

Public Document Pack

COUNCIL

A meeting of Council will be held via ZOOM Video Conferencing System on TUESDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2020 at 4.00 PM and I request you to attend accordingly for transaction of the following business:

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak and the restrictions by the Government on gatherings of people, this meeting will be conducted remotely using the Zoom video conferencing system. There will be no access to this meeting at the Council offices, but there will be public participation in line with the procedure for speaking at Planning Committee.

The meeting will be available to view on YouTube:

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Previous Minutes (Pages 3 - 14)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held 6 August 2020.
- 3 To receive any announcements from the Chairman of the Council and/or the Head of Paid Service.
- 4 To receive members' declaration of any interests under the Local Code of Conduct or any interest under the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting.
- 5 To receive questions from, and provide answers to, councillors in relation to matters which, in the opinion of the Chairman, accord with the provisions of Procedure Rules 8.4 and 8.6.
- 6 To receive reports from and ask questions of Cabinet members with portfolio holder responsibilities, in accordance with Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2. (Pages 15 - 50)
- 7 Motion submitted by Councillor Tierney (Pages 51 - 52)

Motion submitted by Councillor Tierney regarding the proposal of a moratorium on sales of FDC land in Wisbech within 500 metres of the track of the decommissioned railway line or within 500 metres of any part of the site of the proposed new incinerator.
- 8 Corporate Governance Annual Report 2019/20 (Pages 53 - 64)

To report to Full Council the commitment and effectiveness of the Corporate Governance Committee's work from April 2019 to March 2020.
- 9 Coates Conservation Area Appraisal (Pages 65 - 108)

To inform Members that public consultation on the Coates Conservation Area Appraisal has been completed and seek approval from Council that these documents are adopted.

10 O&S Annual Report 2019/20 (Pages 109 - 120)

The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report reflects what has been undertaken and achieved by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel during 2019/20 and takes a forward look at the programme of work and challenges for the Overview and Scrutiny in 2020/2021.

Fenland Hall
March



Chief Executive

Friday, 28 August 2020

NOTE The Council may, by resolution, as exemplified below, exclude the public from a meeting during the consideration of any item of business whenever it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100 I of the Local Government Act, 1972

"Resolved that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for Item No./Minute No. on the grounds that the item involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act"

COUNCIL



THURSDAY, 6 AUGUST 2020 - 4.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A Miscandlon (Chairman), Councillor R Skoulding (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor Mrs S Bligh, Councillor C Boden, Councillor G Booth, Councillor J Clark, Councillor S Clark, Councillor D Connor, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor K French, Councillor A Hay, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor C Marks, Councillor A Maul, Councillor Mrs K Mayor, Councillor N Meekins, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor M Purser, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor W Sutton, Councillor M Tanfield, Councillor S Tierney, Councillor D Topgood, Councillor S Wallwork (*left at 5.30pm*), Councillor Wicks, Councillor Wilkes and Councillor F Yeulett

APOLOGIES: Councillor S Count, Councillor Mrs M Davis, Councillor D Divine, Councillor A Lynn, Councillor D Mason, Councillor D Patrick and Councillor W Rackley

Councillor Miscandlon welcomed members of the public and press watching the livestream of the Council meeting via YouTube due to Government guidance on social distancing. The meeting was held in accordance with the provision set out in the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and with Fenland District Council's Virtual Meeting Protocol.

C9/20 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 17 June 2020 were confirmed.

C10/20 TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE.

Councillor Miscandlon made the following announcement:

"Members may already be aware that I have had to take the difficult decision to postpone this year's Chairman's Civic Reception. As far as I am aware the Civic reception has never been postponed previously, however in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and Government guidance in relation to social distancing I thought it would be appropriate to postpone and rearrange a date in the future which will enable greater numbers of people to attend and enjoy the event.

Sadly I have also had to take the decision to cancel this year's annual charity coffee morning and will seek alternative opportunities to raise money for the Chairman's Charity Macmillan Cancer Relief.

Paul Medd, Chief Executive, made the following announcement regarding Customer Service Excellence re-accreditation:

I am delighted to announce that the Council has again been reaccredited for Customer Services Excellence or "CSE" following a remote annual inspection in June.

CSE is a national standard that recognises public bodies that provide customer-focused, high

quality, excellent services. Fenland is one of the few councils across the country that have consistently achieved this rigorous standard for all its services.

The CSE assessor said “despite working to tight budgets the Council has continued to deliver excellent customer focused services thanks to the tremendous resolve of staff who always strive to put the customer at the heart of everything”.

He added “Councils are by their nature required to interact with wider communities. However, with the onset of COVID-19 it is clearly apparent that Fenland has managed this situation extremely well.”

The assessment feedback noted the following strengths:

1. How the Council has utilised and extended consultation using social media platforms.
2. The success and effectiveness of a dedicated COVID-19 response hub.
3. The empowerment and use of staff insight in delivering and improving services.
4. Many customer access channels to enable residents to access services, including during the coronavirus pandemic.
5. Partnering arrangements remain strong with a wide range of partners working with the Council resulting in tangible benefits for customers and communities.

Moving forward, the Council is keen to explore new ways of working and technology to further improve the cost-effectiveness of services to residents post COVID-19.”

Councillor Miscandlon thanked Paul Medd and said on behalf of all the members he would like to thank all staff for their diligence and work ethic that has produced this excellent result for Fenland District Council. Councillor Mrs Dee Laws said she would like to second Councillor Miscandlon’s comment.

C11/20 TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM, AND PROVIDE ANSWERS TO, COUNCILLORS IN RELATION TO MATTERS WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIRMAN, ACCORD WITH THE PROVISIONS OF PROCEDURE RULES 8.4 AND 8.6.

Councillor Miscandlon stated that no questions had been received submitted under Procedure Rule 8.6 and asked if there were any questions under Procedure Rule. 8.4 from Councillor Tanfield as Leader of the Opposition.

Councillor Tanfield said that she also wished to express her thanks to all the staff of Fenland District Council. The last few months have been unprecedented and service provision has been amazing. She also wanted to highlight the great work of getting grants to local businesses which has been vitally important; our businesses are the heart of Fenland and any issues have been dealt with efficiently and effectively.

Councillor Tanfield addressed Councillor Boden regarding rural broadband, saying that home working and zoom meetings may be here for some time to come and, although not something we deal with specifically, it has highlighted the struggle for decent internet connection in some rural areas. This issue has also been experienced by some members, and therefore she asked if this is something that could be pushed. Councillor Boden agreed the importance of broadband not only in rural areas but in towns also. He said understandably there has been a great deal of additional use of broadband over the last five months and there will be greater demand going forward. Therefore broadband provision is increasingly one of the vital infrastructure provisions which has to exist for business and community success. He agreed that unfortunately there are some rural “not spots” which are poorly served by broadband within the district but surprisingly on average Fenland does have remarkably good broadband support. However, he stated that we do have to do better and whilst it is not our responsibility we do have a voice at various tables of those who do have the

responsibility; the most important of which is the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. Councillor Boden added that both he and Councillor Count, speaking on behalf of the County Council, never stop asking for further investment in broadband to make sure that it is brought up to adequate standard and continues to be improved. Councillor Boden thanked Councillor Tanfield for the question.

Councillor Tanfield said Councillor Wilkes had brought to her attention the isolation that people with disabilities feel during the pandemic. Councillor Tanfield therefore asked what facilities are in place for people with disabilities, particularly those who have been unable to get out because of the social distancing rules. She added that Councillor Wilkes had further experienced struggles when contacting local charities and so she wondered if the council could work to make more helpful information available in a better structured way. Councillor Boden said this was a very valid point with national and local implications. He agreed there are a number of communities that are particularly susceptible to isolation and loneliness and people with disabilities form a significant proportion of that number, and the situation can be very debilitating. However, the Local Resilience Forum is aware of this and has made attempts to reach out. We do also have a COVID-19 hotline available through the main Council telephone number and assistance can be given to put people in touch with volunteers. Many of these are available even to have a chat over the telephone just to relieve some of the isolation that people have felt. There are many communities, neighbours and friends and families that do help across Fenland to ensure that people are not isolated. Unfortunately some people do fall through the gaps but again he stressed the fact that the helpline is available. Councillor Tanfield thanked Councillor Boden.

Councillor Mrs French said that she had just this morning attended a Communities and Partnership meeting at County where it was discussed the amount of people who had been helped. The total number of residents shielding up to the end of July was 32,000. This number is now decreasing and although the number of hubs are slowly closing down, this help will always be there. Councillor Mrs French added that she was surprised and disappointed that nobody had picked up that Councillor Wilkes needed help. Over the last 4/5 months, FACT has been an absolute gem in March and other volunteer groups started up which have done a wonderful job and she apologised to Councillor Wilkes that he was missed out. She advised him to contact her direct if he does need any help. Councillor Tanfield thanked Councillor Mrs French.

Councillor Tanfield asked Councillor Boden what processes are in place if a local COVID-19 lockdown is required. Councillor Boden advised that there is a great deal of coordination at local resilience forum level, which for us is Cambridgeshire and Peterborough combined. The Cabinet Office identifies areas that may need local lockdown and then liaises with the local resilience forum and the individual local authority to ensure that all necessary steps are being taken. If necessary, more restrictive steps are then taken. However more localised lockdowns or actions can be taken by the local authority themselves, as seen recently for example with a factory within Wisbech. Therefore, it is a local coordinated matter between local authorities under the guidance of the local resilience forum, with the Cabinet Office watching all the statistics and intervening or expressing interest when it needs to. Councillor Tanfield thanked Councillor Boden.

Councillor Miscandlon invited Councillor Wilkes to speak on the issue previously raised by Councillor Tanfield regarding people with disabilities. Councillor Wilkes said he had felt forgotten with these new measures and had called the hotline for help to get exercise given that people had permission and unfortunately is not something he can do independently. The helpline told him to ring Cam Sight who said they could not provide him with the help he was asking for due to the rules on social distancing, therefore he received no help. He felt that he had been passed from pillar to post and his main concern is that as restrictions start to be eased, there will be heavier reliance on assistance outside of one's house-hold. Generally he relies on a cab to get about with assistance at the start and end of journeys from taxi drivers and venue staff. He is not getting any answers as to what legal rights people like himself have to get the assistance needed that could be received pre-COVID. He feels that if disabled people are not going to have their independence

stolen from them, we need those answers. Councillor Miscandlon thanked Councillor Wilkes and invited Councillor Boden to reply having responded to Councillor Tanfield previously.

Councillor Boden thanked Councillor Wilkes for his extremely valuable feedback. He said that the COVID-19 hotline does not provide services itself but acts as a signpost towards service providers and he is sorry to hear that Cam Sight were not able to assist; however he will ensure that Councillor Wilke's experience will be fed back. Furthermore he will ask officers to contact Councillor Wilkes to discuss this further and see where it might be possible to find assistance so that individuals are in a position of being able to rely on others so they do not have their independence stolen from them. Councillor Wilkes said he would welcome that; it would be a great help to him and others within the community.

C12/20 **TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM AND ASK QUESTIONS OF CABINET MEMBERS WITH PORTFOLIO HOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULES 8.1 AND 8.2.**

Members asked questions of Portfolio Holders in accordance with Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 as follows:

- Councillor Purser addressed Councillor Sam Clark and asked what has been the feedback and attendance since the leisure centres reopened. Councillor Clark said the response had been overwhelming; there has been no negativity and the staff are doing an excellent job. They are pleased to be back at work and have adapted to the new way of working. The attendance has been positive in that sessions were booked to capacity in the first week of reopening so extra hours have now been added in the second week. Councillor Purser thanked Councillor Clark.
- Councillor Purser asked Councillor Tierney how the new pay point systems had been received by customers. Councillor Tierney said he is pleased with the way they are working; we have had to adapt and move forward with the times to give customers more ways to pay, whilst also maintaining face to face contact for those that need it. He can report that the first week some 70 people used the new pay point system, mostly for council tax totalling over £17,000 of bills so overall it is a good, solid start. Councillor Purser thanked Councillor Tierney.
- Councillor Miss French asked if Councillor Mrs Laws could share any further updates of the emerging Local Plan. Councillor Mrs Laws said members may recall that in February 2019 Council approved the Local Development Scheme which confirmed commencement of a new Fenland Local Plan. In accordance with the scheme, the council issued a public consultation document in October 2019 and carried out a call for sites exercise with local land agents, owners and developers. In February 2020, a key report was published with the results of the consultation along with the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment report. In early 2020 work commenced on the draft version of the Local Plan and work is well underway on the various evidence-based documents to support it. The Council has also commissioned a strategic flood risk assessment and a water cycle study. The Local Plan team has engaged with neighbouring districts and County Council to fulfil its obligations under the Duty to Cooperate, and identify both infrastructure and housing needs across Cambridgeshire through preparation of a strategic housing marketing assessment. The work to assess 425 individual sites through the call for sites exercise is at an advanced stage. Due to COVID-19 delaying work on aspects of the Local Plan and the additional call for sites process, the timetable has been delayed by approximately 8 months, and this was approved by Cabinet on 28 July 2020. Councillor Mrs Laws added that members are encouraged to visit www.fenland.gov.uk/newlocalplan for the latest information on the emerging plan. Councillor Miss French thanked Councillor Mrs Laws.
- Councillor Miss French addressed Councillor Benney and asked how the Economic Growth Manager and Business Account Manager are settling into their new roles and what have they achieved so far. Councillor Benney said they had settled in very well and he would like to thank them for the work they have undertaken providing grants to local businesses. Unfortunately due to the lockdown the number

of business enquiries has been lower than he would have liked but now things are gradually opening up again, there has been a number of positive enquiries. Furthermore, with the work done to contact as many local businesses as possible we now have a comprehensive database of businesses within Fenland which we did not have before and they will use it as a tool to contact and work with businesses to try and develop further business growth within Fenland.

- Councillor Mrs Mayor addressed Councillor Murphy saying that we have received regular press releases regarding refuse collections and asked how they have managed during this pandemic. Councillor Murphy said that he is extremely proud of how hard the frontline staff have worked. They have been dealing with the highest level of waste ever seen before here for example, an extra 92 tonnes a day of green bin waste, 39 tonnes a day of blue bin waste and 48 tonnes a day of brown bin waste. They have worked their days off and cancelled leave and have received a high level of support and compliments from customers. Additionally, we have had drivers from within the community willingly come and work for us on a temporary basis to help us keep delivering our services at this key time and he would like to thank those as well. We now also have our highest level of garden waste customers; the majority of whom took advantage of the reduced direct debit offer which he extended during the lockdown period. He would like to say thank you once again to the hardworking staff who have made 110% effort.
- Councillor Mrs Mayor thanked Councillor Murphy for his response to her last question and asked if the replacement scheme for high street bins had started, and if not when. Councillor Murphy said there are 900 litter and dog bins in the district, of which 341 have been identified as requiring replacement. Cabinet supported a two-year capital project to update, renew and replace the oldest and most worn of these bins. The plan will now commence this autumn, with 175 being replaced in 2021 and 166 in 2022. Councillor Mrs Murphy thanked Councillor Murphy.
- Councillor Wicks addressed Councillor Wallwork regarding the Community Safety Survey saying he had previously emailed his concerns that approximately 80% of the land mass of Fenland will have no account taken of their individual concerns as all rural areas and villages are lumped in with the four market towns. He said this was a distortion and dilution of the concerns of those of us living in these areas and he asked what action is being taken to rectify this concern. Councillor Wallwork said that she had previously replied to the email but reiterated that just because the villages had not been asked specifically it did not mean their concerns were ignored. It was just that they have been trying to get a picture of the whole of Fenland and will then break that down to deliver specific work areas or specific safety events. Realistically to do what Councillor Wicks suggests would treble the workload and the system is working well as it is. However, she had taken on board his suggestion but after some preliminary investigation has decided to keep to the current method. Councillor Wicks said he was still concerned as the villages and rural areas are a much neglected area for a number of aspects.
- Councillor Hay addressed Councillor Boden and said that she was pleased to hear the Combined Authority mention that the CAM Metro was coming to Fenland, although it is not known where. Since the CAM was first mentioned, Councillor Hay has lobbied the Mayor to include Chatteris on the network as it is the only market town within Fenland not to have a railway station or the prospect of one. Bringing the CAM to Chatteris would not only create wide-ranging economic benefits for the people of Chatteris, but could also have the effect of providing better or more affordable housing to those living closer to Cambridge. Councillor Hay said she is proud to live in Chatteris and would like to see her town grow, provide more housing, more industry and better amenities and it is with this in mind that she would ask that Councillor Boden, in his role as leader of FDC and as a member of the CA, that he also brings up the benefits of including Chatteris in the CAM network at every opportunity. Councillor Boden responded that Councillor Hay was indeed the champion for the connectivity of the network to Chatteris but the Mayor had actually said there would be connection to the Fens and Peterborough, not Fenland specifically. He explained that CAM, or Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro, is designed to link people across the county in a faster and more reliable way via a driverless vehicle primarily utilising dedicated track which will operate on the core network on a 24/7 basis. Both Councillor Boden and Councillor Count have also been lobbying the Mayor and they are determined to get an announcement that Chatteris can be included. The Mayor's office is currently looking at the technical feasibility of this. Therefore, he would invite Councillor Hay to ask the same question at every

full Council meeting going forward, subject to the Chairman's agreement, which will push the initiative onto him to get some positive progress. He could not agree enough about the importance not only for Chatteris but for Fenland as a whole and it would absolutely transform the opportunities for the people of Chatteris.

- Councillor Tanfield addressed Councillor Sam Clark saying that she is pleased to hear the leisure centres are back open and that demand for the facilities is increasing. However, what are the implications for Fenland District Council financially or otherwise should we have to go into a further lockdown in the near future? Councillor Clark said this is a worry and she will get back to Councillor Tanfield regarding this.
- Councillor Cornwell asked Councillor Wallwork about the 'Think Communities' update in the portfolio holder report. Originally it was planned for Wisbech and was then to be extended to the other towns but this has not happened. He asked if this was still planned because a lot of the advantages of this would be equally important for the other three towns. Councillor Wallwork said that she has a meeting soon regarding this and will get back with an update once that has taken place. Councillor Cornwell said he would look forward to that.
- Councillor Cornwell addressed Councillor Mrs French about the car parking element in the portfolio holder report. The report stated that there had been no progress and a steer was awaited from members. However, he was not aware that members had been engaged in the next stage of the process so presumably we are waiting for engagement so we can give a steer. Councillor Mrs French said that all members will be included and she had been talking to Inspector Lombardo about combining this with work that he was doing to recruit highly trained special volunteers, but unfortunately due to COVID-19 this was put on hold. As soon as she gets a steer from the police it will come back to all members for further discussion. Councillor Cornwell said he appreciates that priorities have been in other directions over the last few months but hopefully we are now getting to a stage where we can begin to approach a new normal.
- Councillor Cornwell addressed Councillor Murphy regarding enforcement saying that he understands our own officers have been trying to undertake some of the work that Kingdom used to do. He asked how many FPNs had they issued since we stopped working with them. Councillor Murphy said he did not have that information to hand and asked to get back to him on this. Councillor Cornwell thanked Councillor Murphy.
- Councillor Booth addressed Councillor Murphy saying that he had read that CCORRN are now issuing Eco boxes therefore they have recommenced some activity. Although he understands it is County's responsibility, he asked Councillor Murphy if he knows when CCORRN will be taking paint again. The County website still says they are unable to take paint or textiles although he was under the impression that textile banks are now being emptied across the district. Councillor Murphy said the March household waste recycling centre had recently accepted paint from him, however they were unable to take textiles or old TV sets, videos etc. because the people that take those are not working currently. Councillor Booth said it was at March that he was told the paint goes to CCORRN, who are just around the corner and they are not open but as the report shows they are undertaking some activity so there appears to be a little bit of disconnect with information given from the March site. His main concern is still that we may see fly tipping rates increase further as people get more frustrated and we want to avoid that as we have already seen an increase in fly tipping over the last few months.
- Councillor Bligh agreed with Councillor Booth that due to the household recycling sites being closed in lockdown there had been an increase in fly tipping within the villages. She wanted to give her thanks to the Rapid Response team for their speed in clearing this up and asked Councillor Murphy if there had been any successful prosecutions. Councillor Murphy said that there had not been any prosecutions but thanked Councillor Bligh for her comment; fly tipping had increased but not as much as had been thought. He agreed it is still prevalent and is not something that will ever stop unfortunately but we have been able to keep on top of it. Councillor Bligh said the team at the Base have been brilliant for the way they have dealt with fly tipping, particularly regarding recent incidents involving asbestos as it has been particularly prevalent in the villages.
- Councillor Connor asked Councillor Seaton how the regeneration of Wisbech High Street is progressing.

Councillor Seaton said that he is pleased to report that the National Heritage Lottery Fund has agreed to a project extension, with the new expiry date being 31st December 2022. This is welcome news and provides reassurance to grant applicants so they can now progress with their projects in confidence. He thanked officers for lobbying long and hard to get this extension through. On 11-12 High Street, the developer has progressed well with the plans for demolition, which they are paying for, and tenders for construction are being assessed and once a contractor is approved and appointed the grant application can be assessed which will enable the funding agreement and build lease to be completed. On 24 High Street, FDC has issued an invitation for project management services and once a project manager is appointed plans will be progressed which will allow for FDC to apply for funding from the NHLF, who have already confirmed they are in support of this scheme. On 13-17 High Street, the applicants can now make a start on the site and the funding agreement is being updated to reflect the revised project end date. On 18-19 High Street, as with 13-17, the applicants were waiting for the project extension to be agreed before proceeding with the work. The owner has been advised to update the funding agreement as soon as possible. There are reserve properties, but the owners have failed to advise of their intentions and officers are working to get a response on these. Officers have issued letters of improvement works to the owners of some properties and if not undertaken then S215 notices will be served. Grants are available from the project for the works outlined in those schedules.

- Councillor Wilkes addressed Councillor Sam Clark saying if he would be interested to know what Freedom's policy is on those who require extra assistance, for example to be guided around the leisure centres which could be done quite easily pre COVID-19 and the current rules on social distancing. Councillor Clark said she would look into that and get an answer; she said that although Freedom staff would be happy to help she agreed that the current rules would be an issue. Councillor Wilkes thanked Councillor Clark.
- Councillor Wilkes said he was assuming that now that everything has to be pre-booked to manage capacity, he asked if the facility was available for people with disabilities not to have to access online services but to be able to use the telephone for example. He gave an example of his experience with another authority where their booking procedures are not accessible for a blind user and he felt there was no interest in providing extra help or making any reasonable adjustments to adhere to the Equality Act 2010. Councillor Clark confirmed that there is a reception facility at each of the leisure centres who will take telephone bookings from people who cannot use the app. Councillor Wilkes thanked Councillor Clark.
- Councillor Sutton asked Councillor Seaton if FDC applied to the Rural Mobility Fund and if so, did we get through to the second round and if not why not. Councillor Seaton said he thought he had the information but would like to check it and get back to Councillor Sutton.
- Councillor Sutton thanked Councillor Sam Clark in her position as Portfolio Holder for Leisure for sending a congratulatory letter to the Wisbech Boxing Club on their fantastic achievement of receiving the Queens Award. He shared a pride in the club, having previously been involved with them for many years and he knows they were really pleased to receive the letter.
- Councillor Sutton asked Councillor Boden about when some of the smaller committees can meet again in person, although he understands it is not practical for full Council to meet face to face given the number of members involved. Councillor Boden said that the statutory instrument has been written in a way to make it possible to hold hybrid meetings at least until 7 May 2021, and any member of the Council can attend a meeting remotely. Therefore we cannot force any meeting to be held in person. He said although it would be possible for some smaller committees to meet, central Government have only recently announced that they strongly recommend digital meetings. He is disappointed but cannot ignore government advice regarding social distancing. Councillor Sutton thanked Councillor Boden and said he is disappointed too but accepts the decision.
- Councillor Sutton addressed Councillor Mrs Laws saying that he had noticed that planning validations seem to have gone awry. He suspected this may be due to COVID-19 but asked for comment. Councillor Mrs Laws agreed that COVID-19 has had a serious impact on the team in terms of staffing but we are looking at IT and whether some of the validation work can be undertaken at home, therefore it is an issue she is on top of. Councillor Sutton thanked Councillor Mrs Laws.

