

Public Document Pack

COUNCIL

A meeting of Council will be held at Council Chamber, Fenland Hall, County Road, March on THURSDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2021 at 4.00 PM and I request you to attend accordingly for transaction of the following business:

Whilst this meeting will be held in public, we encourage members of the public to view the meeting via our YouTube channel due to the current Covid-19 restrictions.

The meeting can be viewed via the link: <https://youtu.be/Zo17nf24Xws>

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

To confirm and sign the minutes of 19 May 2021.
- 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 - 52)
- 7 Motion submitted by Councillor Sam Clark regarding the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn (Pages 53 - 54)
- 8 Corporate Governance Annual Report 2020/21 (Pages 55 - 66)

To report the commitment and effectiveness of the Corporate Governance Committee and Audit and Risk Management Committee's work from April 2020 to March 2021.
- 9 O&S Annual Report 2020/21 (Pages 67 - 78)

The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report reflects what has been undertaken and achieved by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel during 2020/21 and takes a forward look at the programme of work and challenges for Overview and Scrutiny in 2021/2022.
- 10 Treasury Management Annual Report 2020/21 (Pages 79 - 88)

The purpose of this report is to consider the overall financial and operational performance of the Council's treasury management activity for 2020/21.

11 Fenland Electoral Review - Council Size Report (Pages 89 - 126)

For Members to consider and agree the formal Council consultation submission in relation to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Electoral Review of Fenland District Council. This report forms the Council's response to the initial part of the electoral review process regarding the proposed future Council Size which is the numbers of Councillors required to run the Council in future.

12 Appointment of Monitoring Officer and Notification of Deputy Monitoring Officer (Pages 127 - 128)

To approve the appointment of Amy Brown, Head of Legal and Governance as the Council's Acting Monitoring Officer to cover a period of maternity leave for the existing Monitoring Officer and to note the appointment of Kathy Woodward, Internal Audit Manager, as Acting Deputy Monitoring Officer for the Council, during the period in which Amy Brown is Acting Monitoring Officer.

Fenland Hall
March



Chief Executive

Wednesday, 22 September 2021

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



WEDNESDAY, 19 MAY 2021 - 4.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor A Miscandlon (Chairman), Councillor R Skoulding (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor C Boden, Councillor G Booth, Councillor J Clark, Councillor S Clark, Councillor D Connor, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor S Count, Councillor Mrs M Davis, Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor K French, Councillor A Hay, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor A Lynn, Councillor D Mason, Councillor A Maul, Councillor N Meekins, Councillor J Mockett, Councillor D Patrick, Councillor M Purser, Councillor W Rackley, Councillor W Sutton, Councillor S Tierney, Councillor D Topgood, Councillor S Wallwork and Councillor R Wicks

APOLOGIES: Councillor Mrs S Bligh, Councillor D Divine, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor C Marks, Councillor Mrs K Mayor, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor M Tanfield, Councillor S Wilkes and Councillor F Yeulett

C1/21 TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN FOR THE PERIOD TO THE NEXT ANNUAL MEETING AND TO RESOLVE THAT AN ALLOWANCE OF £4,116 PLUS TRAVELLING EXPENSES BE PAID TO THE PERSON ELECTED.

It was proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Skoulding and resolved that Councillor Alex Miscandlon be elected as Chairman of the Council for the period to the next Annual Meeting and that he be paid an allowance of £4,116 plus travelling expenses.

The Chairman thanked everybody for their support and hoped that this would be a better year than 2020. He stated that he will do his best to uphold the high standards set by the previous Chairmen of this Council and going forward hopes for a better year for us all.

C2/21 TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE PERIOD TO THE NEXT ANNUAL MEETING AND TO RESOLVE THAT AN ALLOWANCE OF £1,000 PLUS TRAVELLING EXPENSES BE PAID TO THE PERSON ELECTED.

It was proposed by Councillor Miscandlon, seconded by Councillor Purser and resolved that Councillor Rob Skoulding be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the period to the next Annual Meeting and that he be paid an allowance of £1,000 plus travelling expenses.

The Vice Chairman thanked all of the members who voted for him as Vice Chairman. On a personal note he gave a big thank you to all of the Councillors who have phoned him, texted him and have sent Facebook messages to him, along with all of the staff and officers who have asked after him over the last ten weeks.

C3/21 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 23 February 2021 were confirmed and signed.

C4/21 TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to all of the Officers for their time and efforts in ensuring that the Annual Council meeting could be held in person, which is the first meeting of Full Council where members have been able to meet together since the lockdown

The Chairman took the opportunity to welcome the newly elected member to the Lattersey Ward of Fenland District Council, Councillor Mockett.

Members observed a two minute's silence in memory of His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh, who passed away on 9 April and also as a mark of respect for former Councillor David Wheeler who served between 2007 and 2011 and who sadly passed away on 23 April 2021.

C5/21 MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL 2021/22

The meeting dates for the Annual Meeting of the Council and for the ordinary meetings of the Council for 2021/22 were agreed as follows:

The Annual Meeting of the Council in 2022 to be held on Thursday 12 May 2022.

The ordinary meetings of the Council be held on:

Thursday 16 September 2021

Wednesday 8 December 2021

Thursday 24 February 2022

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

- Councillor Boden stated that on the original schedule of meetings, which had been published on the Council's website, there was a meeting listed for Full Council for the 15 July 2021, but due to the Covid arrangements that have had to be made to reduce the number of meetings and to reduce the potential spread of Covid a number of committee meetings have either been rescheduled or cancelled. Councillor Boden stated that he would like it recorded that the meeting scheduled for 15 July 2021 has been cancelled.

C6/21 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 submitted under Procedure Rules 8.6 and asked if there were any questions under Procedure Rule 8.4 from Councillor Cornwell as Leader of the Opposition Group.

Councillor Cornwell stated that he was disappointed that he had not received a written response to a letter he had sent Councillor Boden on 12 March following the Full Council Meeting held on 23 February 2021. Councillor Boden stated that he was under the impression that he had responded to the correspondence that Councillor Cornwell was referring too and gave assurances that he would ensure that a response was sent without any further delay.

Councillor Cornwell stated that in addition to the closure of its branches in Whittlesey, Chatteris and Ramsey, Barclays Bank have now announced the closure of their branch in March, which provides services to a very large part of Southern and Central Fenland and only leaves the Wisbech Branch in operation. He added that the branch is due to close in late June or early July and its closure will inconvenience local businesses and residents especially the elderly. Councillor Cornwell expressed the view that their decision to close seems to be based on several factors, which Barclays have determined and they have also used the pandemic as a contributing factor. He expressed the opinion that it is ironic given the location of the branch in the town centre and

directly in the area which is subject of £6.4 million pounds worth of investment planned to be spent on it, and is not supportive of the community, and he expressed the view that any company that provides a service to the community and relies on community support has a moral duty to support them. Councillor Cornwell asked Councillor Boden if it would be possible for a severe objection to be posed to Barclays on behalf of the Council expressing the concerns of the Council and asking them to reconsider their proposal? Councillor Boden stated that the situation is something which is not unique to March or Fenland and high street banks across the country are closing. He added that it is a shame that Barclays have made the decision to close their March branch and it is also clear that it is a decision which they have made and are not going to retract that decision. Councillor Boden stated that the decision may be due to the lease of the building ending in July, and it may be that they had commercial reasons to close the branch rather than a decision due to footfall. He stated that it is more important to protect the interests of residents and businesses of Fenland as far as possible to be able to access banking facilities in person, rather than to protest on a decision which has already been made. Councillor Boden stated that it is understanding that in Whittlesey and Chatteris those facilities have already been lost and there is the danger that Wisbech and March will follow suit. He stated that there needs to be an engagement process with the remaining High Street banks in March and Wisbech to ensure that these in person banking facilities are not lost. Councillor Boden stated that the commercial reality of the situation is that fewer and fewer branches will exist and the remaining branches need to be made aware of the commercial reality that Fenland is a growing area with a growth agenda and it is in their commercial interests to continue to maintain services rather than expect customers to travel to Peterborough, Kings Lynn, Ely or Cambridge.

