

AGENDA

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2019

2.30 PM

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, FENLAND HALL,
COUNTY ROAD, MARCH PE15 8NQ**

Committee Officer: Izzi Hurst
Tel: 01354 622281
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- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Previous Minutes. (Pages 3 - 12)

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of 2 September 2019.
- 3 To report additional items for consideration which the Chairman deems urgent by virtue of the special circumstances to be now specified.
- 4 Members to declare any interests under the Local Code of Conduct in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting.
- 5 Update on previous actions. (Pages 13 - 16)

Members to receive an update on the previous meeting's Action Plan.
- 6 Annual Meeting with the Leader and Chief Executive. (Pages 17 - 28)

Members to receive a presentation.
- 7 Future Work Programme (Pages 29 - 34)

To consider the Draft Work Programme for Overview & Scrutiny Panel 2019/20.

8 Items which the Chairman has under item 3 deemed urgent.

Thursday, 3 October 2019

Members: Councillor A Miscandlon (Chairman), Councillor A Hay (Vice-Chairman), Councillor G Booth, Councillor A Bristow, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor D Mason, Councillor M Purser, Councillor R Skoulding, Councillor D Topgood, Councillor Wicks and Councillor F Yeulett

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2019 - 2.30 PM



PRESENT: Councillor A Miscandlon (Chairman), Councillor A Hay (Vice-Chairman), Councillor G Booth, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor D Mason, Councillor M Purser, Councillor R Skoulding, Councillor Wicks and Councillor F Yeulett

APOLOGIES: Councillor A Bristow and Councillor M Humphrey

Officers in attendance: Peter Catchpole (Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer), Anna Goodall (Head of Governance and Customer Services), Izzi Hurst (Member Services & Governance Officer), Dan Horn (Head of Housing & Neighbourhood Services), Phil Hughes (Head Of Leisure Services), Carol Pilson (Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer), Mark Saunders (Chief Accountant), Annabel Tighe (Environmental Health Manager) and David Wright (Policy & Communications Manager)

OSC12/19 PREVIOUS MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of 15 July 2019 were confirmed and signed, subject to the following comments;

1. In regards to minute number OSC11/19, point 2 should read; 'Councillor Mason suggested that as opposed to holding additional meetings...'

OSC13/19 UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS.

Members requested that the date of the meeting in which an action is raised, is added to the first column of the action plan.

In relation to Action 1 on the Action Plan; Councillor Booth thanked officers for their response but stated that the figures show that only 5% of breaches are resolved when a formal notice is issued by the Council. He suggested that these figures reflect that the Council could do more in relation to planning enforcement and asked that his comments are passed back to Nick Harding.

OSC14/19 PROGRESS OF CORPORATE PRIORITY - COMMUNITIES.

Members considered the Progress of Corporate Priority – Communities report.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows;

1. Councillor Miscandlon asked what the Council are doing to support vulnerable members of the community to ensure they are receiving the help available to them. Councillor Mrs French explained that Dan Horn works closely with the Housing Options team and officers work hard to ensure people do not 'slip through the net'.
2. Councillor Hay highlighted that the cumulative figure provided for LP1 ARP1 (page 15 of the agenda pack) is below target for 19/20. Councillor Mrs French explained that the Council had originally been given a target of 12 days however this had been reduced this to 8 days. She added that Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) are currently recruiting which should further improve this figure.

3. Councillor Hay asked how many Council Tax Billing Officers are currently recruited by ARP. Councillor Mrs French agreed to provide members with this information after the meeting.
4. Councillor Booth questioned the green RAG rating for performance indicator LP1 ARP1 as whilst monthly the target has been exceeded, cumulatively it is underperforming. Peter Catchpole explained that the RAG rating has a 10% tolerance and therefore is still classified as a green RAG rating. He reiterated that the original target given to the Council was 12 days however the Council asked for this to be reduced to 8 days.
5. Councillor Mrs French highlighted that considering the pressure the team are under, they are doing an exceptionally good job.
6. Councillor Booth stated that the target reported to members should include the tolerance level of 10%.
7. Councillor Miscandlon asked what action is being taken by the Council to ensure vulnerable members of the community are being supported. Councillor Mrs Wallwork explained that the Council liaise with outside agencies to ascertain whether contact has been maintained with these individuals and attempt to re-establish contact where necessary.
8. Councillor Cornwell said whilst it is positive that work is underway in identifying Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs), he is concerned that a high number of HMOs may not have been identified (page 16 of the agenda pack). He asked what action the Council is taking to identify these properties. Councillor Miss Hoy explained that legislation changed in October 2018 and HMOs are now identified as properties in which five or more unrelated individuals form more than one household. HMOs now require a licence and whilst a number of licences have been applied for, there are still those outstanding. She explained that the Council have issued Press Releases in relation to this and officers inspect properties on a regular basis to ensure they are compliant.
9. Councillor Miss Hoy explained to members the challenges surrounding the identification of HMOs and assured members that the Council are utilising the powers available to them in relation to enforcement action.
10. Councillor Booth asked for further assurance that the Council are using the powers available to them. Councillor Miss Hoy explained that she is working closely with Carol Pilon, Dan Horn and Peterborough City Council in relation to tackling this issue. The Council are reassessing their current enforcement process and considering ways in which enforcement action could be taken an earlier stage. She added that consideration is also being given to the potential resource the Council may require in the future to tackle this.
11. Councillor Booth asked if the Council could have done more in relation to housing enforcement. Councillor Miss Hoy said whilst a 'tougher' approach could have been taken, the Council have focused on educating landlords as opposed to taking enforcement action initially. She explained that through this process, officers have built positive relationships with landlords however there does need to be an element of enforcement action too.
12. Councillor Miscandlon highlighted that the Council face additional difficulties compared to Peterborough as Fenland is a rural area and many HMOs can be difficult to detect against the rural landscape. He offered his appreciation to the Private Sector Housing team for the hard work they have undertaken.
13. Councillor Cornwell asked if there is any indication that the number of HMOs are decreasing in the district. Councillor Miss Hoy said this data is not available however HMOs are popular due to the high rental yields they generate for Landlords. She said it would be interesting to see the effect Brexit may have on this sector as a number of HMOs are occupied by foreign nationals.
14. Councillor Cornwell asked if the Council are still engaging with landlords in relation to this. Councillor Miss Hoy confirmed that the Council do still actively engage with landlords however there is only so much that can be done to raise awareness.
15. Councillor Miscandlon asked how many HMOs are registered in Fenland. Councillor Miss Hoy confirmed the figures.
16. Councillor Booth asked if all existing HMOs have had to reapply for licences under the new scheme. Councillor Miss Hoy explained that those with an existing licence have not had to reapply. Dan Horn confirmed that there are a total of 52 HMOs; 14 licensed under the old

