

AGENDA

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2020

1.30 PM

**A VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM VIDEO
CONFERENCING SYSTEM**

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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 you can view the meeting on YouTube, apart from any items marked confidential.

This meeting can be viewed via You Tube URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81765708487>

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Previous Minutes. (Pages 3 - 8)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of 7 September 2020.
- 3 To report additional items for consideration which the Chairman deems urgent by virtue of the special circumstances to be now specified.
- 4 Members to declare any interests under the Local Code of Conduct in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting.
- 5 Annual Meeting with the Leader and Chief Executive (Pages 9 - 36)

Members to receive a presentation.

NB: Presentation added retrospectively to give clarity to the minutes of this item.

6 Future Work Programme (Pages 37 - 42)

To consider the Draft Work Programme for Overview & Scrutiny Panel 2020/21.

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

Thursday, 1 October 2020

Members: Councillor D Mason (Chairman), Councillor A Miscandlon (Vice-Chairman), Councillor G Booth, Councillor D Connor, Councillor S Count, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor M Purser, Councillor R Skoulding, Councillor D Topgood, Councillor Wicks, Councillor F Yeulett, Councillor Mrs K Mayor, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor S Clark, Councillor C Seaton and Councillor Mrs J French

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2020 - 1.30 PM



PRESENT: Councillor D Mason (Chairman), Councillor A Miscandlon (Vice-Chairman), Councillor G Booth, Councillor D Connor, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor Mrs K Mayor (*substitute for Councillor Purser*), Councillor R Skoulding, Councillor Wicks and Councillor F Yeulett

APOLOGIES: Councillor S Count, Councillor M Purser and Councillor D Topgood

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Anna Goodall (Head of Governance and Customer Services) and Dan Horn (Head of Housing and Community Support)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor S Clark, Councillor S Hoy, Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor C Seaton and Councillor S Tierney

GUESTS: Clarion Housing: Sally Greetham (Head of Operations), Yvonne Ogden (Clarion Futures – Community Development and Daniel Read (Clarion development)

Councillor Mason welcomed members of the public and press watching the livestream of the Cabinet 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.

OSC9/20 **PREVIOUS MINUTES.**

The minutes of the meeting of 13 July 2020 were confirmed.

OSC10/20 **UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS.**

Councillor Mason advised members that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel had agreed earlier in the year to set up a sub committee to review the Anglia Revenue Partnership, this was under the Chairmanship of Councillor Anne Hay and she will be presenting the findings to the Committee in December.

OSC11/20 **ANNUAL UPDATE FROM CLARION**

Councillor Mason welcomed Sally Greetham, Daniel Read and Yvonne Ogden from Clarion Housing and thanked them for their attendance at today's meeting.

Colleagues from Clarion provided a presentation to Members, outlining the various key projects and their work programme over the past year and looking forward.

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

1. Councillor Skoulding asked Daniel Read whether he was aware of the unfinished road in Lake Close in March, which commenced 6 years ago and made the point that following a previous Overview and Scrutiny meeting, assurances had been given that Anglian Water

had approved the work and Cambridgeshire Highways would then be in a position to look at the road, with the works to be completed by Summer 2019, but to date have not yet started. Councillor Skoulding stated that he is aware that there has been damage caused to cars and there have also been instances of children becoming injured. He added that letters have been sent to residents advising them that the delay is due to the Highway Authority and he would ask that a follow up letter is sent to all the residents giving them an update of when the works will commence. Daniel Read stated that he is happy for a response to be circulated following the meeting.

2. Councillor Connor questioned why Clarion does not seem able to respond to issues such as neighbour disputes in a timely manner, referring to an issue which was only resolved when the Environmental Health Team and Dan Horn intervened. Councillor Connor requested that elected members be provided with a direct contact number and dedicated person to be able to report issues and concerns to. Sally Greetham stated that it is always disappointing to hear when customers have received poor levels of service, the operating model that Clarion uses has slightly changed and there is now a central contact centre where issues are reported to, which should mean that the lower level anti-social behaviour cases should be passed to the local teams for quicker intervention. She added that there is also a dedicated email address for member enquiries. Councillor Connor agreed to contact Sally Greetham outside of the meeting.
3. Councillor Miscandlon expressed the view that whilst he is pleased to hear that Clarion have an online service, consideration needs to be given to those customers who do not have access to a computer, or good IT literacy. Sally Greetham agreed with Councillor Miscandlon's comments and said that customers do still have the option to contact them by phone.
4. Councillor Miscandlon referred to a customer complaint last year, concerning an area of overgrown vegetation and fallen detritus, with the customer trying on numerous occasions to contact Clarion and being advised that the contractor had been to the location and cleared the area. Councillor Miscandlon asked whether follow up inspections are carried out to verify whether works have been carried out following a complaint? Sally Greetham advised that inspections are carried out in communal areas, both internal and external, and the time between these inspections span between weekly and six weekly dependent on their location. She added that the inspections are carried out by their Community Wardens, whose role is to ascertain whether there are any health and safety issues and also to check that the contractor is undertaking work to a satisfactory standard.
5. Councillor Wicks asked for clarification with regard to the Military Covenant Scheme and whether an individual is vetted by the Council before their details are passed to Clarion or whether the person needs to be genuinely homeless before an application can be made? Sally Greetham confirmed that anybody can apply to be added to the housing register and added that their band may change as their situation changes. Dan Horn agreed to circulate the specific references in local policy that Fenland has with regard to the armed forces and affordable housing.
6. Councillor Wicks asked what the timescales are for bringing long term void properties back into use? Sally Greetham stated that there are different categories of property once they become void, some require little work to make them habitable again and some may require further works. She added that it is the interest of Clarion to get properties re-let as quickly as possible.
7. Councillor Wicks asked for confirmation regarding procedures associated with any work required for the maintenance of communal trees. Sally Greetham advised Councillor Wicks that Clarion have a dedicated arboreal contractor who checks the trees in communal areas regularly and they are also checked as part of the grounds maintenance contract.
8. Councillor Booth referred to last year's update from Clarion, where he made the point that not all Clarion tenant's properties are serviced by gas, as many of the properties are situated in a more rural location and are reliant on oil fired heating or air sourced heating systems, and that he requested an update at that time, but this has not been received to date. Councillor Booth stated that over previous years, there have been residents who have