Councillor Cornwell reiterated his initial question as to whether Councillor Boden is prepared to write to Barclays and then engage with the existing High Street banks? Councillor Boden stated that as Barclays is one of the High Street's major banking establishments they will of course be contacted, and he added that the letter to Barclays will also raise our disappointment and anger of the banks closure in March. He stated that looking forward the protection of in person banking facilities in Fenland is imperative where it still exists.

C7/21 **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:

1. Councillor Topgood stated that there appears to be an increase in vandalism in the parks in the district currently and he asked Councillor Murphy what steps are in place to rectify the issue? Councillor Murphy stated that he is aware that the issue of vandalism has escalated very quickly over the last three weeks and he explained that repairs are taking place as soon as is practicable. He stated that vandalism has taken place at different times of day and night and at various locations across the district and some of the instances of vandalism are dangerous and have meant that it has been necessary to advise the Police. Councillor Murphy added that the parks have always suffered from vandalism but on a far smaller scale than what has been experienced recently. Councillor Topgood asked whether the Police are increasing their patrols and questioned what steps are taking place to rectify the situation? Councillor Murphy stated that although the Police are being advised of the issues and instances of vandalism taking place, there is never any form of response received. Councillor Topgood expressed the opinion that the Council should pressurise the Police into undertaking more regular patrols and added that, whilst he appreciates that there is antisocial behaviour everywhere, the issues and instances in the local parks are now becoming very serious and it is going to cost a great deal of money to rectify the damage. Councillor Miscandlon stated that it is his understanding that there are liaison meetings between Councillors and the Police and it may be advantageous to raise the issue with one

of the members who can then raise it with the local Neighbourhood Inspector.

2. Councillor Sutton stated that two years ago he had raised the subject of the Forgotten Corners Local Highway Improvement (LHI) project and at that time he had asked Councillor Seaton whether there was the possibility of the Council joining the group. He stated that at that time Cambridgeshire County Council Officers had advised that each member of the bid would receive a financial contribution and added that it has now become apparent that the financial contribution is no longer expected. Councillor Sutton stated that the six interested authorities, including this Council, were all willing to contribute £1666, which was very much appreciated. Councillor Sutton stated that there has been a recent notification that costs have substantially increased and there is likely to be a financial shortfall of £5,000 to £10,000 despite in the region of £56,000 being raised outside of the bid and he asked Councillor Boden whether consideration could be given to the Council contributing towards that shortfall, so that the scheme can move forward? Councillor Boden stated that he was disappointed to hear about the issues concerning the funding and added that, even though it is a highways matter and not a Council issue, he was very pleased to support the LHI project along with other authorities due to its importance and he stated that it is regrettable that after a great deal of work it was determined that it was not possible to have a joint LHI project. He stated that with regards to the shortfall, he would be grateful if he can be supplied with further details concerning the current status of the project, including the costs, associated risks and the shortfall so that further consideration can be given to the request.

C8/21 MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR TIERNEY

Councillor Tierney presented a motion with regard to the Fens Biosphere. He expressed the opinion that the recent member seminar concerning the Biosphere in his view did not provide any information and that, after listening to the three speakers, it appeared that the same questions were asked, and the responses received were very vague and it was not clear how the Biosphere would benefit Fenland and what the consequences would be for Fenland. Councillor Tierney expressed the opinion the motion highlights the views of other members and he asked members to support it.

Councillor Boden seconded the motion and Councillor Miscandlon opened the motion for debate.

1. Councillor Boden stated that everybody wants to see improved biodiversity, less pollution and more open spaces and added that many of these aspects are already provided or being planned for by Local Authorities or other bodies. He added that it is very unclear as to what additionality would be created by the Fens Biosphere Project. Councillor Boden expressed the view that by having the designation of a biosphere could be valuable and helpful in terms of tourism and reputation and Fenland is the only Local Authority which falls totally within the planned area of the Fens Biosphere. He stated that he does not know, as it is currently constituted, where the Fens Biosphere would go and how far it will go. Councillor Boden questioned whether input would commence with the Planning process and whether representations would be made regarding Economic Growth or with the required new Infrastructure. He stated that all these questions were asked, but answers were never provided. Councillor Boden stated that he is not against the concept of the Biosphere, but it is what comes with it which needs to be limited. He stated that it is pleasing to know that in the last few days the Biosphere Steering Group have contacted the Council, asking for discussions to take place to discuss the project and he expressed the view that it is a shame that the discussions have not taken place previously. Councillor Boden welcomes the opportunity for discussions to take place to see if there are any areas of commonality, which he is sure will happen, however, the current proposal is so uncertain and open ended, it would be irresponsible for a Local Authority to agree and adopt such a proposal.
2. Councillor Count stated that he would like the newly formed administration at the County Council, Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Councillor Elisa Meschini, Councillor Tom Sanderson, and Cambridgeshire County Council Officer Executive to be added to the circulation list. He

stated that the newly formed administration has already publicised their plans to oppose the Fens Biosphere across the whole area, however, that opposition does need the agreement of all relevant parties. Councillor Count stated that the previous administration had requested extra time during debate to consider further information with regard to the proposal, however, the new administration have disregarded this request. He expressed the view that the Fens Biosphere does have aspirations, including biodiversity and green space, and he has been looking at this project for over four years since they first approached the Combined Authority for extra money to keep themselves in a position where they could promote the Fens Biosphere. Councillor Count added that at that time the same questions concerning the project were asked and four years later there are still no answers and he expressed the view that it does appear to be a branding exercise in terms of the benefits, however, the disbenefits will place a number of restrictions which will be placed on the area which do not line up with the aspirations of the local people and it appears to only suit people outside of the area to determine that the proposal is the best thing for Fenland. He stated that at the recent Annual Council meeting of Cambridgeshire County Council, the new administration spoke at length with regard to the importance of collaboration and communication and their press statement appeared to state what their intentions are for Fenland by imposing the biosphere on the district, when in fact there have been no discussions. He stated that he cannot agree to the biosphere from the evidence he has seen to date, as the benefits are far outweighed by the tenuous links that have been stated with regard to what will happen to the area. Councillor Count expressed the view that Fenland is a great place to live, and the Biosphere is not necessary to achieve what can be attained anyway and he will support the motion.

3. Councillor Benney stated that he attended the seminar and expressed the opinion that the representatives who presented to members on the Biosphere did not seem to understand their subject matter. He added that they kept referring to Fenland as special and he stated that Fenland and the whole of East Anglia is special as it feeds the rest of the country. Councillor Benney expressed the view that their proposal would be economically harmful to the area as they referred to tourism being a replacement for farming. He expressed the view that Fenland is a farming area, and an economy cannot be dismantled that is good on the hope that something else will better it. Councillor Benney added that the proposal would be very detrimental to the core business of the area which is agriculture and to jobs and he fully supports the motion.
4. Councillor Sutton stated that he would support the motion if he felt that the fears of other members would come to fruition, but he does not. He added that the motion is incorrect in three places as it refers in Section 8 as David Thomas being the Chairman, which he is not, in Section 14 it states that at the seminar members were wholly against the proposal, which is not true, and at Section 18 it states that the proposal does not have community support, however, there is no evidence to support this fact. Councillor Sutton added that the Middle Level Commissioners administer over 30 Internal Drainage Boards (IDB) and he has been advised that every one of those IDB's support the proposal in principle. He expressed the opinion that the motion is slightly premature, and a decision should not be made currently as the application will not be submitted until the last quarter of 2022 and further discussion and information is needed before a decision is made. Councillor Sutton referred to the earlier comments made by Councillor Count regarding the new administration and made reference to their press statement, which does not categorically state that they agree with the proposal and have stated that they will work with them and other partners and he expressed the view that is what the Council should be doing.
5. Councillor Cornwell stated that the idea of the biosphere has been in place for some time and if it was ever to come to fruition, in his opinion, it would have been in place by now. He added that the Internal Drainage Boards that he is a representative for the Council on have only noted the report. Councillor Cornwell expressed the opinion that unless there is further movement on the proposal within the next three months there is no merit in moving the

project forward. He expressed the view that he does not understand what the benefits are in the proposal.