legislation and 38 licensed under the new legislation.

17. Councillor Hay asked for a breakdown in the location of these HMOs. Councillor Miss Hoy explained that she does not have this information however the majority are located in Wisbech.
18. Councillor Cornwell praised the work undertaken in this area. He asked the members are provided with an update on this work in the coming months. Dan Horn confirmed that members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel will consider this item further as part of next year's Future Work Programme.
19. Councillor Yeulett asked if statistics could be provided to members in relation to deprivation in Fenland as this would allow the Council to benchmark against other local authorities. Councillor Hoy explained that deprivation is not unique to Fenland and confirmed that the Council are engaging with Boston Borough Council to see the work they are undertaking as they have a similar level of deprivation.
20. Councillor Yeulett asked if the statistics on deprivation released by Central Government can be used to see the progress the Council has made on tackling this issue. He added that whilst housing and homelessness is a national challenge, many wards in Fenland are nationally recognised as being deprived. Councillor Boden explained that unfortunately the statistics available are merely an indication on the granularity of deprivation that exists and therefore cannot be used for benchmarking purposes or to measure the success of policy. He added that the most recent index was released in 2011, with an interim update provided in 2017. As the index is published every 5 years, the next update will not be released until 2022.
21. Councillor Yeulett reiterated that as the district is recognised as deprived, the Council must monitor its progress.
22. Councillor Cornwell added that the figures were previously published as part of the Health & Wellbeing strategy and they had shown progress in this area. He believes that consideration needs to be given to alternative means to measure deprivation to allow the Council to see if they are delivering on this priority.
23. Councillor Miscandlon agreed and asked officers and Portfolio Holders to keep members updated.
24. Councillor Cornwell highlighted that Health Services reference this data therefore the information is available.
25. Councillor Mrs Wallwork explained that deprivation is a very broad subject and includes not only physical wellbeing but psychological wellbeing too. The topic covers a large range of issues and is difficult to quantify.
26. Councillor Miscandlon agreed and added that the measurement of deprivation can be subjective.
27. Councillor Mrs Wallwork suggested that deprivation is often viewed negatively and Fenland residents often show a great deal of resilience. Deprivation cannot be measured purely on the number of benefit claimants but psychological wellbeing should also be a consideration too.
28. Councillor Booth highlighted that a number of projects implemented to tackle this issue are often only funded for a short period of time. Consideration needs to be given to sustained delivery of the core issues surrounding deprivation.
29. Councillor Mrs Wallwork agreed but highlighted the results of longer term projects can take time to produce outcomes. She suggested a balanced approach needs to be taken as there are fewer outcomes from short term projects and consideration needs to be given to long term solutions.
30. Councillor Mason congratulated the work undertaken by the Ferry Project in Wisbech. He highlighted that this project is a good example of sustained growth and is invaluable to the community. He added that the project has recently introduced a Hub offering homeless support. He asked if the Council had any intention of extending this scheme into other areas of the district.
31. Councillor Miss Hoy agreed and stated that the project works very well and has multiple funding streams. The new Hub was introduced as a result of special one-off funding and

early indications are showing the positive effect it is having. She said the Council need to consider what action will be taken when this funding comes to an end and whether it is necessary to implement it in other areas of the district.

32. Councillor Miss Hoy informed members that as Portfolio Holder of Housing, she will be considering the work of the Homelessness service as a whole. She is keen to assess what is required for Fenland and part of this will include assessing the needs of the other Market Towns.
33. Councillor Mason congratulated Councillor Miss Hoy and officers for their work on this issue and suggested that consideration could be given to working with voluntary services once funding has ended for this project.
34. Councillor Miscandlon asked when the funding ends for this. Councillor Miss Hoy confirmed it was due to end in June 2020. Dan Horn confirmed it would cease next year.
35. Councillor Miscandlon asked what the Council are doing to replenish these funding streams. Councillor Miss Hoy confirmed that officers are working hard to locate other revenue streams available to them however due to Brexit; the Government are only offering 1 year settlements currently. She explained that her aim is to ascertain what Fenland requires in relation to funding and resources and then try to source this.
36. Councillor Booth referenced the figures shown on page 21 of the agenda pack in relation to the number of homes adapted to assist vulnerable residents. He asked if figures were available that show the number of housing adaptation applications that were refused due to the landlord not giving consent, as he had recently had a constituent whose application had been halted due to their housing provider refusing the works. Councillor Miss Hoy stated that the scheme is very successful and agreed to provide this figure at a later date. She informed members that they are due to meet with Clarion at the scheduled Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting on 24 March 2020 and it may be worth discussing this issue with them too.
37. Councillor Wicks asked if the Council maintain a register of properties that have been adapted. Councillor Miss Hoy confirmed that this information is only held in relation to registered housing providers and not private sector housing.
38. Councillor Booth highlighted that there are only a finite number of these properties and many are adapted specifically for an individual's needs and therefore may not be suitable for others.
39. Councillor Miscandlon asked if 'lifetime homes' are increasing in the district. Dan Horn said he would try and obtain these figures.
40. Councillor Miscandlon said whilst the number of Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) awarded (page 24 of the agenda pack) is very positive, the number of customers that responded to the satisfaction survey is disappointing. He asked what can be done by the Council to improve the number of residents that complete these surveys. Councillor Miss Hoy suggested that many residents do not submit feedback when they are satisfied with the service and this should not always be viewed negatively.
41. Councillor Miscandlon asked that the Council focus on improving this public engagement and suggested that officers could visit these residents to try and obtain feedback. Councillor Booth disagreed as the response rate is quite high compared to the average response rate of surveys. He added that the team do not have resource to carry out visits for feedback.
42. Proposed by Councillor Booth, seconded by Councillor Cornwell and agreed that the customer satisfaction statistic in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants (page 24 of the agenda pack) is removed from future reports. Members agreed to replace this figure with budgetary information and the number of instances in which DFGs do not progress from initial enquiries.
43. Councillor Cornwell asked if the Council had considered extending the Syrian Refugee project into other areas of the district (page 24 of the agenda pack). Councillor Seaton confirmed that consideration is being given to a second phase of this project and members will be kept updated on the progress of this.
44. Councillor Yeulett congratulated members and officers for their work on this project.
45. Councillor Miscandlon highlighted to members that Whittlesey were in the fortunate position

