

love every drop
anglianwater



NEW MODELS FOR COLLABORATIVE WORKING

A GUIDE TO COMMUNITY REGENERATION IN WISBECH

An Anglian Water Perspective

FOREWORD



Anglian Water is immensely proud to be Business in the Community's Responsible Business of the Year 2017.

We received the accolade for our innovative approach to tackling challenges in the environment and communities, and driving sustainable business through innovation and collaboration.

When we received the award we committed to sharing our learning through three guides on key collaborative programmes: community regeneration in Wisbech, our innovation Shop Window initiative and Water Resources East (WRE).

In today's world there is a real opportunity for businesses to recognise their role in broader society and the part they can play in supporting the communities they serve. We wanted to explore, alongside our alliance partners, whether we could create sustained, positive impacts in an area which was facing real challenges. The beautiful, but often forgotten, market town of Wisbech was the location we chose.

In the early days, there was some scepticism in the town about what we had set out to achieve. In the past, organisations had tended to come in with good intentions but only stayed for the length of their initiative. Our commitment to Wisbech is different. We are there to make a systemic and sustained difference by working with the local community and businesses over a long period of time.

Ultimately, by concentrating on improving a single town in a collaborative way, we believe that we can make a lasting difference to local people's lives. Anglian Water wants to share and promote a shared approach to corporate citizenship; making the UK happier, healthier and wealthier, place by place. We hope this booklet is useful to you, whichever sector or industry you are part of.



Peter Simpson

Peter Simpson
Chief Executive
Anglian Water

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to explore the ways in which the vision for Wisbech has been transformed over the last five years through a collaborative, multi-sector approach and how this has been achieved from an Anglian Water perspective. We want to provide private, public and voluntary sectors with an insight into how we achieved this vision, and key steps and considerations if they are looking to develop a similar approach to driving local socio-economic regeneration in their 'place'.

We hope this guide will play a part in inspiring broader change and transformation in places around the UK. We want these insights to be useful to all audiences; no matter what sector you work in. Everyone has something that they can offer to improve a local area.

It's important to note that the change we've seen in Wisbech is a result of true collaboration, which extends beyond the work of Anglian Water and our alliance partners. This collaboration is key, and we have worked in close partnership with many people and organisations, including the local MP Stephen Barclay, Fenland District Council

and Government agencies. Various local and national businesses have also committed time and resources to specific aspects of the development of Wisbech.

The vision has grown from grassroots community work to fundamental change in the area, including a proposal for a new garden town with over 10,000 new homes. The regeneration work can be grouped into three key themes; community, education and skills, and infrastructure. Together these will bring improved transport links, an increase in career prospects, improved health, better education, and skills training for local people.



BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY

"BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY HAS BEEN CALLING ON COMPANIES AND ASKING THEM TO THINK DIFFERENTLY FOR OVER 30 YEARS. THIS HERITAGE GIVES US THE PRIVILEGE OF SEEING HOW BUSINESSES CHANGE, GROW AND SHAPE THEIR IDEALS OVER A LONG TIME, OFTEN SPARKED BY A SINGLE MEETING OR MOMENT OF INSPIRATION. I THINK ANGLIAN WATER IS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF THAT.

I WASN'T YET CEO OF BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY WHEN PETER SIMPSON WENT ON ONE OF HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES' 'SEEING IS BELIEVING' VISITS, AND SAW THE POWER OF A BUSINESS CONNECTOR. NOR WAS I HERE WHEN HE STARTED TO CHAMPION THIS ROLE FOR ANGLIAN WATER AND ITS SUPPLY CHAIN. BUT I HAVE BEEN LUCKY ENOUGH TO SEE THE RELATIONSHIPS CAREFULLY FORGED, THE HARD WORK UNDERTAKEN AND THE IMPACT IT'S HAD ON WISBECH.

ANGLIAN WATER'S COMMITMENT TO ITS COMMUNITY, AND THE FACT THAT PETER AND HIS TEAM UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF LONG-TERM THINKING, ARE THE REASONS THAT THEY HAVE ACHIEVED SO MUCH IN THE TOWN. THE IDEA THAT SO MUCH CAN GROW FROM ONE SMALL ENCOUNTER YEARS AGO IS TRULY EDIFYING. I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING MANY MORE STORIES LIKE THIS ONE; HEROIC, IMPACTFUL AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE PLACE BY PLACE."

BUSINESS
IN THE
COMMUNITY

Amanda Mackenzie,
Chief Executive of BITC



WHY WISBECH? FINDING YOUR PLACE

Wisbech is widely known as the Capital of the Fens and is home to a quarter of all Fenland's residents. It is renowned for its elegant Georgian architecture and its people are justly proud of its history and traditions. Once a thriving town, it has struggled to redefine itself since the industrial revolution, experiencing sustained underinvestment, increased levels of deprivation, low-skill and low-paid employment and challenging educational needs.

