

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2021 - 1.30 PM



**PRESENT:** 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 R Wicks and Councillor F Yeulett

**GUESTS:** Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor A Lynn, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor S Tierney, Inspector Ian Lombardo, Cambs Constabulary and Matt Staton, Cambs County Council

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Alan Boughen (Safer Fenland Partnership Development Officer), Anna Goodall (Head of Governance and Customer Services), Dan Horn (Head of Housing and Community Support), Aarron Locks (Shared Service CCTV Manager), Mark Mathews (Head of Environmental Services) and Carol Pilson (Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer)

## OSC39/20 PREVIOUS MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of 11 January 2021 were confirmed.

## OSC40/20 UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS.

Members were provided with an update on the status of actions raised at previous meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Most of the comments were in relation to Action 8/9 and the visit from Anglian Water (AW).

1. Councillor Connor said his issue with Clarion has still not been resolved so he would like a response and action as soon as possible. Regarding flooding, he has been told AW is not updating infrastructure in Wimblington and Doddington for the next five years so he also wants an answer regarding what can be done in respect of future planning applications when flooding issues are so prevalent. Without updated infrastructure, the flooding issue will only get worse.
2. Councillor Booth said in relation to the infrastructure, he raised the concerns of rural residents about low water pressure from the Fridaybridge pumping station. AW could not confirm any replacement work or upgrade in the next five years. He is also still waiting for a response to his question about the design life for the pumping station.
3. Councillor Miscandlon said although he appreciated that AW did not have to come before the panel, they did kindly send a representative. However, as she was unable to answer the more technical questions, he would like to invite AW back but for them to send someone with more technical knowledge.
4. Councillor Skoulding said pressure needs to be put on Clarion to finally sort out Lake Close (Action 3) as it is still in a dangerous state and we have waited a long time. Councillor Mason said he would discuss making a direct approach to Clarion with Councillor Skoulding after the meeting.
5. Councillor Cornwell said both he and Councillor Count never received a proper response to their complaint about the smell from the March sewage treatment works and therefore they need an update on that.
6. Dan Horn provided an update on the Turf Fen travellers site (Action 10) and confirmed that all

pitches are let. A gypsy/traveller needs assessment for future provision is a statutory requirement that FDC will be working on. Councillor Booth said it would be useful when the needs assessment is completed that councillors be provided with that information and a rough timescale for when it is likely to be completed.

## **OSC41/20 FENLAND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP INC. CCTV SERVICES**

Councillor Mason welcomed Councillor Lynn to the panel meeting and congratulated him on his elevation to Cabinet. He also welcomed Matt Staton, Highway Projects and Road Safety Manager at Cambs County Council and Inspector Ian Lombardo from Cambs Police.

Councillor Mason added that the Overview & Scrutiny Panel have been raising road safety concerns for some time now, so they are delighted that this item is now being given focus and consideration.

Members firstly considered the Road Safety Partnership Strategy report presented by Matt Staton.

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

1. Councillor Miscandlon said he does not see much by the way of road safety education for schools. He asked what initiatives there are to encourage the use of motorcycles as a cheaper form of travel than the car. Matt Staton responded that over the last two years they have been working with other authorities within the East of England and Highways England on an online programme for enhanced compulsory basic training for young motorcyclists called Ridefree. The course has won a Prince Michael International Road Safety Award and was adopted last year by the DVSA and is now available nationally. The course contains 5 online learning modules, we are one of the pioneering areas with several providers available within Cambridgeshire.
2. Councillor Miscandlon said he does not see any advertising for Ridefree and asked why the parish and town councils have not received any publications that they can use to promote safe riding to young people. Matt Staton said that because of the adoption process they were going through, they now want to promote the DVSA adopted version, so this is something the partnership will now take forward. Councillor Miscandlon thanked Matt Staton.
3. Councillor Cornwell said he realises it is difficult when putting something together on a county-wide basis that tries to show the situation within each individual place. For example, he understands the collisions and casualty figures, but how do they affect the quantity of traffic which in turn influences the figures themselves? For example, South Cambs has a large section of the M11, A14 etc. One would naturally expect that the numbers of incidents would be affected by the amount of traffic but is there any way this can be described more simply? Matt Staton said the graphs were there to provide an indication, there is a huge amount of data analysis available, but Councillor Cornwell is correct that it is difficult to draw area comparison. However, a lot of work has been undertaken in measuring traffic levels during lockdown and seeing how that has impacted on different types of collisions. All severity collisions have reduced considerably but the most severe collisions on the network have not reduced to the same extent. Therefore, the reductions in traffic have not seen corresponding reductions in killed or seriously injured casualties, which is the same nationally, and relates to some of the speeds seen during the lockdowns. Moving forward, they are looking to provide more comprehensive data online and this will include looking at rates against traffic volumes.
4. Councillor Cornwell asked if the NHS are involved at all within the strategic board, public health is mentioned but is not part of the same structure as the deliverers of the actual health services. Matt Staton replied that they have involvement directly from the major trauma centre at Addenbrookes and work with the emergency services, but engagement is limited because staff are operational. Councillor Cornwell suggested it was slightly misleading to say public health when it should say health services but thanked Matt Staton for his response.
5. Councillor Wicks asked Matt Staton if he would agree that the state of Fenland roads has an