of having a property suitable for this project.

46. Councillor Cornwell praised the project and said it shows how successful partnership work can be.
47. Councillor Hay asked if all costs associated with this project were funded by the national budget set aside for Foreign Aid. Councillor Mason confirmed this is correct.
48. Councillor Booth asked for further information on the role of the CLLD Project Animator (page 25 of the agenda pack). Dan Horn confirmed that the role involves co-ordination of the project.
49. Councillor Yeulett asked if residents are approaching the Council for advice in relation to Brexit (page 28 of the agenda pack). Councillor Seaton confirmed he did not know this figure however the Council are acting as a conduit for information being released by Central Government.
50. Councillor Boden informed members that the Council have received financing in relation to this issue from Central Government. The Council are engaging with many other local authorities, organisations and networks to ensure they are continually monitoring the potential challenges we could face as a result of Brexit. One area of concern is in relation to individuals registering for settlement status in the UK and the Council have worked hard to ensure people are informed on this process. He explained that if Brexit goes ahead, there may be a deadline for people to complete their application and reiterated that the Council are undertaking a lot of work in this area.
51. Councillor Miscandlon said there was a lot of confusion surrounding settlement status and asked how the Council are assisting foreign nationals with this process. He added that officers in public facing roles must also be informed of the process in order to educate the public. Councillor Boden stated that this confusion has not been reported in Fenland and officers are available to assist with the application process. The application form has been simplified to make the process as easy as possible. He added that work is ongoing to engage with individuals that may require assistance with this.
52. Councillor Booth stated that many of the issues surrounding the applications relate to the proof of residency required for foreign nationals. He stated that only 61% of applications submitted are granted settlement status, due to processing issues at the Home Office. He suggested the Council need to be vigilant of this as Wisbech, in particular, has a large number of foreign nationals. Councillor Boden reiterated that the Council have a duty to assist these residents and will offer help where necessary.
53. Councillor Booth said the process will be resource intensive and the Council need to be mindful of this. Councillor Boden agreed and stated that the Council need to promote a wider message that foreign nationals are welcomed and encouraged to stay in this district.
54. Councillor Yeulett agreed and endorsed Councillor Boden's message.
55. Councillor Booth asked for confirmation that the Youth Advisory Board (page 29 of the agenda pack) has replaced the previous Youth District Council. Councillor Seaton confirmed this.
56. Councillor Booth asked how the Council will assist in relation to Youth Advisory Boards. Councillor Seaton explained that the Youth Advisory Boards are externally funded and coordinated by 2020 Productions who design the programme.
57. Councillor Booth asked if figures were available to show the savings to residents as a result of the Fenland Ferret (page 31 of the agenda pack). He stated that whilst this scheme was initially very successful it does not seem to be as well utilised now.
58. Councillor Mrs Wallwork confirmed that the service is still successful however as they are now well established, the initial feedback has dropped. She explained that the scheme signposts residents to services available, therefore residents may be accessing these services directly now.
59. Councillor Cornwell explained when the Fenland Ferret was set up; it was the only means people could use to access this type of information however there are now other partners that offer this service too.
60. Councillor Miscandlon agreed and explained that nowadays information is much more readily available to residents via other means. Councillor Mrs Wallwork agreed and

highlighted that the number of people that engage with the scheme will naturally drop as technology advances as the information is more readily accessible.