- Councillor Sutton also said that given we are in a shared planning partnership with Peterborough, is there any chance of having someone help out from there? Councillor Mrs Laws said this had been explored but they are in a similar situation. Councillor Sutton asked that if applications are as they should be, could Councillor Mrs Laws confirm that the clock would start ticking on the deadline once we validate, and not from when they are sent in. Councillor Mrs Laws said she could confirm that but unfortunately only about 4% of applications are correct upon first submission; most are of a very poor standard. She applauded the team because their brief from her is to do everything possible to bring those applications forward for validation but they are being used as an extension to agents' professional offices by even having to check scale drawings etc. She is nearly at the point of refusing some applications and sending them back which may lead to an improvement of the applications submitted. However, the team are very professional and have a lot of experience, they are trying to be helpful and this does impact on the validation process and dates. Councillor Sutton thanked Councillor Mrs Laws, saying this had been his experience in previous years also.
- Councillor Sutton asked Councillor Mrs Laws for an update on the Level 2 Flood Risk Assessment across the district. Councillor Mrs Laws said that this is running about 8 months behind but hopes that by the next meeting of full Council she will be able to provide an update.
- Councillor Sutton asked what effect the latest Government White Paper will have on our Local Plan. Councillor Mrs Laws said that this is so new that she has had no time to look at it; however she will read it and will answer the question at next full Council.
- Councillor Sutton addressed Councillor Tierney regarding the forthcoming new FDC website. He asked for a better interactive section regarding, for example, the reporting of street lights. He reported an issue some months ago and found it hard to go through; subsequently he found that others had also reported it. Could there perhaps be a system so that we can see if an issue has already been reported? Councillor Tierney said that the FDC website had previously been layered with years of information which has taken time to strip back, but will be much more responsive and user friendly with a 'magazine feel'. The new website can be updated as we go along and he will be interested in members' views when they see it as it will go live in a week or two. We can then be reactive to any changes suggested. However, in regards to the mapping facility, that is not something that we are currently planning to do as we are not dealing with Highways.
- Councillor Mrs French asked Councillor Hoy for updates on Private Sector Housing Enforcement and the Empty Homes Project. Councillor Hoy said the project is progressing well and the new Empty Homes Officer has now been in post for some time; she has been meeting with home owners and investors and a number of properties have already been brought back into use as a result. Regarding the private sector, the team has embraced a change to the way enforcement is undertaken. There are still fines waiting to be collected and some are in the appeals system. Property inspections are now underway again having been stopped due to COVID-19 and in all, things are very positive.
- Councillor Seaton referred to Councillor Sutton's earlier question regarding the Rural Mobility Fund. He had now checked his information and said only the Transport Authority could apply for this funding; it was based on-demand services. Fenland District Council is not a transport authority and there are on-demand services within FDC. The CPCA are running a bus review and as he sits on the task review group, that is where efforts have been concentrated. He apologised for not having the information to hand earlier.

C13/20 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

Members considered the Treasury Management Annual Report 2019/20 presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Yeulett asked for clarification of the last sentence of 5.12 of the report, "It is clear that the Treasury intends to put a stop to local authorities borrowing money from the PWLB to purchase commercial property if the aim is solely to generate an income stream". He asked if that affects Fenland in any way in terms of the industrial and commercial strategy going forward. Councillor

Boden responded that unfortunately he cannot answer that question as we do not yet know what Government are going to do about the PWLB. Councillor Yeulett thanked Councillor Boden.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Skoulding it was AGREED that the report be noted.

C14/20 BUDGET UPDATE

Members considered the Budget Update Report by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Booth asked how much lobbying we are doing through the Local Government Association to get better clarity from the Government around what additional payments they may be making. Councillor Boden said there are 300 local authorities around the country all having financial issues at the moment. All have different issues. And they are all being taken up by others who have the same problem, for example leisure services. The financial support given under the income loss scheme does not cover our additional costs because they are set up in such a way that they only really apply to those authorities who still run their own leisure services. We have contracted ours out so, along with many other authorities who have done the same, are liaising together to lobby Government on the same issue. The LGA is doing a good job of lobbying but we are being served well by the Association of District Councils who are lobbying on our behalf on issues that we as a district council have got. We have also been gently lobbying our local MP on the issues that we, as his own local council, are facing.

Councillor Sutton said that he believes that the figures presented before us are made worse due to the actions of Councillor Boden, when as Vice-Chairman of Corporate Governance, he insisted that we have a vacancy factor built into the budget. At that time many of us were not keen on this but we gave way and now the crows have come home to rest.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Booth it was AGREED that the report be noted.

C15/20 PARSON DROVE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Members considered the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan presented by Councillor Mrs Laws.

Councillor Mrs Laws said this plan was the result of several years of hard work of the Parson Drove Parish Council and the local community who have taken the opportunity to shape their local area through the neighbourhood planning process. On behalf of Fenland District Council she would like to congratulate the Parish Council on this important achievement.

Councillor Booth thanked Councillor Laws for her kind words. He said the plan was part of the Localism Act and he would encourage other parishes and villages to follow the same route to help influence the way they can grow their communities.

Councillor Bligh said she has seen the outstanding work that has gone into this plan and to allow the community to have a say in the future development of their village is really important.

Councillor Mrs Laws said she fully appreciated the amount of work that has gone into this and would agree with Councillor Booth that she would encourage any village to go through with a neighbourhood plan. It can take a lot of time and be very challenging but is worthwhile when it comes to planning decisions and taking local people's views into account.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Laws, seconded by Councillor Bligh Council AGREED to adopt the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan (Appendix 1) as a part of the Development Plan for

Fenland, and note the Reg. 19 Decision Statement (Appendix 2) which confirms the reasons for the Council's decision.

(Councillor Booth declared an interest in that he helped develop the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan therefore will not vote on the matter but reserves the right to speak if anyone has any questions).

C16/20 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS (VIRTUAL MEETINGS PROCEDURE RULES & BUSINESS AND PLANNING BILL)

Members considered the Constitutional Amendments (Virtual Meetings Procedure Rules & Business and Planning Bill) Report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Booth thanked Councillor Boden for taking on board the comments raised at the last meeting and acting to give them the opportunity to help shape what he feels is a more democratic solution.

Councillor Sutton reiterated Councillor Booth's comments. They both made representations that were taken on board which was good. He added that 8.5c of the Constitution says that a written question should go to all members, so he hoped that Cabinet members responding in writing will take that on board and get back to all of us in a timely fashion. Councillor Miscandlon said that was duly noted. Councillor Boden added that for the sake of clarity he could assure members that the requirement for written responses to all members was not changed by the virtual procedure rules.

Councillor Booth said it was a minor observation but 19.1 mentions the raised hand function and we must remember that if we do change to a different method of meeting, this will have to be taken into account at that time.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Booth Council AGREED to note and ratify the changes that the Monitoring Officer has made to the Constitution in exercise of the authority delegated to her under Part 3, Table 4, paragraph 47 of the Constitution and as set out at Appendix A and B to the Report.

C17/20 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS (AMENDMENT TO PLANNING SCHEME OF DELEGATION)

Members considered the Constitutional Amendments (Amendment to Planning Scheme of Delegation) Report presented by Councillor Mrs Laws.

Councillor Sutton said he had a problem with the paper because the key issues at item 2 had used the term 'Members' as a sweeping statement. He said this should have read 'some Members' as he had not been asked and it did not reflect his thoughts. He also said he had a slight problem with the possibility of overloading the Planning Committee with applications that perhaps should not be there but could end up there. Therefore, whilst he will support the paper he would like to ask both the Leader and Portfolio Holder that we review this after six months. Already we are seeing uplift in applications through the extended time, which he had not agreed with. Every four weeks would be more suitable in his opinion.

Councillor Booth was going to suggest the same as Councillor Sutton, that this be reviewed in six months' time to see how it works in practice. However, his main concern is the member call-in process which was only changed a few years ago. His understanding at that time is that it would be a consultation between the heads of Planning and Legal and the Planning Chairman. This is a slight change but seems to put a lot of power on the head of Planning and feels that the other

changes put more power onto members' hands so we seem to be going in two different directions about how planning matters are dealt with. Therefore he would like a review in six months' time.

Councillor Boden said he had great doubts that there would be the number of occasions when these provisions would end up being used. That is why he believes Councillor Sutton's concern about the increasing workload on the Planning Committee is not based on reality. Nevertheless as we have a local plan that is out of date it will be the case on occasion that planning officers will have little option but to recommend refusal for some things that we really need to see approved. If in six months' time, Councillor Sutton or Councillor Booth wish to seek a revision then that is fine but he does not think we will be in that position then.

Councillor Hoy said she fully supported the report.

Councillor Mrs Laws said we have to be mindful that our local plan is not fit for purpose. Unfortunately however, it is what planning officers have to go by. These amendments she believes will be helpful and what we are all trying to achieve is suitable and sustainable development. Like Councillor Boden, she will be happy to receive a revision request in six months and is hoping that it will not be necessary. We also have to bear in mind we have had a sudden surge because many agents have been working from home and they found applications that have stalled or needed revitalising and she hopes this will address any misgivings that Councillor Sutton and Councillor Booth have.

Council AGREED to revise the Planning scheme of delegation within the Council's Constitution as set out at Appendix A of the report.

6.20 pm

Chairman

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Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

September 2020
(For performance in July 2020)

Cabinet Members



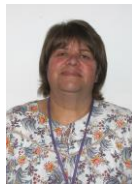
**Councillor
Chris Boden**

Leader of the Council
& Portfolio Holder for
Finance



**Councillor
Ian Benney**

Portfolio Holder for
Economic Growth



**Councillor
Sam Clark**

Portfolio Holder for
Social Housing &
Leisure



**Councillor
Susan Wallwork**

Portfolio Holder for
Communities



**Councillor
Mrs Jan French**

Deputy Leader of the
Council



**Councillor
Miss Sam Hoy**

Portfolio Holder for
Housing



**Councillor
Mrs Dee Laws**

Portfolio Holder for
Planning



**Councillor
Peter Murphy**

Portfolio Holder for
Environment



**Councillor
Chris Seaton**

Portfolio Holder for
Social Mobility &
Heritage



**Councillor Steve
Tierney**

Portfolio Holder for
Transformation &
Communication

Communities

Projects from Business Plan:

Work with landlords to improve housing conditions and management standards in the district's private sector, including using the Council's enforcement powers (Cllr Sam Hoy)

The Council has undertaken 9 positive interventions in response to new requests for service for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) across the district.

The Council has also investigated 70 complaints from tenants occupying privately rented accommodation in the same period. Council officers intervened to remove Category 1 hazards (serious faults) and Category 2 hazards (less serious faults) from properties to make them safe for the residents.

The geographical spread is as follows:

Town	HMOs investigated	Privately Rented Homes investigated
Wisbech	9	36
March	0	15
Chatteris	0	4
Whittlesey	0	1
Villages	0	14 Manea =3 Leverington =4 Guyhirn = 2 Wimblington =1 Murrow = 2 Parson Drove =1 Christchurch = 1

Private Sector Housing enforcement 01 April 2020 - 31st July 2020

	Numbers since 01 April 2020	Raised charge total £	Income received £
Improvement Notice	7	1680	£720.00
Prohibition	0	0	0
CPN (Intent)	4	38,000	£9,500
CPN (Final)	9	97,000	£5,152
Other	3	180.00	£60.00
HMO applications	2	1,500	£1,500

Support property owners to bring long-term empty homes back into use, helping to address the district's housing needs (Cllr Sam Hoy)

Since November 2019, the Empty Homes Officer has recorded 191 properties over 6 months empty being brought back into use, of which 52 were as a result of the officer's intervention.

Recently the officer has worked successfully with the owner of a 2yr+ property and facilitated the sale via auction and is now working with the new owner to ensure its occupation.

The officer is also focusing on ensuring all council tax data is up to date in preparation for the yearly New Homes Bonus submission in September.

Prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping through working with individuals, families, landlords, housing associations and providers to meet the housing needs of residents in crisis (Cllr Sam Hoy)

The Council undertook a night time rough sleeper count in late July with 5 found on the count. The outreach team will continue to work with these individuals.

Rough Sleeper Case Study

The Ferry Project and CGL Outreach were aware of a rough sleeper with a broken leg who refused to engage with their services. During the peak of COVID-19 the individual would still not engage with any authority figure and would not accept any medical support for his leg. The client refused accommodation and there were growing concerns around the individual's welfare as the plastic cast had been on their leg for several months.

However, with persistence and continued support from CGL Outreach they brought the client food and went to see the individual on a regular basis. Since this, and with the new Outreach worker coming in to post who spoke the same language as the individual, the client accepted accommodation and is engaging well. Since being placed in accommodation, the client's alcohol misuse has greatly lessened and they are also hoping to find work once their leg is healed. This was a great outcome for the client after several weeks of concern and the client's support continues to finding long term suitable housing.

Housing Options Team

Alongside the rough sleeper project the Council have also prevented 73 families from becoming homeless.

As an example of their work; a homeless family (one who was pregnant and a baby of 1 year old) approached the Council Housing Options team. The investigation established that they were potentially being exploited.

The family have engaged well with multi agencies including operation pheasant with regard to the allegations of exploitation.

They have recently been rehoused with tenancy support.

The Ferry Project (FP) was contacted as the family had very few clothes and no furniture for their new home. The FP, within a matter of a couple of hours, had provided the family with all the donations they had available – this included white goods, beds, settee, crockery, cutlery and a food parcel. They were successful with a Cambs Local Assistance Support grant as part of this. The family has been so thankful for all the professionals involved in resolving their homelessness and are now happy in their new home.

Deliver four Golden Age Fairs across the district (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

As a result of the pandemic no events have been held.

The Council is holding a virtual Senior Citizens Advisory Board meeting in September to explore the use of the brand and to work to support the community impact from Covid-19.

Other Projects:

Leisure Update (Cllr Sam Clark)

Community Health

FDC is working with other organisations across the County to ensure that the recovery from Covid is as effective as possible. In terms of health there are several work streams, with FDC being involved in Health Inequalities work that will be focussing on physical activity, smoking cessation, obesity and diet and alcohol consumption. Food insecurity is also forming some of the early thoughts in this work.

Early indications are that areas that already had significant health inequalities will see the gap increase as a result of Covid19, meaning that an increased focus on effective interventions to reduce these inequalities is required. Fenland has several Wards that

have significant inequalities when compared with County / Regional and National data so additional focus and interventions in these areas might be expected in future months and years.

Freedom Leisure

All 4 leisure centres reopened on Saturday 25th July (the first day permitted).

Systems and procedures are in place to make all facilities Covid secure. FDC Health & Safety and Environmental Health officers have assessed Freedom's approach and are satisfied with measures in place.

Freedom is following government guidance, developed in conjunction with UKActive and governing bodies of sport (such as Swim England) and Sport England.

Capacity in all venues is reduced as a result of new practices, for instance:

- Swimming requires double lanes and a maximum of 10 per lane, so total pool capacity is 30, down from as many as 75.
- Swimming lessons will not recommence until September at the very earliest, and may be delayed past this point due to social distancing requirements.
- In an exercise class the number of people fitting into each room is reduced significantly to allow for social distancing. Sports halls (where available) and outdoor space (subject to weather) are being used to increase class capacity where possible.
- Gyms have limits on the number of people allowed in each free weights area. In the rest of the gym the equipment is either spaced out with items removed, or every other item of equipment has been taken out of use allowing for effective social distancing.

A booking system is in use for all sessions and an enhanced cleansing regime is in place, along with sanitization gel for users and one way systems for customers.

Feedback from customers has been overwhelmingly positive so far. It is worth mentioning that the teams in the leisure centres have been very keen to get back to work, have adapted to the new way of working very well and are exuding confidence in the procedures and policies in place and this confidence is transferring to the customers visiting. Great job from all team members.

In terms of income and user numbers, we really need several weeks' worth of data to draw up any meaningful projections. That said, initial data suggests that users are coming back to the facilities with the sessions being booked to near capacity in the first week. The first week was so successful that additional time has been added to opening hours to facilitate additional bookable sessions. Additionally, the centres are even picking up new members to offset some of the cancellations seen during lockdown.

Freedom is extremely mindful of costs and is managing the facilities at as low a cost as possible, with many staff still in furlough.

Active Fenland

During lockdown Active Fenland provided online sessions to help people remain active – these even included a tips session for bike maintenance.

With the easing of lockdown, 'real' physical activity sessions have recommenced, with walking football, tennis, buggy fit, tai chi, table tennis and badminton all taking place. Outdoor sessions have proved most popular in the first week. In March, Active Fenland is using the new tennis courts at Estover Field for activities for the first time – great community facilities.

Fenland Activity booklets have been produced and will be sent out to interested people in the next week – all come with a resistance band for home exercise. As well as the online information the physical booklet will enable older residents to access sessions effectively.

Fit & Fed has restarted, but in a Covid compliant manner. Sessions are not taking place as before, but an adapted takeaway system is in place. This is happening at the Oasis Centre (Monday) and March market place (Wednesday). The takeaway packs for families include;

Rainbow Activity Packs for families, a food pack, cooking tips in a cook book, pre-prepared lunch for that day, physical activity games pack for the summer holiday, children's books from Wisbech Reads.

I Love Wisbech Update (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

A proposed partnership collaboration has been agreed for Community and Voluntary Sector organisations and statutory agencies in the town to work together around some areas of joint interest to capture new inward investment from funding agencies into the town. With the support of Supporting Cambridgeshire, over the next three months a collaboration of Public Sector and Community and Voluntary Sector partners will be working together on a pilot project whilst investigating funding streams to develop further projects in the town moving forward.

Pride In Fenland Awards (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

The Pride In Fenland awards were postponed in March as a result of Covid-19 and will be rescheduled as soon as Government advice allows such an event to take place.

Health & Wellbeing Update (including Covid-19 Outbreak Plan implementation) (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Outbreak Control Plan was approved by the Public Health Board in June and has since continued to be refined and adapted to the changing situation presented by the Covid-19 virus.

Of particular note in relation to changes are the new powers held by upper tier local authorities for local lockdown controls. These new powers must only be implemented as part of a partnership approach with input from public health colleagues and also the district authorities and wider partners. An updated version of the plan will be published during August.

The Council's role in delivering the plan has continued to grow and in particular the role to manage outbreaks in workplaces. The role of the Council is to work with any workplace that has an outbreak with 2 or more cases of Covid-19. There have been 3 of these in Fenland to date and each has been well managed by businesses who have appreciated the support given to them by the Council.

In addition to the workplace focus, staff within the environmental health and housing service have received training in local contact tracing and they may be called upon to support the national track and trace system if contact is not made with those who have tested positive. In addition, a hardship fund has been made available by the County Council which will support residents in financial crisis due to the need to self-isolate and potential loss of income. The Council's community hub will be able to help assess these cases and provide appropriate advice signposting.

Prevention is a key workstream to the outbreak plan and priority areas have been identified where additional support may be required and communicating key messages may need to be done differently. For example, for those in houses in multiple occupation or in agency employment.

Delivery of the plan is overseen by the Public Health Board and supported by the Programme Delivery Group, Local Resilience Forum Strategic Coordinating Group and the Member Led Engagement Board.

The plan can be found by clicking on this link:

[-https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Cambridgeshire-and-Peterborough-Local-Outbreak-Control-Plan-v12.pdf](https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Cambridgeshire-and-Peterborough-Local-Outbreak-Control-Plan-v12.pdf)

Wisbech 2020 Update (Cllr Chris Boden)

Although the Covid-19 epidemic has impacted on the original timescales, plans are still in place to review the various Council projects being delivered in the town of Wisbech (including the Wisbech 2020 Vision), with a view to aligning them more closely. Discussions will be held with the Wisbech 2020 Core Vision Group in due course.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 20/21	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
ARP1	Council tax support – days to process new claims and changes	8 days	7.07	7.9	
ARP2	Housing benefit – days to process new claims and changes	8 days	4.18	4.5	
CELP1	Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	602	400	79 + other score	
CELP2	Number of people prevented from becoming homeless	390	300	73	
CELP3	Number of empty properties brought back into use	NEW	Baseline	October 20	
CELP4	Amount of New Homes Bonus achieved as a result of bringing empty homes back into use	NEW	Baseline	TBA	
CELP5	Customer satisfaction with Golden Age events (as per event)	298	200	0	
CELP6	Number of Active Health local sessions per year that improve community health	NEW	600	N/A	
CELP7	Customer feedback across Freedom Leisure facilities in Fenland	NEW	80%	N/A	

Comments

ARP1 & 2 – The time taken to assess Council Tax Support new claims/changes Target 1 has been achieved this month, with the target being exceeded. The time taken to assess Council Tax Support claims and changes target for the year has also been achieved, with the YTD figure has exceeded the target by 0.10.

The time to taken to assess Housing Benefit new/claims Target 2 still exceeds the target for the year by 3.50 days.

Fenland has managed to spend 19.80% of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funds. The Council is working with Fenland's Housing Team to ensure that DHPs continue to be promoted as an option for customers.

All Benefits staff to continue to work from home due to Covid-19.

As a result of recent remote recruitment exercise three candidates have been appointed as Council Tax Billing Officers. These officers will help to assess Council Tax Support entitlement and establish liabilities and discounts for customers.

Environment

Projects from Business Plan:

Deliver the CCTV shared service with Peterborough City Council (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

The new shared service arrangement is performing well and has been able to maintain full service delivery and function even during the current Covid-19 pandemic.

Even though there have been significant changes within our public spaces during the last quarter with lock down measures and a period of closure of the night-time economy, performance has remained steady with no significant reductions being recorded by the CCTV team. The CCTV team during April – June 2020 recorded 291 incidents across the four market towns compared to 297 during April to June 2019. This clearly highlights that there has been no reduced or detrimental impact to services being provided to Fens under the new shared service CCTV arrangement.

During the last quarter the CCTV service has completed a successful recruitment campaign to fill the CCTV operator post that was left vacant in April 2020.