not been able to get their heating systems repaired as their heating systems are more specialised and he asked for further information to be provided to members as it is an area of concern. Sally Greetham stated that the servicing of the specialist heating systems sits with different contractors and have different compliance requirements as opposed to those properties with gas heating and she agreed to provide members with further information.

9. Councillor Booth stated that he has been made aware that when residents have contacted Clarion to report maintenance issues, they have been advised that it is the householders responsibility to repair certain items themselves and added that the residents have challenged the response after checking their tenancy agreements. He stated that he is concerned that as a registered social housing provider, Clarion are trying to pass the onus back to the resident to address certain aspects of maintenance and questioned whether it is because Fenland has different contracts compared to other areas. Sally Greetham stated that there is not anything unique to the Fenland area and added that the contractors are the same as elsewhere. Councillor Booth stated that the issue appears to be arising when the householder first registers an issue with the Clarion contact centre, and the issue is only addressed once it is followed up in writing.
10. Councillor Booth asked for clarity with regard to the status of large established trees within a tenant's garden who has been advised it is their responsibility to maintain it. Sally Greetham stated that it can be a grey area, as the tenancy agreements state that residents are responsible for their garden, which would usually include trees. However, there could be certain circumstances where Clarion would look to carry out works dependent on the nature of the enquiry.
11. Councillor Booth asked for an update with regard to the information which was provided last year with regard to the provision of 422 houses proposed to be delivered over a 5 year period. Daniel Read stated that he will look into this further and provide the information to members through Dan Horn.
12. Councillor Humphrey asked for an update with regard to the situation at Roman Court in Leverington and asked for clarity with regard to what the plans are for the site? Sally Greetham stated that it will not be sold for private sale and be replaced with affordable housing, but it is likely not to include sheltered accommodation as there is a reduced demand for this type of accommodation. She added that the initial plan was for a set of 1, 2 and 3 bedroomed affordable housing, but final details are yet to be determined. Councillor Humphrey expressed the view that the response appears to be vague, as the site is being vacated without Clarion having any firm plans for it. Sally Greetham stated that a situation arose where tenants were asking for an explanation with regard to their home going forward and, therefore, the decision was taken to offer the tenants the home loss payment far quicker than would normally be the case. Councillor Humphrey asked what the situation will be for the two residents who are still living at Roman Court. Sally Greetham stated that a final decision will have to be made and discussions will take place with the residents to discuss the next steps.
13. Councillor Yeulett asked how Clarion deal with accommodation requests for larger families? Sally Greetham stated that they do hold larger units for bigger families and whenever there is a vacancy then the housing register is checked. She added that on rare occasions properties can be adapted to make them suitable for larger families and stressed that there is not a large amount of bigger properties, so it can be a challenge.
14. Councillor Cornwell asked whether the play area in Russell Avenue, which has been taken out of use, can be reinstated? Sally Greetham agreed to look into this further.

(Councillor Skoulding and Councillor Humphrey left the meeting following this item).

OSC12/20 PROGRESS OF CORPORATE PRIORITY - COMMUNITIES

Members considered the progress of the Corporate Priority, Communities, presented by Councillor Hoy.