6. Councillor Hoy stated that she did not know what the Biosphere was initially, and had been looking forward to the seminar, so she was able to obtain a better understanding of the proposal, however, that did not happen. She added that the biosphere representatives stated that the Fens have no real green space which she finds meaningless. Councillor Hoy referred to a response she was given with regard to a question she had asked concerning re wetting the Fens and the reply she was given in her opinion was evasive. She referred to a BBC Radio Cambridgeshire debate that she had listened to earlier where Pippa Haylings from South Cambridgeshire District Council was quite animated over the topic of rewetting the Fens who had stated that it is something that should be done as the carbon capture is needed. Councillor Hoy stated that those comments worried her and added that one of the aspects that the people of the Fens should be proud of is the amount of agriculture and farming in the area, which help to feed people. She added that it was interesting listening to some of the Councillors at the seminar, who have links to the farming community and to hear their expertise and knowledge was interesting. Councillor Hoy stated that regarding the point made by Councillor Sutton about supporting the proposal in principle is that sometimes the contributing factors associated with proposals and projects may change in the future. She added that further questions and requests for detail have been requested, but there has been no further information received. Councillor Hoy made reference to the Rainbow Coalition at Cambridgeshire County Council with regard to the fact that they are not in support of the proposal and stated that at a previous County Council meeting Councillor Lorna Dupre was very much in support in everything she said with regard to the Biosphere and had made reference to the fact that Fenland District Council did not know enough about the proposal.
7. Councillor Booth stated that he agrees with the comments of Councillor Sutton and added that he attended a presentation from the Biosphere project representatives held at North Level Internal Drainage Board. He expressed the opinion that he was sceptical of what the obligations would be to the area if the Biosphere was adopted and after asking questions and carrying out some further research it has become apparent that the project would have no legislative power or impositions on the local area and would only be a designation. Councillor Booth added that the only way the Biosphere could enter discussions with the Planning Team is if the emerging Fenland Local Plan states that the Biosphere should be recognised. Councillor Booth expressed the opinion that there is a need for further information before the motion is put forward and he added that there is more background information that Councillors need to be made aware of and it is not necessarily the Fens Biosphere that could bring about changes referred to in the motion, such as re wetting the Fens, it is also Central Government. Councillor Booth made reference to George Eustice, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, who has published the Peat Action Plan which refers to re wetting of the Fens to bring peat back into better condition. He stated that Central Government are taking this very seriously and have set up a specific taskforce which will specifically look at the Fens. Councillor Booth stated that there is the assumption that the Internal Drainage Boards are dormant, however, he expressed the opinion that they still manage the water very well in our area, including dealing with the recent extreme weather events where some of the pumping stations were 40mls away from being flooded in the North Level catchment area. He added that the drainage boards are reviewing how the area can be protected against flooding and other possible mitigation needs to be considered, including the need to recognise that there needs to be change and the realisation that the drainage boards are going to operate differently with regard to the Peat Action Plan and also the fact that tax will no longer be able to be claimed for red diesel costs, which will have a direct financial impact. Councillor Booth expressed the view that the motion is too premature, and he agrees with Councillor Boden, that there should be further dialogue. He stated that the possibilities it could present is about more investment and he expressed the view that the Council is being poorly served by the Combined Authority

regarding Agritech up until now as there has only been one application to date in the Fenland Area for £68,000. Councillor Booth stated that the motion refers to the lack of public engagement, but consultation took place for the Wisbech Garden Town Project which was submitted to the Government having only consulted 150 people on one day in Wisbech Market Place, and that report stated the project had the overwhelming support of the Fenland, which in his opinion is incorrect. He stated that the Biosphere Project has probably consulted more people than the Garden Town project did and stated that the Wisbech 2020 Vision recently listed the Fens Biosphere as being on the Council's agenda moving forward as it is being listed as project that the Council wants to take forward in one document and there is now a motion to oppose it.

8. Councillor Topgood stated that during the debate it has been mentioned that the Biosphere Project are not looking for any public funding and he asked Councillor Tierney for clarity as the documentation following the seminar states that the project are looking for funding only for the public consultation process? Councillor Tierney stated that he does not recall and added that the information presented was so vague it was hard to tell.
9. Councillor Murphy stated that he is still unsure about the detail of the Biosphere and he asked at the time how much it was going to cost the Council. He added that the representatives from the Biosphere have never been able to answer any questions or provide the information requested. Councillor Murphy expressed the opinion that Fenland is a unique area and that is how it should stay, and Fenland does not want a World Heritage Site.
10. Councillor Sutton stated that the funding for the project so far has derived from the National Lottery and at this stage there has been no request for funding from Fenland.
11. Councillor Count stated that when the Biosphere project presented to the Combined Authority, there was a direct request for funding of public money.
12. Councillor Lynn stated that at the seminar he questioned the representative over funding, and he was advised that they needed the Council to join with them so that they could apply to the Government for future funding.
13. Councillor Tierney stated that Councillor Booth has advised the Biosphere Project would not have any legislative powers and although that may be the case to start with, the same could be said for the Centre for Disease Control, however, that agency has very much been in control globally for the last year. He added that when an emergency is declared, power is directed to all different types of agencies and bodies to deal with. Councillor Tierney referred to the comments made with regard to the Wisbech Garden Town Project and stated that many members had stated at the time that they were not ready to support the project as it was felt that there had not been enough public consultation and he added that he never supported the project.
14. Councillor Tierney referred to the point made by Councillor Sutton with regard to waiting to see what happens. He stated that there are consequences to taking no action and he added that the representatives who came to the seminar asked members whether they supported the proposal and, in his opinion, as Fenland were the authority they needed to have on side with the project he would have expected them to come fully prepared with information and answers, however, this was not the case. Councillor Tierney expressed the view that there is nothing stopping the representatives of the project from coming back to the Council in the future with clearer or different proposals, which would give the Council the opportunity to reconsider, however, based on what members were told, there was not enough information provided to enable members to make an informed decision.
15. Councillor Booth stated that he wished to respond to the point that Councillor Tierney made with regard to the Wisbech Garden Town Proposal. He stated that contained within

documentation provided to members it stated that 68% of respondents supported the proposal and that data was submitted by the Council to the Government as part of the submission bid and request for funding and as part of that it stated that it had public support.

A recorded vote was taken on the Motion:

In Favour: Councillors Benney, Boden, J Clark, S Clark, Connor, Cornwell, Count, Mrs Davies, Mrs J French, Miss K French, Hay, Hoy, Humphrey, Lynn, Maul, Miscandlon, Mockett, Murphy, Purser, Rackley, Skoulding, Tierney, Topgood, Wallwork and Wicks.

Against: Councillors Booth, Patrick and Sutton.

The motion was approved.

C9/21 COMMITTEE BALANCE, POLITICAL BALANCE AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS.