The recruitment campaign generated much interest and led to 98 applicants applying for the post and after shortlisting was completed, led to 18 applicants being invited to interview. Interviews were delivered using Microsoft Teams to ensure safe working practices during the current pandemic. This format was a success and allowed for the recruitment to be completed and a successful applicant being identified to fulfil this vacant post.

The successful applicant has now completed pre-employment checks with PCC and will commence training with the CCTV team on Tuesday 25th August.

The CCTV service is continuing to operate under its Covid-19 business continuity plan measures to help maintain this vital 24/7/365 service throughout the pandemic.

Continue to deliver environmental enforcement using fixed penalty notices and the court process for serious offences (Cllr Peter Murphy)

During June and July, Streetscene officers have continued to investigate reports of environmental offences.

The main types of issues have been fly tipping and abandoned vehicles. As the towns and residential areas become busier reports of issues affecting localities have increased.

During this time there have been 232 instances of fly tipping reported. Streetscene Officers attended more than 100 of these sites to look for evidence. 138 tips contained household related items. Where address details can be found, these are followed up with formal investigations.

During this time one fixed penalty notice for fly tipping has been served and settled.

1 fixed penalty notice for littering has also been issued and paid.

1 fixed penalty notice for parking offences on March market place has been issued and paid.

Abandoned and nuisance vehicles continue to be reported. The team has investigated 44 potentially abandoned vehicles, which resulted in 4 being removed by our contractor. A further 34 nuisance vehicles were reported which were matters relating to untaxed vehicles, parking issues and neighbour disputes.

The consultation for dog control powers to be refreshed across Fenland closes on 7th August. The consultation feedback will hopefully support continuing the dog control powers currently in place. Early feedback has been very positive with many community groups supporting the work of both council staff and community volunteers such as the Green Dog Walkers.

The team has continued to have a visible presence in the open spaces and 1 person was issued with a fixed penalty notice for failing to pick up their dog's fouling in Chatteris.

Deliver the Four Seasons events programme in partnership with our four market towns (Cllr Peter Murphy)

Due to Covid-19 many community events have been postponed or cancelled. This included St George's Fayre, Chatteris Midsummer Festival and the Whittlesey Festival.

The March Christmas Market committee has decided not to hold their event this year.

Wisbech Christmas Market committee is reviewing their plans in line with government guidance and considering options.

Deliver the Recycling Action Plan (Cllr Peter Murphy)

With emergency working arrangements for the Environmental Services team significantly impacting on our usual waste and recycling communications and education these moved online; through emails, the website and via social media.

Continued work by collection crews checking bins, supported by targeted posts online and through the Getting It Sorted network, has resulted in incorrect materials returning to more typical levels in both May and June.

Social media posts through the period have been really well received by customers and more widely shared than typically seen. The Fenland Bin Day App has also been promoted widely and now been downloaded more than 110,000 times.

Deliver a competitive trade waste service (Cllr Peter Murphy)

The Fenland Commercial Waste and Recycling Service continues to operate as usual.

Income to the service has been affected by closures and while a small number of new customers are coming to us, and we are supporting customers to adapt their waste collections in light of new working arrangements, overall income continues to be impacted.

Monitor and respond to the DEFRA Waste & Resources Strategy consultation with RECAP partners (Cllrs Peter Murphy & Steve Tierney)

Defra has yet to announce when the next stage of the consultation on the Waste and Resources Strategy will be delayed to. The Recap member group is preparing for this consultation and the development of a shared response later in the year.

Other Projects:

Street Lighting (Cllr Jan French)

Street Light Repairs & Maintenance

During the month of July, 5 street light faults were reported to the team and passed to our street light contractor for rectification.

Our street light contractor has increased their resource levels over the past few months and is now operating at similar pre-Covid staffing levels. Works however continue to be undertaken in a revised manner to ensure government guidance for safe working is adhered to.

Unfortunately, many of the material suppliers are still low on stock and we are experiencing some delays in obtaining components and replacement luminaires that would have otherwise been readily available pre-lockdown. This is predicted to continue over the coming months until UK manufacturers have replenished stock levels.

Capital Street Light Replacement Works

The replacement of 275 of the Council's defective street lights continues to progress, albeit at a slower rate than initially envisaged due to material availability and longer manufacturer lead-in times. Phase one is now anticipated to be completed at the end of August, with Phase two anticipated to commence in September.

Community Safety Partnership Update (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

The July meeting of the CSP went ahead as planned on 22nd July 2020. External speakers from the County Road Safety Partnership and the national Illegal Money Lending Team gave short presentations. The CSP is progressing opportunities to support the work of both within Fenland.

Progress continues to be made in respect of delivering Covid-19 safe Workforce Development and Community Engagement. The first partnership engagement session with a focus on Cybercrime is scheduled for late August. CSP colleagues from Cambridgeshire Constabulary and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Against Scams Partnership are working closely with the Council to deliver this exciting and innovative engagement. There are also plans for Workforce Development sessions in September and November. These will cover the subjects Drug Harm Reduction and Domestic Abuse respectively.

Safety Zone

Due to the public health crisis, the 2020 scheduled Safety Zone events were cancelled. However, recognising the importance of these sessions there will be some engagement with primary schools to help ensure the safety messages are delivered.

Upon their return to school in the Autumn and in conjunction with the schools there will be leaflets and activity books distributed to the relevant age group. The leaflets cover the key Safety Zone messages and the activity books will have cartoons and puzzles linked to the same safety messages that would have been delivered had the usual events gone ahead as planned. Students will be supported by teaching staff to ensure the content is understood before the students take the leaflets and books home to share with their parents.

Street Drinking Update (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

As the easing of Covid-19 restrictions continues the impact of this continues to be monitored through feedback from relevant partners including the police, CCTV, Drug & Alcohol Support Services and Environmental Services.

Overall feedback continues to indicate a reduced level of street drinking. However, this needs monitoring over a period of more than one or two months to have some confidence this is the case.

Plans are being made for a Covid-19 safe partnership meeting mid to late August. The current Public Spaces Protection Orders for Wisbech are currently subject of a review as required by legislation.

Open Spaces and Grounds Maintenance Contract Update (Cllr Peter Murphy)

Tivoli continues to deliver a great service on behalf of FDC for our community. Complaints this year have been very limited, with many compliments.

During the lockdown open spaces were well maintained by the Council and very well used by the community for their daily local exercise. Nationally there is a push to ensure that use of green spaces to support community health improvements continue and FDC will access funding to improve our open spaces where possible.

The decision to switch to sustainable planting has again proved its worth, with the towns looking beautiful this year, and Tivoli being in a very good position to manage their workloads. Fortunately we are not spending thousands of hours watering in the heat as the sustainable plants are more resilient than the previous approach to

summer bedding.

Snowley Park play area in Whittlesey will soon receive a substantial investment in play equipment. Funding for this improvement comes from Section 106 funding as well as an FCC Environment (landfill tax credits) grant. Procurement is almost completed, with work due to start in 8 – 10 weeks.

FDC has also been successful with a bid to the Cambridgeshire Community Capital Fund (CCF) for £75,000 to support improvements to West End Park in March. These improvements will include enlarging the popular play area, facilitating easier access to the bandstand, part fencing the skate park and developing a running surface to allow park run to take place safely in wetter months. A junior park run is also planned for the park, that this work will also support.

In addition, the CCF panel has also discussed the Wisbech Pavilion project. The panel is recommending to Committee that this project is supported and FDC will be notified of Committee's formal decision in early September.

Tree Management Strategy

FDC is developing a tree strategy that will ensure tree management (in terms of risk and safety) is subject to improved management by the Council. It is anticipated that the strategy will be ready in the coming months, with formal tree inspections taking place across FDC land following its adoption.

Future Parks Accelerator

FDC is a member of this project group that included the County Council, Peterborough City Council and all Cambridgeshire Districts. A key strand of work that is currently in development is an assessment of more effective ways of managing green space – particularly with limited or less funding than presently available. Information from this work is expected in late 2020 for project group Members to consider.

Getting it Sorted Volunteers Update (Cllr Peter Murphy)

The 30 Getting it Sorted volunteers are still contributing to the Recycling Improvement Plan, but they have had to change how they support recycling in Fenland. Many activities have moved online, with 478 hours volunteered so far this year creating a teachers' recycling support pack, online resources, colouring competitions, activity videos, hints and tips emails and social media posts.

The Getting it Sorted website has seen customers using its resources 8,300 times since March, 1,066 families have been supported through Rainbow boxes and similar in cooperation with local charities including CCORN. The colouring competition has attracted 730 participants so far and there are now more than 1,100 Fenland recyclers signed up to the monthly Getting it Sorted e-newsletter.

Social media has been very active during lockdown and since with posts reaching 17,300 people and being shared or clicked 1,250 times. These included posts on what to do with single use PPE such as gloves and facemasks, which were becoming a problem in the blue bins.

Garden Waste Service Update (Cllr Peter Murphy)

The Garden Waste Service continues to grow and now has more than 22,500 customers. A growth of 1,120 subscriptions (5% increase) when compared to last year.

With Household Waste Sites closed for a period and operating in a restricted fashion still, the overall tonnages collected by the garden waste team remain 10% higher than last year, with the team collecting an additional 460 tonnes of garden waste so far.

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP) (Cllrs Peter Murphy & Steve Tierney)

The Recap Partnership Board met remotely in July to receive an update report and agree budgets for the coming year.

The Covid-19 response has naturally delayed much of the work of the partnership, although it was recognised that the close working relationships as a result of the partnership across the area had assisted all with a joined up approach and integration within waste and recycling.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 20/21	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP8	Rapid or Village Response requests actioned the same or next day	95%	90%	96%	
CELP9	% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards (including graffiti and flyposting)	99%	93%	100%	
CELP10	% of household waste recycled through the blue bin service (1 month in arrears)	28%	28%	27%	
CELP11	Customer satisfaction with refuse and recycling services (quarterly)	99%	90%	N/A	
CELP12	Customer satisfaction with our garden waste service (quarterly)	94%	85%	N/A	
CELP13	Number of Street Pride, Green Dog Walkers, and Friends Of community environmental events supported	204	204	15	
CELP14	% of those asked who are satisfied with FDC's events (May, July, October, January)	96%	96%	N/A	

Comments

CELP13 – Street Pride events were put on hold during April and May. A small number of volunteers have started to carry out litter picks and planting. The target may need to be reviewed in light of the situation with Covid 19.

CELP14 – No community four season events have been held so far in 2020/21

Economy

Projects from Business Plan:

Continue to review council land and property assets to ensure they are fit for purpose and optimised to deliver better public services, improve efficiency and release surplus land for residential and commercial development as outlined in our Commercial Investment Strategy (Cllr Ian Benney)

The surplus asset disposal programme will be reviewed in line with the adopted Commercial & Investment Strategy. Whereupon sites with development potential will be evaluated against a set of criteria which will assess whether such sites are likely to produce greater returns if they are developed by the Council.

Of the surplus sites approved for sale by Cabinet there are 6 sites remaining to be sold either at auction or by private treaty. Currently these are on hold pending the appointment of an Officer resource. Approval has been gained for a temporary appointment and recruitment will commence in August to enable the disposals programme to recommence.

Continue to lobby for improvements to our transport infrastructure, including the A47 economic corridor (Cllr Chris Seaton)

Wisbech Access Strategy

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. The latest information about the project can be found on the County Council website from the following link:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-funding-bids-and-studies/wisbech-access-strategy>

Kings Dyke Level Crossing

This is primarily a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. The County Council website includes all the study information, technical details and progress information relating to the [Kings Dyke Crossing](#).

March Area Transport Study

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. A virtual room public consultation was held from 15 May to 28 June 2020. Copies of the project reports and technical information which make up the consultation

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-funding-bids-and-studies/march-transport-study>

March to Wisbech Railway Line

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. The full business case was submitted to CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee for its 1 July 2020 meeting. The papers relating to the business case can be found from the following website link. Item 2.7

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1969/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

A47 Dualling (CPCA Project)

This is a CPCA led project. This project was last discussed by CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee during its March 2020 meeting. This was Item 8. A link to the paper for this meeting is below.

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/890/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

A47 Guyhirn (Highways England Project)

The latest information we have been provided with confirms a start on site time of 2021 with the scheme being open to traffic in 2022. This is a Highways England Scheme that is part of the Roads Investment Strategy 1. More detail about this scheme and the latest updates can be found on the [Highways England website](#).

Support the delivery of interventions listed within the four market town 'Growing Fenland' socio-economic masterplans (Cllr Ian Benney)

The CPCA is committed to unlocking economic opportunities in each of our market towns. They have provided financial assistance to draw up masterplans and recently announced that each town will now be able to bid for up to £1m of capital funding to turn these plans into a reality.

Following approval of the four 'Growing Fenland' masterplans at a number of Council meetings in late 2019 and early 2020, Town Teams have met to prioritise projects to be taken forward to bid for funding from the CPCA.

With the bidding process now open, business cases will begin to be produced in line with the guidance provided. The Town Teams are meeting in August to discuss prioritised projects and how to develop the applications and business cases.

Continue to prepare a new Local Plan document, which will determine how the district will grow in the future (Cllr Dee Laws)

A second round of the call for sites is currently underway with the deadline for sites being 8th September. Sites previously put forward by owners continue to be assessed.

The government has made a number of announcements regarding the future of local plans one of which included a significant increase in the housing requirement that needs to be provided for by site allocations. Proposed changes being consulted on by government include a 30 month plan preparation period, site allocations equating to the grant of outline planning permission and a slimmer more focussed content that follows a standard template. The Council will need to consider these proposals in detail.

Deliver railway projects with CPCA support through the Manea, March and Whittlesea Stations Project Boards (Cllr Chris Seaton)

Manea Station

- Car Park – the planning application is expected to go to Planning Committee in September 2020. Greater Anglia consultants are finalising the survey work and analysing the results. This work is expected to be complete in September 2020.

March Station

- Car parking and platform 1 building – all feasibility study and design work has now been completed. An independent review and assessment is currently taking place of all the study work to date. Final single option design work is expected to commence following procurement of a contractor.

Whittlesea Station

- Car Park – Greater Anglia consultants are finalising the survey work and analysing the results. This work is expected to be complete in September 2020.

Work with partners to deliver property improvements and the activity plan as part of the National Lottery Heritage Funded Wisbech High Street Project (Cllr Chris Seaton)

Project Extension

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has approved the request for an extension to the project grant expiry date. The funding must now be drawn down and final evaluation completed by 31st December 2022. This additional time provides applicants with

reassurance to sign their agreements in the knowledge that they will be able to complete within the timescales allowed.

The Gap – 24 High Street

A report was submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to request their support in principal for an alternative scheme for 24 High Street, replacing existing plans for "The Gap". This request was approved in July. The next step is to present a fully costed scheme and grant application for their approval. The Council has submitted invited tenders for the appointment of a project manager to lead on the delivery of the scheme, the closing date for submissions is mid-August.

11-12 High Street

The developer has submitted the tenders for the main contract which is a crucial step in their application for project funding. These will now need to be assessed by the Project Officer and NLHF and comments/questions addressed. Once approved, the build lease can be finalised and signed.

Demolition will commence on 3rd August and is expected to take around 6 weeks.

13-17 High Street

Following the extension of the project expiry date, the legal agreements are being updated to reflect the new end date as well as the agreed revised funding level. The Council's Solicitors have been asked to progress this as a priority as the agreement needs to be signed before works can commence.

18 and 19 High Street

As with the 13-17 High Street, Officers are currently awaiting the updated legal documents to allow the owner to commence with the works.

Other Properties

The project is currently working with owners and tenants of a further 3 properties who are in the process of applying for a grant for building improvements. All of these are historic properties and two are listed buildings. With a generous grant proportion available to assist with the repairs, the owners/tenants are in the process of gathering quotes, applying for statutory consents where applicable and completing their applications. With shops now re-opening, face to face meetings with property owners and tenants is much easier.

S215/Enforcement

Working closely with our Conservation Officer, a number of properties have been identified as in need of urgent improvement works. A series of letters advising of this action were issued leading up to the outbreak of Covid-19. As a result, further action was put on hold, however, as Covid-related restrictions have been relaxed, Officers are now looking at progressing with issuing notices. These notices include requirements to address rotten windows, ineffective rainwater goods, facades in need of repair/cleaning and UPVC windows. Owners/tenants are advised that they may qualify for a grant from the High Street Project and are advised to make contact.

Activity Plan

Due to the outbreak of Covid-19 the Activity Plan has been on hold since March and all events and activities postponed. However activities are now being reviewed to look at which ones could be revised or rescheduled for next year now an extension has been granted.

The project will be participating in the Heritage Open Days event in September with an online exhibition of old photographs never before seen from the engineers archives. A selection of the images will be displayed on boards in the window of the former Bon Marche store.



Photography Exhibition 11th - 20th Sept 2020

This year, the Wisbech High Street Project will be participating in the Heritage Open Days event by hosting an online photography exhibition of unseen images of Wisbech dating from the 1940s to 1960s. Visit the project website between 11th and 20th September to view a collection of black and white photographs of Wisbech which were found in Fenland District Councils engineers archives. Photos include war damage, images from around the town centre, the river, the canal and new roads and housing schemes.

In addition to the online exhibition there will be a small selection of images displayed in the window of 9-10 High Street (former Bon Marche store)

www.highstreetwisbech.org.uk



The “Wisbech Underground” activity has recommenced with laser-scanning of the cellars of the Rose and Crown Hotel scheduled for early August by the University of Lincoln. Once complete, other locations will be contacted again to arrange free surveys and interpretive reports.

It is hoped that the CWA will be able to resume the training scheme we launched prior to March in which several students were learning traditional repairs skills using the Council’s chapel building on Mount Pleasant Road. More will be known in September.

Project updates available on the website: www.highstreetwisbech.org.uk

Other Projects:

Economic Growth Team Activity (Cllr Ian Benney)

Government Grants

The government announced a number of support schemes to assist businesses as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Within this package of measures Local Authorities were required to administer two Business Grant schemes which included:

1. Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant Fund and;
2. Discretionary Grant Fund Rounds One and Two.

There has been a significant collaborative effort across a range of Council teams to process and make grant payments, with the Economic Growth team creating the application process for both grants, website text, assessing applications and where required engaging with over 340 applicants. Undertaking the approval or rejection decision process for the vast majority of applications.

Major Projects

Engaged with two of the major commercial development projects to understand timescales and issues and any barriers to ensure that the required support is in place to enable successful delivery.

Combined Authority Recovery Team

The team represents the Council as a member of the Combined Authority Economic Recovery Team, which has supported commissioning of Hatch Regeneris’ report into the impact of Covid-19 on local economy that will help with insight to support a recovery plan. A draft local economy recovery strategy has been created and will be consulted upon both internally and with key external stakeholders including businesses.

Future High Streets Fund (Cllrs Ian Benney and Chris Seaton)

We are still awaiting feedback on our bid, which is expected in 'summer'. Officers are following up with MHCLG to try to ascertain a more specific date.

Skills Update (Cllr Chris Seaton)

Internally, the Council offers a range of apprenticeship qualifications out to our workforce, and are currently developing a wider apprenticeship offer to maximise apprentice posts being offered by the Council.

We already have:

- 1 x HR Apprentice
- 3 x Management Apprenticeship
- 1 x Accountancy Apprenticeship (Finance)
- 1x ICT Apprentice
- 1 x GDPR Apprentice (Member Services)
- 3 x Planning Apprentices

In addition to this, we are actively seeking apprenticeship opportunities in a number of teams, such as Project Management, Customer Services, Leadership and Management.

Promote and develop our Business Premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and Light Industrial Estates to encourage investment, business and job creation and skills diversification (Cllr Ian Benney)

Whilst the impact of Covid-19 and the restrictions related to it continue, many of the businesses operating from our industrial portfolio have continued to trade and remained open throughout the period.

Our business centres were closed during lockdown and conferences have ceased to operate. The latest government guidance suggests that conference centres may reopen from 1st October. However as the buildings were designed so tenants can have unimpeded access we have kept a reception presence in each building. At both business centres a small number of tenants continued to operate from their

offices, but the majority have not been in attendance as staff worked from home.

At South Fens business centre two tenants served notice, but both did so independent from Covid-19. Happily for us one of those tenants has decided to return to their old office as alternative plans did not work out for them. Unfortunately another business that rents 3 offices has decided to leave and will vacate at the end of August 2020. On a more positive note, 2 new tenants will take occupation in August and an existing tenant has moved within the premises to a smaller office. Current occupancy is the highest it has been for some time at 66.5%, but this is likely to reduce in September unless further lettings are secured.

At The Boathouse there is one vacant office, but two other tenants occupying 3 offices will be leaving at the end of August. Both will retain an office so they are effectively downsizing. Another existing business at The Boathouse may take one of the units being given up but they will release a smaller unit. Generally occupancy remains more buoyant at The Boathouse compared with South Fens.

Across the whole estate we cannot anticipate whether or not more tenants will decide to serve notice. By the nature of the tenancies which promote 'easy in and easy out terms', we are always at risk of tenants leaving on 2 or 3 months' notice. Officers will continue to closely monitor occupancy and income, seeking to mitigate any effects from the loss of either.

Affordable Homes (Cllr Sam Hoy)

The Council has been supporting "This Land"; a company created to develop CCC land sites across Cambridgeshire.

This Land had 3 sites in March that even with no affordable housing they were struggling to make viable. An officer met with This Land and introduced them to CPCA and then potential affordable housing partners.

The sites are currently going through planning process.

From the discussion with one of the partners, an agreement has been reached and a successful funding bid was submitted to the CPCA. The Council provided supportive text to the submission. The grant awarded is £3,520,000 which will deliver 90 additional affordable homes for March.

Environmental Health inspection and business support programme (Cllr Sam Hoy)

In July the Council's statutory return to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) was submitted. This return informs the FSA how many of the programmed inspections within the Council's programme were completed. The period of time this covered was from April 2019 to March 2020.

During that time 417 out of 432 inspections were completed; this is 96%. The final few were due during late March as business closures were implemented so the inspections will now be picked up during this year's programme.

In delivering the food inspection programme the Council is required to follow the Food Law Code of Practice which stipulates how frequently food premises should be inspected. Since April 2020, local authorities have been given permission to deviate from the inspection programme due to the impacts of coronavirus. This has been further extended to 30th September 2020.

The Council's programme for 2020/21 is currently being reviewed and will recommence as guidance allows, most likely at the end of September 2020. Therefore no inspection data is available for this report.

During July and August officers have continued to work closely with businesses to ensure the implementation of changes to Covid-19 guidance and regulations, to support reopening of businesses as allowed and to ensure risk assessments are adequate to meet Covid-19 compliant status.