impact on road safety. Matt Staton replied that he understood that Highways had circulated some information around the processes they use to monitor collision rates and condition of the carriageway. From that, his team see that the highest rate of collisions is on rural A roads so there is focus on the condition of those roads but probably the biggest element involved is traffic speed.

6. Councillor Wicks asked what action is being taken to combat the higher proportion of accidents on our rural roads within the strategy that is being developed. Matt Staton said they are doing a lot of work on safe roadsides, focussing on a preventative approach in looking at what hazards are by the roadside; there is also considerable investment on the A142 as one route that is having roadside treatment to reduce the chances of vehicles running off the road.
7. Councillor Wicks asked what support and encouragement is given to people who want to form Speedwatch groups in their locality. Matt Staton responded that the partnership are looking to enhance what they offer to Speedwatch and he has met with the police around what can be offered in terms of additional support with the use of special constables, and some projects to look at speed and produce a communities toolkit. Hopefully something should be available by summer. They are also looking at a new speed management strategy to support local groups as much as possible as part of their partnership work.
8. Councillor Wicks asked what action the partnership is taking in respect of combatting the increase seen in numbers drunk or/and substance abuse driving incidents during the pandemic. Matt Staton said they are working with the police and are looking at the incidents over that period, many of which are still under investigation, to see what learning is available and this will feed into the work that goes forward. Councillor Wicks thanked Matt Staton.
9. Councillor Booth said it is very good news that we are getting a dedicated presentation on this subject as he has been raising this as an issue for many years. However, one statistic not provided within the report is the number of young drivers that experience a serious accident within the Fens. At one stage we were one of the highest incident statistics for young drivers in the country and he asked if anything has been done to improve that situation. Matt Staton said they have introduced Cambs Drive iQ, an online package with a series of workshops that FDC helped to promote within colleges. This has been delivered for the past three years; several Fenland schools have signed up and will be delivering it later this year; unfortunately, the pressure of remote learning due to the pandemic has disrupted the current delivery. In terms of the statistics for young drivers, Matt Staton said he would obtain the data and pass it on.
10. Councillor Booth said the statistics show the total number of accidents but do not provide a breakdown of population in the areas, and that would provide a better indication of how serious the issue is within Fenland.
11. Councillor Booth said Matt Staton had mentioned supporting local highway improvements for safety and asked how that will work in practice as the bids are put in by the town and parish councils. He asked what the partnership's role will be in helping deliver road safety improvements. Matt Staton said his role is across all the partner organisations and although he is hosted by the County Council, he is working across the police and fire rescue services, and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough councils. Therefore, his role would be to feedback to the safe roads work stream which will have a few of the LHI proposals as part of the feasibility stage.
12. Councillor Booth said often when we ask the police for their views on reducing speed limits at certain locations, their key determining factor is whether it is self-enforcing. Unfortunately, with the LHI bid processes, it is a small pot of money and you cannot incorporate speed cushions or chicanes within the overall bids. He feels this policy needs to be looked at and he asked Matt Staton if that is something that he can take forward and work on with the police. Matt Staton said he can take this up as part of the speed management strategy which he mentioned earlier. Councillor Booth thanked Matt Staton.
13. Councillor Miscandlon said he had been involved with a speed reduction request where all parties were in favour and it passed the LHI with a high score, but the police liaison officer at police HQ stopped it. Unfortunately, there has just been an accident at that location which could have been avoided but for the refusal of that officer. Speaking to other councils as part of his role on the CPCPA it appears they have the same problem with this officer. He asked if this is

something that Matt Staton could take up. Matt Staton responded that again this is something that could be taken up as part of the speed management strategy and having clear definition within it about how such a request progresses, and that is the place to get a coordinated approach.