A national index that measures health, education, crime, income, employment and barriers to housing and services, shows that Wisbech sits in the bottom 10% nationally for four of the top eight deprivation indicators.

Despite only being 40 miles away from Cambridge, rail transport links have been lost and road links suffer from underinvestment, which has left a population increasingly cut off from the economic and social networks the communities depend on.

It was clear to us that Wisbech faced more challenges than most other towns. However, this was not the only criteria for us when choosing

KEY STATS

3 yrs	6th	35%	Rail	Senior Citizens
Life expectancy 3 years less than in Cambridge	Ranked 6th worst town on social mobility index, across the whole country	35% of people do not have any qualifications	Largest town in England not connected to the rail network	4 out of 10 pensioners do not have access to a car, relying on public transport



KEY TAKEAWAY:

Choose a location close to where you have people and resources.

our 'place'. **Wisbech is at the heart of our operating area**, and we openly recognise that it would have been much harder to implement the same changes if the 'place' was too far from our key operational centres.

BUILDING ON STRONG FOUNDATIONS: WISBECH 2020

When we started our engagement in Wisbech we were lucky to find an existing framework already established. A joint project, led by the leaders of the Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Wisbech Town Council and Stephen Barclay, MP for North East Cambridgeshire, as well as a number of partners, led to the creation of the 'Wisbech 2020 Vision' which was launched in January 2013. The document created an aspiration for the future of Wisbech, regenerating the town and its surrounding area, making it 'a great place to work, live and visit'. The creation of this vision was an important milestone and vital in creating momentum to deliver better infrastructure and regenerate the town. The next step was to think about where the community wanted to see Wisbech further into the future. As the aim was to create a thriving town for the future, we wanted to help the vision extend in scope and scale far beyond 2020.



KEY FIRST STEPS:

Immerse yourself into the local community, **ask questions** and most importantly **listen**. Through this you'll create strong, trusting relationships where all parties are treated equally.

Understand the current situation and challenges. Hearing this from local people will help you really understand what is going on and create emotional investment from key stakeholders. This is extremely useful when moving things forward.

Be honest from the beginning about what you can offer as an organisation and what you can't. This will help you to gain the respect of the local community and local stakeholders.

Understand your long term vision. Can you find connections between your business strategy and supporting community change? This will help you move you from quick wins to long-term change.

Look out for opportunities, both quick wins and ongoing opportunities to advance the long-term vision. Build on what's already being done.

Be prepared to invest time. The changes that will have the biggest impact over time will require long-term investment and might not be measurable in the short term.

CREATING CONNECTIONS: VITAL SUPPORT FROM OUR SUPPLY CHAIN @one ALLIANCE

Our involvement in Wisbech began in 2013 when we seconded a Senior Operational Manager, Russell Beal, into Business in the Community (BITC) as a Business Connector, a national programme initiated by HRH the Prince of Wales in 2001 funded by the National Lottery. The overall goal of the programme is to create a culture of collaboration across communities. In Wisbech, we originally aimed to focus on helping those not in employment, education or training. Our approach to the traditional Business Connector model was different in a number of ways:

- We funded and supported Russell in collaboration with our supply chain. We brought together senior leaders from our Tier one suppliers 'The @one Alliance', creating a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach. This meant members of the @one Alliance were directly involved in guiding and influencing the way forward in Wisbech.

- We committed to a longer period of time than a normal connector (one year) to deliver transformational change.
- We created a working group to maintain regular contact and deliver support.

This gave Russell the ability to focus on building strong, long-term working relationships with local stakeholders and develop larger, strategic, collaborative proposals for transformational change. Russell was a BITC Business Connector for three years and was then brought back into the business to continue to work on the programme full time, providing long-term stability. This innovative approach resulted in a joint funding model and comprehensive involvement in strategic and tactical directions. Ultimately this allowed the cost, expertise and effort to be shared between multiple partners, and meant a broader range of resources could be called on to achieve maximum impact.



COLLABORATION IN DECISION MAKING IS KEY

A pivotal moment in 2013 was a meeting held at Octavia View, the headquarters of the Ferry Project, a charity and social enterprise that helps homeless people, based in Wisbech. It included representatives from Fenland District Council (FDC) and the previous Headteacher at Thomas Clarkson Academy, one of the local secondary schools. At this point, the 2020 Vision was already established, and there were many ways that we could have supported it. However, we felt Wisbech could look towards a bigger and bolder long-term vision. As an infrastructure company we are used to working to long-term goals, and we felt we could support FDC to lengthen and broaden the vision beyond 2020. This led to the creation of the Working Group, which had a clear shared vision. It brought stakeholders from a range of sectors together, in a supportive and constructively challenging way, to deliver on their common commitment to transformational change in Wisbech.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Don't impose your own vision - build on what's already there and what's already going on.