More than 350 interventions have been undertaken; 150 of these by the High Street Compliance Officer who has been appointed using grant funding. Business feedback has been very positive with certain sectors (such as the beauty industry) very appreciative of the bespoke advice they are receiving.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 20/21	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP15	% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks (or within extension of time)	100%	75%	100%	
CELP16	% of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks (or within extension of time)	94%	80%	93%	
CELP17	% of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks (or within extension of time)	99%	90%	98%	
EGA1	% occupancy of the business premises estate	87.8%	89%	89.5%	
EGA2	% of customers satisfied with our business premises estates (quarterly)	100%	95%	98%	
MS1	Number of berth holders / occupancy of berths at Wisbech Yacht Harbour (85 berths)	85	85	81	
CELP18	Number of local businesses supported and treated fairly (quarterly)			N/A	

Comments

EGA1 Cumulative figures not recorded. Historically reported as a year-end figure. For June 2020 the figure is 87.8%

EGA2 Annual figure based on survey Oct 2019

Quality Organisation

Projects from Business Plan:

Launch our Commercial Investment Strategy (Cllrs Chris Boden & Ian Benney)

Preparations are underway for the first meeting of the Council's Investment Board, and similarly the Fenland Future Limited Board to progress the Council's aspirations in relation to commercial investments.

Deliver the 'My Fenland' project to modernise customer service arrangements across the district (Cllr Steve Tierney)

The My Fenland project focuses on modernising the way the Council delivers all aspects of our services to our customers. Current processes, wherever possible, will be streamlined to improve consistency and efficiency across the organisation. Technology will be utilised to improve the process for both staff and customers. The key focus will be ensuring we are putting the customer journey first and providing the best possible customer experience.

We have made significant progress with the project, despite the current Covid-19 restrictions.

We have process mapped a number of activities from a number of customer facing and administration teams, including our Licensing functions, our Corporate 3Cs process (complaints, compliments and correspondence), our Freedom of Information request (FOI) process, environmental service requests (e.g. how we process Missed Bins reports, to name just a few). We have streamlined and automated these processes to make them more efficient and customer focused.

The new My Fenland went live from Monday 27th July and now includes all of the following teams:

- CEL Admin team
- Customer Services teams
- Assests and Projects admin team
- Business Centre team

In addition to the teams coming together, we have also successfully introduced the teams working together and co-locating where possible and in line with government guidelines around safe working practices and capacity restrictions in some offices.

We are also undertaking a full update and relaunch of our website and access points for customers.

We will shortly be implementing a telephony upgrade and associated training for employees, which will enable us to provide a web chat service to our customers.

We have very successfully implemented Pay Point functionality across the district, which allows our customers to pay their Council bills at an increased number of locations, such as Post Offices, garages, convenience stores and so on.

Identify and deliver projects that support us to become a 'Council For the Future' (CFF)
(Cllrs Chris Boden & Steve Tierney)

A number of projects are progressing successfully that are subject to separate updates within this report, including My Fenland, Empty Homes, and Housing Enforcement.

Other Projects:

3Cs Update (Cllr Steve Tierney)

	June 2020
To answer 90% of Correspondence within 10 working days	100%
Answer 90% of Complaints by the agreed deadline	94%
Dealt with 90% of complaints at Stage 1	83%
Progress less than 10% of complaints to Stage 2	12%
Progress less than 5% of complaints to Stage 3	5%
Number of Ombudsman complaints upheld	0

Communications Update (Cllr Steve Tierney)

News update:

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in July = 15

Monthly update on FDC social media sites:

The number of social media updates added to the FDC twitter and Facebook accounts in July;

Twitter = 164

Facebook = 137

We currently have 3,771 likes on Facebook and 8,586 followers on twitter.

Consultation Summary:

- Coates Consultation Area Appraisal – 8 July to 5 August 2020
- Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) – 10 July to 7 August 2020

COVID-19 comms update:

We continue to follow and publicise national Government and Public Health England (PHE) advice and guidance in respect of Covid-19.

The latest information is being shared through our Council's Covid-19 web page at: www.fenland.gov.uk/coronavirus and the Council's social media accounts. In total, we have had 33,000 Coronavirus web page views since their launch.

We are also publicising press releases for all key Council news and service information relating to Covid-19.

We also continue to circulate comms to staff on a daily basis via our What's Breaking emails and the intranet.

Staff Survey (Cllr Steve Tierney)

The Council undertakes a Staff Survey every 2 years. All staff were invited to take part in the 2020 Staff Survey in June 2020 by either completing the survey online or by completing a paper copy if required.

The response rate for this year was a very encouraging 59%, an increase of 19% since 2018. (This equates to 209 members of staff completing the survey).

The survey asked questions under the following categories;

- Contribution
- Communication
- Working relationships
- Personal Development
- Suggestions

The survey had a number of yes/no or multiple choice questions, and the table below provides a comparison to our previous surveys.

Almost all areas saw an improvement, with some of the key headline statistics as follows:

- 95% of staff are proud to work for Fenland District Council
- 99% of staff feel committed to their work here at Fenland District Council
- 98% feel they make a positive contribution to the success of the Council
- 97% of staff feel they work well with their immediate supervisor or manager
- 95% of staff feel treated in a fair and respectful manner at work

Since 2018's Staff Survey we have also seen notable improvements in satisfaction rates on Springboard discussions, training needs and feelings of being trusted within a team, which indicates that improvements introduced over the past 2 years have been successful.

This year saw the introduction of a new section of the survey on the Council's response to Covid-19. 82% of respondents said that their working arrangements had changed as a result of the pandemic; and 76% of this group indicated they would like their new working arrangements to continue.

Elections (Cllr Chris Boden)

It is the intention of the Electoral Returning Officer to conduct a Polling District Review during the autumn of 2020, the final recommendations from which will be considered by Full Council in December. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. The last compulsory review was agreed by Full Council on 13 December 2018. Subsequent compulsory reviews must be started and completed within the period of 16 months that starts on 1 October of every fifth year after 1 October 2013.

The review conducted during 2018 was in preparation for the District and Town and Parish Council election which took place in May 2019 whilst also implementing changes resulting from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Review of Cambridgeshire County Council to some parish wards and the Community Governance Review in Whittlesey.

Whilst legislation does not require a Polling District Review to be conducted this year, as a Council we are keen to demonstrate our proactive approach to the May 2021 elections and provide reassurance to local electors that we remain committed to enabling residents to be able to cast their vote in person at a polling station in a manner that is COVID secure, if that is their choice. We are therefore seeking to conduct a further review of all Polling districts across Fenland with the aim to reduce the number of electors allocated to each location whilst also increasing the number and location of polling stations available, where possible, therefore reducing the volumes of electors voting at each location. The objective of this approach is to give local electors confidence that COVID compliant considerations are a key consideration of the Returning Officer and Elections Team as well as the security and integrity of the elections process.

As such the Polling District Review may result in changes to the location of Polling Stations in which local electors cast their vote or have done so previously and therefore, we would encourage local residents to feedback any comments/ views via the public consultation during September and October. We also want to emphasise that postal and proxy votes will continue to be available to electors should these alternative means of voting be their preference rather than having to vote in person via a polling station.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 20/21	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries resolved at first point of contact	95%	Rolling monthly target of 85% per month	94.7%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (March 2021)	96%	90%	96%	
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	64%	Rolling monthly target rising to 46.5% by March 2021	90.79%	
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	92%	Rolling monthly target rising to 80% by March 2021	99.49%	
ARP3	% of council tax collected	96.76%	96.8%	37.64%	
ARP4	Council Tax net collection fund receipts	£11,650,572	£57,913,023	£21,477,928	
ARP5	% of NNDR collected	96.84%	97.51%	37.05%	
ARP6	NNDR net collection fund receipts	£3,076,767	£17,069,917	£6,799,531	
PRC5	Number of visits to our website	684,190	718,000	280,005	
PRC6	% of staff who feel proud to work for FDC (every 2 years)	84%	85%	95%	

Comments

COUNCIL TAX: At the start of the month there were 2834 outstanding processes, and this has increased to 2923 at the end of the month. This is due to an increased number of moves notifications being received now that people are able to move as lockdown is relaxed. For Fenland the total number of outstanding processes at the end of the month was 201.

Council Tax collection is below target due to customers taking up the option of the 2-month payment break introduced to help alleviate financial problems associated with Covid-19. The Council Tax Hardship fund has been applied to all applicable customers.

Statutory reminders are due to be issued week commencing 17 August which should see the collection figures improve over the next couple of months. There is still no indication when the Courts will open for Liability Order hearings.

BUSINESS RATES: The flow of incoming work has further reduced over the course of the month. For Fenland we received 219 pieces of post during July compared with 213 for the same period last year. The number of processes completed during July was 263 compared to 243 for the same period last year.

All call volumes remain at a manageable level. Staff that had been previously redeployed are now back with their normal teams. Grant claims need to be in by 28th August and payments made by end of September. This means that this work is being prioritised to ensure that the maximum number of businesses are able to receive the grants.

There are still a number of query accounts that require amendments by the Valuation Office or further investigation of the situation of the premises before any grant can be paid.

There is still no definite idea of when courts will resume, however discussions indicate that the attendance at court will be carefully managed by restricting the number of cases, ensuring that debtors wanting to attend will be required to attend at a specific time to facilitate social distancing. It is envisaged that the majority of people who contact the office to make an appointment will actually deal with the enquiry with the office at the time negating any need to attend the court. We await confirmation of the detailed arrangements and when this may commence.

Collection rates are maintaining. The monthly targets have been re-profiled to reflect the movement of debt to later in the year due to businesses requesting a payment break at the start of the year and those that have moved to 12 monthly instalments to help spread the debt and reduce their monthly outgoings.

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MOTION

MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR TIERNEY REGARDING THE PROPOSAL OF A MORATORIUM ON SALES OF FDC LAND IN WISBECH WITHIN 500 METRES OF THE TRACK OF THE DECOMMISSIONED RAILWAY LINE OR WITHIN 500 METRES OF ANY PART OF THE SITE OF THE PROPOSED NEW INCINERATOR

FDC has consistently supported the reintroduction of a rail service into Wisbech, and has opposed the proposal to build a mega-incinerator in Wisbech. In the near future, both schemes will reach critical milestones.

To help promote the re-instatement of the railway line, and to help defeat the incinerator proposal, Full Council recommends that those exercising delegated authority for decisions connected with the disposal of land observe a six-month moratorium on all sales of FDC land in Wisbech within 500 metres of the track of the decommissioned railway line in Wisbech or within 500 metres of any part of the site of the proposed new incinerator unless either:

- (a) the proposed sale assists in the promotion of the re-instatement of the railway line and does not assist in the promotion of the incinerator OR
- (b) the proposed sale assists in the fight to oppose the proposed incinerator and does not harm the proposal to re-instate the railway line.

The moratorium above shall not apply in respect of transactions which FDC is obliged to complete by a Court, or under the terms of a Compulsory Purchase Order, or under threat of legal action against FDC which FDC is unlikely to be able to defend successfully.

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Agenda Item No:	8	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	8 September 2020	
Report Title:	Corporate Governance Committee Annual Report 2019/20	

1 Purpose / Summary

To Report to Full Council the commitment and effectiveness of the Corporate Governance Committee's work from April 2019 to March 2020.

2 Key issues

- The Corporate Governance Committee considered its Annual Report at its meeting on 17th August 2020
- The Committee has completed a review of its effectiveness using a checklist compiled by CIPFA which was a recommendation made by the external assessment of Internal Audit.
- The Committee recommends the report be presented to Council.

3 Recommendations

That full Council acknowledges the work of the Corporate Governance Committee and it's compliance with CIPFA's annual checklist for 2019/20.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr John Clark, Chairman of Corporate Governance Committee
Report Originator(s)	Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Kathy Woodward – Shared Internal Audit Manager
Contact Officer(s)	Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Kathy Woodward – Shared Internal Audit Manager
Background Paper(s)	Corporate Governance Committee agendas and minutes 2019/20 Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (CIPFA 2018)

Appendix: Annual report

Report of the Corporate Governance Committee

April 2019 - March 2020



1 What is corporate governance?

- 1.1 Corporate Governance in Fenland District Council is an essential part of the Council's standards for transparent and informed management and decision-making. It provides assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the control environment, independent scrutiny of the Authority's financial and non-financial performance and to oversee the financial reporting process.

2 Responsibilities of the Committee

- 2.1 The Corporate Governance Committee rules listed in Part 2 (rule 10), of Fenland District Council's Constitution, illustrates their role within their terms of reference:
- a) Consider the effectiveness of the Authority's risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements.
 - b) Seek assurance that action is being taken on risk related issues identified by auditors and inspectors.
 - c) Be satisfied that the Authority's assurance statements, including the Statement on Internal Control, properly reflect the risk environment and actions required to improve it.
 - d) Approve internal audit's strategy, plan and monitor performance.
 - e) Review summary internal audit reports and the main issues arising and seek assurance that action has been taken where necessary.
 - f) Receive the annual report of the Internal Audit Manager providing an opinion on the level of internal control.
 - g) Consider the reports of external audit and inspection agencies.
 - h) Ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit, inspection agencies and other relevant bodies, and that the value of the audit process is actively promoted.
 - i) Review the financial statements, external auditor's opinion and reports to Members, and monitor management action in response to issues raised by external audit.

3 Members commitment to corporate governance in 2019/20

- 3.1 Meetings included development briefings, and items of topical interest, to maintain knowledge and awareness of the Council's Governance Framework. Examples were:
- the role of Corporate Governance, Officers and the annual work plan;
 - interpretation of Annual Financial Statements;
 - the role of internal audit in Local Government. A quarterly update report on audits completed is provided which includes the number of and theme of recommendations;
 - risk management;
 - reports on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act
 - reports from external audit; and
 - Data Protection updates

3.2 The Chairman of Corporate Governance Committee also attended external courses provided by the Public Sector Auditor Appointments (PSAA), which covered topics such as:

- Update on Local Audit (External Audit provision and delays in 2018/19 accounts)
- Update from the LGA on support for Audit Committees
- Getting assurance on difficult issues (ICAEW)
- What is the Audit Committee role in relation to developments such as commercialism and groups?
- Code of Audit Practice - update on development

4 Work programme and outcomes

4.1 The Committee considered the matters in the table below as part of its work programme for 2019/20

Programme	Outcome
Annual Governance Statement 2018/19	<p>The Authority has a statutory duty to publish a statement as to the level of effectiveness its governance and internal control framework.</p> <p>The Corporate Governance Committee was able to consider the sources of assurance and approve the content of the Statement prior to its publication with the Financial Accounts.</p> <p>The statement included an action plan which was reviewed during the year to ensure that governance and control framework weaknesses were addressed.</p> <p>This has helped the Council to proactively identify and manage governance and control risks that could affect Corporate Priorities. Examples include changes in legislation, finance and Government policy.</p>
Accounting Policies	<p>The Committee considered the accounting policies for use in producing the 2018/19 accounts. This helped ensure that the Council demonstrated compliance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).</p> <p>The Committee endorsed the approach proposed to meet the revised Accounts and Audit regulations 2015. This included managing a condensed timetable for preparation, approval and publication of financial performance information in preparation for the imposed earlier statutory deadline.</p>
Statement of Accounts	<p>The Committee were able to approve the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2018/19, assisting the Council in achieving its publication deadline.</p>

Programme	Outcome
Internal Audit work programme	<p>The Corporate Governance Committee received reports, from the Internal Audit Manager, for review of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk based annual plan and strategy, • Performance Outturn 2018/19, • Internal Audit Manager’s opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council’s control environment, and • Progress updates on delivery of the annual plan <p>These reports demonstrate that the Council has arrangements in place to comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, to maintain an adequate and effective internal audit and system of Internal Control.</p>
Review of effectiveness of Internal Audit	<p>The Committee received assurances from the Corporate Director & Chief Finance Officer, following a review of Internal Audit effectiveness for 2018/19.</p> <p>This confirmed that the Internal Audit Team is effective and follows professional quality standards such as the CIPFA “Local Government Application Note” for “Public Sector Internal Audit Standards” and the CIPFA “Statement on the role of the Head of Internal Audit”.</p>
Risk Management Framework	<p>The Committee received regular updates on the Corporate Risk Register, discussed emerging risks, and completed an annual review of the Risk Management Strategy.</p> <p>This provided assurance that significant risks are identified and managed for the Council.</p> <p>In addition, Members requested additional items to be considered which led to some changes to the risk register which have been implemented.</p>
Treasury Management	<p>The Committee received reports throughout the year on the Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, Annual Investment Strategy and financial performance.</p> <p>This provided assurance that the Council's assets are managed in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.</p>

Programme	Outcome
Data Protection Policy	<p>The committee received reports on the Council's Data Protection Policies that included updates on:</p> <p>Data Protection Policy Information Security Policy Reporting Data Breaches Policy and Procedures</p> <p>These provide assurance that the Council collectively and proactively demonstrate the commitment to protecting individuals' privacy whilst also fulfilling our obligations under data protection legislation.</p>
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act	<p>The Committee received a report that allowed it to review the Council's use of the Regulations of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), and understand its use as part of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. The Committee also reviewed the RIPA Policy following an inspection by the Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office (IPCO).</p>
External Audit Assurance	<p>The Committee received reports from the Audit Commission's appointed auditor, Ernst and Young. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual work plan; • Annual grant certification report; • Annual report to those charged with governance (ISA 260) summarising the work of the external audits completed; • Annual Audit and Inspection letter <p>The reports affirmed continued maintenance of high financial management and control standards.</p> <p>The Annual Audit letter explained that in all significant respects the Council made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and an unqualified value for money conclusion was given.</p> <p>The Committee also received updates on the future arrangements for appointing the Council's External Auditors</p>

Fenland District Council
Corporate Governance Committee Self-Assessment Exercise

For the year 2019-20

No	Issue	Y	P	N	Evidence/ Comment	Action Required
AUDIT COMMITTEE PURPOSE AND GOVERNANCE						
1	Does the authority have a dedicated audit committee?	Y			Referred to as Corporate Governance Committee	
2	Does the audit committee report directly to full council? (applicable to local government only)	Y				
3	Do the terms of reference clearly set out the purpose of the committee in accordance with CIPFA's Position Statement?		P		The Corporate Governance Committee have a Terms of Reference that broadly cover the purpose as outlines in CIPFA's Position Statement. The current Terms of Reference are out of date and would benefit from a review.	Update / review the current Terms of Reference
4	Is the role and purpose of the audit committee understood and accepted across the authority?	Y			The committee's Terms of Reference are documented on the council's website where officers and members can access relevant documentation.	
5	Does the audit committee provide support to the authority in meeting the requirements of good governance?	Y			The committee supports the authority by following the Nolan Principles adopted by the authority, and ensuring to the best of their ability that the corporate plan and strategic goals of the authority are adhered to.	
6	Are the arrangements to hold the committee to account for its performance operating satisfactorily?	Y			The Corporate Governance Committee report to Council and provide an annual report to Council. Throughout the year other members of the Council may request to attend meetings.	
FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE						
7	Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement?		P		The majority of the core areas are covered in the current Terms of Reference, these would benefit from a review.	Update / review the current Terms of Reference
	good governance			N		<i>Update / review the current Terms of Reference</i>

	assurance framework, including partnerships and collaboration arrangements			N		<i>Update / review the current Terms of Reference</i>
	internal audit	Y				
	external audit	Y				
	financial reporting	Y				
	risk management	Y				
	value for money or best value			N		<i>Update / review the current Terms of Reference</i>
	counter fraud and corruption	Y				
	supporting the ethical framework			N		<i>Update / review the current Terms of Reference</i>
8	Is an annual evaluation undertaken to assess whether the committee is fulfilling its terms of reference and that adequate consideration has been given to all core areas?	Y			The Audit Committee completes an annual report, which encompasses this review. The committee also considers as part of its annual work the Annual Governance Statement and Risk Register. The committee regularly receives reports from Internal Audit, External Audit and reviews the financial statements.	
9	Has the audit committee considered the wider areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement and whether it would be appropriate for the committee to undertake them?	Y			The committee reviews treasury management reports and has oversight of the annual report. Additional wider areas could be considered during the review of the committee's Terms of Reference.	Additional wider areas could be considered during the review of the committee's Terms of Reference.
10	Where coverage of core areas has been found to be limited, are plans in place to address this?	Y			A review of the Terms of Reference is recommended.	Update / review the current Terms of Reference.

11	Has the committee maintained its advisory role by not taking on any decision-making powers that are not in line with its core purpose?	Y			The Corporate Governance Committee maintains its independence by adhering to being a non-decision making committee.	
MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT						
12	Has an effective audit committee structure and composition of the committee been selected? This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • separation from the executive • an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills among the membership • a size of committee that is not unwieldy • consideration has been given to the inclusion of at least one independent member (where it is not already a mandatory requirement) 	Y			The current committee is separate from the executive, the current membership has an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills, and the size is not unwieldy. The mix of members from each political party is in line with current policies. The consideration to include an independent member took place at the Corporate Governance meeting of 17 August 2020. The committee decided it may be something they wish to pursue in the future.	Add the action to review the position of an independent member in 12 months' time to the committee action plan.
13	Have independent members appointed to the committee been recruited in an open and transparent way and approved by the full council or the PCC and chief constable as appropriate for the organisation?				Subject to whether an independent member is to be appointed or not.	See 12 above
14	Does the chair of the committee have appropriate knowledge and skills?	Y			The current chair of the committee has the appropriate subject knowledge for the position. Members of the committee are given opportunity to freely discuss matters with fellow members of the committee. Officers attending the meetings are always available for advice to the chair if required. Training is given to all members of the Corporate Governance Committee to ensure appropriate skills are up to date and relevant.	
15	Are arrangements in place to support the committee with briefings and training?	Y			Training for members of the committee is given to members on specific subjects (mainly technical areas – AGS, Statement of Accounts etc) prior to the official meetings taking place when requested.	
16	Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found to be satisfactory?	Y			The committee membership is formed from members with financial backgrounds, historical knowledge of the authority, knowledge from other authorities resulting in a varied mix of experience and knowledge.	Consider undertaking as assessment of current members against the core

					A formal assessment has not taken place, but could be considered.	knowledge and skills framework.
17	Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the CFO?	Y			All meetings are attended by a mixture of officers, including the Corporate Director / S151 officer, external audit, Chief Accountant, Head of Governance and Internal Audit Manager	
18	Is adequate secretariat and administrative support to the committee provided?	Y			Relevant officers attend meeting to facilitate secretarial and administrative support to the committee.	

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMITTEE

19	Has the committee obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?	Y			The Chairman of the Corporate Governance Committee presents an annual report to the Council and receives feedback from the executive.	
20	Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members?	Y			All members are encouraged to be involved fully at all meetings. Relevant officers are invited to attend meetings to provide greater detail to help discussions and engagement.	
21	Does the committee engage with a wide range of leaders and managers, including discussion of audit findings, risks and action plans with the responsible officers?	Y			The committee engages with the relevant responsible officers when discussing risks and action plans. Examples of this are the AGS, Corporate Risk Register, Treasury Reports and RIPA policies.	
22	Does the committee make recommendations for the improvement of governance, risk and control and are these acted on?	Y			All reports presented to the committee for approval are discussed and actions minuted on suggested improvements. These actions are reviewed by the officers to ensure they are followed up on and discussed at the following meeting.	
23	Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?		P		No formal evaluation has taken place, but the annual audit committee effectiveness report considers this to some degree.	Consider whether the committee is adding value using the information provided in CIPFA 2018 guidance.