61. Councillor Booth asked that the Customer Satisfaction statistic provided in relation to the Golden Age Fairs (page 31 of the agenda pack) is removed as it does not provide members with useful information. Councillor Mrs Wallwork agreed to this and reiterated that attendees are very happy with the service during the events however these residents do not always wish to provide official feedback. Members agreed to remove this statistics unless it is of a significant value.
62. Councillor Wicks praised the Golden Age Fairs and their success. He asked for further information on the next event scheduled to take place. Councillor Mrs Wallwork confirmed that the next Golden Age Fair is due to take place on Tuesday 15 October 2019 between 11.00am-2.00pm at March Library.
63. Councillor Mrs Wallwork thanked officers for their outstanding work on the Golden Age Fairs.
64. Councillor Miscandlon asked how much funding was being directed to education, apprenticeships and skills required in Wisbech. Councillor Boden said whilst he did not have figures available a significant focus is being put on apprenticeships. He added that there is an emphasis across partners to have as broad an advancement in skills, as possible.
65. Councillor Miscandlon asked what the Council are doing to raise the profile of the district's town centres. Councillor Boden said as the Council are working on the Market Town Project which will identify which areas they need to focus on in relation to town centres. He explained to members that the issues surrounding the town centres is not an isolated issue for Fenland and this shows how society is moving forward.
66. Councillor Miscandlon reminded members that they will be provided with an update on the Wisbech 2020 project at the Overview & Scrutiny meeting scheduled to take place on 11 November 2019.
67. Councillor Mason added that St Neots have invested largely in their town centre and the Growing Fenland project should engage with them on their successes. Councillor Boden agreed that this could provide the Council with valuable information however St Neots have had an enormous amount of housing growth over the previous years and therefore their requirements will be different to Fenland.
68. Councillor Wicks asked if the Wisbech 2020 project had engaged with the College of West Anglia. Councillor Boden confirmed they had.
69. Councillor Booth asked if the Council had produced Management Information in relation to the Freedom Leisure Contract and asked for an update on the monitoring of this contract. He added that the Corporate Governance Committee had requested an interim audit to be carried out on this contract and asked if the outcome of this was known.
70. Phil Hughes confirmed that the internal audit team are currently working on this area.
71. Councillor Miscandlon reminded members that further information will be provided to them at the Overview & Scrutiny Meeting scheduled to take place on 11 November 2019.
72. Carol Pilson assured members that officers are working closely with Freedom Leisure and are pleased with their progress. She explained that the contract has performance indicators that are monitored on a quarterly basis.
73. Councillor Booth stated that he was disappointed to see that there had been little progress on the Smoking Cessation Strategy (page 40 of the agenda pack). Councillor Boden explained that the most recent statistics will be reflected in later public health data. Carol Pilson reminded members that the Council are merely one partner in this strategy but are conscious that progress has been slow.
74. Councillor Cornwell reiterated that the Council are largely dependent on other partners but need to ensure their own Health & Wellbeing Strategy is incorporated into this. Carol Pilson confirmed the Council's Health & Wellbeing Strategy will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel at the meeting on 10 February 2020.
75. Councillor Booth asked if the Council receive commission from referring residents to grant schemes (page 41 of the agenda pack). Councillor Miss Hoy confirmed that the Council receive £5.00 per referral. Councillor Booth suggested that this figure needs to be public for

transparency purposes.

76. Councillor Cornwell agreed but explained that this is a cost neutral project as the Council invest any revenue back into publicity and advertising to extend the scheme further.
77. Councillor Miscandlon praised those involved with the Active Fenland project. Councillor Sam Clark agreed and endorsed the brilliant work taking place.
78. Councillor Wicks asked if the Council had plans to extend the Active Fenland project into Whittlesey and Chatteris. Councillor Sam Clark confirmed that the activities were implemented in Wisbech and March as a need for them was identified in these areas. She confirmed that they are currently engaging with Whittlesey Sports Association to see what work can be done there.
79. Carol Pilson highlighted that the Public Health funding received for these projects, could only be used in areas identified as having a need. She added that consideration is being given to other external funding for other projects.
80. Councillor Cornwell praised the work of Active Fenland and congratulated them on their work over the past year.
81. In relation to housing developments reported on page 43 of the agenda pack, Councillor Cornwell highlighted the inadequacies within national planning policies that halt the delivery of social/affordable housing nationally. He added that further work need to be done to ensure we have adequate housing for the families and young people of Fenland.
82. Councillor Yeulett endorsed Councillor Cornwell's comments and said whilst this is a national issue it needs to be addressed at a local level too.
83. Councillor Miss Hoy confirmed the Council are trying to work on this issue and consistently encourage registered providers to develop in Fenland. Viability issues are responsible for the non-delivery of many housing developments and work is taking place within the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to tackle this issue regionally.
84. Councillor Boden agreed but highlighted that this is a very wide subject and whilst additional support is required, the Council require the delivery of these schemes within Fenland and the current process is not succeeding in this delivery. He said members need to consider innovative and different solutions to tackle this problem.
85. Councillor Hay assured members that as the Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee, all members of the Planning Committee are extremely frustrated about this topic. Viability issues mean a vast number of developments cannot be delivered and the Council have to consider alternative ways to combat this.
86. Councillor Skoulding agreed but highlighted the requirement for infrastructure to support these new homes. Councillor Boden agreed but stated that the system does not work this way unfortunately. He agreed that it was essential that large scale developments are supported by the necessary infrastructure; however it is rare that infrastructure is implemented before a development is delivered.
87. Councillor Miscandlon encouraged members to have their input in the Local Plan Review currently taking place. He stated that it was essential that town and parish councils are involved in this process too.
88. Members asked in future that officers include all Portfolio Holders photos in reports, highlighting which members are relevant.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.35pm

(Councillor Booth declared a personal interest by virtue of the fact that he had spoken in objection at a Planning Committee meeting in relation to the development in Wisbech St Mary reported on page 43 of the agenda pack)

Councillor Yeulett left the meeting at 4.33pm.

Councillor Booth left the meeting at 4.35pm

OSC15/19 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT - 2020/21 SCHEME.

The meeting reconvened at 4.40pm

Members considered the Council Tax Support – 2020/21 scheme report, presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden offered an apology to members of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel for his absence at the previous meeting where this item was due to be considered.