Push the boundaries and create a shared vision of the future.

Visionary plans were born out of the Working Group through honest discussions, and by challenging each other to find examples of successful transformation across the UK. For example, Skipton in Yorkshire had many similarities to Wisbech, but was now regarded as an exemplar market town. The Infrastructure for Growth (I4G) lobby was one of the main workstreams that developed out of the Working Group, focusing on increasing connectivity in the town, rather than just improving roads. This then led to the production of a business case for the 'Garden Town'. To create an achievable long-term vision, it is crucial to identify key steps required to succeed, build on what's already there and identifying what expertise you can offer.

Councillor Chris Seaton, Leader of Fenland District Council

"FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL IS PROUD TO HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE FOUNDING PARTNERS OF THE WISBECH 2020 VISION PROJECT WHICH WAS LAUNCHED BACK IN 2012. WORKING ALONGSIDE WISBECH TOWN COUNCIL AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, WE HAVE ENGAGED WITH OTHER PARTNERS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS TO HELP THEM WORK TOGETHER MORE EFFECTIVELY IN TACKLING LOCAL ISSUES. FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL ALSO ARRANGES THE WISBECH 2020 VISION STEERING GROUP MEETINGS, WHERE REPRESENTATIVES FROM PARTNER ORGANISATIONS MEET ON A MONTHLY BASIS TO PROVIDE STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND DISCUSS THE PROGRESS OF CURRENT INITIATIVES.

THE PRODUCTION OF THE WISBECH 2020 VISION DOCUMENT, AND THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE ACTIONS IT CONTAINS, WOULD SIMPLY NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE SUPPORT AND INPUT FROM OUR PARTNERS."



COMMUNITY AT THE HEART OF REGENERATION: LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY - 'FIND YOUR KEITH'

Keith Smith is the founder and director of the Ferry Project, a charity and social enterprise that helps homeless people in Fenland. The Ferry Project provides both accommodation and the skills needed to enable the homeless to live independently.

Fenland District Council connected Keith and Russell Beal, highlighting the impressive work which was being done by the Ferry Project. Keith's vision and passion for improving the town was undeniable and infectious; his presence as a key player within the community was incomparable.



Keith Smith, founder and director of the Ferry Project

"THE PEOPLE OF WISBECH USED TO BELIEVE THAT NOTHING WOULD EVER CHANGE AND IF IT DID IT WOULD ONLY BE FOR THE WORSE. WHEN ANGLIAN WATER GOT INVOLVED, THE FIRST THING THEY DID WAS LISTEN. THEY DIDN'T COME BECAUSE THEY HAD TO OR BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO IMPROVE A GOVERNMENT STATISTIC; THEY CAME TO HELP US TO CHANGE THE WAY THINGS ARE. THE WAY THEY ARE INVOLVED IN WISBECH HAS EVOLVED, AND THEY HAVE RESPONDED TO WHAT THEY HAVE HEARD AND SEEN IN A FLEXIBLE WAY. IT IS NOT ABOUT FOLLOWING A PRESCRIBED METHOD BUT ABOUT AN ATTITUDE OF BEING READY TO DO WHAT IT TAKES TO CHANGE THINGS."

WHY DID THE RELATIONSHIP WORK?

Keith and Russell's first meeting was a crucial step in identifying opportunities to support Wisbech. It allowed an honest and open conversation to take place. We didn't have all the answers and needed to understand the current situation from someone at the heart of the community to appreciate how we could make a difference. We wanted to help, but needed to ensure we were doing it in the best way we could. Keith's expertise and knowledge on Wisbech was invaluable and quickly led to the proposal of assisting in the refurbishment of the Queen Mary Centre, Wisbech's community centre.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Find a local, trusted and inspirational community voice to guide, inform and share the journey with.

CASE STUDY

In 2013 the Ferry Project assumed management of the Queen Mary Centre (QMC), a disused school building, alongside Cambridgeshire County Council and The Kings Church. The building was making a loss of £30k per year, but Keith Smith and the team at the Ferry Project had a vision. They saw the potential of the building to become an important community hub.

WHAT WAS DONE?

The first problem to overcome was securing a long-term lease on the building, which had previously been a challenging and time consuming task. Anglian Water and the @one Alliance held discussions with the local council and other key stakeholders and we were able to help achieve a successful resolution. This then enabled practical work to start. Between Anglian Water, our Supply Chain and the Ferry Project, we upgraded the lobby area, both large halls, the main toilets, the heating system, IT system, both kitchens and the front garden. Over 180 employee volunteers were involved in the renovation. This included directors from both Anglian Water and Tier 1 @one Alliance companies. Senior involvement on the ground meant everyone understood Keith's vision and felt emotionally invested in Wisbech.