24	Does the committee have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness?		P		The Committee agreed at its meeting on 17 August 2020 to create an action plan for the committee to review throughout the year.	Create an action plan for the committee to consider at future meetings.
25	Does the committee publish an annual report to account for its performance and explain its work?	Y			Corporate Governance Committee Annual Report.	

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Agenda Item No:	9	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	8 September 2020	
Report Title:	COATES CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL	

1 Purpose / Summary

To inform Members that public consultation on the Coates Conservation Area Appraisal has been completed and seek approval from Council that these documents are adopted.

2 Key issues

The Coates Conservation Area Appraisal have been prepared for the following purposes:

- 2.1 to satisfy Policy LP18 of the adopted Fenland Local Plan which states that *"the Council will protect, conserve and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment throughout Fenland and will look to achieve this by keeping up-to-date and implementing conservation area appraisals and management plans"*.
- 2.2 to satisfy S71(1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which places a duty on Local Planning Authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.
- 2.3 to support the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Planning Team by providing an evidence base from which they can develop their neighbourhood plan.
- 2.4 in the case of the Coates Conservation Area Appraisal, to provide guidance that will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 2.5 in the case of the Coates Conservation Area Appraisal, a management plan has been included to provide a framework of objectives for the Council to follow as proactive actions for preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Coates Conservation Area.

3 Recommendations

To approve the Coates Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

Wards Affected	St Andrew's Ward St Mary's Ward Delph Ward
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Seaton - Social Mobility and Heritage Cllr Denise Laws - Neighbourhood Planning

Report Originator(s)	Claire Fidler, Conservation Officer
Contact Officer(s)	Claire Fidler, Conservation Officer- 01354 622321 Nick Harding, Head of Planning - 01354 622315 Carol Pilson, Corporate Director - 01354 622360
Background Paper(s)	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Adopted Fenland Local Plan (May 2014) SPD Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland (July 2014) Historic England, Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management". (2011)

1 Background / Introduction

- 1.1 These documents provide an up to date Appraisal including management plan for the Coates Conservation Area. The current Coates Conservation Area Appraisal was published in August 1993 and is now well out of date, containing a number of inaccuracies and a management plan that does not address the conservation area's current issues. It is essential to have accurate and up to date documents for the Coates Conservation Area to support initiatives for the area.

2 Considerations

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 2.1 S71(1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that *"It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas"*. The production of the Coates Conservation Area Appraisal accords with this duty.
- 2.2 S72 (1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in respect of determining applications affecting conservation areas the Local Planning Authority shall have *"special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area"*. The Coates Conservation Area Appraisal is intended to identify the architectural and historic interests of the *conservation area* and would be a material consideration in the determination of applications affecting the Conservation Area in line with S72 (1). The objectives set out in the *management plan* will support decision making that aligns with S72 (1).

Local Policy: Fenland Local Plan (May 2014)

- 2.3 Under Local Plan Policy LP18 the Council commits to *"keeping up-to-date and implementing conservation area appraisals and management plans, and using such up to date information in determining planning applications"*. The production of the Coates Conservation Area Appraisal seeks to meet this Local Plan policy commitment.

Historic England Guidance - Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 (February 2016)

- 2.4 Historic England (formally English Heritage), the statutory advisors to the government on heritage matters, provide advice on the production of the appraisals and management plans in their guidance document - Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1. Within this guidance it states that it is good practice to review and update these documents every 5 years. The existing documents are now 27 years old and require updating in accordance with good practice to ensure they are current and remain relevant.

Structure and Layout of Document

- 2.5 The Coates Conservation Area Appraisal is laid out following the methodology and best practice guidance set out in Historic England's guidance document Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (February 2016)
- 2.6 The document appraisal is effectively structured into three parts. As is standard in the production of these types of documents the first part covers the introduction and the legislative and policy framework under which the document is produced along with the assessment of the character and appearance of the conservation area with the aim of clarifying what its special architectural and historic interest is. Part 2 covers the boundary review. Part 3 details the management plan.

- 2.7 The Conservation Area boundary has remained unchanged since its initial designation in 1976. Two areas have been proposed for removal as it is considered they do not have a special architectural and historic interest which contributes to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 2.8 Some clarifications over the boundary have been raised in consultation comments received. These have been noted and answers given in the consultation feedback. The boundary is drawn to reflect the character of the Green and the settlement morphology of the village, rather than the architectural interest of the largely 20th century buildings surrounding it. Therefore some inclusions and exclusions are due to the need for a logical boundary to ensure easy 'readability' and the maximise the greens and verges included, rather than because of the architectural quality of the housing.
- 2.9 Other feedback included the need for spelling corrections, address clarifications and comments regarding the objectives and have been duly noted. Further discussions regarding the objectives were conducted via a Zoom meeting with Cllrs Laws, Wicks and Miscandlon, FDC and CCC officers (Highways, Conservation) and Whittlesey Town Council and feedback noted.

Consultation and Adoption

- 2.10 The consultation period began on 6th July 2020 and concluded on 6th August 2020. Due to the Covid 19, the consultation was held online only with letters sent to affected residents making them aware of the online process, with copies of the draft documents sent to relevant Councillors and amenity societies.
- 2.11 Comments were received from 9 persons/organisations following the public consultation. These comments are detailed in the table in Appendix B. In accordance with S72 (3) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the Council shall have regard to the public views expressed during the consultation period. The consultation comments received have been appraised and where appropriate the document has been amended and the action taken has been recorded in the table in Appendix B.
- 2.12 A few changes have made to the document. A sentence has been added to 'Part 2 Boundary Review' on p19 to state that the boundary is drawn to reflect the character of the Green, rather than the built environment. Wording has been altered to 'Part 3 Management Plan' Objectives on p21 to ensure they are clear as to the actions and parties' involved. List entry numbers and address clarifications have also been added to Annex 1: Buildings on the National Heritage List for England, p24.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

- 2.13 The Coates Conservation Area Appraisal will assist in the delivery of the Council's corporate objectives specifically Environment and Economy.

3 Community Impact

- 3.1 Once adopted, the Coates Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan will have a positive impact on the community within the Coates Conservation Area and will be seeking to achieve improvements in the quality of this environment.

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Part 1

1. Introduction

The historic centre of Coates comprising of North Green and South Green is designated a conservation area. This conservation area status is a legal recognition that the area has **special** architectural and historic interests and there is a presumption that the character and appearance of the area should be preserved and enhanced. The purpose of this conservation area character appraisal is to clearly identify what the **special** interests of the Coates Conservation Area are and what elements of the built and natural environment contribute to its special interest. The boundary of the Coates Conservation Area is shown on Map 1.

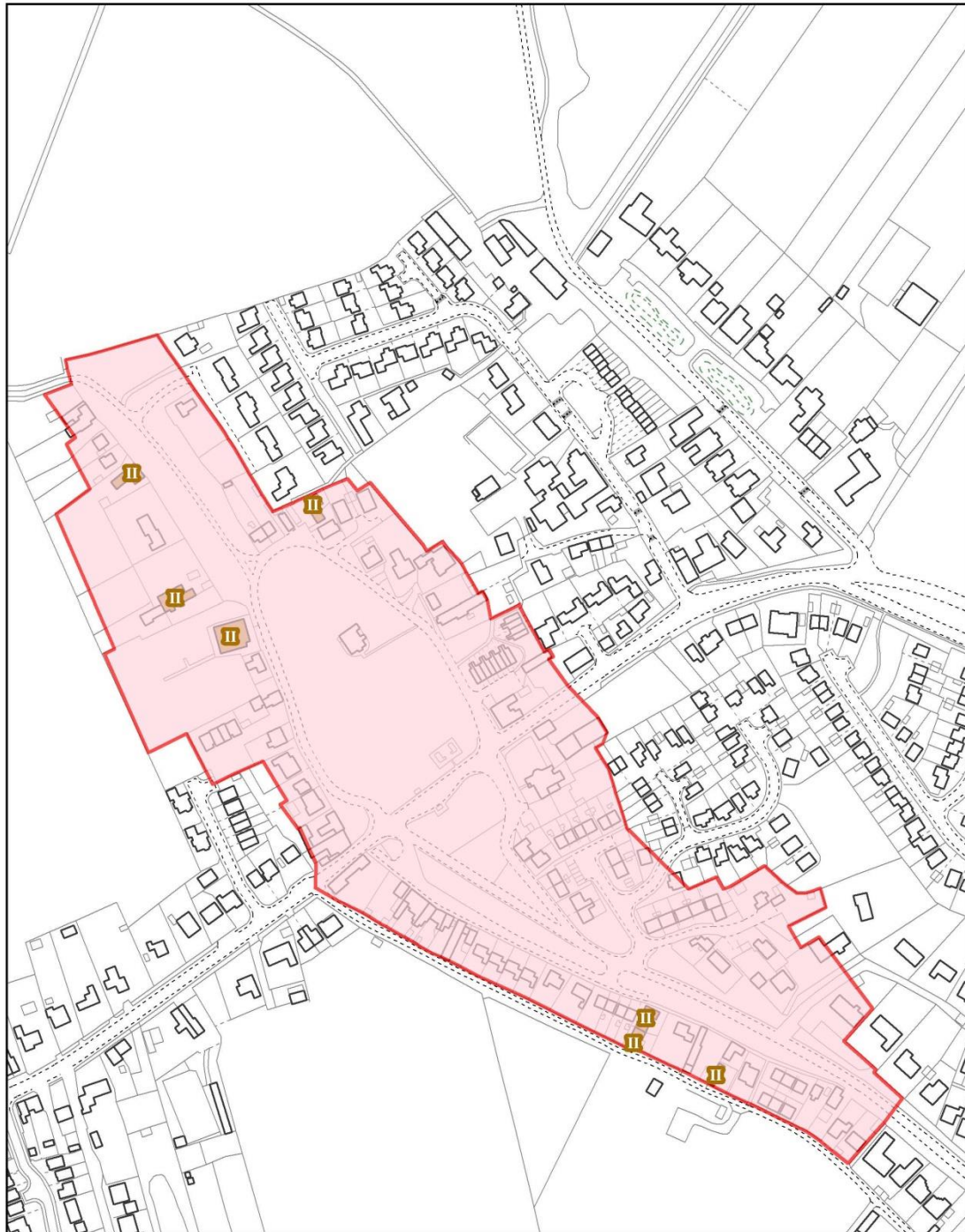
A conservation area was first designated in Coates on 7th October 1976 and is focused on the central core of the village taking in North Green and South Green and the property immediately around these open spaces. The boundary to the Coates Conservation Area has never been amended or altered since designation.



The Appraisal and Management Plan Process

This appraisal and management plan have been prepared following the methodology set out in Historic England's guidance document 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' (Feb 2019). It will set out the legislative and policy background associated with the need for the appraisal and management, before first appraising the **special** historic and architectural interest of the Coates Conservation Area and secondly considering management requirements to maintain the conservation area's special qualities.

This Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was approved by Fenland District Council's Full Council on XX XXXXX XXXX. Prior to its adoption it was subject to local consultation as required by S71 (2) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Full details of the public consultation process are set out under Annex 3.

Coates Conservation Area Boundary (as original designation)



Created on: 02/09/2019	Con Area	N	
© Crown Copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 10023778	Scale = 1:3,000		Fenland District Council

2. Legislation and Policy: The requirement to produce a conservation area appraisal and management plan

The legislation governing the designation of conservation areas and the legal duties towards their care now falls under the provision of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It is under Section 69 of the act that gives local planning authorities the power to recognize areas which are considered to be of ***“special architectural and historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance”***, defining them within a boundary and designating them as a conservation area. This conservation area character appraisal and management plan is prepared in accordance with Section 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which places a duty on the Local Planning Authority to *“from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas”*.

Local Planning Policy

The Fenland Local Plan was adopted on 8th May 2014. This local plan forms the policy basis for growth and regeneration in Fenland over the next 20 years. In the context of planning, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the local development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Within the Fenland Local Plan (2014) Policy LP18 specifically relates to the historic environment and states that *“The Council will protect, conserve and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment throughout Fenland”* and one of the ways it will achieve this is by *“keeping up-to-date and implementing conservation area appraisals and management plans, and using such up to date information in determining planning applications”*. This conservation area appraisal has been produced with due regard to satisfying policy LP18.

Local Plan Policy LP12 (Rural Areas Development Policy) applies to villages in Fenland including Coates. Part (d) of the policy states that where development is concerned *“the proposal is of a scale and in a location that is in keeping with the core shape and form of the settlement, and will not adversely harm its character and appearance”*. This conservation area appraisal will support policy LP12 by clearly identifying what aspects of the built and natural environment make up the character and appearance of the Coates Conservation Area.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2019) sets out Government planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It identifies how planning policy is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development through economic, social and environmental factors. A core principle of the NPPF is to *“conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations”*. The NPPF seeks to promote positive planning which can shape and direct development. This character appraisal has been produced to accord with the NPPF as a positive planning tool which serves to identify the significance of the Coates Conservation Area so that significance can be given appropriate regard in the consideration of planning proposals.

Under the NPPF (Feb 2019) Annex 2 it defines Designated Heritage Assets as “A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation”. **Coates Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset.** Within the conservation area there are 7 listed buildings which are also designated heritage assets. A full list of the listed buildings is provided in Annex 1.

3. Planning Controls

Conservation area designation brings with it certain planning controls which mean that planning permission is required for certain aspects of development which may not have required planning permission if they were not located in a conservation area. A full account of additional planning controls associated with conservation area designation is provided in Annex 2. In addition to this in determining planning applications associated with buildings or land within a conservation area the duty in law under S72 (1) of the Act states that “**special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of that area**”. The character and appearance of the Coates Conservation Area, as identified in this appraisal, shall inform planning decision making so that it aligns with the duty in law.

4. Summary of Special Interest

Date of Original Designation:	8 th October 1976
Dates of Boundary Amendments:	None
Location:	Coates, Cambridgeshire
Changes to Boundary through this review:	Yes – amendments to the line of the boundary.
General Character:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rural village ▪ Centrepiece of the village is The Green, which is an extraordinary settlement feature for this Fen location. ▪ Dwellings are modest in form and size. No more than two storey. ▪ Buff brick, pantile and slate are the more prevalent building materials seen within the village. ▪ The oldest surviving cottages are timber-frame, brick and thatch.
General Condition:	Good
Scheduled Monuments:	0
Listed Buildings:	7
Negative Factors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Green vulnerable to damage ▪ Appearance of part of the war memorial railings
Heritage at Risk:	Not identified as being “at risk”

Section 1 – Character Appraisal

5. Assessing Special Interest

Location & Topography

Coates is a Fen village located in East Anglia, in the north of the county of Cambridgeshire, in the district of Fenland. It is located within the parish of Whittlesey and is 2 1/2 miles east of Whittlesey and 8 miles west of the town of March. The village is located on part of a gravel capped “island” within the low-lying Fenland and is one of a number of these geological “islands” (areas of higher land) within this Fenland area the others including Whittlesey, Eastrea, Eye, Crowland and Thorney. Coates was once a small settlement on part of an island surrounded by marshland but it is now a village surrounded by prime agricultural land. The prime agricultural land has been created through the draining of the Fens (land reclamation) which was undertaken from the mid-17th century. To the north of the town lies the river Nene and Nene washes, which is an area of wildlife rich wash-land on the bank of the river.

Geology

Coates is situated upon bedrock from the Jurassic period specifically a formation of Oxford Clay-mudstone which formed 156-165 million years ago in shallow seas. The overlying superficial deposits, those being the younger geological deposits over the bedrock, are of sand and gravel. These superficial deposits were formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary period and were formed in a shoreline environment. The soil is chiefly a black loam.

Coates in Context

Archaeology

There has been human activity within the parish of Whittlesey since at least the Late Neolithic Period/Early Bronze age (2500 – 2000BC). In Coates, archaeological investigation has identified evidence of a possible Bronze Age or Early Iron Age settlement as post holes and pottery and flint have been found in the locality (CHER MCB17257). The existence of early Bronze Age activity in Whittlesey parish has also been evidenced in recent years by the substantial finds associated with a Bronze Age settlement at the Must Farm site in the west of the parish. Sites recognised as Scheduled Monuments within the Whittlesey parish include Suet Hill Round Barrow Cemetery, a Bronze age burial site (2000-700BC), and the Bowl Barrow south of Buntings Farm, comprising of funerary monuments of earthwork mounds (2400 – 1500BC).

It is known that the Romans (43AD to 410AD) were active in the area. The Fen Causeway (Fen Road), a Roman Road, ran through the area north of the current settlement and provided a Roman route through the marshland of the Fens from Norfolk through Whittlesey to Water Newton (just outside Peterborough). A Roman field system and trackway with later field ditches has also been identified at Whittlesey Washes, again to the north of the town, and this is protected as a Scheduled Monument. Roman artefacts and pottery fragments have been found scattered in fields around Coates.

Less evidence of Anglo-Saxon (410-1066AD) living has been found within the Parish of Whittlesey and none in Coates. There has however, been some archaeological evidence of late medieval activity in Coates through evidence of quarrying, field boundaries and water features and some evidence of post medieval activity in the form of building material finds (MCB17083).

History of Coates

Archaeological evidence identifies human activity in the area from the Bronze age era although it is not known when a settlement at Coates was first established or what form it originally took. Up until the 17th century Coates would have stood above the surrounding Fen marshes comprising of peat fen with water logged ground, with reeds growing over it and served by a communication network of canals and rivers. The inhabitants of these lands would have used the surrounding land for fowling, fishing and catching eels which would have been a food source and traded.

Land ownership in Fenland from the 10th century onwards was dominated by monastic estates. The Fenland monasteries were “*refounded*” from 970 onwards and they were “*endowed with enormous estates (augmented through purchase and bequests) by the King and leading members of his court*” (Oosthuizen 2000). The Benedictine Abbey of Ely owned the Isle of Ely including Wisbech, March and most of Whittlesey. The land where Coates is located was under the ownership of The Benedictine Abbey of Ely and fell within the parish served by St Mary’s Church in Whittlesey. The monastic estates of Whittlesey were seen as generating a good income, indeed it is noted that “*Judging by the value of the manors, Whittlesey was a prosperous place in the Middle Ages*” (BHO)



A Map of ye Great Levell of ye Fens. 1658 Jonas Moor map

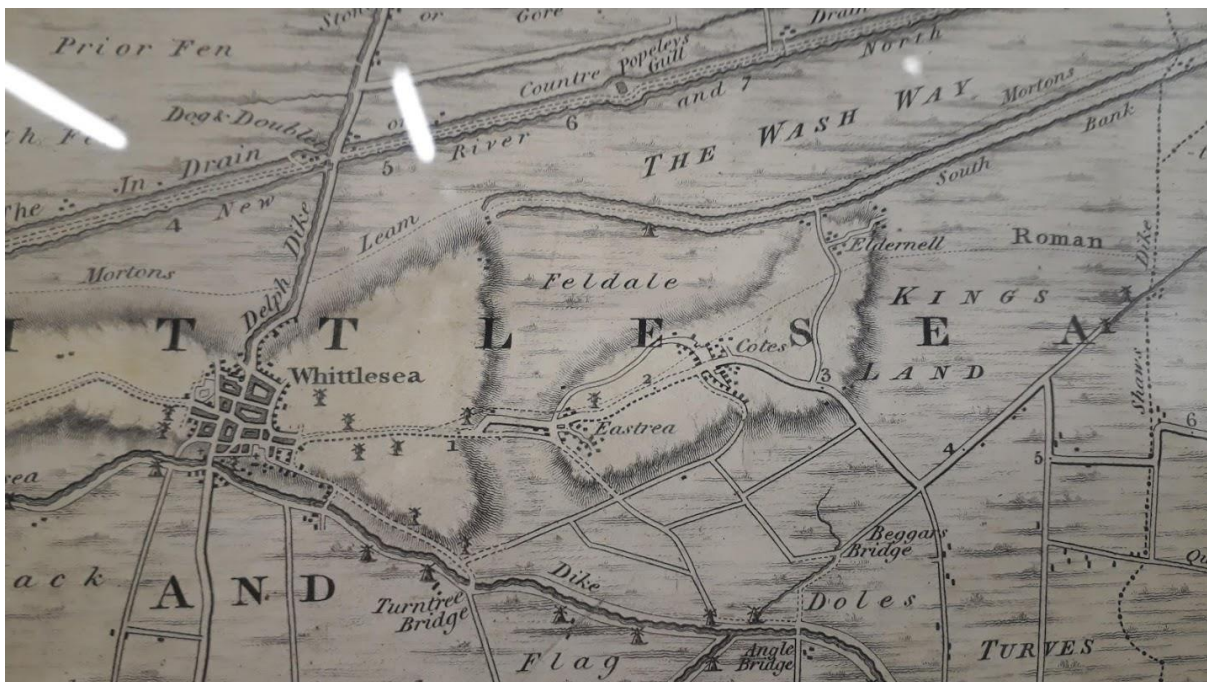
The ownership of land where Coates is located changed in the 16th century with the dissolution of the monasteries. The monastic estates were broken up and lands passed to private owners. A large amount of land within the Whittlesey area formed the Whittlesey Manors which was owned by the Lord of the Manor and this appears to have included land at Coates. In the early 17th century the Duke of Bedford and associated investors set about draining the Fens, They were seeking to capitalise on its fertile lands for grazing and arable farming. In the mid-17th century the Dutchman Cornelius Vermuyden was appointed to oversee the draining of the Fens. Within the area around Whittlesey and Coates Vermuyden's plans involved widening the Nene and creating the washes to hold excess river water in winter. By the end of the 18th century it is estimated that there was 1550 acres of open field and 2400 acres of pasture created.

Coates is referenced on the Jonas Moor map of 1658 as Cotes and depicted as a handful of dwellings enclosed by a rectangular boundary suggesting an established settlement of properties over and above a lone farmhouse. There is documentary reference to Quakers and other non-conformists living in Coates in the late 17th century. There is also a documentary reference in 1699 to a sports event being held on Coates Green indicating the Green had existed at this time. The earliest surviving buildings in Coates date to the late 17th and early 18th century and are **98 South Green (grade ii)**, **22 North Green (grade ii)** and **45 Fieldside (grade ii)**. These properties are constructed in timber frame and brick with thatch roofs.



Beasdales 1723 Map of the Great Level

Coates appears to have grown and established itself as a village from around 1800. In Gardner's Directory of 1851 it states that "Coates is a hamlet and Chapelry in Whittlesey. It is has grown out of encroachments on the lords of the manor's wastes, within the last 50 years, until a population of about 700 souls have been collected". Wastes refers to land which does not have a value for farming. A map accompanies the 1808 book Lyson's Cambridgeshire references Coates as Mortons Cotes. The R G Baker map of 1821 refers to the settlement as Cotes. The oldest lime trees found on North Green appear to be around 200 years old and would have been planted around this time. Properties which survive from around 1800 include the cottages at **40 North Green (grade ii)**, and Cottage rear of **91 South Green (grade ii)**. Both these cottages have thatched roofs with brick walls possibly with timber frame or some earthen construction. **The Rectory (grade ii)** is dated to 1773 (date stone) although with later alterations and is the grandest property being a good sized house of two storeys and attic and built it brick with slate roof.