14. Councillor Mason said he noted that the two-year funding cycle ends this financial year and asked what will happen in terms of funding going forward. Matt Staton said unfortunately he could not answer that as he only deals with the road safety partnership which has only just started a funding cycle.

Cllr Mason thanked Matt Staton for his contribution and attendance at the meeting.

Members then considered the Community ACTION plan report presented by Councillor Lynn.

Councillor Lynn added that is a privilege to be appointed as portfolio holder for Communities and having been in the role for just a short time is already impressed by the way statutory and non-statutory partners work together for the benefit of the community.

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

1. Councillor Cornwell praised all involved in delivering community-based services during this pandemic and asked for details on the financial make-up of the partnership. Carol Pilson advised that the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is a statutory meeting where the partnership organisations have a duty to cooperate on all issues to do with community safety. In respect of financing, a number of partners give resources in relation to staff time but in terms of financial revenue contributions, FDC funds the Community Safety Manager and a two- year funding package comes from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) which, as Councillor Mason previously pointed out, ends in March. Active discussions regarding that funding is currently ongoing and involves Councillor Lynn and the PCC. Carol Pilson said the other partners do not currently make a financial contribution.
2. Councillor Cornwell asked therefore to what degree and how much commitment comes from the other partners if FDC is providing funding in terms of staffing costs and the PCC providing further funding. Councillor Mason said that as we are only two months from a review, it would be good to have an answer to the question and would hope that can be provided soon.
3. Councillor Cornwell said the report refers to voluntary services and asked who they are. Dan Horn said it varies according to the project being undertaken, for example the CSP is currently working on a programme relating to illegal money lending with funding coming from the Illegal Money Lending Team, involving the Credit Union and an Arts and Culture organisation getting the message out regarding the threat of illegal money lending and how to raise awareness. In the development of each project, county-wide groups look at the risks to the Fenland district, the CSP looks at the intelligence and then discusses what can be done to impact the risk raised. Very often it is often the voluntary community sector that can help.
4. Councillor Cornwell congratulated the partnership on the success of Essentials by Sue.
5. Councillor Miscandlon advised Councillor Lynn that some years ago a comprehensive report on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence was produced as part of a tri-county effort with Huntingdon and Cambridgeshire County Council. It was chaired by Councillor Sam Hoy and the report presented to Theresa May when she was the Home Secretary. This report was widely lauded; it is still available and should be of some assistance to him. Councillor Lynn thanked Councillor Miscandlon for this information.
6. Councillor Booth commented regarding community engagement and the viewing figures of various videos. He feels the figures are very low in comparison to the population of Fenland and asked how we can improve the reach of such material to the public. Dan Horn said the next meeting of the CSP will be in April so he will take that back as a comment to work upon.
7. Councillor Booth asked if Essentials by Sue is a Fenland or county-wide project. Also, statistics show that street drinking has been reduced over the last year. He would like to know that it is not being displaced elsewhere simply because people are aware that they are being monitored

by CCTV. He would like an eye kept on these statistics to ensure they do not increase once lockdown is over. Inspector Ian Lombardo said patrols continue around highlighted areas, although reductions have been seen. The police have seen that enforcement is not key with these individuals but rather the support services that is put around them, and they continue to work with supporting agencies around things like substance misuse. This support tends to lead to a reduction in offences, but the police continue to look at this. Councillor Booth said whilst we cannot rely on the last twelve months' data because this is not a normal situation, he is pleased that the police continue to keep an eye on the situation.