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

1. Councillor Miscandlon stated that in the report it states that officers have worked with 79 landlords, which appears to be a limited number, given the scale of the private rented properties in the district, and he would like an understanding of the work carried out with unregistered landlords to encourage them to register and to ensure good sound rental housing, which impacts on the health and wellbeing of their tenants. Councillor Hoy expressed the view that the numbers are low, compared to last year when the number was 95, but that it is for a much shorter period, and that due to Covid 19, formal inspections on properties has not been able to take place. She stated that with regard to registration, there is no formal landlord registration scheme or any licensing type of scheme in place apart from houses in multiple occupancy (HMO), however, the Landlord Forum which took place in early March, which was used to explain the new enforcement approach, appears to be working well and landlords seem to be taking action. Councillor Hoy stated that the mandatory HMO licensing which was introduced last year, initially meant that people were slow to sign up, however, because they now realise there are penalties if they do not register, there has been an increase in the number of registrations. She expressed the opinion that it has been successful and will be reviewed pre-budget time and she hopes that this approach will focus on the bad landlords.
2. Councillor Miscandlon asked what action is being taken to bring the empty properties across the district back into use? Councillor Hoy stated that an officer is now in post to address this issue, which has proved to be successful. She stated that there were 400 properties across the districts which have been empty for over 6 months and since the officer has been in post, 52 of those empty properties have been brought back into use.
3. Councillor Cornwell asked for clarification with regard to the figures at the bottom of page 3 of the report in connection with private sector housing. Councillor Hoy provided an explanation to members with regard to the meaning of the income and expenditure listed and also outlined the various processes that are in place in order for monies to be paid to the Council.
4. Councillor Wicks asked what enforcement takes place with regard to dog fouling? Carol Pilson stated that this issue would fall within Councillor Murphy's portfolio for environment, but she would be happy to give an overview. She stated that the Council is keen to promote responsible dog ownership; it has recently carried out some consultation with regard to its Public Spaces Protection Orders, where an overwhelming response was received from the public who wanted to retain them going forward, and the Council also promotes the Green Dog Walkers Initiative, where there are over 150 volunteers who promote the scheme to impress amongst others about how to behave responsibly with their dogs. She stated that seven additional dispensers for dog fouling bags have also been installed within hot spot areas in the District and the Street Cleansing service, which operates a 7 day a week service, will respond to any reports of fouling to be cleared. The Street Scene Team also patrol in a number of areas and they have the powers to issue fines of £75 if they witness any fouling, which is not cleared up by the owner and three of these fines have been issued in the last year. Carol Pilson concluded by stating that it does remain a priority for the Council as it is a such a concern for the public and we regularly update our social media and website campaigns. Councillor Wicks asked whether there are any anti fouling posters in existence that can be displayed? Carol Pilson stated that she will raise this proposal with Councillor Murphy.
5. Councillor Booth stated that the Street Scene Team do have anti-fouling stickers and will come out and display them if requested.
6. Councillor Booth asked Councillor Hoy whether she was confident that all empty properties have been identified across the District via the Council Tax database? Councillor Hoy stated that the Anglia Revenues Partnership database is utilised, however, if Councillor Booth has a property which he is aware may be an empty property then he can email the officers for it to be investigated further. Councillor Booth stated that if a resident is trying to get a property back into circulation, but needs assistance, is advice and guidance available? Councillor

Hoy responded that yes advice is available and she would encourage the residents to make contact.

7. Councillor Mrs Mayor said that during the COVID 19 pandemic and associated lockdown there appears to be an increase in vandalism. She added that in Whittlesey there has been a property in the grounds of the Manor Leisure Centre, which has been so badly vandalised it now needs to be removed, and she asked what deterrent can be put in place to stop the vandals? Councillor Hoy stated that she will ask Councillor Wallwork to respond to this question.
8. Councillor Mrs Mayor referred to page 25 of the report where it mentions Vivacity handing back their contract to Peterborough City Council and also refers to a smaller trust doing a similar thing further south, asking for further details regarding this. Councillor Clark stated that it was in Southern England and was a company called Adur Leisure Centres and she would send Councillor Mrs Mayor the newspaper link to it.
9. Councillor Cornwell referred to a comment in the report in relation to Groundwork East concerning a community tree planting scheme and asked whether members were going to be kept informed of any proposed tree planting. He was also keen to understand if the community would be involved and how the organisation decides where any works are to take place? Councillor Clark responded that Groundwork East have recently been awarded an Environmental Education contract to run a number of tree planting days. The project is in its initial stages and is currently looking for potential sites, with the intention to engage with community groups and land owners. Once sites are identified and plans are in place, ward councillors will be notified and receive updates on the project.
10. Councillor Cornwell stated that apart from the Covid pandemic there is nothing contained within the report with regard to health services and he would like to have an update going forward.
11. Councillor Cornwell asked for an explanation with regard to the 'I Love Wisbech' project. Dan Horn advised that it is an initiative which has created collaboration between the community and voluntary sector in conjunction with the public sector, with various objectives and a set of principles. He added that moving forward funding opportunities will be investigated and submissions of bids for funding will be worked on to move forward with projects.
12. Councillor Cornwell asked for an update regarding Civil Enforcement parking ideas which have been discussed over time. Councillor Mrs French stated that this was first discussed last year, however, there have been delays due to Covid. She added that she has since had a meeting with officers and the intention is to bring a report to the Cabinet meeting in October, which will outline how the project can be funded.
13. Councillor Mason asked Councillor Hoy to outline what the plans are for rough sleepers following the Covid pandemic and asked whether the current level of funding is going to be sustainable? Councillor Hoy stated that the funding is not sustainable, however, the Council has banded rough sleepers with regard to their level of need and possible solutions and interventions are being investigated to assist these individuals going forward. She added that additional funding has been requested from Central Government, to assist with accommodation placements for our rough sleepers and it is hoped that the Council will be successful with its bid as it is the wish that rough sleeping is ended by 2023.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel agreed to note the progress made by the Council in delivering the Communities corporate objectives in the Business Plan.

OSC13/20 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS

Councillor Tierney presented the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) Annual Review of Complaints report to members.

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

1. Councillor Booth asked in future can the report provide a breakdown to identify what service areas receive complaints, so that members can have a better understanding of the type of complaints that are received.

Members agreed to note the report.

OSC14/20 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Future Work Programme.

Councillor Mason reminded members that officers had been tasked with ascertaining if representatives from Anglian Water would be willing to attend a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Confirmation has now been received that representatives are willing to attend a future meeting the date of which has yet to be confirmed. He stated that Anna Goodall is compiling a list of questions which have been submitted by members to put to Anglian Water.

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

1. Councillor Miscandlon stated that it would be helpful if a list of those questions submitted by members could be circulated to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to ensure that there is no duplication in questions. Anna Goodall agreed to circulate the list and stated that, if members were in agreement, then all other members would be invited to submit questions that the Panel could put forward to Anglian Water.

OSC15/20 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Councillor Mason reminded members that, during the Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 13th July, the Council Tax Support scheme was discussed, with the report seeking a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel regarding whether any proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme should be considered.