Members considered and Committee Structure, Political Balance and Allocation of Seats report and received an update in relation to the Committee Structure.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED to:

- **increase the number of committee seats on the following committees to achieve political proportionality at an individual committee level in addition to globally across all committees:**
 - **Overview and Scrutiny Panel**
 - **Planning Committee**
 - **Licensing Committee**
 - **Audit and Risk Management Committee**
 - **Conduct Committee**
- **maintain the committees and panels set out in Appendix A to the report for the 2021/2022 municipal year**
- **continue with the terms of reference set out at Part 3 of the Council's Constitution in relation to the committees and panels**
- **the allocation of seats and position of Chairman and Vice-Chairman on those committees subject to political balance arrangements**
- **the appointment to seats allocated to include co-opted and non-members**
- **the list of Outside Bodies and allocation of seats in accordance with political balance as set out in Appendix C of the report for 2021/22, with appointments to be made at a subsequent Cabinet meeting**
- **delegate to the Monitoring Officer to make the appropriate changes to the Constitution.**

C10/21 COMBINED AUTHORITY MEMBERSHIP AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS

Members considered the Combined Authority Membership and Other Appointments report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden drew members attention to 3.5 of the report where it states that he is the substantive member for the Housing and Committees Committee, with Councillor Mrs Laws as the substitute member and he asked for it to be noted and amended to reflect that Councillor Mrs Laws should be shown as the substantive member and he is the substitute member.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED that:

- **the following appointments to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority be made for the municipal year 2021/2022:**
 - **Council's appointee to the Combined Authority Board – Leader of the Council,**

with substitute Deputy Leader

- **Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Councillors Hay and Miscandlon, with substitutes being Councillor Tierney and one vacancy**
- **Audit and Governance Committee – Councillor Benney, with substitute being Councillor Hoy**
- **Employment Committee – Councillor Miss French, with substitute being Councillor Mrs Davis**
- **Housing and Communities Committee – Councillor Mrs Laws, with substitute being Councillor Boden**
- **Skills Committee – Councillor Seaton, with substitute being Councillor Mason**
- **Transport and Infrastructure Committee – Councillor Seaton, with substitute being Councillor Boden**
- **to authorise the Chief Executive to make any amendments to the appointments to the Combined Authority Board, all existing committees and any new committees which may be created in consultation with relevant Group Leader at any time throughout the municipal year.**

C11/21 REVIEW OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME

Members considered the Members' Allowances Scheme Review report presented by Amanda Orchard, the Chairman of Independent Remuneration Panel.

Members made comments as follows:

1. Councillor Booth stated that he will support the report and added that the changes are modest which in his opinion is appropriate in the current situation. He added that although the Parish Councils were also consulted the report makes no reference to them and he asked when that information will be made available? Anna Goodall advised that the information will be available imminently.
2. Councillor Boden stated that it is important that the proposals detailed within the report are adhered to and he expressed the view that he has seen some small inconsistencies within the report, one of which he has noted by virtue of the fact that there is a position with additional responsibilities, which is now in receipt of a lower amount of allowance, than previously, which he knows was adjusted for mathematical reasons, but he finds it unfortunate. He stated that after reading the report, he has concluded that Councillor Sutton was correct when he had referred to the previous Independent Remuneration Panel report two years ago, with Councillor Sutton making the point that every four years following the elections, members allowances should be determined and as there is a democratic deficit in the process. Councillor Boden stated that on reflection he agrees with the view of Councillor Sutton and he added that he will be reviewing the process along with other members, to ascertain whether there is a more directive scheme, which is still legally compliant and where it may be possible for the electors of Fenland to know in advance what the expectation is of an Independent Remuneration Panel review.
3. Councillor Mrs French referred to page 68 of the report and questioned why the Independent Remuneration Panel are referring to electric charging points in their review and she added that she would like that aspect removed from the report, as it has nothing to do with the panel. She added that the subject of Civil Parking Enforcement is currently being looked into by the Council and she added that she has been advised that the £400,000 of funding which has been allocated by the Combined Authority for the project is still in place. Councillor Miscandlon added that Whittlesey Town Council have recently installed two electric charging points and they are not chargeable to members of the public as they are powered by solar panels on the roof of the Town Council offices. Councillor Mrs French stated that the project is being looked into for consideration across the whole of the district.
4. Councillor Tierney expressed the opinion that the report is reasonable, but he has always promised his constituents that he would never vote for a pay increase in members

allowances and for that reason he will abstain from any vote.

5. Councillor Hoy expressed the opinion, that looking forward, consideration should be given to forming a cross party working group when looking at member allowances and for those members who sit on the Combined Authority. She added that she can understand why the panel have recommended that those members who sit on the Combined Authority do not receive any allowance, because when it was set up, discussions took place with regard as to whether an allowance was paid and it was decided that an allowance should not be paid, however, that changed as time went on and an allowance was paid. She added that as it appears in the panel's report it may be shows a clearer picture of what the members actual wishes were when the Combined Authority was formed. Councillor Hoy added that she is aware how much time is spent by those members who sit on the Combined Authority and to not pay those members an allowance seems unfair, but to pay them would go against the decision made initially and, therefore, looking forward this should be an aspect of the scheme that should be reviewed.
6. Councillor Sutton stated that he has always had the opinion that the scheme should always be an independent review carried out by independent people and, in his opinion, their findings should be agreed. He stated that he will support the report and thanked the panel for their involvement and work in putting the report together.
7. Councillor Wallwork stated that she has read the review and added that the recommendations and increases appear to be fair. She added that she takes great honour in being a Councillor and agrees with the comments made by Councillor Tierney and for that reason she will not support the report.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Booth and Council AGREED:

- **the conclusions and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) in respect of its review of the current Members' Allowances Scheme, to come into effect from 1 April 2021**
- **to authorise the Monitoring Officer to make such typographical amendments as are necessary to produce clean text copies of the Constitution.**

(Councillors Lynn, Tierney and Topgood requested it be recorded that they abstained from voting on this item)

C12/21 ELECTORAL REVIEW FOR FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Members considered the Electoral Review for Fenland District Council report presented by Councillor Boden.

Members made comments as follows:

1. Councillor Booth stated that whilst he does not disagree with the content of the report and the mathematical formula as set out, he expressed the view that he does have concerns over the consequences of the review. He added that there is potentially going to be a review of Local Government, which will include a white paper due to be published and he questioned as to what the impact will be of that, if the electoral review is carried out. Councillor Booth also stated that previously when the Council undertook a boundary review, a year later the Boundary Commission undertook a review of the County Council divisions, which led to difficulties with regard to warding arrangements of surrounding parishes and wards within the district boundaries. He expressed the view that it may be better to undertake a combined County Council and District Council ward boundary review, but he realises it would be problematic as the County Council would need to be in agreement.
2. Councillor Boden stated that since the 1880's there have been 20 white papers that have been produced with regard to the review of Local Government and as a result there have been approximately four actual changes. He added that the point Councillor Booth made with regard to reviewing the County Council and District Council boundaries at the same

time is a logical approach and it is something that used to take place, however, it has now been agreed that County reviews and District reviews will now be undertaken separately, which, in his opinion, is a far less effective and efficient process.

3. Councillor Sutton asked Councillor Boden if he could advise him of what the aim and objective of the review is, and whether it includes reducing the number of members? He added that during the evolution of the Combined Authority, members all stated that four tiers of Local Government was too many and members were led to believe that the County Council or the District Council would be abolished and he has been an advocate of unitary authorities for a long time. Councillor Sutton questioned whether the outgoing Mayor had looked into that proposal? Councillor Boden stated that the process of a Local Government Boundary Commission for England Review involves firstly a request to be made for a scientifically produced estimate of the likely electorates due to be in place in 5 years' time. He added that consideration is then given with regard to Council size and when that takes place the Local Government Boundary Commission for England consults with all councillors and many others to determine based on the needs that there is in the area and the demand that there is within the Local Authority what the appropriate Council size is. Councillor Boden stated that to suggest any numbers would be premature until the electorate numbers for 5 years' time is known, but in his personal view a smaller Council would be better than the current size and he added that further discussion will take place at the second stage of the review. He stated that with regard to the four tiers of Local Government, along with the boundaries of the Council and the Town and Parish Council, they do not form part of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England review so are not allowed to change. Councillor Boden expressed the opinion that four tiers of Local Government is at least one too many and he would look for a change to that. He added that, in his view, changes to Government policy that have taken place in the last two years have not been conducive in his opinion when looking at the form of localism that he would like to see when there is a review to the tiers of Local Government.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and Council AGREED to approach the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to request an Electoral Review of Fenland District Ward Boundaries in time for this review to inform the 2023 Fenland District Council elections.