Councillor Miscandlon thanked Councillor Boden for his apology.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows;

1. Councillor Hay asked if the Council had approached Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) again as per point 4.5 of the report (page 52 of the agenda pack). Councillor Mrs French explained that she believed CCC would not be contributing as no business case had been presented to them. She confirmed that she had raised this with the Leader of CCC and discussions were ongoing.
2. Councillor Boden confirmed that CCC are willing to consider this, if a suitable business case is presented to them on this and other elements of the Council Tax system. However, he added that this would not happen this financial year.
3. Councillor Cornwell agreed and asked that members support the undertaking of a detailed business case modelling of a future scheme. He explained that there would be no detrimental effect to residents this financial year and a business case detailing improvements that could be made to the Council Tax System, will be considered the following year.
4. Councillor Boden asked members of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel to support the recommendation to introduce a fluctuating earnings rule to the treatment of Universal Credit (UC) as variable incomes can cause unfortunate consequences to those affected individuals as they receive repetitive and revised estimates and demands.
5. Councillor Wicks asked if claimants 'pay rotas' will be considered. Councillor Boden confirmed that this is covered by legislation. He stated that whilst legally there are provisions, putting them into practice can be difficult. He explained that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) are currently trialling the practical application of moving existing claimants on to UC and are looking to move all existing claimants on to UC by 2024.
6. Councillor Hay raised concern from an equalities perspective about the treatment of a new UC claimant and an existing claimant with a change in circumstances, as different assessments are carried out and could result in different claim amount. Councillor Boden assured members that this cannot be challenged from an equality perspective as the administration of UC is being carried out as per legislation.
7. Councillor Mason asked if consideration should be given to a tolerance level of £20 following the rise of the National Wage. Councillor Boden explained that it is a balancing act between incentivising people and unreasonable variations. Peter Catchpole explained that this has been considered and both ARP and other Local Authorities have decided that £15 is an appropriate tolerance level of fluctuation in earnings.
8. Mark Saunders confirmed that a tolerance of £15 will be cost neutral to the Council. If the tolerance limit is increased further, the cost to the Council will increase too. He reiterated that the tolerance level is purely for administrative purposes and is not a cost saving or benefit to the Council.
9. Councillor Hay thanked officers for their explanation.
10. Councillor Cornwell requested that Credit Unions are included in the consultation process.
11. Councillor Cornwell asked that members are made aware if feedback received as part of the consultation process, is submitted by claimants of Council Tax Support or just interested parties.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel AGREED to;

- 1. Recommend to Cabinet the implementation of a fluctuating earnings rule of £15 per week. The £15 per week level is to be reassessed to ensure the anticipated administration gains remain relevant depending on the income level.**
- 2. Undertake a detailed modelling of a future Council tax Support Scheme during 2020 to be implemented in 2021/22.**
- 3. Continue with the current 14% Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21.**

(Councillor Boden declared an interest by virtue of the fact that he is the Chairman of LGSS, which could be considered a competitor of Anglia Revenues Partnership)

OSC16/19 ANNUAL OMBUDSMAN LETTER AND 3CS PROCESS.

Members considered the Annual Ombudsman Letter and 3Cs process report, presented by Councillor Boden (on behalf of Councillor Tierney).

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows;

1. Councillor Miscandlon said he was impressed at the speed in which the Council had responded to the upheld complaint.
2. Councillor Mason informed members that the Staff Committee are due to consider '3Cs Policy and Procedure on the Management of Unreasonable Complaint Behaviour' report at the meeting on Monday 9 September 2019.
3. Councillor Wicks highlighted that the upheld complaint was in relation to the leisure service. He asked if the 'lessons learnt' by the Council in relation to this complaint have been passed on to the new Leisure provider, Freedom Leisure. Councillor Boden confirmed that they had and the system, implemented as a result of the complaint, has been inherited by Freedom Leisure.
4. Councillor Wicks asked if the 'lessons learnt' by the Council in relation to this complaint had been circulated to all public-facing officers. Councillor Boden explained that this was not necessary as the 'lessons learnt' were specific to the leisure service.
5. Councillor Boden said the actions taken to mitigate the complaint should provide members with a great deal of confidence on how complaints are handled.
6. Councillor Wicks asked if the Local Government Ombudsman's (LGO) findings should be shared with other Local Authorities. Councillor Boden confirmed that this was not necessary however the results of the LGO review are available to view online.
7. Councillor Miscandlon praised officers for their handling of the complaint.
8. Councillor Boden suggested that when this item is considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel as part of the Future Work Programme, that a link is included in the report to the LGO website so members are able to view any complaints directly.

OSC17/19 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members agreed the Future Work Programme subject to the following comments;

Anna Goodall asked for clarification from members on their proposed approach to the forthcoming meeting with the Leader and Chief Executive (Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting on 14 October 2019). Members agreed that they would like to receive the following;

- A presentation delivered by the Leader and Chief Executive regarding key achievements and performance during the previous twelve months, how the organisation intends to move forward, hopes and vision for the future including an outline of the projects and programmes anticipated to deliver that vision.
- The presentation should include how the Leader intends to address the budget deficit.

- The presentation should include an outline of the major obstacles and pitfalls which the Chief Executive and the Leader foresee in relation to delivering against the vision and how they are being mitigated against (including information on the potential impact of Brexit on the Council).

Members asked that consideration is given to the format of future 'Progress of Corporate Priority' reports. It was agreed that officers would liaise with Councillor Miscandlon in relation to this.