Councillor Mason stated that any recommendation arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel discussions would subsequently be considered by Cabinet as part of their decision making regarding any consultation proposals for the scheme and any proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme would have to be subject to a statutory public consultation period prior to any final decisions being implemented in 2021/22.

Councillor Mason stated that the Council Tax Support Scheme was not included on the Forward Plan as it was not clear if any changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme would be proposed. In order for Cabinet to consider the Overview and Scrutiny recommendations he was asked to utilise the urgency powers delegated to him as the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, which subsequently require consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to ensure effective transparency regarding decision making. He added that it is also worthy of note that Cabinet have not made any final decisions in relation to the Council Tax Support Scheme, but have decided what should be included as part of the statutory consultation in relation to the scheme.

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

1. Councillor Booth stated that members should note that it is a statutory requirement that items are placed on the Forward Plan at least 28 days in advance of consideration and that is why the Chairman was required to use his urgent powers of delegation on this occasion.

(The Chairman agreed to this item being discussed as a matter of urgency to avoid undue delay in the Panel being updated)

Presentation by Leader and Chief Executive of Fenland District Council

FDC Overview & Scrutiny
Meeting

12 October 2020

Sources of further information

Please click on the links below to access further information:

[Annual report 2019/20](#)

[Corporate Priority Reports already tabled at O&S Committee meetings](#)

[Joint Portfolio Holder Reports tabled at Council Meetings](#)

[Brexit pages on our website](#)

Update reports on our response to the COVID-19 pandemic tabled at O&S meetings:

- [Tabled on 08 June 2020](#)
- [Tabled on 13 July 2020](#)

[Budget Update tabled at Council on 06 August 2020](#)

Key Achievements & Performance

- Communities –

Supporting vulnerable members of our community

Year 2019/20:

- **Council tax support** - we achieved an actual year end result of 6.06 days to process new claims and changes against a target of 8.0 days.
- **Housing benefit** - we achieved an actual year end result of 4.65 days to progress new claims and changes against a target of 8.0 days
- 367 residents attended **Golden Age** events during 2019/20

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Despite the additional pressure on the team caused by the pandemic, we are maintaining performance in this area and have achieved a year-to date result of 7.88 days against an annual target of 8.0 days for **Council tax support**(days to process new claims and changes).
- It is a similar result for **Housing benefit** (days to process new claims and changes) and we have achieved a year-to-date end result of 4.76 days against an annual target of 8.0 days.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Communities –

Supporting vulnerable members of our community

Year 2019/20:

- 390 households prevented from **homelessness**
- **Rough Sleeper Initiative funding** secured (£340k) plus **£50,000** cold weather fund payment
- 52 empty properties brought back into use through **Empty Homes** initiative

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- New **Homelessness Strategy and Rough Sleeper Action Plan** approved by Cabinet on 9 June 2020
- **57 Roughsleepers** accommodated as part of COVID-19 response
- **Next Steps Accommodation funding** - £198k secured from MHCLG with the potential for a further £567,705 to be released.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Communities –

Promoting health & wellbeing for all

Year 2019/20:

- Funding achieved for **Active Fenland** was £196,865 including £31,885 funding in addition to core projects
- Total number of **Active Fenland sessions** delivered was 1,316 and number of attendees was 13,912
- **MJ Rising Star award** – Highly Commended award for Lauren Bremner

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- 64 different '**do at home**' **online sessions** available via YouTube. 2,400 views and 25,600 impressions. 26 zoom pre and postnatal sessions made available for participants to log into and take part as a group.
- The **Active Fenland team** took just one week from date of lockdown to deliver the first online activity session.
- **Active-at-home booklets** created for older residents and posted to them with resistance bands
- **Takeaway Fit and Fed** was developed to tackle holiday hunger. Activity and game packs, lunches and extra food parcels were given to those families most in need in the district over the 6 week summer holiday.
- **Active Fenland social media** now has a total of 3,529 followers and has reached 12,372 different people during March-June 2020

Key Achievements & Performance

- Communities –

Promoting health & wellbeing for all

Year 2019/20:

- **Freedom Leisure** delivered an excellent service to the local communities in Fenland in their first full year of operation
- Improvements in the service included the extending of **Learn to Swim** sessions and increased capacity on the programme.
- New **spin bikes and Technogym equipment** in all facilities
- The successful completion of the **renovation works at the Hudson centre** delivered a new gym, spin studio & exercise class studio. Additionally reception and the dryside changing rooms have been transformed, creating a customer focussed and welcoming facility.

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **Leisure Centres** were forced to close during lockdown, reopening on 24 July
- After 1 week, **opening hours were extended**. They are being further extended on October 5.
- Consequently visitor numbers are lower than 2019, but Freedom Leisure are working hard to provide **well managed and COVID-19 secure** centres for customers use

Key Achievements & Performance

- Communities –

Working with partners to promote Fenland through culture & heritage

Year 2019/20:

- Successful bid to Arts Council for support to develop a **Culture Strategy** for Fenland
- Consultant appointed with work in the community undertaken to inform the **draft strategy**
- **Draft Culture Strategy** to be reviewed by Portfolio Holder in the Autumn

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- An update on the progress of the **Culture strategy** will be shared with O&S in Nov
- **Coates Conservation Area Appraisal** approved by Cabinet in Sep 2020
- Work continues on the renovation of historic buildings through the **Wisbech High Street Project**

Key Achievements & Performance

- Environment -

Delivering a high performing refuse, recycling & street cleansing service

Year 2019/20:

- More than **2.9 million bin collections** successfully made across the district, in all weathers. Fenland residents **recycled more than 50%** of their waste through waste collections or by using the household waste recycling centres in Fenland.
- Customer satisfaction with the Fenland Garden Waste (Brown Bin) service remained high at **94%**. Subscriptions rose to **21,300** in 2019/20 allowing members to freeze the fee for 2020/21 for a fourth year.