Baker Map 1821

From Cotes to Coates, the 1841 Tithe map and records refer to the settlement as the Hamlet of Coates. It is clear however, it is already a well-established village set around The Green, the footprint of the Green seen today. In 1841 there are 50 dwellings (19 on the north side and 30 on the south side) around The Green mainly described as cottage and yard/garden but some more specifically to the north are referred to as house and garden. There is a mix of tenure between owner occupiers and tenanted property and there is no dominating property owner. This was an agricultural community with those living in the village working as farmers or predominantly agricultural labourers although there were other professions which supported the agricultural community including wheel wrights, shoemaker, blacksmiths, tailor and publican. The non-conformist chapel was built on The Green in 1831 (enlarged 1866) and in 1840 the **Church of England Church of Holy Trinity (grade ii)** was built to the west side of North Green.

<p>Halliday Henry, beer retailer & farmer; Pearce Edward, cooper</p> <p>COATES and EASTREA, the former 2½ miles east, the latter 1½ east from Whittlesey, were formed into an ecclesiastical parish in 1850 from the civil parish of Whittlesey, in the North Witchford hundred, Whittlesey union, Peterborough county court district, rural deanery of Ely, and in the peculiar archidiaconal jurisdiction of the Bishop of the diocese (Ely). Holy Trinity church is a brick building, erected in 1840, with square tower and very neat spire, and was thoroughly restored and enlarged in 1874, and newly seated with open benches, and north and south aisles added, at a cost of £900. The register dates from the year 1850. The living is a rectory, yearly value £200, in the gift of the Lord Chancellor and J. W. Childers, esq., alternately, and held by the Rev. Peter Royston, M.A., of</p>		<p>St. Catharine's College, Cambridge. There is a mixed school on the National system, and a Wesleyan chapel. The principal landowners are J. W. Childers and Charles Isham Strong, esqrs. The soil is chiefly a black loam; subsoil, clay or gravel. The chief crops are wheat and potatoes. The area is 5,200 acres; the population in 1871 was 1,303.</p>
<p>POST OFFICE.—Thomas Plowright, receiver. Letters through Peterborough, via Whittlesey, arrive at 7.30 a.m.; dispatched at 5.15 p.m. Whittlesey is the nearest money order office</p> <p>School, Miss Fanny Allen, mistress</p> <p>CARRIER TO PETERBOROUGH.—Isaac Jarman, Saturday</p>		
<p>Coates.</p> <p>Aveling James Thomas, J.P. Eldernell Bradley John Royston Rev. Peter, M.A. [rector], Rectory</p> <p>COMMERCIAL.</p> <p>Akins Thomas, boot & shoe maker Allen Benjamin, wheelwright Anos William, saddler & harness maker Barratt William, farmer, Turves Bates David, farmer, West Fen Bates John, farmer, Cross drove Bates William, farmer, Duncomb's crrn Beaton John, farmer Beaton William, farmer, Turves Bedford Henry, farmer Blunt James, farmer Blunt John, <i>Bottle & Glass</i> Blunt John, sen. farmer & miller Blunt Thos, farmer, Duncomb's corner Blunt Thomas Lovell, farmer Blunt William (Mrs.), <i>Three Horse Shoes</i>, & farmer, Turves Bodger Henry, tailor Boys William, beer retailer Boys Thomas, baker</p>	<p>Corby Thomas, butcher Elderkin Edwin Burton, miller Fawn William, grocer &c Fletcher Ann (Mrs.), shopkeeper Fletcher George, farmer Flint Lewis James, farmer, Eldernell Gale John Hidson, farmer & thrashing machine proprietor Gill Anthony, boot & shoe maker Gill Charles, boot & shoe maker Gray George, wheelwright Gray Thomas, brazier Ground Daniel, farmer, Eldernell Hull John, farmer Hughes John, farmer Hughes Thomas, farmer Hurry John, beer retailer Hurry Stephen, farmer Jarman Isaac, carrier Jones William, farmer, King's land Kisby Levi, shopkeeper Kisby William, farmer Lindsay Eliza (Mrs.), farmer Neal Ann (Mrs.), <i>Falcon</i>, & farmer Newill Stephen, farmer, Turves Newton John, <i>Carpenters' Arms</i> Parr Mark, cooper</p>	<p>Rowe Joseph, blacksmith Ruff Daniel, farmer Ruff James, farmer Searle James, farmer Searle John, miller Setchfield Edward, horse breaker Setchfield John, jun. blacksmith Thompson Hosier, poultryer Vergette Robert, farmer, Gravelhouse Whitton Abinger, farmer, Burnhouse farm</p> <p>Eastrea.</p> <p>Anker Joseph, farmer Blunt Charles, shopkeeper & farmer Blunt David, tailor Blunt Thomas, farmer Blunt William, miller & baker Elston William, farmer FitzJohn Martha (Mrs.), shopkeeper Franklin Henry, farmer Gill Charles, shoe maker Hooton James, coal dealer Kisby James, farmer Lindsey John, farmer Mitcham Abraham, farmer</p>

Post Office Directory 1875 Entry.

Coates does not grow as a settlement in the Victorian era, indeed the population of the village itself declines towards the end of the 19th century. From having a population of 600 - 700 in 1841 the population of the village is recorded in the 1861 census as being 709 residents occupying 181 dwellings, in the 1881 census as 694 residents occupying 164 dwelling and by 1901 there are 587 residents occupying 150 dwellings. The Post Office Directory of 1858 still describes Coates as "the pleasant hamlet of Coates" under the entry for Whittlesey but in later decades it is recognised under its own entry for Coates and Eastrea; "*formed into an ecclesiastical parish, July 9 1850, from the civil parish of Whittlesey*" (Kelly's Directory 1892). The OS maps of 1887 and 1901 show the footprint of village changes little in the 19th century from that presented on the Tithe map of 1841. It is clear that the settlement pattern around The Green was well established by the 19th century. The buildings which stood around it included many thatched cottages. Buildings including the Fire Engine House, and Sunday School date to this era.



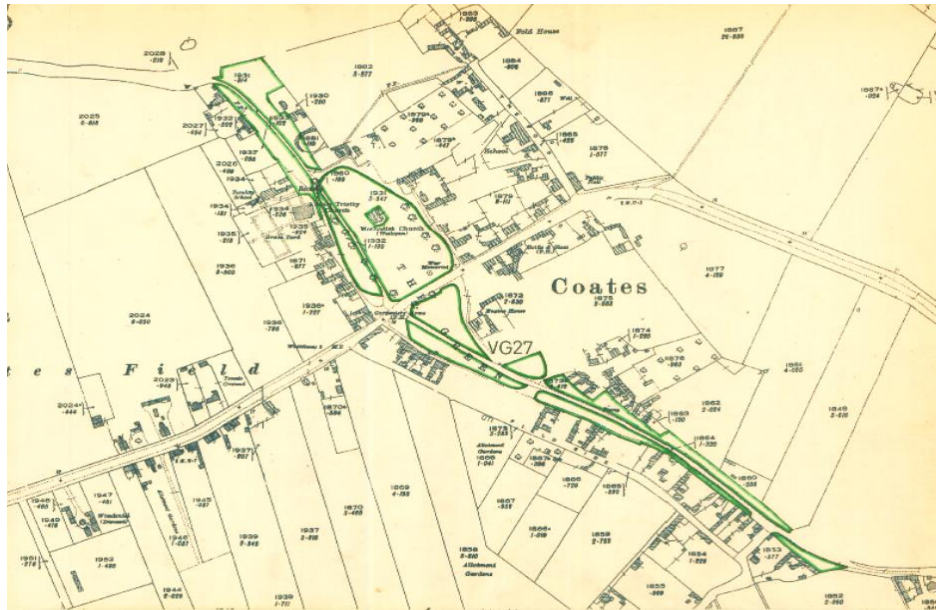
South Green

The footprint and character of Coates appears to change little in the first half of the 20th century and it remains a village serving an agricultural community. Kelly's Directory 1929 cites numerous commercial businesses in the village including a blacksmiths, wheelwright, thatcher, beer retailer as well as two pubs, a post office, a Barclay's Bank, public hall, school, parish church and Methodist Chapel. The 1926 OS map indicates trees around North Green but South Green was more open. From the mid-20th century onwards the character of the village would change as the cottages that had existed around the Greens were demolished and replaced with new houses. At this time the footprint of the village also expands as housing development starts to occur on the east side of South Green between South Green and March Road and then to the north of The Fold. In the 1990s there has been tree planting schemes which have seen new trees planted across the Greens particularly across South Green which has changed the context of the space. Notable buildings/structures erected in the 20th century are Church View built in 1914 and the War Memorial erected in 1920.



North Green

Up until the turn of the 21st century Coates Green was owned by the Lord and Lady of the Manor of Whittlesey. In 1999 on the death of the last Lady of the Manor, Nancy Bowker, the Whittlesey Manors including Coates Green was gifted to the Whittlesey Charities. While owned by the Lord of the Manor and now Whittlesey Charities, Coates Green has historically served as public open space for use by the village community. Historically residents of the village grazed their livestock on Coates Green and it was known for geese grazing on it. Coates Green appears on Cambridgeshire County Council's Register of Common Lands and Village Greens as a Registered Village Green (VG27) which affords it protection and prevents it from being built on. Its registration as a village green was finalised on 1st October 1970 and under this registration it states the inhabitants of Coates have the right to use the village green for lawful sports and pastimes. Coates Green is maintained by Fenland District Council.



Village Green Designation Map (1970)

6. Character Analysis: Overview

Green Space and Trees

Coates sense of place is defined by The Green which is the focal point of the village and the fundamental element of the character and appearance of this conservation area. Coates Green is a sizeable area of grassed public open space approximately 8.2 acres in size which is bisected by the A605 Whittlesey to March road. It is considered an unusual feature for a Fenland settlement, where greens are not a common aspect of settlement morphology, which adds to its interest. In describing Coates Pevsner observed *“The village has an uncommonly large Green at r. angles to the main road and cut in half by it”* (Pevsner). The Green is irregular in its shape with the largest part of the Green to the north of the A605 and is known today as North Green. The smaller section of green to the south of the A605 is known today as South Green and it tapers away in a southerly direction and is dissected by a number of roads leaving fragments of green alongside the road.

The natural quality of Coates Green is enhanced by the presence of trees upon it. These are all deciduous trees and as such the appearance of The Green differs between summer when trees are in leaf and winter when leaves have fallen. The oldest and most prominent trees on the green are the European lime trees (common lime trees) found on the east and west sides of North Green. These lime trees stand dominant on North Green and are by far the tallest trees. At the northern end of north green there is a mix of younger trees including Norwegian Maple, Rowen, Ash, Horn beam and Cherry. On South Green the trees are young trees, of native and ornamental types including Norway maple, Horse Chestnuts, Oaks and Cherry Trees. The churchyard also affords a pleasant green space and within it is a fine mature Holm Oak and yew trees. There are no specific Tree Preservation Orders in place within the Coates Conservation Area but all trees are protected by virtue of being within the conservation area.



Trees on Green

Built Environment

The focus of the conservation area is Coates Green and the boundary takes in property which largely sits around the green either facing the green or appearing gable end on to it. Two-thirds of the dwellings within the conservation area date to the mid-20th century onwards and comprise of a mix of generic 20th century buildings. In this respect there are no strong architectural and historic qualities across the conservation area's built environment. There are, however, obvious aspects to the character and appearance of buildings. Buildings are modest in scale and of one, one and a half storey or two storeys in height. Property is predominantly of brick construction and presents a variety of grey, creams and buff bricks with some properties rendered. Where dormer windows exist it is in one half storey properties only.

7. Character Analysis: Detailed

North Green

North Green comprises the largest single area of grass which is bound by the A605 on its southern side and enclosed by the road running around it. In addition to this North Green continues northwards in the form of a narrower section of elongated green which extends to the northern field edge of the village and has the road running through the middle of it. Upon the larger section of North Green standing alone in the centre and drawing the eye is the former Methodist Chapel. This Victorian chapel building, circa 1841, is of simple form and style but by virtue of its

positioning it stands out as a feature building within the village and makes an intrinsic contribution to the special architectural and historic interests of the conservation area and the village's sense of place.

The only other built structure found on North Green is the Coates War Memorial which sits adjacent to the A605 towards the south east corner of North Green. The war memorial takes the form of a stone obelisk generously enclosed by fencing much of which is comprised of concrete posts with tubular metal bars. The enclosure around the memorial reinforces the presence of the memorial on the vast green and with its well-maintained hedging and some flowers it creates an attractive semi private space on the otherwise open green. The concrete posts and tubular metal bars do not form a particularly attractive boundary to the war memorial and it is felt this offers an opportunity for enhancement.



Historic Image War Memorial

A key feature of North Green is the trees upon it which add to the strong natural qualities of this part of the conservation area. The oldest and largest trees on North Green are lime trees which make a fundamental contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. A total of nine mature lime trees survive each of which are around 150 years old or more. Given the size of the green these large trees sit comfortably within the space complimenting the vast expanse of the green. A number of other mature trees are worth noting around North Green including the Horse Chestnut at the Rectory. Younger trees are also found around North Green and these collectively contribute to the natural qualities of the green.

There are no physical boundaries surrounding North Green to separate it from the roads around it and through it. The edge of the green is entirely open and at any point you can step off the road or path and on to any part of North Green. The mature and semi mature trees that sit towards the edge of the green are seen as

natural features on the green and not as a boundary treatment. The open nature of the green forms part of the character and appearance of the space and reinforces its intent as a welcoming space to be used by the local community. North of the former chapel there is a playground area which also emphasises the fact this is a village green for community recreation. The nature of the green edge is such that it is susceptible to suffering from damage and erosion particularly if cars repeatedly park around the edge.



Church from the Green

The open character of the green means it is viewed from all angles and all directions across it. The most familiar view is that looking northwards from the A605 up the green towards the former Methodist Chapel. There is a great awareness of the expanse of North Green when looking across it. It is also noticeable, particularly in summer when the trees are in leaf, that the buildings around the green somewhat fade into the background obscured by the trees on the green and the focus of the view is very much the natural space. It is noted that there are particularly attractive views at the northern end of the green looking north along the narrow stretch of green where the road runs through it. As the dwelling houses sit back behind the green they are unobtrusive and the view taken in is one of green lined by trees. In winter, when trees are not in leaf, views are afforded into the open countryside to the north beyond the village. These views are important as they create a strong visual connection between the settlement and the fields beyond serving to reinforce the rural context of Coates.



Countryside view

Around the largest area of North Green the settlement pattern comprises of buildings fronting the outer edge of the surrounding road. Buildings generally face onto the green although a few sit gable end onto the green. Where front gardens exist these are narrow spaces and there is a mix of low level front boundary treatments. At the northern stretch of North Green the settlement pattern differs as houses sit back behind the green accessed from driveways which cross the green. The buildings around North Green are notably modest in scale and of simple architectural styles which is a characteristic of this rural village settlement and the conservation area. The historic buildings tend to be those which are more characterful, and which stand out in the street scene including the **Church of Holy Trinity (grade ii), 22 North Green (grade ii), 40 North Green (grade ii)** and Church View 47 North Green.

The Rectory (grade ii) is a historic building dating back to 1773. Although one of the larger of the dwellings within the village it sits fairly discretely in private grounds to the north side of the church. Adjoining the Rectory on its west side is the former Sunday School which is an attractive non-domestic building which can best be seen from the churchyard. Unfortunately this building now stands in a poor state of repair and needs refurbishment. The churchyard itself is worth noting as a tranquil natural space within the conservation area. The Holme Oak is a fine tree within the churchyard and in spring the Magnolia trees come out in their delicate pink blooms.

South Green

The green to the south of the A605 is called South Green. It is smaller than North Green and more fragmented as a result of the roads which run through it. South Green is triangular in shape tapering away as it heads south. The largest section of South Green abuts the A605 and is open without any boundary enclosure. The trees on the space are young trees with the exception of two Norway Maples on the east side. There are no buildings on this area of South Green and the focal point is children's play equipment. The rest of South Green presents itself as wide stripes of verge to the sides of the road with young deciduous trees throughout. These green spaces offer less opportunity for recreation given their size but contribute to the strong natural qualities of the conservation area.



South Green

Buildings around South Green are predominantly from the mid 20th century onwards and sit to the footpath edge or behind front gardens. The buildings around South Green are notably modest in scale and of simple architectural styles which is a characteristic of this rural village settlement and the conservation area. The historic buildings which survive on South Green tend to be the more characterful buildings in this part of the conservation area and include the pair of adjoining thatched dwellings known as **98 South Green (grade ii)** and **45 Fieldside (grade ii)**. 98 South Green fronts the green although 45 Fieldside is discretely sited behind. **The cottage to rear of No. 91 South Green (grade ii)** is also discretely sited and not entirely visible from South Green itself although its thatched roof can be seen from the green. These

three early buildings are located close together at the southern end of the conservation area.

Fieldside

Fieldside is a lane which forms the western boundary to the conservation area south of the A605. The lane is no more than a farm track, untarmacked. On the east side of Fieldside is the rear boundaries, rear access and garaging of South Green properties. Boundary treatments are a mix of modern walling, fencing and hedging. The interest of this conservation area boundary is in the nature of the unmade track. To the west of Fieldside are currently fields which give rise to its name.

Buildings of Local Importance

Buildings of Local Importance identified in the text above are:

- Former Sunday School, North Green (identified as a BLI since 1993)
- Former Methodist Chapel, North Green (identified as a BLI since 1993)
- Church View, North Green (identified as a BLI since 1993)
- Coates War Memorial, North Green (identified as a BLI since 1993)
- Fire Engine House (identified as a BLI since 1993)

DRAFT

Part 2

Boundary Review

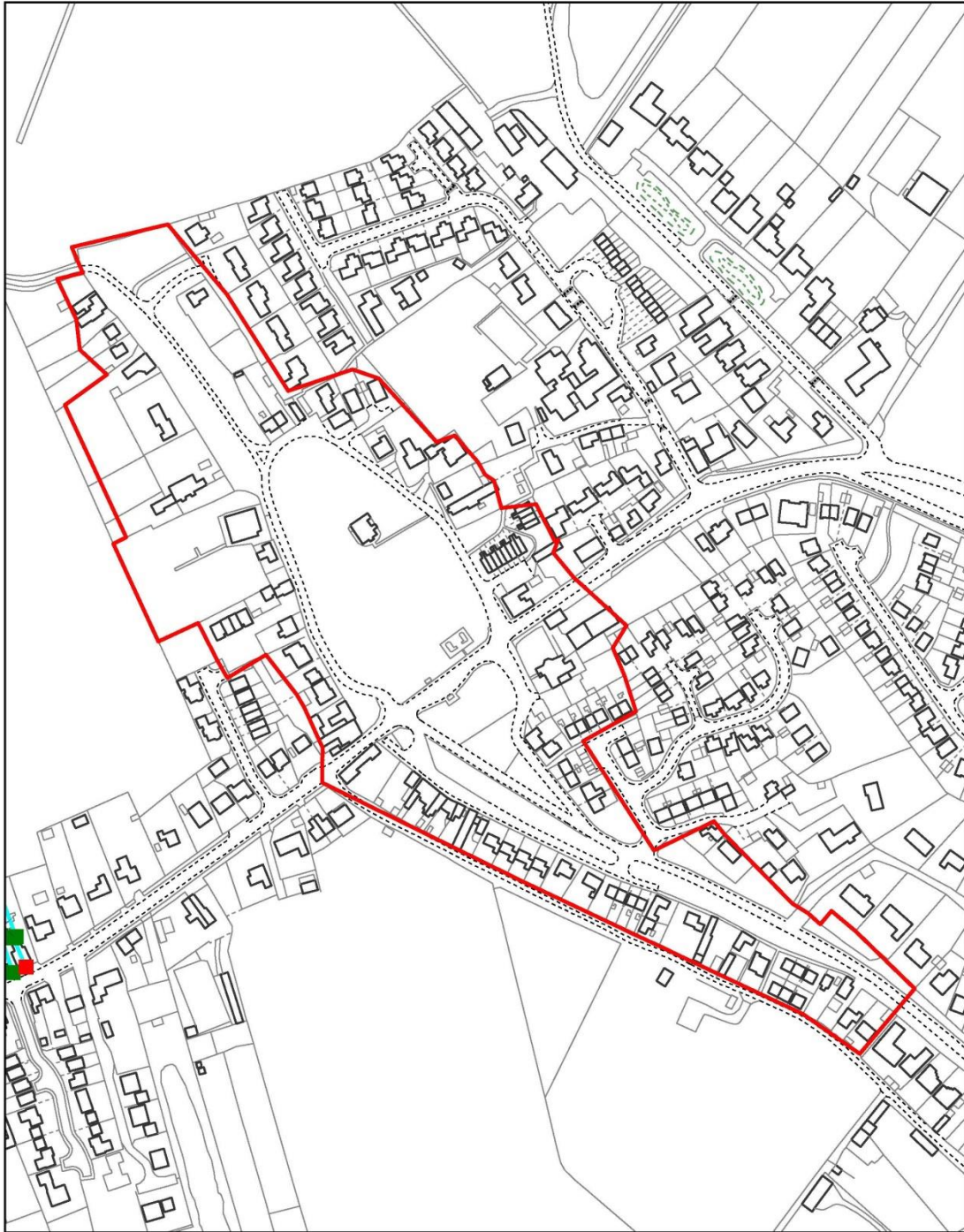
Coates Conservation Area was designated in October 1976 and the boundary has not changed since its original designation. As part of this appraisal process the boundary line of the conservation area has been reviewed to ensure it still covers an area which can be determined to be of special architectural and historic interest. The boundary is drawn to highlight the character of the Green and the settlement morphology of the village. It therefore focuses on those buildings which directly surround the North and South Green.



In this instance it is felt the Coates Conservation Area boundary requires amendment to reflect the fact that a part of the conservation area does not have a special architectural and historic interest. The boundary is to be amended on its east side to remove an area of mid-late 20th century housing development which is not of special interest and does not have a tangible relationship with Coates Green. The areas to be removed are as follows:

- Sunnyville Road and the entrance to Barnfield Gardens are included within the conservation area. These streets were created in the mid-20th century and are not considered to be part of the historic footprint of the village. The housing on these streets does not front South Green. Property on Sunnyville Road was built circa 1970 and comprises of generic modern housing. Given it does not relate to the green and is not of architectural or historic interest it is proposed that the boundary is realigned to exclude Sunnyville Road property.
- 37 – 42 South Green were erected after the conservation area boundary was designated. 40, 41, and 42 are bungalows which are well set back from the green. 37, 38 and 39 sit behind them and are not clearly visible from South Green.

A map showing the proposed boundary is provided in Map 2.

Map 2 - Proposed Coates Conservation Area Boundary



<p>Created on: 02/09/2019</p> <hr/> <p>© Crown Copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 10023778</p>	<p>Scale = 1:3,000</p>		
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Part 3

Management Plan

The Management Plan is intended to provide a strategy for managing change, addressing issues and identifying enhancements within the Coates Conservation Area to ensure the conservation area retains its qualities as an area of special architectural and historic interest. The objectives developed are intended to effect positive changes within the Coates Conservation Area to enhance its character and appearance and better reveal its significance.