5.35 pm

Chairman

Agenda Item 5

Outstanding actions from Overview and Scrutiny – October 2019

MEETING DATE AGENDA ITEM AND MINUTE NUMBER	RECOMMENDATION/ ACTION	UPDATE	TIMESCALE
02/09/19 OSC13/19 ACTION 1	Councillor Booth stated that the figures show that only 5% of breaches are resolved when a formal notice is issued by the Council. He suggested that these figures reflect that the Council could do more in relation to planning enforcement and asked that his comments are passed back to Nick Harding (Head of Shared Planning).	These comments were passed on to Nick Harding.	Completed
02/09/19 ACTION 2 OSC14/19	Councillor Hay asked how many Council Tax Billing Officers are currently recruited by ARP.	ARP currently have 19 Council Tax Billing Officers, plus another 8 starting in two weeks. The total will then be 27.	Completed
02/09/19 ACTION 3 OSC14/19	Councillor Booth asked if figures were available that show the number of housing adaptation applications that were refused due to the landlord (mainly housing associations) not giving permission	We do not keep data on refusals from landlords regarding adaptations. Often this would be dealt with by the Occupational Therapists prior to the Council being involved. However the feedback from Officers is as follows:	Completed

	(page 21 of the 2 nd September 2019 agenda pack)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private rented landlords rarely refuse a DFG as relates to an improvement. • Registered Providers may query the appropriateness of the proposal linked to managing their stock and future lettings etc. In these cases work would be done to look how the resident could be supported through other options e.g supported move etc, linked to the FDC allocations policy 	
02/09/19 ACTION 4 OSC14/19	Councillor Miscandlon asked if 'lifetime homes' are increasing in the district.	<p>In the last 3 years the Council is aware of 12 affordable homes that have been lifetime homes compliant. We do not monitor delivery of lifetime homes in other tenures.</p> <p>The Local Plan says that 'In this regard, where appropriate and viable, the Council will seek all new housing to be of a Lifetime Homes Standard'.</p> <p>Viability is an issue in the Fenland area though it is recognised achieving this standard is a challenge across the country as a whole</p>	Completed
02/09/19 ACTION 5 OSC14/19	Members asked that the customer satisfaction statistic in relation to DFGs is removed from future reports and replaced with budgetary figures and the number of instances in which DFGs do not progress	Agreed	Completed

	from initial enquiries.		
02/09/19 ACTION 6 OSC14/19	It was agreed that members would be kept informed of progress in relation to the second phase of the Syrian Refugee Project	Agreed	Completed
02/09/19 ACTION 7 OSC15/19	Councillor Cornwell requested that Credit Unions are included in the CTS consultation process.	Yes, they will receive a stakeholder letter highlighting the proposed changes to the scheme and the consultation details, including consultation dates and the survey link.	Completed
02/09/19 ACTION 8 OSC15/19	Councillor Cornwell asked that members are made aware if feedback received as part of the CTS consultation process, is submitted by claimants of Council Tax Support or just interested parties.	Yes, the survey includes the following 2 questions: 1. Does your Council Tax Bill include a reduction called 'Council Tax Support' on it? 2. Do you currently get Housing Benefit from FDC?	Completed

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Presentation by Leader and Chief Executive of Fenland District Council

FDC Overview & Scrutiny Committee Meeting

14 October 2019

Agenda Item 6

Sources of further information

Annual Report 2018/19:

[https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/10262/Annual-Report-2018-19/pdf/Annual Report - web version.pdf](https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/10262/Annual-Report-2018-19/pdf/Annual%20Report%20-%20web%20version.pdf)

Corporate priority reports already tabled at O&S Committee meetings:

<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/localgov/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=135&Year=0>

Joint Portfolio Report tabled at Council meetings

<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/localgov/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=156&Year=0>

Brexit pages on our website:

<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/brexit>

Key Achievements & Performance

- Communities -

Supporting vulnerable members of our community

Year 2018/19:

- 152 complaints from tenants investigated in **private rented accommodation** and 216 from HMO tenants which resulted in serious health and safety failings being put right. In just one year, officers inspected 1,746 properties and made 719 interventions.
- Supported by £196k from the government's **Controlling Migration Fund (CMF)**, we have been able to build upon our existing enforcement work. By undertaking street-by-street inspections in Wisbech, we have gathered valuable property intelligence and uncovered hidden issues.
- Supported by new housing legislation, we prevented 315 households from becoming **homeless** in 2018/19; a 174% increase since 2017/18.

April to July 2019:

- 65 complaints from tenants in **private rented accommodation** and 31 from HMO tenants
- **Housing enforcement** work now commenced in March through CMF funding
- 108 households prevented from becoming **homeless**
- The **Homeless Hub** opened in June 2019:
 - £131k funding for hub at the Ferry Project
 - 44 rough sleepers / homeless customers engaged
 - 30 now in accommodation, 5 people into work, 9 registered for training courses, 11 through a counselling service
- Successful work continues through the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough 'Trailblazer' project to pilot early approaches to **homeless prevention**.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Communities -

Supporting vulnerable members of our community

Year 2018/19:

- Financed through the '**Better Care Fund**', we adapted 145 homes to help elderly and disabled people remain safe, secure and protected at home.
- 310 people attended our **Golden Age** events during 2018/19.
- The twelfth annual **Pride in Fenland** awards were held during 2018/19 to honour the district's unsung heroes.
- Information telling residents how they could reduce their energy spend was circulated with annual council tax bids. Over 200 free home visits have been carried out saving householders in the region of £35k through incentives such as
 - warm homes discount
 - grants for first time central heating, loft insulation and cavity wall insulation

April to July 2019:

- An **Empty Homes** strategy is being produced to look at bringing a number of the empty homes in the district back into use.
- 61 homes adapted through the '**Better Care Fund**' to provide assistance to the elderly and disabled.
- 87 people have attended **Golden Age** events.
- 2 **Syrian refugee families** have been welcomed to Fenland during September 2019.



Key Achievements & Performance

- Communities -

Promoting health and wellbeing

Year 2018/19:

- In December 2018, Freedom Leisure took over the operation and management of Fenland's 4 **leisure centres**, saving the Council £351k per year against our current budget and enabling our facilities to remain high quality, affordable and accessible to all. It will also bring investment of £1.1million to extend and refurbish gym and studio facilities, purchase state-of-the-art fitness kit, improve catering offerings and develop a community outreach programme.
- During 2018/19 the '**Active Fenland**' project attracted over £256k of external funding to encourage local people of all ages to get moving and try new sports where they live.
- The **Controlling Migration Fund** has enabled people from a variety of cultures have joined together to enjoy activities such as floorball, basketball and yoga.