C13/21 RESOLUTION TO APPROVE REASONS FOR ABSENCE UNDER S.85 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Members considered the resolution to approve reasons for absence under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 report and amendment presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden stated that if any member is unable to attend a meeting due to Covid 19 reasons or if a meeting has been postponed or cancelled due to Covid 19 reasons then that will count as a qualifying reason for the six-month qualification to start rolling again.

Councillor Boden drew members attention to the tabled item which states that in respect of any of the first five bullet points in paragraph 5.2, being a reason for non-attendance at a relevant meeting, a member must advise Member Services in writing in advance of that meeting that one or more of those five reasons applies in relation to their non-attendance.

Councillor Boden stated that it had been agreed that an additional reason be added as provided by Councillor Booth, which would be listed as bullet point 6

- Has caring responsibilities that cannot be catered for due to Covid-19

Councillor Boden drew members attention to the tabled item which states that in respect of any of the first six bullet points in paragraph 5.2, being a reason for non-attendance at a relevant meeting,

a member must advise Member Services in writing in advance of that meeting that one or more of those six reasons applies in relation to their non-attendance.

Members made comments as follows:

1. Councillor Mrs French expressed the opinion that given the circumstances she thinks that the proposal is totally appropriate.
2. Councillor Sutton stated that he supports the proposal and it is wholly appropriate.
3. Councillor Cornwell stated that the proposal makes perfect sense and added that both himself and Councillor Boden both agreed that this was the right thing to do.
4. Councillor Hoy stated that she is pleased to see the amendment included, which gives members the opportunity to make contact to state that they are unwell.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Booth and members AGREED

- **in relation to each and every member, as a reason for failure to attend any meeting of the Council, Cabinet, Committee or Sub-Committee (“a Relevant Meeting”) between 8 May 2021 and the day after its 2022 Annual General Meeting, the circumstances set out below, as a reason for non-attendance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972**
- **the circumstances which comprise approved reasons for non-attendance at a Relevant Meeting are because the member:**
 1. **Has contracted or been infected by COVID-19**
 2. **Has tested positive for COVID-19**
 3. **Is suspected of having or suspects that he/she has contracted or been infected by COVID-19**
 4. **Has concerns that they may contract or become infected with COVID-19**
 5. **Is in quarantine or self-isolating in relation to COVID-19**
 6. **Has caring responsibilities that cannot be catered for due to COVID-19**
 7. **Is unable to attend the Relevant Meeting because the meeting is cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19**
- **in respect of the reasonable reasons 1-6 above for non-attendance, the member must advise Member Services in writing in advance of that meeting which one or more of those six reasons applies to their non-attendance.**

5.58 pm

Chairman



Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

September 2021
(For performance in July 2021)

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
Health



**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
Andrew Lynn**

Portfolio Holder for
Licensing &
Community Safety



**Councillor
Peter Murphy**

Portfolio Holder for
Open Spaces, Street
Scene & Waste
Management



**Councillor
Chris Seaton**

Portfolio Holder for
Social Mobility &
Heritage



**Councillor Steve
Tierney**

Portfolio Holder for
Transformation,
Communication &
Environment

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)

April 1st 2021 to July 31st 2021

The Council has undertaken 21 positive interventions in response to new requests for service for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) across the district.

The Council has also investigated 38 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	20	27
March	1	2
Chatteris	1	1
Whittlesey	0	3
Villages	0	5 Benwick =1 Doddington =1 Eastrea = 1 Elm =1 Manea = 1

Private Sector Housing enforcement 01 April 2021 - 31st July 2021

	Numbers served	Raised charge total £	Income received £
Improvement Notice	0	0	480
Prohibition	2	480	0
CPN (Intent)	10	49,866	N/A
CPN (Final)	1	3,450	0
Other	0	0	0
HMO applications	7	5,250	5,250

In order to recover the outstanding Civil Penalty Notice debts, a new process has been finalised with the High Court Bailiffs, who are now in the process of transferring the oldest court order into a writ to be executed in order for the debt to be recovered.

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

The target for 2021/22 is to bring 70 properties back into use.

The Annual property questionnaires have been sent to all known empty properties requesting an update and the officer and ARP are currently working through the responses to update the council tax system.

The officer has received the first application for suspension of the premium council tax rate. The property was purchased as a renovation project with a view to placing it on the rental market. The owner is experienced in renovation and hopes to have the project completed and the property tenanted by the end of September 2021.

Properties brought back into use between 1 April 2021 and 31 July 2021

LTEP - Long term empty with premium charge (2yrs+)	LTE- Long term empty (6-23mths)
12	14

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 Housing Options team has prevented 134 households from becoming homeless since April 2021. The target for the year is 200.

The service is anticipating a significant uplift in approaches once current financial support ceases along with the easing of the extended notice periods and court action resuming. These measures were imposed by Government amidst the pandemic. We have started to notice an increase in B&B use for both June and July.

The team continues to work closely with households, landlords and other partners to resolve issues before notices are served. We are also encouraging early engagement with a variety of partners as a commitment to refer alongside the statutory duty to

refer mechanism.

Number of enquiries Year To Date (YTD) – 590 (Q1 – 429)

Advice only given YTD– 342 (Q1 – 271)

Preventions achieved YTD – 134 (Q1 – 109)

The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing Options work (calculated as total preventions / prevention and relief duties owed) - 60% YTD = 134 out of 224. Target is 60% (Q1 - 63% [109/174])

Figures correct up to end of July 2021.

Deliver four Golden Age Fairs across the district (Cllr Sam Clark)

On 13th July we held our first Golden Age Partnership meeting online via Zoom with over 30 Golden Age partners in attendance including Alzheimer's UK, Living sport, NHS, Cam Sight, Citizen's Advice, Versus Arthritis, Breathe Easy, Care Network, Age UK, U3A, CPFT, Healthy You, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Bobby Scheme.

During the meeting, partners were split into 5 groups via breakout rooms and given opportunity to feedback about their experiences over the last 18 months during the pandemic, the lessons they have learned, how Golden Age can promote their organisation and feedback on the existing format of Golden Age Fairs.

Feedback was gathered from facilitators of each group and this information will now be analysed by the Golden Age Team to inform and shape the future of The Golden Age Fairs.

We look forward to our next event which is taking place at The Whittlesey Big Bash on Sunday September 12th between 2-4 pm at Whittlesey Manor Leisure Centre

Increase the use of local open spaces and collaborate with local activity providers and other partners to address health inequalities (Cllr Sam Clark)

Green social prescribing is being trialled in several areas across the UK. It is anticipated that this work will roll out in Fenland as part of a CCG / Public Health initiative in coming years. In the meantime, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Parks project will run some trail sessions across the County in coming months.

In Wisbech Park a living wall project is expected to use the wall of the public toilets to involve local people in a project where a framework of plant is attached to the building. This will enhance the park, whilst also involving people in a creative activity.

Other Projects:

Leisure Update (Cllr Sam Clark)

Freedom Leisure continues to provide an excellent service to local communities with friendly, clean facilities run in a Covid secure manner that are seeing a return of members and swimmers.

Current performance exceeds expectations. Whilst Fenland's contract is performing particularly positive when compared with other Freedom facilities, it appears that across the leisure sector recovery is taking place in a similar manner. Current membership levels are around 80% of pre-covid levels and slowly getting higher. The expected change to covid regulations on 19 July should see a slight increase in the rate of improvement, as fitness classes and swim pool use will return to normal capacities.

Where local managers have done a very good job is with junior swimming lessons. Fenland's Freedom Managers have used the pool as flexibly as possible and swim instructors have supported the changes. This means that the pent up demand of children to learn to swim has been maximised and income levels now exceed pre-covid levels.

One area of weakness across the sector is casual (pay and play) income. Income levels are still low due to capacity restrictions in place and the appetite of people to take part in indoor activities whilst the weather is good.

Freedom continues to make use of local feeds on Facebook and other social channels to encourage more users to take up sessions in the centres, or return to their old regime.

The National Leisure Recovery Fund grant that FDC received from the Government to use to support Freedom was split across 2020/21 and the current financial year. This total grant of £224,000 may be all that is required in the current year to support operational costs of the facilities, whilst recovery continues. This is a more positive situation than anticipated at the turn of the year.