The fundamental factors which contribute to the special character and appearance of the Coates Conservation Area are identified in the character appraisal. Given the interest of the conservation area there are only a few issues which threaten this particular conservation area's character and appearance.

Objectives

Preserving the Green

Coates Village Green is the defining element and fundamental feature of the Coates Conservation Area. Therefore preserving the character and appearance of this open green space is fundamental to preserving and enhancing the special interests of the conservation area. As a designated village green it is protected from development and will never be developed upon but there remain some threats which may harm its interests and the quality of the green. The grassed edges of the green are considered to be vulnerable to being eroded and damaged by vehicles repeatedly and regularly being parked on it to the detriment of its character and appearance.

Objective 1 - *The Council will work in partnership with the landowner, residents and all relevant and interested parties to endeavour to alleviate parking issues on the Green.*

Coates War Memorial

Coates War Memorial occupies a prominent position on North Green adjacent to the A605. The memorial has historic importance within the village commemorating those villagers who lost their lives in World War I and World War 2. It is also a notable historic feature within the conservation area. In many towns and villages war memorials are listed and recognised for their architectural and historic interests. It is disappointing that the Coates War Memorial is not afforded the same recognition.

Photographic evidence shows that the enclosure around the war memorial has changed in the last century and has been enlarged. The enclosed space is well maintained although the nature of the enclosure on the north, west and east side which is formed from concrete bollards and steel poles is considered to detract from the setting of the war memorial and wider appearance of The Green. It is felt there is an opportunity to enhance the setting of the war memorial and appearance of the green by providing better quality railings.

Objective 2 - To seek to promote the historic importance of the war memorial and enhance its setting by (i) putting the memorial forward for listing and (ii) seeking to facilitate an enhancement scheme to replace the modern sections of railings around the memorial as and when they are due for renewal or if funding opportunities arise.

Trees within the Conservation Area

The natural qualities of the Coates Conservation Area are enhanced by the presence of trees, particularly on the green and within the churchyard area. These are predominantly deciduous trees and as such the appearance of the conservation area does differ between summer when trees are in leaf and winter when leaves have fallen which add to its seasonal interest. The oldest and most prominent trees within the conservation area are on the green are the European lime trees (common lime trees) found on the east and west sides of North Green. These lime trees stand dominant on North Green and are by far the tallest trees. Care is required to effectively manage the lime trees along with other trees on the green.

Objective 3 - Tree management on North & South Green will be implemented in accordance with the Council's emerging Tree Management Strategy. Trees will only be removed for reasons of health and safety following a full inspection and ensuring a suitable replacement tree will be planted to ensure continuity of tree cover on both greens.

Development site opportunities

Coates Conservation Area draws its boundary tight around the village green and its peripheral houses and it is already densely developed. In this context development opportunities within the conservation area are limited. There are, however, a few sites and poor quality buildings which currently detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area and offer an opportunity to enhance the conservation area through appropriate and timely redevelopment. Development of these sites will need to be initiated and undertaken by the land/property owners. Where required the Council can support these owners by providing appropriate planning and conservation advice to help ensure such developments enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area:

- 6 March Road
- 14 March Road

Delivery

The three objectives cited within this Management Plan are to be delivered in partnership with stakeholders. The delivery of these objectives will require the input of the Conservation Officer(s), the Arboricultural Officer and may involve collaboration with other teams such as Street Scene, Enforcement, Leisure and

Open Spaces, and Highways. Fenland District Council will use its available resources to help deliver the objectives contained in this Management Plan.

The Parish of Whittlesey benefits from a strong civic voice and a committed Town Council. There are a number of established community groups and organizations within the parish that take an interest and seek to promote Whittlesey and Coates cultural heritage and its built environment. These groups include The Whittlesey Society and Whittlesey Museum. The Management Plan provides an opportunity for local groups to get involved in the delivery of some of the objectives specifically objective 2.

Monitoring

During the 5 year period this Management Plan is set to cover it is important to be able to monitor progress of objectives and measure success at the end of the period. Monitoring procedures should be easy to implement and transparent. In this regard the following monitoring should be followed:

- i. **Annual Review** – Fenland District Council's conservation team and stakeholders referenced within the document shall convene on an annual basis. The purpose of the meeting will be to specifically review the objectives set out in this management plan and report on the progress being made under each objective.
- ii. **Measuring Success (Objectives)** – Success can be measured against completed objectives. It is considered that objective 2 has a clear outcome and success will occur when the objective is met. It is felt that objectives 1 and 3 are open ended objectives covering a long term strategy of care.
- iii. **Recording Success (The Photographic Record)** – In collaboration with the annual review it would be beneficial to keep a photographic record of objective related buildings, streets and spaces so successes can be visually convey through “before and after” photographs.

Annex 1: Buildings on the National Heritage List for England – Listed Buildings

The buildings listed below are identified by the address in the official entry on the National List for Historic England.

- **22 North Green, Coates. Grade II, List Entry Number: 1279446**

Cottage, subdivided, and now one dwelling. Late C17, and early C19 with C20 small addition at rear. Timber framed, and later brick, plaster rendered.

- **The Rectory, North Green, Coates. Grade II, List Entry Number: 1228228**

Rectory. 1773 (dated stone) and mid C19. Yellow gault brick with steeply pitched slate roof and sawtooth eaves cornice.

- **Church of Holy Trinity, North Green. Grade II, List Entry Number: 1287280**

Parish Church. 1840, 1874 and 1890 by J. Wild.

- **40 North Green, Coates. Grade II, List Entry Number: 1228707**

Pair of Cottages. Late C18 or early C19. Brick, rendered with long straw thatch and saw tooth eaves cornice.

- **98 South Green, Coates. Grade II, List Entry Number: 1228713**

Cottage. Late C17 or early C18, and 1784. Originally timber framed but the frame has been substantially replaced or cased by brick.

- **45 Fieldside, Coates. Grade II, List Entry Number: 1227934** (to the rear of No. 98 South Green).

Cottage. Probably late C17 or early C18 in origin, altered and repaired in C19 and C20.

- **Cottage, Rear of 91 South Green, Coates. Grade II, List Entry Number: 1279403** (now also known as 55 Fieldside, Thatchers Cottage)

Cottage. C18 and C19. Originally of claylump which has been replaced entirely by late C18-C19 calow brick, part now painted, and one gable end rendered.

Annex 2: Planning Controls and Enforcement

Development Control

This Management Plan seeks to establish a proactive framework for managing change, addressing issues and identifying enhancements within the Coates Conservation Area to ensure it retains its qualities as an area of special architectural and historic interest and to better reveal these interests. The Local Planning Authority does however manage change within conservation areas on a day to day basis through the process of development control. Where planning permission or listed building consent is required for works to buildings within a conservation area there are statutory considerations the Local Planning Authority has to follow in determining such applications. Buildings located within a conservation area are also subject to some additional planning controls. The following section identifies the Acts and statutory guidance which contribute to the framework of development control and the process of considering applications.

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is at the heart of the planning system although it is modified by The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and more recently by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013. S57 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 sets out the requirement that ***“Planning Permission is required for the carrying out of any development of land”*** although it allows for certain development to be exempt from planning permission if it is covered by a development order such as The Town & County Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as detailed below. S55 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 defines development. S38 (6) of The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 instructs that ***“if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination [of planning permission] to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicate otherwise”***.

The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 made changes to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 simultaneously in respect to the demolition of unlisted buildings within conservation areas. The changes made in respect of demolition resulted in Conservation Area Consent becoming obsolete and instead Planning Permission is solely required for works of relevant demolition in a conservation area under provisions now covered by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Planning Permission is required for demolition of a building exceeding 115 cubic metres or to take down any wall, gate or fence over 1 metre high abutting a highway or over 2m elsewhere. Undertaking works of relevant demolition in a conservation area without planning permission constitutes a criminal offence under S196D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

The designation of a conservation area has implications under The Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. For the purposes of this act, as stated under Schedule 1 Part 1, land within a conservation area is referenced as Article 2 (3) land.

Under this act certain works to unlisted dwelling houses which would have otherwise been possible to proceed without planning permission will require planning permission because the dwelling house is in a conservation area. Matters pertaining to the requirement of planning permission for dwelling houses are detailed in Schedule 2, Part 1 of the act and the act should be fully consulted before undertaking works to dwelling houses within a conservation area. Examples where planning permission will be specifically required if a dwelling house is located within a conservation area includes where works consisting of the cladding of any part of the exterior of a house with stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles or extending to the side of the house or extension consisting of a two storey rear extension. The installation of microwave antenna (satellite dishes) is also more greatly controlled if they are on dwellings within a conservation area.

Certain changes of use will require planning permission if a building is located in a conservation area. Such matters are detailed under Schedule 2, Part 3 of the act and this should be fully consulted when considering change of use of buildings within a conservation area. For example planning permission is required where buildings operating as shops, financial or professional services, betting offices or payday loan offices seek to change use to a building to function for assembly or leisure. Planning permission is also required where buildings are to change use to a dwelling house from a building operating as a shop, financial or professional services, betting office or mixed use.

Certain non-domestic extensions will require planning permission because a building is located in a conservation area. Such matters are detailed under Schedule 2, Part 7 of the act and this should be fully consulted when considering the extension of non-domestic property in a conservation area. For example planning permission is required for the extension of a shop or financial or professional services establishment or office building. Planning permission would also be required for the erection of a collection facility or modification of the loading bay of a shop.

The installation, alteration or replacement of micro-regeneration solar PV or solar thermal equipment is more closely controlled where buildings are located in conservation areas. Such matters are detailed under Schedule 2, Part 14 of the act and this should be fully consulted when considering installing such equipment. For example, planning permission is required if it is the intention to install the equipment on roofs fronting a highway.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The legal duties in respect to the consideration of listed building consent applications and planning applications affecting listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas falls under the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. With regard specifically to conservation areas the act requires that in determining planning applications within conservation areas **“special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character or appearance of that area”**.

With regard to listed buildings, S16 of the act concerns the determination of Listed Building Consent and requires that **“in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”**. S66 of the act concerns the determination of planning permission in respect of works to listed buildings and requires that **“in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case maybe, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”**.

Fenland Local Plan (May 2014)

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Relevant material considerations may include other legislative direction (such as the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) 1990), statutory guidance (NPPF) or other general guidance but such considerations should be weighted accordingly. The Fenland Local Plan was adopted in May 2014. Policy LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan (May 2014) specifically concerns the historic environment.

Within the Vision Statement set out in the local plan a commitment is made seeking that **“The natural and historic environment will be protected and enhanced with new development taking into account the surroundings of the area in which it would be situated”**. Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 reinforce the vision and intrinsically inform how the Council will approach development affecting the district’s conservation areas and other heritage assets. Objective 3.1 seeks to **“Preserve and where appropriate, enhance buildings, monuments, sites and areas and landscapes that are designated or locally valued for their heritage interest; and protect/enhance their settings”**. Objective 3.2 seeks to **“create places, spaces and buildings that are well designed, contribute to a high and local distinctiveness of townscape character”**.

National Planning Policy Framework (Feb 2019)

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out Government planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It identifies how planning policy is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development through economic, social and environmental factors. A core principle of the NPPF is to “conserve

heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations". Section 16 covers conserving and enhancing the historic environment and paragraphs 184 – 202 provide guidance on the determination of applications.

Enforcement

The character and appearance of a conservation area can be diminished or harmed by unauthorised works being undertaken to listed buildings within it, where breaches of planning occur, where unauthorised advertisements have been used or where tree protection offences have occurred. Where buildings or sites within conservation areas are neglected and allowed to fall into disrepair this can also impact negatively on the interests of a conservation area. In these circumstances, the Local Planning Authority has a range of enforcement powers available at their discretion to address these issues.

Unauthorised Works to Listed Buildings

Any works to listed buildings that involve their alteration, extension or demolition are controlled by the mechanism of Listed Building Consent and proposals that would fail to preserve a listed building's interests would not be granted consent. The interest of a listed building may be harmed by inappropriate and unauthorised works and failure to obtain listed building consent itself or breaching a condition attached to a listed building consent constitutes a criminal offence under S9 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and owners can be prosecuted for undertaking such works.

The Local Planning Authority has the power to address unauthorised works to listed buildings under S38 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and can issue a listed building enforcement notice. A Listed Building Enforcement Notice would set out steps required to restore the building to its former condition or set out steps required to alleviate the effect of the unauthorised works or steps required to bring the building back to a state it would have been in if conditions attached to a listed building consent had been complied with.

Breaches of Planning Control

A breach of planning control is defined under S171A Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and occurs where development has been carried out without the required planning permission or where there has been a failure to comply with a condition under which planning permission has been granted. It is at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority to take action against breaches but where such breaches cause harm to the interests of a conservation area enforcement action should be pursued. The Local Planning Authority can serve an Enforcement Notice which would state what action is required to remedy the breach. It is an offence to fail to comply with an Enforcement Notice once the period for compliance has elapsed.

Unauthorised Advertisements

Unauthorised advertisements may relate to illegal hoardings, fly-posting, graffiti or adverts along highways. There are a range of provisions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for dealing with these issues.

Tree Offences

Tree Preservation Orders are made to protect specific trees in the interest of amenity. Anyone who contravenes an order by damaging or carrying out works to a tree has committed an offence and can be fined. They can also be required to replace the tree under a tree replacement notice.

Securing repairs to listed buildings

Under S48 and S54 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the Local Planning Authority has powers to address listed buildings which have fallen in to disrepair. Under S54 an Urgent Works Notice can be served on unoccupied listed buildings. An Urgent Works Notice would cover works (the minimum required) considered urgently necessary for the preservation of a listed building to keep the building wind and watertight, supported against collapse and secure from unauthorised entry. Such a notice would require an owner to undertake specified work in a particular timeframe otherwise the local authority would step in and execute the works. A S48 notice, also known as a Full Repairs Notice, could specify works for the full repair of the building although should an owner fail to execute such works the Local Planning Authority would have to be in a position to review the viability of compulsory purchase.

Securing repairs to unlisted buildings in conservation areas

Under S76 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the local planning authority could apply the provisions of a S54 urgent works notice (as detailed above) to an unlisted building.

S215 Notice

S215 Town & Country Planning Act 1990 provides Local Planning Authorities with the power to take steps required for land and buildings to be cleaned up when their condition adversely affects the amenity of an area. Under S219 of the act Local Planning Authorities have the power to undertake the clean-up works at cost to the Local Planning Authority, and recover the costs from the landowner.

Annex 3: Public Consultation

In accordance with S71 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2019) are put to public consultation from Monday 6th July 2020 to Monday 3rd August 2020.

Please note the consultation process has been impacted upon by the 2020 Coronavirus outbreak and associated “lockdown” measures. In this regard it has not been possible to undertake consultation activities in the community such as a public display or public event.

The consultation was being undertaken in the following way.

- **Web Site Publicity and Consultation** – A consultation page is provided on the Fenland District Council website which gives the necessary information about the new appraisal, the proposed boundary amendment and the management plan content. The community has an opportunity to provide consultation feedback online. Full copies of the Conservation Area Appraisal (July 2020) are available to download from the website: www.fenland.gov.uk/consultations
- **Advertising** – The consultation period will be advertised by means of a press release. Within the press release, the dates of the consultation period are cited alongside the details of where the documents can be viewed.
- **Direct Consultation** – For those building owners who have property that is proposed to be removed from the conservation area they will be directly contacted by letter. They will be made aware that their property is to be removed from the conservation area and asked to comment.

Annex 4: References

Books

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Slater's 1950
Post Office Directory of Cambridge, Norfolk & Suffolk 1858
Cassey's Cambridgeshire Directory 1864
Kelly's Directory of Cambridge, Norfolk and Suffolk 1875
Kelly's Directory of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk 1892
Articles

Maps

Cambridgeshire Records Society, Jonas Moore's Map of the Great Levell of the Fens 1658
1841 Tithe Map
1887 OS County Series 1:2500 Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely
1901 OS County Series 1:2500 Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely
1926 OS County Series 1:2500 Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely
1970 OS Plan 1:2500

Websites

British History Online (BHO) <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/cambs/vol4/pp123-135> (viewed 23/03/2017)

Dissertation

1982 – Institute of Geological Natural Environment Research Council The sand and gravel resources of the county around Whittlesey Cambridgeshire S Booth

Coates Conservation Area Appraisal and Whittlesey Conservation Area Management Plan

Consultation Responses

The Coates Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan were put out to public consultation between Monday 6th July 2020 and Thursday 6th August 2020. Due to Covid-19 and subsequent lockdown restrictions there were no public display or events, but the documents were available to view online via the Fenland District Council website. The documents were also distributed to heritage interest groups within the town specifically The Whittlesey Charities and Whittlesey Mud Wall Group.

Following public consultation **10** responses were received from the following respondents:

Whittlesey Town Council - Cllr Whitwell

Benwick, Coates and Eastrea – Cllr Wicks

Cllr Laws

Members of the public – Mr and Mrs Todd

- Grace Hards
- Mrs Isabel Boon
- Laurence Seaton

Comment Received From	Comment Made	Page Effected	Action
Cllr Laws	<p>Following Whittlesey Town Council Planning Committee held on Monday evening several points were raised concerning Coates Conservation Appraisal.</p> <p>Coates Conservation Appraisal was listed on the agenda for information only and to alert members of a public consultation between Wednesday 8th July and Wednesday 5th August, 2020.</p> <p>I understand several had noted typo errors – the Town Clerk suggested members complete the consultation individually and highlight spelling mistakes within the text and a road name.</p> <p>One point raised – since the publication of FDC on-line Coates Conservation public consultation – allegedly a Coates War Memorial Voluntary Committee exists and they are raising concerns.</p> <p>The group maintained the shrubs, flowers, flag stones within the memorial grounds. I understand they were not happy to see the entry concerning replacement of boundary fencing.</p> <p>The group consider, although the robust poles/fencing isn't what would be deemed to be the correct railings or age compatible with the War Memorial – it is strong, stable and does a job to protect the War Memorial.</p> <p>Allegedly, the War Memorial is in ownership of Coates Village and not FDC.</p> <p>Maybe, the wording needs to be reconsidered for the objective –</p>		<p>Comments noted and wording will be amended to ensure that the objective indicates railings should aim to be replaced with a more appropriate style, only when the need arises or funds are available.</p>

	<p>when the existing boundary fence protecting the War Memorial needs to be replaced, consideration must be given to replace/erect with the correct materials and appropriate railings/fencing compatible with the age of the War Memorial.</p> <p>At the moment they apparently think Fenland's objective is to pull down and needs to be replaced immediately as we know there wouldn't be the funds available to consider such a project.</p> <p>I have suggested to one of the Village Ward Councillors maybe an opportunity to approach Coates Voluntary War Memorial Group and discuss a fund raising exercise, maybe some grant funding is available to enhance, maintain and retain Ware Memorials - not sure if this will go anywhere.</p>		
Cllr Wicks	<p>Boundary, Can you clarify your proposal as there are a number of older buildings excluded and some very modern that are included. Why have no buildings in the Fold and the village school not been included. Where exactly is 45 Fieldside?</p> <p>Cottage at rear of 91 South green which is 55 Fieldside (Thatcher's cottage) originally part of 91 South Green. This was totally derelict and fully restored in the early 2000's.</p> <p>As Fenland are the maintainers of the Greens, Will the trees be included in any tree maintenance strategy? The subject of regular surveys and maintenance of the trees has been an ongoing matter for some time.</p>		<p>Comments noted and boundary review will be clarified to ensure that buildings are included or excluded as appropriate and clear reasons given.</p> <p>The Conservation Area Boundary has been drawn to include those buildings which front the Green. It is not considered that the Fold forms part of this morphology.</p> <p>Queries over addresses will</p>

			<p>also be clarified before the final document is published.</p> <p>Maintenance of the trees is addressed under Objective 3.</p>
<p>Cllr Wicks</p>	<p>My concerns related to the accuracy of information within the document and in particular firstly the National Heritage Listed for England and also the management of the trees on the greens. F/YR20/0613/O</p> <p>Turning to the Heritage listings and in particular 45 Fieldside was joined with 98 South Green prior to 1999 and from the information I have gathered this happened when a member of the Thorey family owned the property. So at this time 45 Fieldside as a unique address no longer exists.</p> <p>The Description of the cottage behind 91 South Green does now have its own unique address of 55 Fieldside (Thatches Cottage) In 1999 it was derelict and the land around it was a dumping ground. It has since been fully restored, completed around 2010 and its picture is on the Conservation document.</p> <p>The Objective 3 of the management plan I fully support, however, I have been for a number of years been campaigning about the maintenance of the trees on the green. I took me over 18 months after it was agreed that extensive work was required to the trees on North Green for the Arboreal work to be undertaken. I have lost count of the months I have been pursuing the maintenance of the trees on South Green. As a note even today a major branch on a tree has had to be dealt with by Tivoli as it had collapsed. This it the third tree on South Green that has had a significant failure.</p> <p>To ensure that the recommendations made in the management plan are implemented by FDC may I suggest that all relevant departments attend a meeting with interested councillors to ensure full buy in is implemented. I stand available should you require further detail.</p>		<p>Comments noted and accuracy will be ensured before the final document is published.</p> <p>No. 45 Fieldside is the address under which the building is listed and therefore identified on the Historic England Map and List.</p> <p>The same is true of No. 55 Fieldside.</p>

<p>CLr Wicks</p>	<p>If the boundary is being considered again. As 22 and 24 South green are within the boundary and 22 was constructed around 2012 and 24 in 1985 should they not be outside of the boundary as they are both of far more recent constructions than Sunnyville. 25 & 26 South green are however, of the cottage type that existed pre war.</p> <p>(Did you meant that Nos. 22 and 24 <i>should</i> be outside the boundary? If you could just confirm this please, I will add it to the consultation review form.)</p> <p>I think they should be outside given that 25 & 26 are outside at present but are of a far greater age and are of the farm cottage design that was the standard in years gone by. As I stated 22 was constructed around 2012 and 24 in 1985.</p>		<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>No.s 25 and 26 are now so altered as to have lost all architectural merit. The conservation boundary is drawn as logically as possible to ensure that the Green and the settlement pattern of the village is within the boundary as it is this more than the built environment which gives the area its character.</p>
<p>Whittlesey Town Council – CLr Whitwell</p>	<p><u>Page 8, Summary of Special Interest</u> Instead of ‘building materials seen within the town’, it should be ‘building materials seen within the village’.</p> <p><u>Page 17, South Green</u> 2 references where Fieldside is spelt incorrectly as Feildside.</p> <p><u>Page 18, Fieldside</u> Heading and 3 references where Fieldside is spelt incorrectly as Feildside.</p> <p><u>Page 19, Boundary Review</u> First bullet has Barnfield spelt incorrectly as Barnfeild.</p> <p><u>Page 20, Map 2</u> Text on page 19 states ‘it is proposed that the boundary is realigned to exclude Sunnyville Road property’. But the map on page 20 shows properties in Sunnyville Road still within the red line. Red line needs to be adjusted to exclude these.</p> <p><u>Page 23 Delivery</u></p>	<p>8, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23</p>	<p>Comments noted and corrections will be made where appropriate.</p>