THE QMC TODAY:

- 76 different services and groups are delivering directly out of the QMC, compared to four in 2013
- In 2017 alone there were over 48,000 visitors to the centre. There were just 2000 in 2013
- Wisbech Jobs Café - funded by the Local Enterprise Partnership, occurs every Friday offering support and advice on CV improvement, job applications, interview technique and job search
- Fenland Jobs Fair - held annually and provides support to over 2000 people. 300 people have found work through the fair



Assisting in the refurbishment of the QMC was not part of our initial plan; it developed out of a desire to make an immediate impact, demonstrate action and build trust with the local community.

Once the lease was confirmed it was a relatively 'quick win', which enabled local people to experience change and use the centre soon into our commitment to Wisbech. The Jobs Fair and Jobs Café were then established and people started to see the benefit in these services. Smaller projects like this had a snowball effect; increasing the number of people committed to changing Wisbech. The QMC acted as a catalyst within the town.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Find somewhere to focus your effort quickly. This usually leads to more opportunities and allows local people to become invested as they can see benefits of the work quickly.

TOGETHER WE ACHIEVE MORE: DENNIS CURRAN CHAIRMAN OF BARHALE

“On a balmy summers evening in 2013, Peter Simpson and his Board gathered the Principals of the Anglian Water @one Alliance at Octavia View, the Ferry Project’s Headquarters, to hear an inspirational story from Keith Smith. A story about turning a struggling environmental and social situation into a purposeful future for Wisbech.

The ethos of the Anglian Water @one Alliance is that **working collaboratively achieves more**. The Ferry Project sparked recognition amongst us of a wonderful, untapped human resource opportunity compatible with the Anglian Water philosophy of efficiency, delivery in commercial, environmental and human resource. This collaborative mindset meant we’ve

been able to transform the dilapidated Queen Mary Centre into a vibrant community hub. Another monumental success has been sponsoring two new courses at the College of West Anglia that feeds into the efficiency of the @one Alliance workforce. We’re sourcing, training and retaining local people in practice. We are now fully **integrated into the Wisbech 2020 Vision** alongside the Local Authority, community, regional MPs and the Government for the people of Wisbech. A heartfelt feeling nurtured in Octavia View that summer’s evening is now an @one Alliance passion. A passion to fulfil the dream that together **we can make Wisbech a model for best practice, in social, commercial, environmental and educational success** in the Anglian region and the UK as a whole.

This all reinforces our @one Alliance belief; **together we achieve more**. We are proud to work with the Wisbech community. My advice to organisations who want to work with and develop local communities is to **work together and make everything possible.**”

“A HEARTFELT FEELING NURTURED IN OCTAVIA VIEW THAT SUMMER’S EVENING IS NOW AN @ONE ALLIANCE PASSION. A PASSION TO FULFIL THE DREAM THAT TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE WISBECH A MODEL FOR BEST PRACTICE, IN SOCIAL, COMMERCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS IN THE ANGLIAN REGION AND THE UK AS A WHOLE.”



PUTTING THE SPOTLIGHT ON WISBECH: BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY BUSINESS CONNECTOR EVENT

In 2013 the BITC 'Big Connect' event brought together the growing network of Business Connectors from across the UK. Also present were people and organisations from the communities in which they work and companies, national partners and individuals who support the Business Connectors programme. The purpose of the event was to share learning and build networks with people involved in different aspects of the Business Connectors programme.

HRH the Prince of Wales visited our Anglian Water Fenland stand to meet everyone involved, engaging directly with the key stakeholders and understanding the challenges that Wisbech faces. This raised the profile of the ongoing work in Wisbech immensely, making it impossible to ignore Wisbech.

Throughout our involvement in Wisbech we have sought to help keep the spotlight on the town to highlight the fantastic efforts of local people, companies and the authorities in taking forward the vision. It has been important to do this at a local level so the community are kept at the heart of the action, but also with national decision makers so they understand the vision has support and commitment in the long term.



KEY TAKEAWAY:
Make it impossible for people to ignore your place by raising its profile. Work with influential stakeholders like local councils, MPs, and businesses.

Russell Beal, Business Connector, Victoria Harris, Former Director of 'The Prince's Rural Action Programme', Business in the Community and Peter Simpson, Chief Executive, Anglian Water.



CASE STUDY

EDUCATION WITH THE COLLEGE OF WEST ANGLIA

To create a sustainable future for Wisbech we recognised we needed to work with the education sector, alongside community action and infrastructure.

It was clear that Wisbech had lots of people and talent, but limited career opportunities. At the same time, we identified that the five Anglian Water alliances needed more mechanical and electrical engineers.

There was an opportunity to address the two problems together and the flexibility in our approach enabled us to make the most of this opportunity.