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Over the past 6 months there has been a significant increases in waste tonnages collected, 30% more than usual for some services at some points. Almost **1,500 tonnes of extra waste** have been collected by the team since the end of March.
- **Messages of thanks** received from across the district in appreciation of Council services delivered during lockdown but with a particular focus on Refuse and Cleansing.



Key Achievements & Performance

- Environment -

Delivering a high performing refuse, recycling & street cleansing service

Year 2019/20:

- The 40 trained Getting It Sorted volunteers delivered **113 recycling events** and generously volunteered for more than 1,500 hours promoting recycling, including launching a new recycling website www.gettingitsorted.org that has seen **23,715 hits** in the first three months, along with a primary schools recycling project that raised more than **£5,600 for local schools**.
- **Cleansing and Rapid Response** teams responded to over 1,422 service requests in 2019/20, with **95%** on the same or next day. Of the more than 1,000 quality inspections made, **99%** of areas met cleansing standards first time.

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- With the exception of Bulky Waste collections, **no waste or recycling services have been cancelled or suspended** as a result of COVID-19
- The **Getting It Sorted** website has been active, supported by regular social media in relation to recycling issues. A teacher's pack and colouring competition was developed by the volunteers **to support children learning from home**, with more than **500 packs** sent out to disadvantaged families in Fenland.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Environment -

Working with partners & the community on projects that improve the environment & our street scene

Year 2019/20:

- Local Authority Support (previously called Kingdom) supported the **environmental enforcement contract** with 265 fixed penalty notices being served. This cost neutral service was financed by fines paid. Contract ended in January 2020.
- **Fly tipping enforcement** - 3 prosecutions taken to court with a total of £26,138 of fines issued with all costs awarded.
- **Fly tipping fixed penalty notices** - 3 notices served
- **Tivoli** have delivered the **grounds maintenance service** as contracted in a professional and timely manner. The use of shrubs has helped to maintain excellent displays throughout the year.

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **Fly tipping enforcement** – 6 fixed penalty notices served
- **Environmental enforcement** – 3 fixed penalty notices served
- **Tivoli** have helped to maintain the **open spaces** that became even more important to residents during lockdown.
- An '**In Bloom**' award was won for the Council managed spaces in Chatteris
- The Council has committed to a **5 year contract extension term with Tivoli** commencing Nov 2020

Key Achievements & Performance

- Environment -

Working with partners & the community on projects that improve the environment & our street scene

Year 2019/20:

- **Green Dog Walkers** initiative launched in all 4 market towns and 3 rural villages to tackle irresponsible dog ownership. Over 150 volunteers signed up.
- **Markets** remained fairly stable.
- 249 community **Street Pride** and **Green Dog Walker** events supported

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Community groups were unable to meet, however **Green Dog Walkers** have continued to maintain their routine during dog walks as permitted by COVID-19 guidance.
- Annual **Street Pride** event postponed following consultation with groups.
- **Markets** have seen a resurgence since retail reopened in June. March has welcomed 5 new stalls and 1 new stall is trading in Whittlesey.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Environment -

Working with partners & the community on projects that improve the environment & our street scene

Year 2019/20:

- 5 successful **Four Seasons** events; St Georges Fayre, Chatteris Midsummer Festival, Whittlesey Festival and March & Wisbech Christmas Markets attracted more than 15,000 visitors. Visitor and stallholder satisfaction was high at 97%.
- **Community groups** continued to access Council support to hold safe and successful events, receiving advice on keeping events safe and access to services such as waste collection and road closure management.
- Programme of visiting **Fairs** resulted in thousands of visitors to the attractions.

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Since late March 2020, **Four Season** event committees have all agreed to postpone their events.
- **Wisbech Christmas Market** will go ahead in a new format with Christmas themed stalls.
- Guidance issued in the summer has enabled small local COVID-19 safe **community events** to go ahead.
- **Community groups** are being supported to ensure all relevant COVID-19 guidance is being implemented through regular updates & contact with groups.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Environment -

Working with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting social cohesion

Year 2019/20:

- **Fenland Community Safety Partnership** delivered in accordance with Police Crime Commissioner funding requirement
- 148 **ASB** cases investigated and addressed
- **Controlling Migration Fund** projects successfully delivered

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Funding Secured from the **Illegal Money Lending Team** to deliver engagement project in schools
- **Wisbech Public Spaces Protection Order** for street drinking reviewed
- Coordinated work through **Diverse Communities Forum** to provide support for district during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Economy -

Attracting new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses in Fenland

Year 2019/20:

- **Food Safety Statutory Service Plan** – 417 business visits completed and support interventions completed. 96% compliance rate with requirements.
- **Health and Safety Statutory Service Plan** – specialist support to 35 registered beauty / tattoo and close contact services with changing safety guidance.
- **Better Business For All** approach provided opportunities for collaboration with regulatory partners across Cambridgeshire & joint materials/referral mechanisms

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **COVID-19 regulations** introduced new requirements for closure or amended operating protocols (take-away/delivery permitted to trade). More than 700 business supported through interventions to advise on COVID-19 compliance requirements.
- FSA recommenced the **food safety delivery plan** in September 2020.
- £90,000 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) accessed for **High Street Opening Project** including public realm signage and advice.
- **High Street Project Officer** appointed & supported more than 270 high street business to become COVID-19 compliant identifying 430 businesses who needed support.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Economy -