	<p>Last sentence has 'Objectives 2' in plural, should just be 'Objective 2'. <u>Page 14, Page 22, War Memorial</u></p> <p>There are comments that the 'railings do not form a particularly attractive boundary to the war memorial', and the objective is 'seeking to facilitate an enhancement scheme to replace the modern section of railings around the memorial'</p> <p>Whilst I accept that the railings are not compatible with the age of the war memorial, the existing railings are sound and it would be a waste of money to replace them. Indeed, this is the opinion of the majority of people and the small number of people who keep the war memorial maintained and tidy.</p> <p>Any replacement to more compatible railings should only be done if the existing railings were to fall down or become damaged,</p>		<p>Comments noted and wording will be amended to ensure that the objective indicates railings should aim to be replaced with a more appropriate style, only when the need arises or funds are available</p>
Members of the Public	<p>20 South Green – being removed from the CA. This is a mistake as it was built in 1850. Cars parked on the green is detrimental to the area.</p>		<p>Comments noted and boundary review will be clarified to ensure that buildings are included or excluded as appropriate and clear reasons given.</p> <p>Parking on the green is addressed under objective 1.</p>
Members of the Public	<p>Please note that in your plan under Buildings of Local Importance- the number of Church View on North Green is 47 and not 44 as stated.</p> <p>The greens are what gives Coates it's identity, including the countryside view at the bottom of North Green - as outlined in the plan. There are speculations that this could be built upon and it would, without a doubt detract from the village to lose yet another view to a mass of new builds.</p> <p>As an additional note to my previous email; considering the trees on North</p>		<p>Comments noted and corrections will be made where appropriate.</p> <p>Maintenance of the trees is addressed under Objective</p>

	Green are classed as part of the conservation area it would be nice to see the growth around the bottom of the Lime trees cut back and cared for again as they used to be maintained years ago and then it stopped. This would really enhance the look of the green.		3.
Members of the Public	Thank you for this document. I fully support all the comments and objectives made in the document. The importance of engaging with the War Memorial management team is of great importance. (objective 2)		Comment noted.
Member of the Public	I have read your document, and agree with the revised boundary shown on the map, and replacement of the trees in the future as they come to the end of their life and will be replaced. This will benefit the residents of Coates by being a lovely place to live and enjoy for future years. I would like to comment on the parking on North Green, and damage to the verges from Church View down to the bottom near the thatch cottage. The busiest times are during school time, parents park here and walk through the flats to Coates School. This is due to insufficient parking space in The Fold at the beginning and end of the school day. There have been bollards placed at the top of North Green near the flats, if these could be extended along the verge to the bottom this would give protection to the verges that are being damaged.		Parking on the green is addressed under objective 1.
Member of the public	I have read this report with interest and welcome it's intent which I believe is long overdue. Coates is certainly a very attractive village and I support the conservation of both its natural and manmade features. One very important omission from the appraisal, however, is the ancient area to the west of the church towards Eastrea, known as 'Coates Field' and 'Cow Way'. Coates Field is the oldest continually worked piece of land in the village and at one time would have employed most of the inhabitants		Comments noted and boundary review will be clarified to ensure that areas are included or excluded as appropriate and clear reasons given. The boundary of the Conservation Area focuses

	<p>of 'Morton's Cotes' as the village was referred to (Cotes being an old English version of cottages). Down the centre of it running west to east is the Fen Causeway,, which was used exclusively as I understand it by the Romans, with the ancient Cow Way, which borders it on its northern side being used solely by the locals.</p> <p>Cow Way and Coates Field are reputed to be over a thousand years old and are home to foxes, hares and are regular hunting ground for Harriers and Kites and a whole plethora of other wildlife species.</p> <p>Most of the longstanding Coates folk (myself included) were of the belief that the area was already under the protection of a conservation plan and frankly are slightly horrified that this not currently the case, thankfully, though it seems there is now an opportunity to put this right.</p> <p>Whilst most of us recognise the need for some ongoing minor planning / building around the periphery of this area, any sort of housing development application would, I forewarn you, be met with a very well organised and well-funded campaign, backed by intellectuals to prevent it going any further.</p> <p>To conclude, I welcome your report, but please take note of my comment, particularly in the light of any ongoing relaxation of planning laws and the quest to meet county building targets.... there are plenty of other places to put these !</p>		<p>on the nucleus of the village settlement. The outlying fields contribute to its setting as a designated heritage asset and so this would be a material consideration. The same is true of Fieldside and the fields adjacent to it.</p>
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Agenda Item No:	10	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	08 September 2020	
Report Title:	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	

1 Purpose / Summary

The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report reflects what has been undertaken and achieved by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel during 2019/20 and takes a forward look at the programme of work and challenges for the Overview and Scrutiny in 2020/2021.

2 Key issues

The Local Government Act 2000 sets out the requirements of a modernised democratic structure for local authorities. The Act includes the establishment of an Overview and Scrutiny Panel or Committee.

Article 6 (3.4) of the Council's Constitution sets out the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's terms of reference. There is a stated requirement for the work and working methods of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to be reported annually to the Council.

3 Recommendations

That full Council acknowledges the broad scope of work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel during 2019/20.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	-
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor David Mason - Chairman - Overview and Scrutiny Councillor Alex Miscandlon - Vice Chairman - Overview and Scrutiny
Report Originator(s)	Anna Goodall – Head of Governance
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd - Chief Executive 01354 622202 paulmedd@fenland.gov.uk Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director 01354 622201 pcatchpole@fenland.gov.uk Anna Goodall – Head of Legal and Governance 01354 622357 agoodall@fenland.gov.uk
Background Paper(s)	Overview and Scrutiny reports, Agendas and Minutes 2019/20

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 2020

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to present to you the annual report in relation to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The report focuses on the work undertaken by the panel during the past twelve months as well as providing a forward look to 2020/21.

2019/20 was a busy year for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel as the District Council continues to have significant ambition to transform how services are delivered in order to secure sound outcomes for local residents whilst also being an effective, efficient Council that is fit for the future. The onset of the COVID 19 pandemic has been unprecedented in its nature and has already resulted in operational and financial challenges, which will require strong purposeful and effective Overview and Scrutiny both now and throughout the coming municipal year. Fenland District Council Overview and Scrutiny Panel is committed to adding value to the decision making process whilst holding our decision makers to account. We remain focussed in our objective to achieve tangible benefits as a direct result of Overview and Scrutiny. As such the Panel remains motivated and ambitious in supporting the District Council to deliver the very best outcomes for local residents in what is likely to be a challenging national financial position in the wake of the pandemic.

As ever 2019/20 has seen the delivery of a comprehensive work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, which has moved its focus during recent meetings to gain a better understanding of the response and support the Council has provided to local residents and businesses as a result of the global COVID 19 pandemic in addition to considering the recovery actions taken and planned post the national lock down period. I have been privileged to be able to work with a committee of elected members both past and present, who have all taken an active and enthusiastic role in the Overview and scrutiny process.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Members and officers for their ongoing support and co-operation with the Overview and Scrutiny function this year. I would also like to thank the many representatives of partner organisations that have taken the time to contribute so positively to our work.

Councillor David Mason
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny

1 THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 2019-2020

Councillor Alex Miscandlon - Chairman

Councillor Anne Hay - Vice Chairman

Councillor Gavin Booth

Councillor Mike Cornwell

Councillor Michael Humphrey

Councillor David Mason

Councillor Mark Purser

Councillor Robert Skoulding

Councillor David Topgood

Councillor Bob Wicks

Councillor Fred Yeulett

2 INTRODUCTION

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2000 requires Councils to have a committee with the power to review or scrutinise decisions or actions affecting the authority's area or residents. Scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring that local government remains effective and accountable. Scrutiny ensures that executives are held accountable for their decisions, that their decision-making process is clear and accessible to the public and that there are opportunities for the public and their representatives to influence and improve Council policies.
- 2.2 The power to scrutinise was further expanded by the Police and Justice Act 2006, which provided powers to scrutinise the work of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, known locally as the Safer Fenland Partnership.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides more powers to local government to scrutinise other partner organisations. It also brings in other provisions that affect how scrutiny committees work, including powers over the creation of joint committees.

- 2.3 More recently, The Localism Act 2011 consolidated the wide range of scrutiny legislation into a single place, largely unamended from previous legislation. This aims to increase local accountability and transparency of public services as well as enhancing the involvement of local service users

Main responsibilities of Overview and Scrutiny

- 2.4 The role of Overview and Scrutiny has five broad functions:
- Holding the Council's Executive and its statutory partners to account in the public interest. This enables more transparent and effective decision making.
 - Supporting the development of effective policies and initiatives which have a beneficial impact on the community through policy overview and development.

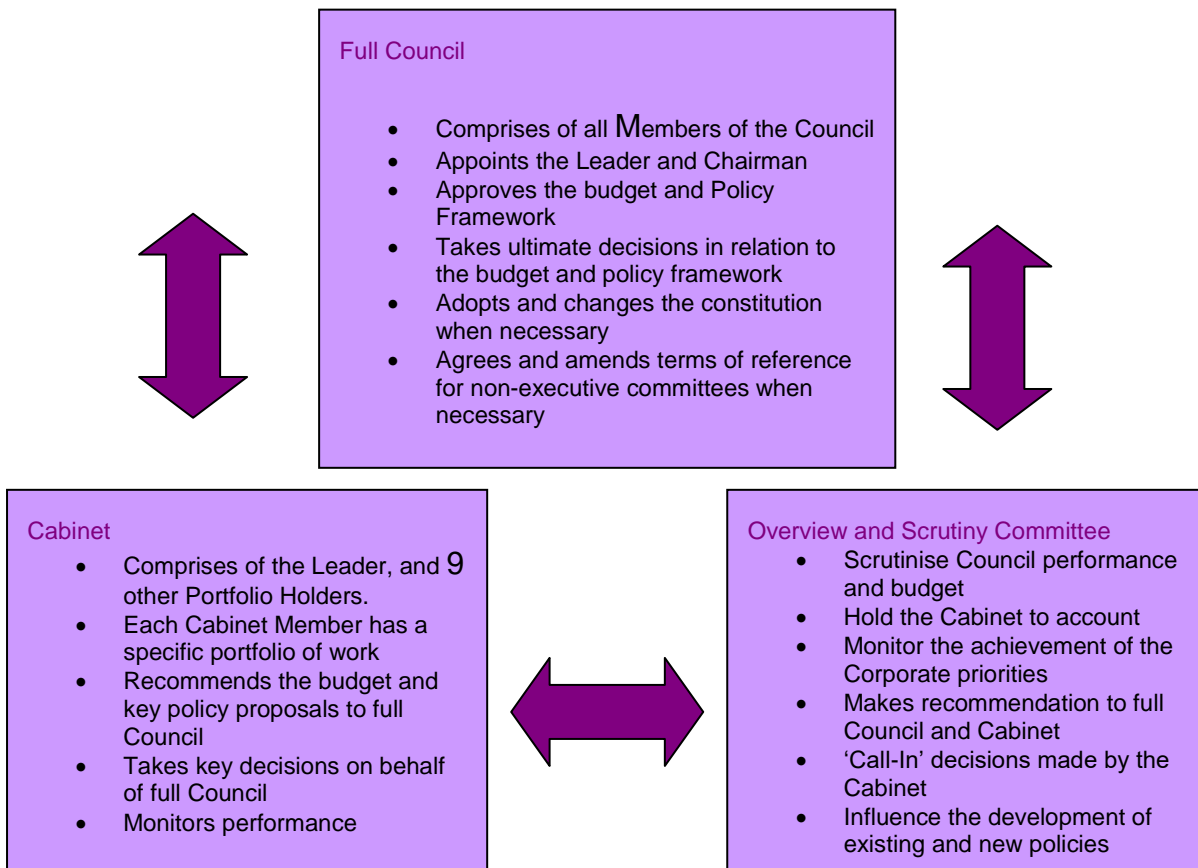
- Contributing to continuous improvement in the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities.
- Having a positive impact on the work and outcomes of external agencies and providers of public services.
- Aiding Councillors in engaging with their communities and undertaking the role of community representatives and leaders.

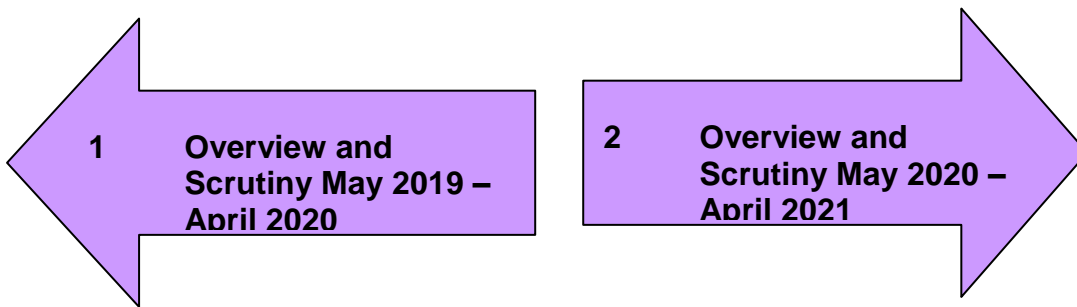
Overview	Scrutiny
Advising on the development of policies.	Ensuring that the Council's policies have been effectively implemented by the Cabinet.
Recommending how the Council's corporate priorities can be delivered.	Helping to monitor and drive improvements within the Council's corporate priorities.
Bringing a wider perspective to problem solving.	Holding decision makers to account
Examining broader issues affecting local communities.	Ensuring all service providers within a local community are providing 'value for money'

Appointing Members onto Overview and Scrutiny

- 2.5 During 2019-2020, following a recommendation by the Leader of the Council, it was the responsibility of the full Council to appoint an Overview and Scrutiny Panel at their annual meeting in May. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel consisted of eleven members drawn from the political groups in the same proportion as they are represented on the Council as a whole.

Relationship between Overview and Scrutiny, Cabinet and Full Council





3 A BACKWARD LOOK TO 2019 - 2020

What the Overview and Scrutiny Panel achieved in 2019/2020

External advisors/partners

- 3.1 The panel looked at an array of different topic areas; most could be dealt with by drawing on the knowledge and expertise of Fenland District Council Councillors and Officers. However, sometimes there is a need to call in external advisors to help the panel with their knowledge and to provide a different vantage point.
- 3.2 As will be explained later, a greater emphasis has been placed on Local Authority scrutiny of and with partner agencies. Fenland’s Overview and Scrutiny Panel is already undertaking this partnership working in a positive spirit, demonstrating its forward thinking. The table below highlights the external partners the Overview and Scrutiny Panel have already engaged with when undertaking the scrutiny function during 2019/20:

Agenda item	External Advisor/Partner	Organisation
Planning Shared Service Annual Review	Cllr Hiller	Peterborough City Council
Wisbech Rail Project Update	Katie Beirne	CPCA Transport Programme Manager
Freedom Leisure	Matt Hunt Dan Palframan	Freedom Operations Director Freedom Area Manager
Safer Fenland partnership (SFP): Annual Scrutiny	Inspector Ian Lombardo	Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Anglia Revenues Partnership - Annual Review	Paul Corney Jo Andrews Adrian Mills	Anglia Revenues Partnership
Fenlands Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Liz Robin	Director of Public Health

3.3 As well as working with individual partners, the panel have also scrutinised other elements of partnership working through each of the respective corporate priority areas. The panel will build on this further in 2020/2021.

How the work of Overview and Scrutiny is linked to the Council's corporate priorities

3.4 Fenland District Council's Business Plan is the vision for the future of Fenland clearly setting out a series of priorities that will be the focus of the organisation for the next twelve month period. To ensure these priorities are correct, deliver on targets and achieve outcomes, the Overview and Scrutiny work programme reflects the Council's priorities to ensure robust scrutiny can be delivered.

3.5 The table below illustrates how agenda items link in with Fenland's priorities:

C – Communities

Env – Environment

E – Economy

QO – Quality Organisation

Topic/Issue	C	Env	E	QO
Progress against corporate priority: Environment				
Progress against corporate priority: Economy				
Progress against corporate priority: Communities				
Fenland Community Safety Partnership (FSP) /Crime Disorder and Reduction partnership				
Freedom Leisure				
Wisbech Rail Project Update				
Kingdom				
Annual meeting with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive				

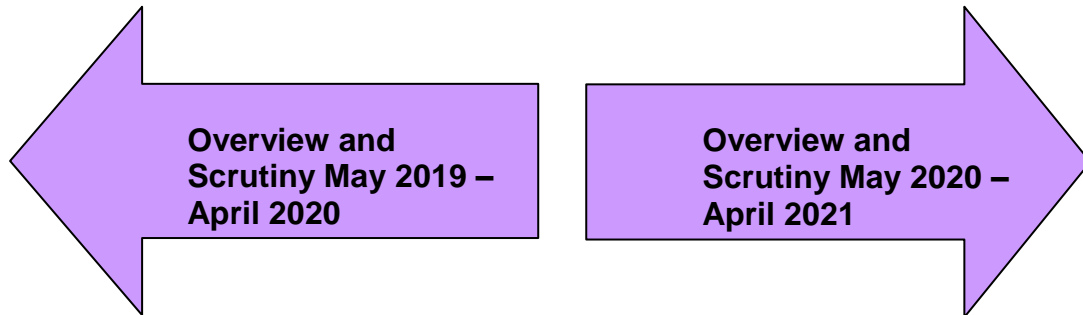
Draft Business Plan and Budget				
Council Tax Support Scheme				
Fees and Charges				
Review of the Planning Shared Service				
Review of Anglia Revenues Partnership				
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy				

4 Specific reviews undertaken in 2019- 2020

- 4.1 Members had raised questions regarding the performance of the Anglian Revenues Partnership at a meeting of Full Council. In addition The Overview and Scrutiny considered the Annual Report in respect of Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) during their February 2020 meeting. During those discussions Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel agreed that as the partnership had been in existence for the past 6 years without a formal review it would be timely to conduct a Member Led Review of the Service to ensure the partnership continued to achieve value for money for Fenland in comparison with the other member Councils.
- 4.2 The aims of the review were as follows
- To examine the current Anglian Revenues Partnership including its structure, performance and governance arrangements.
 - To consider each constituent councils audit plan where relevant to the ARP including their respective findings and recommendations in relation to ARP.
 - To consider the current vision and aims of the partnership to ensure relevant and up to date.
 - To consider feedback from key internal and external stakeholders received in relation to the Anglian Revenues Partnership.
 - To consider the current and future direction of the partnership to ensure aligned to Fenland priorities.
 - To consider wider issues that might impact the performance of the partnership including the wider rollout of Universal Credit.
- 4.3 The Member led Review Group had two review meetings during which they received detailed performance metrics and feedback from audit reviews undertaken by other constituent Council members. Unfortunately the review commenced immediately in advance of the COVID 19 pandemic which adversely impacted the timescales for the formal completion of the review. Discussions will take place with the Panel to ascertain the future direction of the review.

5 Overview and Scrutiny Call – In

- 5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel have the opportunity to scrutinise Executive decisions that have been made, but not implemented through the ‘call-in’ mechanism.
- 5.2 In accordance with the Council’s constitution, decisions of the Executive or a Portfolio Holder decision are published within 3 working days. There is then a further 5 working day period prior to the implementation of the decision in which Members are able to call in the decision. If the necessary number of Members, either the Chairman or Vice Chairman of any panel, or any 3 members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel or any 10 Members of the Council, ask for a decision to be called in for scrutiny, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel has to meet within 15 working days to consider the issue. Whilst this process takes its course, the decision taking process is suspended. If no call-in occurs, the decision is adopted.
- 5.3 If, having considered the decision, the Panel remains concerned about it, then it may refer it back to the decision making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns or, in exceptional circumstances, refer the matter to full Council. If referred back, the decision maker shall then reconsider the matter within a further 10 working days and amend the decision or not, before adopting a final decision. If however the Panel decides not to refer the matter back, no further action is taken and the decision can take effect.
- 5.4 The call-in procedure does not apply where the decision being made by the Executive is deemed to be urgent i.e. where any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council’s or the public’s interests. This should be clearly stated in the record of the decision.
- 5.5 Because of the nature of the call-in procedure, it is generally recognised as a mechanism of last resort. Indeed Government guidance states that it would clearly be detrimental to efficient decision making if every individual decision of the Executive were called in for overview and scrutiny as a matter of course.
- 5.6 The call-in procedure is therefore utilised when other means of influencing decision making have failed. Fenland District Council only utilised the call in procedure on one occasion during 2019/20.
- 5.7 The Call in was to consider the Cabinet decision in relation to the Creation of the Investment Board and Delegation of Functions. Ultimately the Overview and Scrutiny Panel accepted the original Cabinet decision in relation to this matter and therefore the decision took effect.



6 A FORWARD LOOK TO 2020/2021

Policies and measures affecting scope of Overview and Scrutiny

- 6.1 The profile of scrutiny is changing nationally and as a result much is expected of us in response to the Localism agenda, more so now in the wake of the global COVID 19 pandemic. This could include community involvement, scrutiny of and with partners, scrutiny of crime and disorder issues, supporting the scrutiny of health services as well as supporting the scrutiny of the Combined Authority.

Overview and Scrutiny amending its role

- 6.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel remains committed to achieving value for money and ensuring the Council is efficient and cost effective in the delivery of its corporate priorities. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel are also keen to focus on areas where they are able to add the greatest value being forward focused therefore making recommendations to Cabinet whilst also having a positive impact on the future direction and future focus of the Council and its policies.

Fenland's Priorities

- 6.3 In Fenland's Business Plan 2020-2021 the Council's corporate priorities are:
- Communities
 - Economy
 - Environment
 - Quality Organisation
- 6.4 It is important that the work of Overview and Scrutiny complements these priorities to ensure services are being delivered to highest quality and any scrutiny work adds value.

What the Overview and Scrutiny Panel will achieve in 2020-2021

Strategic Priorities

- 6.5 We will aim to raise the profile of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny work by better communicating our successes. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel will continue to articulate recommendations associated with the work plan and monitor how effectively the recommendations have been received and endorsed by the associated decision making bodies.

Work Programme

- 6.6 The Overview and Scrutiny work programme is a detailed programme that indicates the topics that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel will scrutinise. The work programme will be developed early in the new Council year setting out what the key areas of focus will be. Topics already identified for inclusion include:

- Crime Disorder and Reduction Partnership
- Local Health Partnership update
- Review of Anglia Revenues Partnership
- Planning shared service review
- Council Tax Scheme
- Draft Business Plan and Budget
- Progress of Corporate Priorities: Economy, Environment, Communities and Quality Organisation
- Transformation Council for the Future projects

7 CONTACTS

- 7.1 Work of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel is enhanced by the involvement of Fenland residents, service users, our partners and local businesses as they bring an alternative perspective whilst also providing external challenge. Therefore if you would like further details about any of the work mentioned in this report, or on how residents and partner organisations can contribute to the work of Overview and Scrutiny within Fenland, we would very much welcome your input, please contact:

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