We started working with the College of West Anglia (CoWA) in the Wisbech Campus to introduce two new courses. The qualifications in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering and in Construction and Utility Operations were designed to give people the chance to become skilled engineering and construction professionals. Importantly, every student was guaranteed an interview with one of the @one Alliance companies on successful completion of their course.

The courses provide the foundation skills required to work in any of the partner companies in our alliances, allowing future talent to be nurtured. College hours are tailored to the individual's

circumstances and specialist lecturing and materials, including iPads, are provided to students. By providing this support our students feel more connected to Anglian Water, the alliance companies and the college.

The collaborative approach between the five Anglian Water alliances and the college, is raising the aspirations of local people, providing them with skills and developing pathways for exciting and rewarding careers.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Be flexible in your approach; don't be too focused on your original metrics and targets, as this can get in the way of opportunities.

It's okay to identify a direct benefit for your organisation. There is a difference between 'sponsoring' and being truly involved by committing resources, including specialist lecturing, materials, equipment and funding staff.



WHAT WAS THE MAIN CHALLENGE?

For the courses to work we needed to create a strong support system for the students. We needed to raise awareness and the aspirations of everyone involved, including parents, teachers and the students themselves.

2017 GRADUATES

2017 saw the first graduates from CoWA successfully complete their courses and 14 students have been employed as apprentices across Anglian Water, Barhale and Clancy Docwra. As of September 2017, a total of 50 apprentices were studying at the college across the two courses.

Dale Evans, Director of the Anglian Water @one Alliance

"THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE @ONE ALLIANCE AND THE COLLEGE OF WEST ANGLIA OFFERS SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS; FOR THE COLLEGE, FOR THE PARTNERS AND FOR THE COMMUNITY OF WISBECH. IT IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF THE BENEFITS THAT CAN ARISE FROM COMMITTED AND DEEP RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BUSINESSES AND THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE."

David Newsome, Collaborative Skills Programme Manager, Barhale

"THE COURSES HAVE PROVIDED A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO LEARN NEW SKILLS AND GET ON THE RIGHT TRACK FOR EXCITING AND REWARDING CAREERS. BY INVESTING IN EDUCATION IN WISBECH IN THIS WAY, WE CAN NURTURE OUR OWN FUTURE TALENT WITH A VIEW TO EMPLOYMENT WITH ONE OF ANGLIAN WATER'S ALLIANCES."



Sean Maloney, Graduate of the two-year BTEC Level 3 mechanical and electrical engineering extended diploma; now an apprentice with Barhale.

"THE BEST ASPECT OF THE COURSE WAS OUR INVOLVEMENT WITH ANGLIAN WATER AND ITS DIFFERENT TEAMS. THE VISITS WE HAD WERE INFORMATIVE AND GAVE US AN INSIGHT INTO HOW THE TEAMS WORK. IT HELPED CREATE A LINK BETWEEN THE WORK WE WERE DOING IN THE CLASSROOM AT COLLEGE AND THE WORK WE COULD POTENTIALLY BE DOING IN THE FUTURE."



THE IMPORTANCE OF INFRASTRUCTURE FOR GROWTH

CASE STUDY

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR GROWTH

One of the biggest long-term challenges the town faces is poor access to public transport. It is the largest town in England without a railway station. To truly enable the town's development to thrive, transport, and in particular the railway, needed to be a focal point. This was the community's priority. The Wisbech 2020 vision was an excellent starting point to raise the profile of the campaign to bring the railway back to Wisbech.

Railfuture, an independent campaigning body for a better passenger and freight network, is leading the Wisbech Rail Campaign. They joined together with local people, rail planning experts and influential local business leaders, including Anglian Water to progress Wisbech rail through a new group, the Wisbech Consultative Group.

A direct train service to Cambridge is proposed with a journey time of approximately 40 minutes. The journey currently takes over one and a half hours using multiple forms of public transport. Reopening the line would undoubtedly help

create an economic stimulus, support significant new housing development and provide game changing connectivity with Cambridge and Peterborough.

Gaining support from key people and raising the profile of the rail lobby has been crucial. Our role has been to act as a convenor, gathering business and political support, and challenging existing thinking. Stephen Barclay, MP for North East Cambridgeshire has provided unrelenting support to raise the profile of the scheme to a national level. There has also been strong support from various political leaders including successive senior Government Ministers, including Chris Grayling MP and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Mayor, James Palmer.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Work on the systemic challenges in your area - what is truly stopping the development of your place?

Raise the profile and shine a spotlight on key regeneration campaigns.

Changes of this scale will take time and must make sense economically, environmentally and socially.