Attracting new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses in Fenland

Year 2019/20:

- 81 **affordable homes** developed
- New 60 home **extra care scheme** in Whittlesey
- Grant secured by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (BCKLWN) for the '**Sail the Wash**' project. Working with FDC, BCKLWN will enhance existing and create more opportunities for leisure craft wanting to visit The Wash, creating a destination sailing experience.
- to Hydro surveys completed at Sutton Bridge for the 'Sail The Wash' project

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Funding secured for over **200 new affordable homes** in March (CPCA)
- Hydrographic survey program continued in order for information to be handed over to the '**Sail The Wash**' scheme
- Occupancy of berth holders at **Wisbech Yacht Harbour** remains high (96%)

Key Achievements & Performance

- Economy -

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration across Fenland

Year 2019/20:

- Speed of determination of **planning applications**:
 - Major – 100% decided in 13 weeks or timescale agreed with applicant
 - Minor – 96% decided in 8 weeks or time scale agreed with applicant
 - Other - 97% decided in 8 week or time scale agreed with applicant
- **Appeals** allowed over 2 year rolling period (Govt perf target):
 - Majors – 1.2%
 - Other applications – 1.5% (max allowed 10%)
- Emerging **Local Plan** – Issue and options consultation including call for sites

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Speed of determination of **planning applications**:
 - Major – 100% decided in 13 weeks or timescale agreed with applicant
 - Minor – 93% decided in 8 weeks or time scale agreed with applicant
 - Other - 98% decided in 8 week or time scale agreed with applicant
- **Appeals** allowed over 2 year rolling period (Govt perf target):
 - Majors – 0%
 - Other applications – 1.4% (max allowed 10%)
- Emerging **Local Plan** - Additional call for sites consultation

Key Achievements & Performance

- Economy -

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration across Fenland

Year 2019/20:

- Successfully recruited Economic Growth Manager and Business Account Manager to the newly created **Economic Growth Team** (March 2020)
- Disposed of 11 **surplus property assets** (just under £340,000 in capital receipts)
- Played a key role in helping to shape the adopted Cambridgeshire & Peterborough **Local Industrial Strategy**
- Formed Town Teams, comprised and adopted the **Growing Fenland** plans for our Market Towns, enabling the Teams to begin developing formal project proposals

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Created web pages on the **Fenland for Business** website enabling residents and businesses to access COVID-19 related information about local retailers
- Provided regular COVID-19 **'e'newsletters & Twitter updates** regarding funding opportunities & support for businesses impacted by COVID-19
- Worked with the CPCA to develop and adopt the **Local Economic Recovery Strategy (LERS)**, which is being used as the work plan to target interventions that will accelerate the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic
- Established the Council's new trading company **Fenland Future Limited** to begin delivering the ambitions within the Commercial Investment Strategy
- Worked with Town Teams to submit applications to the CPCA's market towns initiative (**Growing Fenland**)

Key Achievements & Performance

- Economy -

Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements across the district

Year 2019/20:

- **Hereward Community Rail Partnership (CRP):**
 - achieved national accreditation status (and now meets national standard set for CRP's)
 - New website and improved comms
 - Over 3,000 line guides given out to the public
- Highways England Stage 0 technical report completed for **dualling of A47**. Now a new proposal for dualling across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- Use of S106 funded **Wisbech Tesco Bus** allowed an extra 12 months of support for the service until March 2021.

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **March Area Transport Study** feasibility & technical work completed included virtual public consultation
- **Wisbech Access Strategy** short term schemes now in detailed design stage for implementation on site in 2021 & 2022
- Work to commence shortly on **Kings Dyke Level Crossing Scheme** (to be opened in Spring 2022)

Key Achievements & Performance

- Economy -

Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements across the district

Year 2019/20:

- **Fenland Railway Stations**

- All 3 Fenland stations have new information screens and help points
- New waiting shelters installed at Manea and Whittlesea Stations
- 10th anniversary of Friends of March Station recognised by Greater Anglia
- Electrical upgrade to allow new lighting installation at Whittlesea Station. New station planters have also improved appearance.
- New cycle parking at March station (50 additional spaces)

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- All feasibility, technical and outline design work for the **March Station Project** now complete
- Successful virtual consultation held to choose a preferred design for **March Station** Platform 1 building
- Full business case work has been completed making value for money case for the **Wisbech Railway Line** project including a station location
- **Emergency Active Travel** tranche 1 funding secured for temporary cycle racks and new speed warning signs for schools in March

Key Achievements & Performance

- Quality Organisation -

Year 2019/20:

- The target for **Council Tax collection** in 2019/2020 was 96.92 %, and the actual achieved was 96.76 %; (margin of deficit was only 0.16%). The in year collection finished slightly below target although recovery of the outstanding balances remained a focus. The small deficit in collection was due to certain outstanding debts which could not be collected in year due to the amount of benefit deductions falling below the level of the debt.
- **Net Council Tax Receipts** payable to the Collection Fund. The target for Net Council Tax Receipts payable to the Collection Fund in 2019/2020 was £56,185,753.00; and the actual achieved was £56,585,398.70. The target was exceeded by £399,645.70.

