Council priorities.</p> <p>The development of a growth strategy has the potential to impact on the Joint Local Plan being prepared with South Cambridgeshire District Council and articulating the growth strategy for the Greater Cambridge area over the next decade. Council officers are seeking clarity from CGC and MHCLG on how the two projects will interact and the potential implications of the recently published Planning and Infrastructure Bill.</p>
5.	<p>Consultation, engagement and communication</p>
5.1	<p>The Cambridge Growth Company is not a Council project, and no consultation has been carried out by the Council to date in connection with the initiative.</p>

6.	Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact
6.1	That members will be informed and up to date on the Councils ongoing engagement with the Cambridge Growth Company.
7.	Implications None: The report is for information.
7.1	Relevant risks
8.	There are no new risks to the Council arising from this report.
8.1	Financial Implications
	The report has no financial impact. The Cambridge Growth Company has advised the Council that it is aware of the potential for its activities to have a resource impact upon the services of the Council and is seeking to engage with Council officers to identify and mitigate such impacts. Dialogue with the Council on this issue is ongoing.
	Legal Implications
8.2	None. The report is for information.
	Equalities and socio-economic Implications
8.3	The report does not result in any actions or decisions from the Council that would give rise to the need for an EQIA. This report is for information.
	Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental implications
8.4	None: Whilst clearly having the potential to impact upon the Councils objectives, this report is for information only and contains no decision or policy recommendations.
	Procurement Implications
8.5	None:
	Community Safety Implications
8.6	None

	<p>Background documents</p> <p>Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</p>
9.	<p>To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact</p> <p>Stephen Kelly Joint Director of Planning stephen.kelly@greatercambridgeplanning.org</p>