April to July 2019:

- The **leisure centres** continue to perform well with high customer satisfaction and an increase in the number of membership from 5,931 to 6,103 in the first quarter of 2019/20.
- The **Controlling Migration Fund** team have already secured £9k this year, resulting in over 40 sessions being available every week, and 4,376 people attending.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Environment -

Refuse, recycling & street cleansing

Year 2018/19:

- In 2018/19 we made nearly 2.9million bin collections across the district, in all weathers.
- 18,000 customers signed up for the garden waste service in 2018/19.
- Our cleansing and rapid response teams continue to provide an excellent, 7 day service. Last year they responded to over 1,200 requests and out of 1,355 inspections, 98% of areas met cleansing standards first time.

April to July 2019:

- From April to June 2019, residents have recycled 54% of their waste (over 10,000 tonnes), which has generated over £100k of income so far.
- Over 20,000 have signed up for the garden waste service for 2019/20 so far. This ensures that the service is self-funded and saves over £700k per year.
- In July 2019 the Arts Council approved a grant of £15k to support the development of a 'Creativity & Culture Strategy' for Fenland. The procurement process for the provision of this work is underway with the aim of completing the strategy by the end of the financial year.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Environment -

Improving the environment and our streetscene

Year 2018/19:

- Our Streetscene team spent over 4,800 hours on patrol in Fenland and, in partnership with Kingdom, served 384 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) on people who committed environmental offences.

April to July 2019:

- The Streetscene team have so far spent over 1,600 hours on patrol, and served 198 FPNs.
- The team continues to work closely with the community to tackle a variety of environmental and anti-social behaviour problems, with a particular focus on preventing flytipping, littering and dog fouling.
- In August 2019, we were successful in a prosecution for 5 separate large incidents of flytipping in Whittlesey, resulting in the person responsible being fined £1,500 for each charge, having to pay the Council's full costs and £1,000 compensation for the clean-up costs.
- The Green Dog Walkers campaign was launched in July 2019, encouraging responsible dog ownership. Over 50 dog walkers have signed up so far.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Environment -

Improving the environment and our streetscene

Year 2018/19:

- We worked with over 300 volunteers across 24 dedicated local volunteering groups and supported 249 environmental events.
- We continue to support local communities to stage the Four Seasons events. Last year 25,00 people enjoyed the range of entertainment and attractions on offer, with 97% of those asked being satisfied with the events.

April to July 2019:

- We have supported 82 volunteer events so far this year.
- The annual Street Pride celebration evening was held on 3rd October, and was attended by representatives from a variety of community groups, including Friends Of, In Bloom, Street Pride and the Getting it Sorted volunteers.
- In Bloom results include Gold awards for Chatteris and Wisbech.
- Work has started on the West End Park Skate Facility. Weather dependent (due to the concrete nature of the new park), this should take around 12 weeks to complete.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Environment -

Keeping people safe and promoting social cohesion

Year 2018/19:

- Our CCTV service recorded over 1,600 incidents of crime and disorder. This has helped partners to tackle violence, street drinking and anti-social behaviour.
- We investigated 163 cases of anti-social behaviour with our partners. The Fenland Community Safety Partnership continues its work to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.
- The Diverse Communities Forum (DCF) continues to improve integration and cohesion between local communities. The DCF has received over £1,456,000 in government funding for 11 cross-cutting projects.

April to July 2019:

- Our CCTV service have recorded over 399 incidents of crime and disorder.
- To reduce CCTV service costs, whilst improving operator presence, we will be sharing staff and the control room with Peterborough City Council from later this year.
- We investigated 55 cases of anti-social behaviour with our partners already this year.
- The 'Essentials by Sue' project has been launched to protect the dignity and comfort of young people in Fenland. Donation boxes for sanitary items, toiletries and underwear and information posters and leaflets have initially been placed in 6 locations. Donations will then be distributed to the participating academies and colleges, who will discreetly give these out to the young people who need them most.



Key Achievements & Performance

- Economy -

Attracting & supporting businesses

Year 2018/19:

- Local businesses are supported through free 'Fenland for Business' events, working with partners NWES and the Chamber of Commerce.
- Our business premises continued to provide popular 'start up' and conference sites, with 92% occupancy.
- Our Planning team processed 759 applications from across the district.

April to July 2019:

- 317 planning applications have been processed to date.
- The Boathouse has become the new location for our Wisbech One Stop Shop.
- Our Wisbech Yacht Harbour remains busy, with 97% of our full-time berths occupied at July 2019.
- Alongside Lincolnshire County Council and West Norfolk and Kings Lynn Borough Council, we are developing a 'Sail the Wash' marketing plan for the leisure ports in the area.
- We continue to work with skills services and local education providers to support young people get ready for work. As well as welcoming students for work experience, we have created 10 new apprenticeship roles across the Council.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Economy -

Promoting & lobbying for infrastructure improvements

Year 2018/19:

- The Hereward Community Rail Partnership (CRP) carried out extensive consultation to understand local transport issues.
- £4.5m of works ordered from Greater Anglia to improve provision at Manea, March and Whittlesea stations
- Supported by CPCA funding, work continues to improve infrastructure and transport connectivity in Fenland and beyond, including
 - £25m to improve A47 Guyhirn roundabout
 - £16.4m to improve A605 Kings Dyke Crossing
 - £10.5m for Phase 1 of the Wisbech Access Study
 - £9m to improve March, Manea and Whittlesea stations
 - £1.5m for the next stage of feasibility work for a March-Wisbech railway line
 - £1m for March Area Transport Study

April to July 2019:

- 3 new project boards established for Manea, March and Whittlesea station masterplans.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Quality Organisation -

Year 2018/19:

- A record number of people are choosing to access our services online through our website. We received 607,000 visits and 10,000 forms were submitted online.
- We have been reaccredited for **Customer Service Excellence (CSE)**. The assessor was highly complimentary of the Council's emphasis on delivering excellent customer-focused services.
- The results of a Staff Survey showed that 83% of staff are proud to work for FDC.
- Our social media following continues to grow with 8,300 Twitter followers and 2,200 Facebook 'likes'.

