

To: North, South, East and West Central Area Committees

From: Joel Carré, Head of Environmental Services

Date: 8th November 2021

Subject: **City centre COVID recovery project update**

Introduction

1. The purpose of this briefing paper is to update each of the Council's Area Committee on progress with various Council led strategic projects to support city centre economic recovery following the pandemic.

Cambridge Visitor Welcome 2021

2. In November 2020, the Council, in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge BID and Fitzwilliam Museum Enterprises Ltd, secured a £710K capital grant from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. The purpose of the grant award is to invest in a proposed programme of city centre measures to improve the city's visitor offer and thereby support its economic recovery following the pandemic.

3. Under the title 'Cambridge Visitor Welcome 2021', the grant funding is being used to deliver a range of city centre focused infrastructure improvements to be completed by spring 2022, including the following:

- Outdoor seating including tables, chairs and awnings
- Cambridge mobile visitor information centre
- Cambridge visitor website with bookable product functionality
- Cambridge visitor app and associated digital wayfinding tool; and
- Enhanced public realm architectural and decorative lighting

4. To date, the Council and its partners has delivered a range of new city centre picnic tables, modular benches and decorative lighting across the city centre, including the Market Square and Peas Hill, which have been well received.

Welcome Back Fund

5. In July 2021, the Council was awarded £110K from the Government's Welcome Back Fund to invest in a programme of measures to support the city centre and neighbourhood shopping areas following the pandemic, to be completed by March 2022.

6. The focus of this programme will be to invest in a programme of 'seasonal' events and activities, which attract visitor footfall and spend and thereby help to support economic economy recovery, especially in the retail, hospitality and cultural sectors. The programme will include the following elements:

- Major city centre lighting-based arts projection event and associated outreach arts projection events at neighbourhood shopping areas in February 2022
- 'Meanwhile use' programme that enables local artist and community groups to re-animate vacant retail space in city centre and neighbourhood shopping areas for cultural visitor experiences; and
- Seasonal outdoor lighting at neighbourhood shopping areas

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