Peter Wakefield, Vice Chairman, Railfuture, East Anglian Branch

"TRANSPORT IS ABSOLUTELY FUNDAMENTAL TO THE ECONOMY. AREAS CAN BECOME ISOLATED IF NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY. ANGLIAN WATER AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN HAVE BEEN FUNDAMENTAL IN MOVING THINGS FORWARD; THEY HAVE CONTACTS WITHIN THE INDUSTRY TO DRIVE CHANGE AND THE SOCIAL STANDING IN THE COMMUNITY. ULTIMATELY THEY HAVE NOT ALLOWED IT TO SINK IN TO THE SAND."



WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The rail link is now in the County Transport Plan and in the third stage of seven in the Network Rail Assessment. Latest estimates suggest that reopening the line would cost approximately £110 million. Our supply chain partners, Sweco and Skanska, have been heavily involved, providing innovative solutions and ultimately keeping costs as low as possible.



2013

Railfuture

Volunteers delivered over 11,000 leaflets in Wisbech, highlighting the advantages of a railway restoration. Invited people to sign an online petition calling for Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) to officially start work on feasibility study leading to the creation of a business case.

5,000

Over 5,000 people signed the petition, it was accepted by Cambridgeshire County Council and the business case was developed.

2014

Growth

Nov 2014 - 'Infrastructure for Growth' (I4G) stakeholder lobby group began.

I4G lobby

Series of I4G lobby meetings were held including one with the East Anglia Rail Franchise bidders to reaffirm the case.

2015

Planning

Feb 2015 - Formally responded to the Network Rail 'Anglia: Route Study - Long-Term Planning Consultation' on behalf of a coalition of businesses providing a strong economic case.

Consultation

Sep 2015 - Meeting with Rail Minister/Rail franchise consultation/rail options considered (work in the background with supply chain rail experts).

£6.2m

Recognition by Combined Authority with £6.2m for detailed appraisals.

2017

Community engagement

2017 - Newly formed 'Wisbech Rail Consultative Group' aims to ensure full community engagement, chaired by Peter Wakefield from Rail Future.



CREATING A COMMUNITY VISION FOR THE FUTURE

As we agreed that Wisbech needed to set its sights 'Beyond 2020' we felt that the creation of a new vision had to be led by the people of Wisbech. To do this we supported a large engagement programme with roadshows and a questionnaire. It allowed the community to consider what they'd like to see long term. We were careful not to impose someone else's vision on

the local people; having open, two-way discussions results in more investment from the local community. By bringing different potential visions to life with the community, people can make their own choices about which ones they want to see developed and possibly implemented in the town. The feedback from over 400 responses shaped a transformational vision for the town.



A pivotal moment was inviting David Rudlin, the founder of Urbanism, Environment and Design (URBED) to deliver a presentation at a meeting of the Wisbech 2020 group. Drawing on his winning entry for the Wolfson Economics Prize, he talked about the issues faced by similar towns in the UK and the strategies that had been implemented to bring about regeneration.

The combination of community feedback and David's concept for a garden town led to a positive debate about the towns' future. By bringing potential ideas to life, rather than imposing a set plan on the local people, the community were able to decide themselves what sort of town they wanted.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Don't be afraid to propose new concepts and ideas.

Ongoing community engagement is crucial to keep the local people involved.



CASE STUDY

GARDEN TOWN PROPOSAL

At one of the regular Wisbech Vision events, David Rudlin presented an inspirational lecture on regeneration and what might be possible in Wisbech. The presentation went down so well that URBED were commissioned by Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council together with Anglian Water and Foster Developments to explore the concept of a Garden Town in more detail, creating a bold vision for Wisbech. The idea is to use the potential reopening of the railway as a catalyst for regeneration in the town, as well as planning for over 10,000 new homes, supported by a country park that would provide flood management.

There was support from a diverse group of stakeholders and community representatives including Wisbech Town Council, Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards, King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council and the newly established Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority who have provided essential funding of £6.5m to carry out a full feasibility of the Garden Town proposition. The project also has support from international businesses such as Nestle and AstraZeneca.

Based on the evolving journey and engagement with the Wisbech community and stakeholders, the garden town opportunity offers a wide and ambitious range of benefits:

- It provides a 'scale of growth' which would allow transformational economic regeneration
- It would facilitate the reopening of the railway line, something that local people are passionate about, transforming the town and increasing its connectivity
- It would create a climate resilient community with blue and green infrastructure at its heart,
- It would support the creation of approximately 11,000 new jobs, expanding the local small and medium enterprise (SME) sector and rejuvenating the high street and town centre.



KEY TAKEAWAY:

Explore the difficulties, don't ignore them. It's important to do this at the earliest stage before concepts become proposals.

Co-create the vision with the community - grassroots engagement is key to ensuring you get the buy in you need.