Love Wisbech Update (Cllr Andrew Lynn)

The collaboration of statutory organisations, Voluntary Community Sector and business in Wisbech continues to explore opportunities to consider issues that need additional support and then what opportunities exist to secure new funding and inward investment into the town to address it.

Word of the group is getting to partners who are proactively asking to present information to the group and the group then agree what can be done to support.

Example projects have included:

- A mental health support project to work with residents suffering mental health issues whilst waiting for an appointment to secure a service to help them.
- Received some communication advice to help increase the awareness and impact of the work which includes changing the name from I love Wisbech to Love Wisbech.
- Exploring how the collaboration can assist in reducing the number of smokers during a pregnancy.

The partnership supported the 'Walk a Mile in Their Shoes' event...Both women and men can suffer from Domestic Abuse. The event took place in Wisbech park on the 8th August with the Wisbech Mayor leading the walk.

Pride In Fenland Awards (Cllr Sam Clark)

Pride in Fenland will be held online again this year in November 2021 and volunteers can be nominated for the following categories; young person in the community, community group and good friend. Pride in Fenland will be launched in the Fenland Citizen using photographs of winners of the 2020 awards and will take place week commencing 25th August.

There is no separate COVID-19 category, but each category will be open for COVID and non-COVID related nominations making sure that volunteers who continued helping others despite the pandemic, rather than because of the pandemic, are given the opportunity to be nominated and recognised. There will of course be a focus on volunteers during the pandemic at the event itself.

We would like to focus on villages and rural areas to begin with when leaflet dropping and a What's Breaking message will be sent in due course to all staff asking if they're able to deliver leaflets in their own area/street to help boost nominations.

Health & Wellbeing Update (including Covid-19 Outbreak Plan implementation) (Cllr Sam Clark)

Local covid outbreak management plan

During the Covid pandemic the Health and Wellbeing Board have suspended their usual meeting diary so resources may focus on the pandemic.

The Local Outbreak Engagement Board meets to support the outbreak management plan and the last meeting was 26th July 2021.

The meeting papers can be found on the County Council website here: [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/Document.ashx?cmis.uk.com)

The Board received an update about the current epidemiology, vaccination and testing statistics and noted the situation was stable.

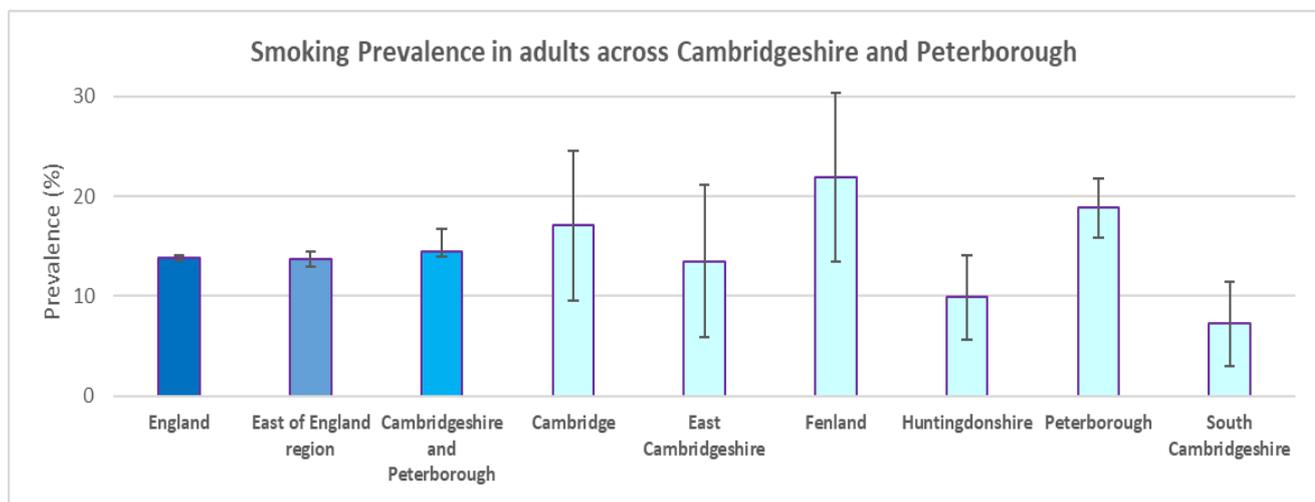
Vaccination levels in Fenland are good with increased levels of vaccination across all age groups.

Further information can be viewed here: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

Cases of Covid 19 in Fenland remain below the England and regional average however case numbers continue to rise. Planning for winter support is ongoing. Commitment to the outbreak management plan continues with its current workstreams.

Smoking cessation – a refreshed approach

The local tobacco control alliance for Cambridgeshire has refreshed plans to address the prevalence of smoking with an early focus on smoking in pregnancy. The local tobacco treatment programme has identified that smoking in Fenland remains high at more than 20% of the adult population.



The proposal is for the NHS to make a significant contribution to making England a smoke free society.

Suggested initial prioritisation plan:

1. Maternity smoke-free pathways across acute providers
2. Mental Health and prioritised acute hospital pathways

3. Remainder of acute hospital pathways

Feedback will be provided through the usual routes including the health protection board.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 21/22	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP1	Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	226	250	59	
CELP2	NEW INDICATOR The proportion (%) of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing options work (%)	N/A	Baseline	60%	
CELP3	Number of empty properties brought back into use	87	70	27	
CELP4	Amount of New Homes Bonus achieved as a result of bringing empty homes back into use	£79,217	£50,000	N/A (December 21)	N/A
CELP5	Customer satisfaction with Golden Age events (as per event)	298	200		
CELP6	Number of Active Health local sessions per year that improve community health	NEW	600		
CELP7	Customer feedback across Freedom Leisure facilities in Fenland	NEW	80%		

Key:	
	Within 5% of target
	5-10% below target
	10% or more below target

Comments
CELP 1 – still on target as the profile has more reactive complaints during winter period

Environment

Projects from Business Plan:

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

2 fixed penalty notices have been issued for cars parked on a market day. As the parking area becomes busier additional signs and information about the risk of a parking penalty have been put up in and around the market place.

Following evidence found at fly tipped sites in March, Whittlesey and Leverington, 5 formal interviews under caution have been posted.

A case is pending at Court for a fly tipping offence where the suspect failed to pay a Fixed Penalty Notice issued for fly tipping in Wisbech.

A Fixed Penalty Notice has been issued for a littering offence in Wisbech. The FPN was paid within the deadline to avoid this proceeding to court.

16 abandoned vehicles have been reported in July. This resulted in 2 vehicles being removed by our contractor. Both vehicles had significant damage so were removed immediately.

A new Tidy Fenland Campaign will start in August as part of our business support activities to ensure a successful progression through Step 4 of the government's roadmap. Businesses will be offered support to control litter outside of the premises and advice in relation to duty of care requirements.

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

This month both March and Wisbech event committees have met and taken the decision to resume the March Christmas Market and Wisbech Christmas Fayre which will be held this year on Sunday 5th December and Sunday 12th December respectively. There was enthusiasm by many volunteers including the Town Councils, Lions, Rotary, Horsefair, Wisbech Library, March Society and more to stage the best events yet; and plans were also agreed to stage some pre- events to encourage visitors back into the high street under the Welcome Back banner.

The Council will support these groups to rebuild the Fenland Four Seasons events and

to provide opportunities for businesses to trade again. Significant work has been done to ensure that we do so safely and within government guidelines. Bookings have been officially opened and will be further promoted in the Autumn.

Deliver the Recycling Action Plan (Cllr Peter Murphy)

Throughout the pandemic the amount of recycling presented in customers blue bins increased in line with other waste streams. Even with the additional materials the quality has been maintained well and 92% of the materials were suitable for recycling. Over the past year these materials have generated a total net income of more than £300,000 to support services.