8. Councillor Booth thanked Inspector Lombardo in respect of the neighbourhood police teams. He had listened to feedback and set up a monthly briefing which gives more information on trends in rural areas rather than just on the towns.
9. Councillor Wicks said that hare coursing, lamping and now drugs and substance abuse involving nitrous oxide are becoming prevalent in his ward. He would like to know what action is being taken, particularly against the suppliers of nitrous oxide. Inspector Lombardo said the Rural Action Community Team are out taking action against hare coursers and receiving good engagement with the public. In respect of nitrous oxide, the police are continuing to work on intelligence and act by serving warrants where they can. The public are encouraged by this which results in further information coming forward and the police will continue to focus and act on substance misuse. They also work hard to educate users of these substances thereby with the aim to reduce demand for the products that are sold.
10. Councillor Wicks asked how the public are encouraged to report substance abuse. Inspector Lombardo advised that members could take information provided from briefings back to their ward residents, but they post information on their website and social media. Residents know their community better than the police do and they are encouraged to contact them either online, by phone or in writing and he would encourage all members to do the same. Councillor Wicks asked if the police could not make use of community magazines. Inspector Lombardo advised that the costs are too great. Councillor Wicks asked if this was something that could be taken up by the CSP and press releases issued by FDC to combat the cost. Alan Bougden replied we already support that, the CSP sends out a regular community newsletter which includes methods of reporting. However, we can work with the police to make this more known. Councillor Wicks asked if more emphasis can be given on written reporting rather than just social media. Alan Bougden agreed to take those comments on board.
11. Councillor Wicks said there is an issue regarding school parking at The Fold, Coates. Inspector Lombardo said this is a big problem for all the schools, but the police do not have the resources to provide regular patrols at all schools. However, they do the best they can with their resources and if a school reports a serious regular issue then it will be prioritised. Councillor Wicks thanked Inspector Lombardo.
12. Councillor Wicks raised the issue of CCTV and asked that all cameras are kept in a serviceable condition with any faults reported immediately. Councillor Mason recalled an issue whereby CCTV footage was required from a camera at Manor Leisure Centre in Whittlesey. Unfortunately, it transpired that the camera had not been operational for some time. Members should be notified of any camera not working and work done to ensure it is up and running as soon as possible. Aaron Locks responded that in this instance he could recall there had been a critical failure on one of the radio networks which needed a specialist repair team. This also occurred during a national lockdown and at time of adverse weather, furthermore a specialist rigger team needed to be booked due to the mast height involved. However, he could assure members that it was reported immediately the failure took place and they have a robust and fully covered comprehensive maintenance contract for all CCTV cameras in Fenland. These cameras operate 24/7 all year round so there will be failures, but a contractor will visit to repair any faults and a weekly visit is undertaken as part of the contract to carry out preventative maintenance on all cameras. However, the camera at the Manor Leisure Centre does not fall under part of the service level agreement for Whittlesey. Whittlesey Town Council contributes toward two town centre cameras but not this one. Councillor Mason thanked Aaron Locks.
13. Councillor Mason asked how costs are calculated as there is a vast difference in contribution rates between the town councils. Aaron Locks advised that contributions by each town council

are based on per camera cost hence the difference.

14. Councillor Yeulett said the national press has highlighted an increase in domestic abuse figures in the current pandemic. He asked what is being done locally regarding this and what extra resource is allocated to tackle the issue. Alan Boughen replied that this is dealt with by several different agencies, including the police primarily to respond to incidents and the Domestic Abuse Sexual Violence County Partnership to deal with education and prevention work. As a CSP, they also deliver domestic homicide reviews which provide learning into domestic abuse that then can be formed into an action plan. They also arrange awareness events for the community and front-line professionals. These events provide education in recognising different certain signs of abuse and can indeed make people aware that they are a victim, and it arms professionals with the knowledge of how to access relevant support. Councillor Lynn said the biggest problem with abuse is that it is under reported and so it is important to get the message out that abuse is not right, encourage people to report it, and to provide assurance that there are people available to help.
15. Councillor Yeulett asked if the relevant authorities have noticed the COVID effect on the number of domestic abuse figures in this area. Inspector Lombardo agreed that recorded figures locally are up by about 26% on 2019/2020. The police continue to receive training from voluntary organisations around domestic abuse and this includes the dangers of stalking. They have a policy of taking robust action against offenders bearing in mind that it may take many incidents of violence before a victim notifies the police. They make best use of legislation to then put in place safeguarding arrangements for the protection of victims. Councillor Yeulett thanked Inspector Lombardo and said he was satisfied that the police are doing all they can.
16. Councillor Connor said he receives frequent reports from a Whittlesey resident regarding lamping and trespassing on their land which affects their livelihood and well-being. Inspector Lombardo said he believed he already knew of this situation, and although it has previously been followed up, he would take the details and make contact.
17. Councillor Miscandlon said the fly tipping of many industrial cannisters of nitrous oxide had occurred recently in Whittlesey and asked if any action has been taken. Inspector Lombardo said unfortunately it would be highly unlikely that they would be able to identify the perpetrator. Councillor Miscandlon said he had further information that he could forward to Inspector Lombardo outside of the meeting.
18. Councillor Booth asked if the CSP could take back the comments provided by the panel today and act upon it as they have done in previous years.

Once again Councillor Miscandlon thanked Inspector Lombardo and Matt Staton for their attendance today.