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **Council Tax collection** is currently below the target set prior to COVID-19; this is due to customers taking up the option payment breaks set by Government. In addition to this, Courts have been shut due to the prolonged lockdown, which has delayed recovery.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Quality Organisation -

Year 2019/20:

- The target for **NNDR collection** in 2019/2020 was 97.88%, and the actual achieved was 96.84%; (margin of deficit was 1.04%). Collection was down on target for the year; however the total Rateable Value increased by over £137k since April 2019. The income for March 2020 was down by approx. £200k compared to previous year, which is attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The target for the net **NNDR Receipts** payable to the Collection Fund for 2019/2020 was £24,663,273; and the actual achieved was £24,137,938. (Margin of deficit was £525,335, which is within the tolerance threshold).

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **NNDR collection rates** have been impacted as a result of COVID-19, due to Government implemented Business Rates Holidays and allocations of Discretionary Business Rate Relief. These schemes have also included an increased administrative burden on the teams.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Quality Organisation -

Year 2019/20:

- **Wisbech and March One Stop Shops** were relocated to The Boathouse and Fenland Hall.
- **Customer satisfaction** rate for Customer Services remained high at 96%
- Elections team delivered three major **elections**, including the unexpected European Parliamentary Election (23 May) and the General Election (12 Dec)
- **Customer Service Excellent** award reaccredited

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **New Pay Point** service launched on 13 July enabling customers to pay for Council services at anywhere displaying the Pay Point logo. Over the past 2 months, 1245 Pay Point payments have been made (£187,374)
- All customer facing services can now be accessed via the **My Fenland** team, through the website, contact centre or via face to face appointment. Customer Service Centres and Community Hubs are currently operating on an appointment only system in light of social distancing measures.
- **Upgraded telephony software** in the process of being launched which will allow web chat functionality

Key Achievements & Performance

- Quality Organisation -

Year 2019/20:

- Our **website** continues to grow in popularity, receiving nearly 685,000 hits and 10,000 form submissions across 50 different topics.
- Our **Social Media** following also continues to grow, totalling 8,570 Twitter followers and 3,368 Facebook followers.
- % of staff who feel proud to work for FDC (Taken from the **Staff Survey** which is undertaken every 2 years). The target was 84% and the actual result was 95%

March 2020 to August 2020 including response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- We launched the Council's **new website** in August 2020. Its design, quality of content, search facility and postcode look-up system has been significantly improved and form a strong platform for future developments. Although early days, changes have been very positively received by our residents.
- Our dedicated **COVID-19 webpages** host important Council, Public Health and Government information and have received 33,000 hits within six months.
- A large number of press releases and social media posts have also been crucial in communicating key, and often time-sensitive, **COVID-19 messages**.

Key Achievements & Performance

- Response to COVID-19 Pandemic-

The Council and its workforce responded to significant changes in a very short space of time, which included:

- Enabling over 60% of our workforce to **work remotely** (from home) effectively within a matter of weeks;
- Effectively **redeploying and re-training** a proportion of our workforce to meet essential existing and new business needs;
- Enabling and encouraging our customers to successfully access all our services remotely via **electronic or alternative channels**;
- Creating and implementing brand new services within a matter of weeks to respond to the needs of our customers (**COVID-19 hub, Small Business Grant payments**), and a move to new operating models based on the recognition that we are playing a role other than service deliverer or commissioner, such as matching and signposting customers/stakeholders to third party services;
- Circa 2000 households supported through COVID-19 **Community Hub** for shielded & self-isolating residents. Over 700 calls for support (both businesses & residents) were fielded and guidance on COVID-19 safety rules provided.
- Responding to, and delivering, massive **changes in legislation/regulations** within a matter of days;
- Responding to and delivering a hugely demanding **communication and engagement process** with our Members, workforce, stakeholders and all members of our Communities;

Key Achievements & Performance

- Response to COVID-19 Pandemic-

The Council and its workforce responded to significant changes in a very short space of time, which included:

- Creating and working with **new methods of communication and engagement**;
- Working in an increasingly collaborative way within the Council and across all services, and also with our partners, with more **strategic partnerships** being developed and established with other local organisations;
- **Sharing and utilising data** to achieve better outcomes for those most impacted in our communities.
- All of the above has been achieved whilst we **have continued to deliver all services** and with minimal impact on performance
- Coordinated and established a **mobile COVID-19 testing facility** at the Chapel Road car park in Wisbech, providing much needed testing capacity to our residents
- **Workplace outbreaks** have been managed and a **local contact tracing** role undertaken.
- A total of £19.9m was paid to 1833 businesses as part of the Government's **Business Grants** scheme.
- The Council's current **financial forecast** shows a potential net negative impact of around £1.3m by the end of the year.

External Funding Received

- **£1m** ringfenced for each of our 4 market towns through the CPCA's market towns initiative (**Growing Fenland**)
- A number of successful bids submitted to the **CCC £5m Communities Capital Fund** including:
 - £234,000 for March Town Rugby Club
 - £75,000 for West End Park, March
 - £35,000 for Estover Park, March
 - £240,000 for Wisbech Park Pavillion
 - £150,000 for Wisbech Market Place
 - £198,000 for Gorefield Parish Council Pavilion Extension
 - £15,000 for Christchurch Community Centre
 - £36,000 for Tower Hall, Friday Bridge
- The CPCA has awarded £997,000 as a 50% match-funded capital grant towards the construction of phase 3 - light industrial 'move on' space at **South Fens Enterprise Park** in Chatteris.
- **£150,000** funding successfully applied for to support the new public health role in managing **workplace outbreaks** and providing **local contact tracing**.
- £90,000 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding successfully accessed for **High Street Opening Project** including public realm signage and advice.