Not everyone gets it right and the collection crews are rejecting blue bins where incorrect materials are obvious, and collection is not made. As a result, more than 1,200 blue bins have been refused since April. Each of these properties were supplied with a reminder letter advising of what can go in their blue bin and how to get more information.

Targeted positive campaign work from supervisors has seen 1,450 blue bins independently checked and information delivered. Of these 496 (35%) were very good, containing all the correct materials, and received a 'thank you' tag and 58 were found to contain incorrect materials.



The very popular Fenland Bin App has been updated and now alongside up to date information on collections, includes direct links to report missed collections, purchase a bulky collection and find recycling information on the Getting IT Sorted website; www.gettingitsorted.org.

The Getting IT Sorted volunteer's website has attracted 3,250 hits April - June, the top five enquiries were how to recycle "Shredded Paper", "Clothes", "Bubble Wrap", "Tin Foil" and "Yogurt Pots". Information on these materials will be included within future social media campaigns.

The Getting IT Sorted social media posts attracted 19,897 views and 1,244 reactions April - June. Many directed customers to the volunteer pages of the website where they can find a range of recycling information and pledge to recycle more. More than 1,600 customers have taken this pledge now and receive a regular email from the volunteers around all things recycling. Fenland District Council social media has also shared the Getting It Sorted recycling messages and over the last quarter these have reached more than 19,000 people.

The letters, targeted positive campaign work, bin app updates and social media work are all directed at targeting at providing customers with access to the correct information and to tackle the largest single issue of contamination, which is customers not washing and emptying containers prior to recycling them.

Deliver a competitive trade waste service (Cllr Peter Murphy & Cllr Tierney)

Many customers are returning to business as usual and we are supporting them by re-initiating their waste and recycling services as promptly and smoothly as possible.

The council wide My Fenland project has seen the commercial waste services move transactions to the Bartec in-cab system that will allow for improved information retention and accurate billing based on real-time metrics.

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

Alongside our Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste partners (RECAP), the Council has responded to the Defra consultations on Extended Producer Responsibility proposals, Consistency of Collection and Deposit Return Scheme proposals for England. These will be considered by Government alongside all the other feedback and will influence the final stages of the Environment Bill as it goes through parliament in the autumn.

Review the current arrangements for parking enforcement in Fenland (Cllr Jan French)

The County Councils Highways and Transport committee met on 7th September and it was agreed that Fenland District Council could further progress plans for the introduction of CPE for the District. A full update will be taken to Cabinet in October.

Deliver the CCTV shared service with Peterborough City Council (Cllr Andrew Lynn)

The CCTV shared service has maintained its 100% service function across a 24/7 period – the CCTV service is the only council service that is delivered across 24 hours a day,

365 days a year.

Since April 2021, the CCTV service has been able to respond to 497 incidents across our four market towns including incidents relating to anti-social behaviour, criminal damage, violent crime, illegal drug use, possession of weapons and theft.

As a result of CCTV intervention this has led to 30 arrests being made by Cambridgeshire Police. This highlights the work CCTV services do to support the council and partners in responding to crime and disorder and helping to make our communities safer and reduce the fear of crime.

The CCTV service also continues to be pro-active in delivering services that helps reduce crime & disorder and anti-social behaviour by delivering regular camera patrols of our four market towns and other key locations. Since April 2021 the CCTV team have delivered 1,755 patrols. All patrols all conducted across the 24/7 period ensuring that no matter what time of day and night our local communities are being protected and that any issues or concerns are being identified as early as possible.

The CCTV service also provides the councils 'out of hours' telephone contact services for example, homelessness, stray and lost dogs, cleansing incidents, dangerous buildings and structures, environmental complaints, to name but a few areas. During April 2021, the CCTV service has responded to over 147 calls for services from our telephone contact service.

Other Projects:

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

Tivoli continues to deliver FDC's grass cutting service on schedule, with a good quality finish.

Despite a damp May and a sunny June meaning that grass has been growing very fast, Tivoli are on top of the contract and delivering as expected. Customer feedback has increased in recent weeks due to growing rates, however grass is being cut every two weeks, with our contractor having no capacity to increase this frequency, and FDC not being able to afford any frequency increase due to additional cost.

Street Lighting (Cllr Jan French)

Street Light Repairs & Maintenance

During the months of June and July, 22 streetlight faults were reported to the

Economic Growth & Assets (Engineering Team) and forwarded onto FDC's streetlight contractor for rectification. The low number of reported streetlight faults is a reflection on both the time of year with the later nights and also the investment currently being made in the street lighting stock.

Elm Parish Council have now joined the FDC streetlight repairs and maintenance contract, and a site-based asset data capture exercise of their lighting stock has been undertaken. Arrangements are being made to rebrand Elm Parish Councils streetlights with updated contact information to aid future fault reporting.

Capital Street Light Replacement Works

The streetlight replacement works continues to make progress and to date approximately 570 street lights have now either been replaced or upgraded to LED since commencing the replacement works in March 2020.

The Engineering Team are also co-ordinating streetlight replacement works on behalf of Gorefield, Christchurch, Tydd St Giles, Parson Drove and Newton Parish Councils.

It is anticipated that the replacement works are likely to be ongoing until the end of the year.

Getting it Sorted Volunteers Update (Cllr Peter Murphy)

Volunteers continue to work on spreading the message of recycling, even in these difficult times. A video in cooperation with Cambridgeshire Skills has been prepared by the volunteers to help provide a means for new volunteers across Cambridgeshire to complete an accredited training plan. In cooperation with partners, 290 food parcels delivered across the district contained recycling games and information on how to reduce waste and recycle more.

The Getting IT Sorted social media posts attracted 19,897 views and 1,244 reactions in the first quarter of the year. Many directed customers to the volunteer pages of the website where they can find a range of recycling information and pledge to recycle more. More than 1,600 customers have taken this pledge now and receive a regular email from the volunteers around all things recycling.

Fenland District Council social media has also shared the recycling messages, including some bespoke videos, and over the last quarter have reached almost 19,000 people.

Garden Waste Service Update (Cllr Peter Murphy)

Throughout the pandemic, core services continued with specific Covid measures in place to keep the team safe. Even with waste tonnages increasing significantly, customer satisfaction with our Garden Waste services has remained high at 99 percent.

The garden waste service was maintained through the past year, and proved popular as a result, with subscriptions at an all-time high of more than 22,900 in 2020/21, ensuring that the service remained cost neutral for a further year by generating sufficient income to support the service.

Already this current year we have more than 23,500 customers in place and the service is running smoothly, although a small number of customers have seen delays to sticker delivery and at times new bin deliveries. We have worked to support these customers and resolve any issues presented by the delivery delays.

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

The Recap partnership have responded to the range of Defra consultations on the Waste and Resources Strategy that have published over the summer. These provide further detailed proposals on how packaging producers can expect to provide funding for the collection and treatment of packaging that they place on the market in future, along with how Defra anticipates the Environment Bill will affect local authority collections when it is considered by Parliament in the autumn.

Community Safety Partnership Update (Cllr Andrew Lynn)

Scams and Cyber Crime

On 13/05/2021 the partnership delivered a Scams and Cybercrime workforce development session via MS Teams. Charlotte Homent from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Against Scams Partnership (CAPASP) and Nigel Sutton, Fraud and Cyber Security Advisor from Cambridgeshire Constabulary delivered the session.

It was attended by 40 front line professionals including staff from third sector organisations. The training provided information and advice on current scams and cybercrime methods being used by criminals, advice on how to avoid becoming a victim, information on reporting and how to support potential victims they meet

through their work.

Modern Day Slavery Engagement Session

A Modern-Day Slavery engagement event was completed in June in partnership with Cambridgeshire Constabulary's exploitation team. This is available to view via the CSP webpage. [\(CSP\) - Fenland District Council](#)

Nick Webber from the exploitation team explained the most prevalent types of modern-day slavery that affect Fenland and how the police work closely with Fenland District Council and other agencies to combat this

Newsletter

The 8th edition CSP Newsletter is soon to be published, reporting on the activities of the CSP. This will be available on the CSP webpage and be distributed to partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors.

