

<b>SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 6</b>
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## Report from Opportunity Peterborough

Contact Officer(s) – Neil Darwin, Chief Executive, Opportunity Peterborough  
Contact Details – 01733 317488

### GREATER CAMBRIDGE GREATER PETERBOROUGH ENTERPRISE PARTNESHIP

#### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report sets out how the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership is addressing rural issues.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Commission is asked to note this report.

#### 3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 Opportunities available from GCGPEP will help deliver activities against each of the priority areas identified in the sustainable community strategy.

- Creating opportunities – tackling inequalities
- Creating strong and supportive communities
- Creating the country's environment capital
- Delivering substantial and sustainable growth

#### 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 **The role of the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership (GCGPEP)**

The coalition government established Local Enterprise Partnerships in 2010. In effect Local Enterprise Partnerships were tasked with taking forward elements of the role from the former Regional Development Agencies. There are 39 partnerships across England. The coalition announced that the Local Enterprise Partnerships would be private sector led supported by the public sector. Notably the Local Enterprise Partnerships have access to limited funding and an even slimmer resource capacity.

Peterborough City Council is one of thirteen local authorities operating within the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership. The areas also covered include Cambridgeshire county (including 5 districts), Rutland, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, West Suffolk, North Hertfordshire and Uttlesford. This makes the area one of the largest in England.

In essence the role of the GCGPEP is to set the economic strategy for the area and provide a conduit for the limited government money available to address economic development and infrastructure issues.

#### 5. KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 **GCGPEP successes to date**

To date GCGPEP has achieved success around the following areas:

- Gaining Enterprise Zone status for Alconbury Weald – the zone now has the ability to attract companies and offer zero business rates
- Supporting Cambridge access a ‘city deal’ – note Peterborough did not succeed in this area
- Adopted the Peterborough Skills Service model to role out a wider programme across King’s Lynn and West Norfolk, Rutland and Fenland
- Securing £3.2m for Agri-Tech business support from the Regional Growth Fund.

## 5.2 **GCGPEP priority areas**

Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership has created an Operational Plan for 2013-2014 to help articulate our delivery priorities and key actions over the next twelve months.

The five core priorities are:

1. Enterprise Zone – Enabling the development and occupation of Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus
2. Infrastructure – Advocating and influencing improvements to our area’s transport infrastructure
3. Skills – Enabling business-led skills provision
4. Enterprise – Promoting enterprise growth and innovation
5. Profile – Improving international promotion, increasing inward investment and exporting

The Commission will note that there is no specific priority aimed at geographic interests, aside from the Enterprise Zone at Alconbury Weald.

## 5.3 **Forthcoming opportunities for rural programmes**

The LEPs across England have been tasked with drafting two programmes by government. These include a Strategic Economic Plan and European programme. These programmes will cover the period 2014-2020 and support activity that meet the areas economic priorities (set out above).

### **i) Single Economic Plan**

The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) will outline a vision that will help unlock the region’s economic potential. GCGPEP will submit its final Strategic Economic Plan in March 2014. Final sign off and confirmation is expected from Government in July 2014, with investment beginning in April 2015. All 39 LEPs nationally are currently bidding for a slice of the Government’s Local Growth Fund through a competitive process.

The financial settlement from the SEP will provide a key funding stream for the LEP to invest alongside European funding and other public and private sector finance to deliver its ambitions.

Work is underway through the Growth and Regeneration department and Opportunity Peterborough to raise local issues and ensure the SEP reflects these. This work is underway with a view to influencing the draft document that will eventually be submitted in March 2014. While there is no specific rural theme to the priorities, there is significant lobby to ensure that rural issues are recognised in what is a largely rural LEP. It is estimated that the Single Economic Plan could bring up to £40m into the wider GCGPEP area in 2015/16.

### **ii) European Funding Programme**

Alongside the Single Economic Plan the GCGPEP is also responsible for producing a European Funding Programme. This has again been requested by Government. Unlike the Single Economic Plan there is a pre-determined allocation identified, for GCGPEP this is £75.5m over the period 2014-2020. The programme will require match funding from local sources, a factor

that has traditionally made European activity more difficult to establish and manage.

The GCGPEP and its partners have been asked to set out how they intend to use this allocation in a European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy, which should be agreed with Government by Spring 2014. Again Officers have been seeking to influence early drafts of GCGPEP's document.

The areas of priority have been predetermined by the European Commission to fit their own programme areas. As a result the GCGPEP plan will reflect activity against 7 priority areas;

- Innovation
- ICT
- Small Medium Enterprise competitiveness
- Low carbon
- Employment
- Social Inclusion
- Skills

While areas do not specifically mention 'rural issues', again it can be assumed that there will be a strong call for rural interests to be addressed. From a Peterborough perspective it will be important for local issues to register as a priority while this strategy is negotiated and concluded.

### **iii) A further opportunity**

Despite the scale and policy limitations of the Single Economic Plan and the European Funding Programme there do remain real opportunities for rural issues to gain support. It is likely that Peterborough may need to work in partnership with neighbouring authorities if we are to achieve optimal support. This developmental work is underway to ensure the city does not lose any opportunities.

Above these two funding programmes, Opportunity Peterborough is pursuing a further source. The new 'LEADER' programme for England is being developed by the Department for Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as part of the Rural Development Programme (RDPE). The new programme offers a potential new route which did not exist under the 2007-13 programme. Essentially DEFRA has stated that the number of LEADER areas could expand from 64 to 100, this could include a new Peterborough/Rutland area. Previously neither local authority was eligible, despite being surrounded on all sides by eligible areas e.g. Fenland, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire.

While further work needs to be conducted to evidence the need for inclusion Opportunity Peterborough has been notified that there may be Development Funding of around £30,000 available to develop a specific Rural Strategy and a further budget potentially available of up to £3m covering 2014-2020. While it is still early in the process, the development process would begin around Easter 2014, and conclude by November 2015. The programme eventually commencing delivering in Spring 2015.

The LEADER programme provides the most relevant and timely mechanism for the Rural Commission to influence delivery against local priorities.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Items within this report are city wide in nature, with programmes identified available to address local priority issues within Peterborough's rural areas.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Discussions to identify local priorities are underway between local authority departments, Opportunity Peterborough and GCGPEP. Further consultation will be undertaken as draft

documents become available in Spring 2014.

**8. NEXT STEPS**

8.1 Further reports will be made to the Commission as plans develop.

**9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

9.1 None

**10. APPENDICES**

10.1 None