**The Overview & Scrutiny Panel considered and noted the report, the current performance of the partnership for 2020 and the CCTV performance report for 2020.**

*(Inspector Lombardo, Matt Staton and Alan Boughen left the meeting)*

**OSC42/20 PROGRESS OF CORPORATE PRIORITY - ENVIRONMENT**

Members considered the Progress of Corporate Priority – Environment report presented by Councillor Murphy.

Councillor Murphy added his grateful thanks to the workforce and volunteers who have gone the extra two miles to keep the refuse service functioning and ensured ongoing customer satisfaction. Councillor Mason added his appreciation to all staff for their hard work in such challenging conditions. Councillor Miscandlon said as Chairman of Fenland District Council he would like to endorse these comments and offered his gratitude and thanks to all staff.

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

1. Councillor Booth noted the 28% household waste recycling rate and asked what is being done to improve that rate and how do we compare against other councils. Councillor Murphy said COVID-19 has affected the recycling rates. However, a new bin app has been created which can be used to see what products can be recycled and this is being widely advertised. We also have a successful garden waste service which is more highly subscribed than ever. The aim is to increase the recycling rate and we try to educate customers whose recycling bins are rejected due to misuse.
2. Councillor Purser said he too wished to thank to all the refuse staff who have kept the service running during the pandemic and praised the new bin app. He said it is very simple and easy to use and a brilliant piece of work and congratulated those behind it. Councillor Murphy thanked Councillor Purser.
3. Councillor Wicks said he would also like to complement the Recycling Officer for all the work she has continued to undertake on new recycling initiatives at this time. He asked Councillor Murphy what is being done in respect of known individuals in the area responsible for fly-tipping. Councillor Murphy said that it is unfortunate that we have seen an increase in fly-tipping during this pandemic but it is very difficult to take action against known offenders if we do not have people willing to make witness statements. Unfortunately, we cannot take people to court without backup. The only alternative is for us to catch offenders in the act and this is extremely difficult.
4. Councillor Count said the clause in the corporate strategy is to 'improve our environment'. He said this should be at no detriment to existing facilities. He raised concerns about moorings at West End park which have been taped off for some while and would like to enquire about what is happening with these. Councillor Mrs French responded that she has already made enquiries about these moorings and officers are looking into this.
5. Councillor Miscandlon asked where we are in respect of car parking enforcement. Councillor Mrs French said we are making progress and she hopes to bring an update to Cabinet in March. The timescale for this will be between 18-24 months.
6. Councillor Purser asked if there are any policies regarding recycling old laptops to share with school children and if not, can anything be done about that. Councillor Tierney replied that although a good idea, he had looked into this and it was not as simple as seemed. There is a cost element to preparing old laptops for re-use, they need to be data cleansed, cleared of any viruses, upgraded in many cases and not all models can take the current operating systems. However, he is aware that County Council may have initiated a project. Councillor Count confirmed there is partner project lined up. There will be drop off points such as libraries where people can donate their old laptops and a team of volunteers will be available to strip down the hard drives. A facility will be available for financial support in terms of assistance. Further information will be provided on this and he would be grateful for the assistance of FDC to promote it.
7. Councillor Cornwell asked if Streetscene officers were still monitoring and undertaking enforcement on overstayers on the river moorings in March town centre. Carol Pilson said that the team are continuing enforcement activity on FDC-owned moorings, but their attention has been diverted onto other projects because of COVID-19. However, we can instigate a process to deal with issues if reported to us. Some moorings are owned by Middle Level who have recently made some changes to the byelaws and will be dealing with the issues they have on their own assets. Councillor Mrs French said that efforts are being made to improve the town, including the river to make it more accessible for people and upgrading of the moorings is required, the area badly needs enhancing, it is in a state, and she will push for support from Middle Level at the next meeting of the IDB.
8. Councillor Count said it would be good to know that our policies and enforcement are aligned with Middle Level on this matter. There are boats that should be moved on and when matters return to normal would certainly like to see greater enforcement and joint action between FDC and Middle Level. With all the transformation work and money about to be spent on the town centre this is the ideal time to work to enhance the moorings so that they do not let the town down.

**The Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered the progress made by the Council in delivering the corporate objectives in the Business Plan.**

**OSC43/20 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor Mason said work will be undertaken to the Future Work Programme for the new municipal year and asked that if members had any suggestions or comments in respect of the Plan, then to let him or Anna Goodall know.

1. Councillor Count said in view of the coronavirus, it would be useful for the Panel to consider our performance during the pandemic to see what we did or did not do well. This is not to undermine FDC's fantastic response to the pandemic, but merely as a form of fine tuning our response to any such incident in the future.

3.27 pm

Chairman