External Funding Received

- **Next Steps Accommodation funding - £198k** secured from MHCLG with the potential for a further **£567,705** to be released
- **£130,000** received from central Government for administering the **Small Business** and the **Retail Hospitality & Leisure funds** in light of the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Future High Street Fund** application for March - **£150,000** received to develop bid with the aim to attract a further **£11.3m** to regenerate the High Street area
- **£2,285,898 Controlling Migration Fund (CMF)** received from MHCLG to assist with Migrant Outreach services and community projects
- **£340,000** received for **Rough Sleeper Initiative** in 2019/20, plus **£50,000** cold weather fund payment
- **£1.9m** from the Heritage Lottery Fund continues to assist with improvements to **Wisbech High Street**

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Overview and Scrutiny – Draft Work Programme 2020-2021

All Formal meetings are held via Zoom until further notice,
and thereafter will be held in the Council Chamber at Fenland Hall

Meeting Dates

<u>Agenda Despatch Date</u>	<u>Informal pre-meeting</u>			<u>Formal Overview & Scrutiny Meeting</u>		
	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Pre-Brief</u>	<u>Meeting</u>
Thursday 28 May 2020	Monday 1 June 2020	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 8 June 2020	1.00pm	1.30pm
Thursday 7 July 2020	Monday 6 July 2020	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 13 July 2020	1.00pm	1.30pm
Wednesday 26 August 2020	Tuesday 1 September 2020	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 7 September 2020	1.00pm	1.30pm
Thursday 1 October 2020	Monday 5 October 2020	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 12 October 2020	1.00pm	1.30pm
Thursday 29 October 2020	Tuesday 3 November 2020	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 9 November 2020	1.00pm	1.30pm
Thursday 26 November 2020	Tuesday 1 December 2020	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 7 December 2020	1.00pm	1.30pm
Wednesday 30 December 2020	Tuesday 5 January 2021	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 11 January 2021	1.00pm	1.30pm
Thursday 28 January 2021	Monday 1	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 8	1.00pm	1.30pm

	February 2021			February 2021		
Thursday 25 February 2021	Monday 1 March 2021	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 8 March 2021	1.00pm	1.30pm
Thursday 6 May 2021	Monday 10 May 2021	2.00pm	Room 38	Monday 17 May 2021	1.00pm	1.30pm

9 November 2020

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ Officer/ External Witness
13.00 to 13.30 Pre Briefing			
13.30 to 15.30 Meeting	Freedom Leisure Review	Communities	Councillor Sam Clark Carol Pilson Phil Hughes Simon Bell Representative from Freedom
	Update on Fenland Projects	Communities	Paul Medd Carol Pilson Wendy Otter Russell Beal (Anglian Water) Adrian Chapman (Cambs County Council and Peterborough City Council) Cabinet Jo Blackmore
	Wisbech Rail Update	Communities	Rowland Potter (CPCA)
	Culture Strategy Update	Quality Organisation	Carol Pilson Phil Hughes Councillor Chris Seaton
	Future Work Programme 2020/21	Quality Organisation	Chairman Anna Goodall

7 December 2020

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ Officer/ External Witness
13.00 to 13.30 Pre Briefing			
13.30 to 15.30 Meeting	Annual review of Anglia Revenues Partnership	Communities	Sam Anthony / Peter Catchpole Councillor Mrs French Paul Corney (ARP) Mark Saunders
	Possibly Anglian Water?????		
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions		Anna Goodall
	Future Work Programme 2020/21	Quality Organisation	Chairman Anna Goodall

11 January 2021

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ Officer/ External Witness
13.00 to 13.30 Pre Briefing	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Future Work Programme 2017/2018	Quality Organisation	Councillor Miscandlon Anna Goodall
13.30 to 15.30 Meeting	Draft Budget	Quality Organisation	Cabinet CMT
	Draft Business Plan	Quality Organisation	Cabinet CMT Dave Wright
	Fees and Charges	Quality Organisation	Councillor Boden Peter Catchpole Cabinet Mark Saunders & Neil Krajewski
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions		Anna Goodall
	Future Work Programme 2020/21	Quality Organisation	Chairman Anna Goodall

8 February 2021

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ Officer/ External Witness
13.00 to 13.30 Pre Briefing			
13.30 to 15.30 Meeting	FDC Enforcement Review	Communities	Councillor Murphy Carol Pilson Annabel Tighe
	Progress of Corporate Priority – Environment	Environment	Councillor Murphy Councillor Tierney Phil Hughes, Mark Mathews, Annabel Tighe Carol Pilson
	Community Safety Partnership	Communities	Councillor Mrs Wallwork Carol Pilson, Dan Horn, Alan Boughen and Aarron Locks Police
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions		Anna Goodall
	Future Work Programme 2020/21	Quality Organisation	Chairman Anna Goodall

8 March 2021

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ Officer/ External Witness
13.00 to 13.30 Pre Briefing			
13.30 to 15.30 Meeting	Investment Board Annual Report	Economy	Justin Wingfield Councillor Benney
	Transformation & Communications Portfolio Holder update		Councillor Tierney David Wright Peter Catchpole
	Update on CPCA Growth Service and impact on Economic Development in Fenland	Economy	Councillor Benney Justin Wingfield

	Commercial Investment Strategy	Economy	Councillor Boden Peter Catchpole
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions		Anna Goodall
	Future Work Programme 2020/21	Quality Organisation	Chairman Anna Goodall

17 May 2021

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ Officer/ External Witness
13.00 to 13.30 Pre Briefing			
13.30 to 15.30 Meeting			
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions		Anna Goodall
	Future Work Programme 2020/21	Quality Organisation	Chairman Anna Goodall

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