David Rudlin, Director of URBED

"I HAVE BEEN DELIGHTED TO WORK WITH THE PEOPLE OF WISBECH THROUGH THE GUIDANCE OF ANGLIAN WATER ON PROPOSALS FOR A GARDEN TOWN. SINCE WINNING THE WOLFSON ECONOMICS PRIZE ON HOW TO BUILD GARDEN TOWNS, I HAVE WORKED WITH MANY PLACES SEEKING TO APPLY THE LESSONS. WISBECH IS THE MOST EXCITING OF THESE BECAUSE OF THE SCOPE AND AMBITION OF WHAT IS PROPOSED AND THE WIDESPREAD SUPPORT OF LOCAL PEOPLE."



CHALLENGES

From David Rudlin's experience, in most places the biggest challenge is public opposition, something that does not exist on any scale in Wisbech. However, there are still a number of challenges that require innovative solutions, primarily flood risk management, accessibility, viability and land assembly.

One of the main challenges is flood risk from the River Nene, exacerbated by climate change and future sea level rise. To overcome this, we coordinated a Study Group visit to the new Leidesche Rijn neighbourhood in Utrecht, Netherlands, to see their world-class approach to climate change and flood resilience in the largest urban extension of the Netherlands. Building on the innovative modelling techniques developed by the Dutch government, we have since held a series of stakeholder workshops bringing together local planners, the Environment Agency and the Highways Agency to explore possibilities. Wisbech is the first place in the country to benefit from the modelling technology, and has also received a £50,000 grant from the Dutch government towards the cost of piloting it in the UK.



KEEPING THE FOCUS ON WISBECH AND THE FUTURE: LOOKING AT BEYOND 2020

During our involvement in Wisbech we have learned you have to become immersed in the community to truly understand and support the delivery of what they want and need. Our involvement has developed over time around three key areas; community support, education and skills, and the development of infrastructure to support a thriving town in the long term. Across all these areas we have invested resources and intellectual support. We have supported existing collaborative partnerships, and built new ones and we have been able to shine a spotlight on the needs and vision of the town. The support of our senior leadership and that of our supply chain has been critical in this. In return we have seen benefits in our own learning, in recruitment, in an understanding of our place in the community and of course in our reputation.

2017 was the year in which Business in the Community (BITC) introduced their 'Pride of Place' initiative, a new approach to the way they ask businesses to engage in communities. It brings together the skills and resources of business to help some of our communities in greatest need thrive again. It is a strategic and long-term approach based on over 35 years of experience. The ultimate aim is to build healthy communities with successful businesses at their heart.

All the partners in the Wisbech Vision and the people of Wisbech are immensely proud that it has been selected as an exemplar for Pride of Place and we are pleased to share our experience with you.

Wisbech 2020 vision

**Councillor Chris Seaton,
Leader of Fenland District Council**

WISBECH 2020 VISION SUMMIT 2017
"IT IS ALWAYS IMPORTANT TO CELEBRATE SUCCESSES. HOLDING A WISBECH 2020 VISION SUMMIT MEETING EVERY YEAR ENABLES STAKEHOLDERS TO CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENTS AND LOOK FORWARD TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE. THE SUMMIT MEETING HELD IN 2017 DIFFERED FROM THOSE HELD BEFORE AS A 'MARKET STALL' APPROACH WAS USED TO SHOWCASE LOCAL ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR PROJECTS. DELEGATES HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO NETWORK WITH LOCAL ORGANISATIONS OVER LUNCH BEFORE HEARING FROM VARIOUS SPEAKERS, INCLUDING LOCAL STUDENTS FROM PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS."

KEY TAKEAWAY:
Maintaining momentum is crucial, particularly from key stakeholders.
Four years into our commitment to Wisbech and our engagement is only increasing.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR WISBECH?



COMMUNITY

- There are plans to create an enhanced community space in Wisbech with the second phase of the Queen Mary Centre renovation. This includes creating a theatre space and a music teaching centre, which will benefit those living in Wisbech and the surrounding towns that may also not have access to such facilities.



GARDEN TOWN

- A fully costed garden town proposal will be developed by Fenland District Council with support from Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.
- Further flood modelling work will be done to overcome risk of flooding and prove the flood resilience concept.



EDUCATION

- College of West Anglia
 - Exploring possible educational and training pathways for career opportunities within the industry for A-level students from the local high school, Thomas Clarkson Academy.
 - We'll be working with Groundworks - a charity that aims to bring people and the environment together to improve and transform people's lives in the UK's most disadvantaged communities- in Wisbech. Their volunteers will transform an outdoor area in need of renovation. Through this work the volunteers will attain a Level one in Horticulture and also Level one in Maths and English, providing a direct pathway onto a construction course.
 - We'll provide training for teachers in the area (Boston, Lincs) to enable them to teach their students the basics of engineering, bringing the subject in to schools at an earlier point.
- The Anglian Water Women in Engineering event will be held in Wisbech this year (2018) introducing hundreds of young women to career opportunities within Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.



DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT

"...PEOPLE ARE STARTING TO HOPE, TO BELIEVE THAT THINGS CAN BE BETTER NOT JUST FOR ONE PERSON OR EVEN 10, BUT FOR THE TOWN. ALL THIS HAS COME OUT OF ANGLIAN WATER'S INVOLVEMENT. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO SAY BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR THE @ONE ALLIANCE COMPANIES AND FOR ANGLIAN WATER NEED TO KNOW THAT THEY HAVE, AND ARE, MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE TO PEOPLE'S LIVES.

WITH BIG PROJECTS WE CAN GET SO WRAPPED UP IN THE PROJECT ITSELF THAT WE FORGET THAT IT IS REAL PEOPLE WHO ARE IMPACTED, REAL CHILDREN, MOTHERS, FATHERS, TEENAGERS, WHOSE LIVES ARE CHANGED FOR THE BETTER EVEN IF JUST FOR A DAY, OR A WEEK, OR A MONTH. ONCE THAT HAS HAPPENED PEOPLE REMEMBER THAT AND THAT CAN NEVER BE TAKEN AWAY."

Keith Smith, Founder and Director of the Ferry Project

"FROM BEING SECONDED TO BITC AS A BUSINESS CONNECTOR TO BECOMING ANGLIAN WATER'S CORPORATE CONNECTOR, I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN WISBECH FROM THE BEGINNING. THE FLEXIBILITY IN THE APPROACH HAS ENABLED TRULY SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS TO TAKE PLACE WITH NO END IN SIGHT. THE PROGRESS MADE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE GENEROSITY, IMAGINATION AND PERSEVERANCE OF ALL THE ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS THAT HAVE WORKED TOGETHER WITH THE SHARED GOAL OF TRANSFORMING WISBECH INTO A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK. MY TIP TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS IS TO FIRST ENGAGE AND LISTEN TO THE COMMUNITY AND 'FIND YOUR KEITH!'"

Russell Beal, Corporate Connector, Anglian Water

ACADEMIC VIEWPOINT

"OUR RESEARCH IN THE 3S GROUP AT UEA SHOWS THAT ADDRESSING 21ST CENTURY SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES DEPENDS ON THE MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT OF SOCIETY AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES. I AM THEREFORE VERY ENCOURAGED TO SEE ANGLIAN WATER AND ITS PARTNERS TAKING SUCH A PROACTIVE AND DYNAMIC APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN WISBECH. I HOPE THIS CASE STUDY AND GUIDE WILL BE AN IMPORTANT STARTING POINT FOR ANGLIAN WATER AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS TO DEVELOP MORE OPEN, INNOVATIVE, SYSTEM-WIDE, RESPONSIVE AND RESPONSIBLE APPROACHES TO SOCIETAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE FUTURE."

Dr Jason Chilvers, Chair of the Science, Society and Sustainability (3S) Research Group, University of East Anglia.



TOP TIPS

LISTEN

UNDERSTAND THE AREAS CURRENT SITUATION AND THE SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES IN YOUR PLACE; WHAT IS TRULY STOPPING THE TOWN'S DEVELOPMENT?

FIND OPPORTUNITIES

BUILD ON WHAT'S ALREADY BEEN DONE AND USE IT TO GAIN MOMENTUM

'FIND YOUR KEITH'

FIND A COMMUNITY FIGURE. THEY CAN BECOME A TRUSTED MESSENGER.

PROPOSE NEW CONCEPTS

DON'T BE AFRAID TO HAVE OPEN CONVERSATIONS WITH LOCAL PEOPLE

STAY FLEXIBLE

THINGS MAY CHANGE SO PLANS NEED TO BE ADAPTABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES.



THANK YOU

To all the organisations and individuals who have committed time, resources and support to Wisbech. We truly believe that by concentrating on improving a single town collaboratively we can make a lasting difference to people's lives. We encourage you to make the UK happier, healthier and wealthier, place by place.

HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTING A PROSPEROUS WISBECH:



IMDS

IOS INTEGRATED OPERATIONAL SOLUTIONS

IMR WATER

IMR Water Recycling



Wisbech Town Council

Cambridgeshire County Council



Royal HaskoningDHV
Enhancing Society Together

foster PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS

urbed

jobcentreplus

KIER

LLOYDS BANK

Balfour Beatty

Barhale

clancydocwra

Ferry Project

Cognizant

PURINA.
Your Pet, Our Passion.

Fenland CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Fenland District Council

Atos

PUBLIC SEWER SERVICES

Stantec TREATMENT

MMB
Mott MacDonald Bentley

CSC

SKANSKA

Capgemini
CONSULTING. TECHNOLOGY. OUTSOURCING

Danaher & Walsh

Claret
CIVIL ENGINEERING LTD

aim

MORRISON Utility Services

SWECO