April to July 2019:

- Wisbech One Stop Shop moved to The Boathouse which, along with the March One Stop Shop move to Fenland Hall, will save taxpayers around £130,000 per year without compromising on the quality of service.
- This years Staff Awards ceremony will take place in December following nominations by staff.

Overview and Scrutiny – Draft Work Programme 2019 – 2020

All Formal meetings are held in the Council Chamber at Fenland Hall

Meeting Dates

<u>Agenda Despatch Date</u>	<u>Informal pre-meeting</u>			<u>Formal Overview & Scrutiny Meeting</u>		
	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Pre-Brief</u>	<u>Meeting</u>
Thursday 23 May 2019	Tuesday 28 May 2019	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 3 June 2019	2.00pm	2.30pm
Thursday 4 July 2019	Monday 8 July 2019	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 15 July 2019	2.00pm	2.30pm
Thursday 22 August 2019	Tuesday 28 August 2019 **please note the amendment to the date	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 2 September 2019	2.00pm	2.30pm
Thursday 3 October 2019	Monday 7 October 2019	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 14 October 2019	2.00pm	2.30pm
Thursday 31 October 2019	Monday 4 November 2019	10.00am *Please note the amendment to the time	Room 38	Monday 11 November 2019	2.00pm	2.30pm
Thursday 21 November	Monday 25	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 2	2.00pm	2.30pm

2019	November 2019			December 2019		
Thursday 2 January 2020	Monday 6 January 2020	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 13 January 2020	2.00pm	2.30pm
Thursday 30 January 2020	Monday 3 February 2020	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 10 February 2020	2.00pm	2.30pm
Friday 13 March 2020 **please note the amendment to the date	Monday 16 March 2020 **please note the amendment to the date	2.00pm	Room 38	Tuesday 24 March 2020** Please note the amendment to this date	2.00pm	2.30

11 November 2019

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ Officer/ External Witness
14.00 to 14.30 Pre Briefing			
14.30 to 16.30 Meeting	Freedom Leisure Review	Communities	Councillor Sam Clark Carol Pilson Phil Hughes Simon Bell Representative from Freedom (TBC)
	LA Support (Kingdom) Review	Communities	Councillor Murphy Carol Pilson Annabel Tighe John Roberts (Kingdom)
	Wisbech 2020 Vision & Wisbech Rail Update	Communities	Councillor Boden Councillor Seaton Gary Garford Wendy Otter Russell Beal (Anglian Water) Adrian Chapman (Cambs County Council and Peterborough City Council) Rowland Potter (CPCA)
	TEP items as required		
	Future Work Programme 2019/20	Quality Organisation	Councillor Miscandlon Anna Goodall

2 December 2019

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ Officer/ External Witness
14.00 to 14.30 Pre Briefing			
14.30 to 16.30 Meeting	Progress of Corporate Priority – Economy	Economy	Councillor Benney Gary Garford, Justin Wingfield
	Annual review of Anglia Revenues Partnership	Economy	Sam Anthony / Peter Catchpole Councillor Mrs French Paul Corney (ARP) Mark Saunders
	Update on CPCA Growth Service and impact on Economic Development in Fenland	Economy	Paul Medd Gary Garford Councillor Benney Justin Wingfield
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions		Anna Goodall
	TEP items as required		
	Future Work Programme 2019/20	Quality Organisation	Councillor Miscandlon Anna Goodall

13 January 2020

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ Officer/ External Witness
14.00 to 14.30 Pre Briefing	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Future Work Programme 2017/2018	Quality Organisation	Councillor Miscandlon Anna Goodall
14.30 to 16.30 Meeting	Draft Budget	Economy	Cabinet CMT
	Draft Business Plan	Economy	Cabinet CMT Dave Wright
	Fees and Charges	Economy	Councillor Boden Peter Catchpole Cabinet

			Mark Saunders & Neil Krajewski
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions		Anna Goodall
	TEP items as required		
	Future Work Programme 2019/20	Quality Organisation	Councillor Miscandlon Anna Goodall

10 February 2020

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ Officer/ External Witness
14.00 to 14.30 Pre Briefing			
14.30 to 16.30 Meeting	Local Health Partnership Update (TBC) Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Communities	Councillor Mrs Wallwork Annabel Tighe TBC – NHS Representative
	Progress of Corporate Priority – Environment	Environment	Councillor Murphy Councillor Tierney Dan Horn, Phil Hughes, Mark Mathews, Annabel Tighe Carol Pilson
	Crime Disorder and Reduction Partnership	Communities	Councillor Mrs Wallwork Carol Pilson, Dan Horn and Aarron Locks
	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Future Work Programme 2019/2020	Quality Organisation	Councillor Miscandlon Anna Goodall
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions		Anna Goodall
	TEP items as required		
	Future Work Programme 2019/20	Quality Organisation	Councillor Miscandlon Anna Goodall

24 March 2020

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ Officer/ External Witness
14.00 to 14.30 Pre Briefing			
14.30 to 16.30 Meeting			
	Review of Clarion	Communities	Dan Horn Councillor Miss Hoy Councillor S Clark Councillor Mrs Wallwork Carol Pilson Sue Stavers (Clarion)
	Transformation & Communications Portfolio Holder update		Councillor Tierney Carol Pilson David Wright Peter Catchpole
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions		Anna Goodall
	TEP items as required		
	Future Work Programme 2019/20	Quality Organisation	Councillor Miscandlon Anna Goodall