In this edition there will be updates on workforce development sessions, information about doorstep scams and rogue trading.

An update on the Loan Sharks awareness project with information about our partners and delivery activities.

Plus, COVID support, advice and reporting links on a range of concerns for the Fenland community to refer to.

Op Grippled – Loan Sharks Awareness Project June/July 2021



The CSP Loan shark awareness project was successfully delivered during June and July in partnership with the England illegal money lending team (IMLT).

Other partners who helped deliver this project were 3 Primary Schools, FDC cleansing team, the Horsefair, Taxi companies, Cambridgeshire libraries, Cambs police and Blackfield Creative.

Work with Primary schools

The project worked with yr. 6 children in Orchards, Ramnoth and Burrowmoor schools

delivering Loan Shark awareness assemblies, banner design competitions, and creative workshops. The children's artwork and IMLT information about the dangers of Loan Sharks are being displayed in libraries across Fenland.



Raising Awareness

Fenlands Community Safety team have increased community awareness of the dangers of Loan Sharks through a series of social media post, press releases and community initiatives.

The Horsefair



The Horsefair supported the Loan Shark awareness campaign with an awareness raising session in the Horsefair, delivered by Community Safety and IMLT. The Horsefair were also able to support by displaying AO sized posters in the main shopping areas.

Schools Design Competition

The Loan shark awareness project concluded with a design competition for Yr 6 pupils.

Entrants were tasked with designing a banner to warn of the dangers of loan sharks and raise awareness of the support that is available to victims through the Stop Loan Sharks Project.



The three winners of the competition received a prize and will see their designs displayed as banners in locations across Fenland.

Two runners up from each school also received prizes in recognition of their hard work. All the designs from the competition are set to be showcased this summer as part of a touring display in Fenland's libraries.

The Community Safety Partnership would like to say a big thank you to all our partners who have worked alongside us to deliver this project and make it a success in raising awareness of Loan Sharks and how to report and seek support.

Street Drinking Update (Cllr Andrew Lynn)

Our CCTV team are providing more detail in relation to street drinking data. Besides identifying the frequency of occurrences by time and day, they have also started to share information relating to behaviour which would require a police report to be made as there is ASB associated with street drinking.

The current number of reports relating to street drinking which are received by the police and FDC from the community is low and the need for CCTV to refer incidents to the police reflects this. A maximum of 4% of street drinking occurrences observed by CCTV required the police to be notified.

Partners are conscious of the impact the pandemic has had on both street drinking occurrences and community impact and will closely monitor the situation as well as supporting education and diversion.

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%	26.7%	
CELP11	Customer satisfaction with refuse and recycling services (quarterly)	99%	90%	TBC	
CELP12	Customer satisfaction with our garden waste service (quarterly)	94%	85%	TBC	
CELP13	Number of Street Pride, Green Dog Walkers, and Friends Of community environmental events supported	204	204	43	
CELP14	% of those asked who are satisfied with FDC's events (May, July, October, January)	96%	96%	N/A	N/A

Key:	
	Within 5% of target
	5-10% below target
	10% or more below target

Comments
CELP10: Using draft figures for June.
CELP13 due to covid restrictions events have been paused throughout most of the year.

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 Disposals and Estates Surveyor arranged for two sites to be entered for auction sale in July 2021. Unfortunately, neither of the sites sold on the day, but the Council expect to exchange contracts shortly with a purchaser on one of the sites, and the other site is to be re-entered in September's auction (August is a blank month for most property auctioneers). Of the other four sites which have previously been approved for disposal, subject to the Portfolio Holder's agreement, two sites may be entered for auction in October, and two sites need further work before they can be taken to auction. A further batch of sites will soon be the subject of a Cabinet Report requesting authority to be declared surplus and disposed of.

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>

A Wisbech Access Strategy report was presented to CPCA Business Board and CPCA Board meetings in July 2021. The reports required a strategic decision on the way forward linked to timescales and budgets. The report sets out a range of different options and included a recommendation to fund the remaining detailed design work and complete land negotiation and land purchase. This is to ensure that the schemes are fully deliverable when funding is available. The CPCA Board approved the recommendation. A copy of the agenda, accompanying paper and minutes for the meeting can be found from the following link:

https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccc_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1529/Committee/62/Default.aspx

Kings Dyke Level Crossing

This project was conceived by and is being delivered by Cambridgeshire County

Council having secured significant further funding by the CPCA, who have also contributed significant funding. The Project is currently in its construction phase. The new road will be open to the public by the end of 2022.

The last update information paper went to the CPCA Transport and infrastructure Committee in early January 2021. This can be found at the website link below.

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1972/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

The above-mentioned paper included a latest update on the construction process in the form of a drone video. Here is a link to the video on You Tube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpfZkEtIYRk&feature=youtu.be>

The County Council website includes significant detail about this project including technical reports and questions and answers. This webpage can be accessed from the following link. [Kings Dyke Crossing](#).

March Area Transport Study

There is no specific update on this project for May/June 2021

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council.

In early November 2020 a report was tabled at the CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee. The Committee agreed to go forward to construction with the quick win schemes. The timetable for which is set out below as an extract from the CPCA paper. Outline Business Case work for the larger schemes that make up this project will be ongoing during 2021. A copy of the paper which includes the quick win scheme details and a construction timetable can be found from the following website link:

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1971/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Table 1: Quick Win Construction Delivery

Quick Wins	Construction Start	Construction End
QW1A - Improve safety for pedestrians. Provide a zebra crossing	January 2021	March 2021
QW2 - Introduce gateway feature at edge of town, introduce 40mph speed limit buffer and revise deflections on Cavalry Dr roundabout	July 2021	August 2021
QW15 - Improve safety for school children. Provide a zebra crossing	November 2020	December 2020
QW16 - Improve signage for HGV drivers to reduce poor route choice	December 2020	February 2021
QW21 - Complete footway on southern side of Norwood Ave	February 2021	March 2021
QW22 - Introduce traffic calming on three sections of Norwood Rd	August 2021	August 2021
QW23 - Complete footway on eastern side of Hundred Rd including build out feature	March 2021	April 2021

Technical details and feasibility study work associated with this project can be found on the County Council website from the link below

<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>

In March 2021 CPCA gave an update to the Transport and Infrastructure Committee on the Wisbech railway project. This included a recommendation to draw down an additional £300,000 for further study work. The work will look to align the Wisbech Railway work with the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement project and in the short term a Wisbech to March service. The report will be completed by November 2021. A copy of the March 2021 CPCA report can be found in the link below.

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1973/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

A47 Dualling (CPCA Project)

It was reported in late 2020 that the Highways England Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) announcement did not include the A47 dualling project. Discussions between CPCA, Highways England and Government in early 2021 have since continued and negotiations are ongoing. In February 2021 Highways England agreed to undertake a

review of the stage 0 work completed by CPCA. This review is to determine if there is any further work needed with a view to Highways England adopting the development work into their own programme. It was also agreed that the work will also consider proposals from East Tilney to A47/A17 junction in Norfolk. This represents an important commitment from Highways England and a Project Manager has now been appointed. The work is expected to complete in October 2021

The above information was reported to the CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee in March 2021. A link to the paper from that meeting is below.

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1973/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

A47 Guyhirn (Highways England Project)

This project is currently in its delivery phase. Work started on site in February 2021 with the scheme being open to traffic in late 2022/early 2023.

Full details about this scheme and the latest updates can be found on the [Highways England website](#). Highways England are due to hold an update meeting for the public and stakeholders at 7pm on 16 August 2021. This will be a virtual meeting and anyone can register to attend through the website link above. This will be an opportunity to meet the team working on the project and to receive progress updates.

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

The CPCA has made funding available through their Market Towns Initiative to deliver the priorities outlined in the Growing Fenland town plans. The capital funding allocated to each of our market towns was £1m (£4m in total).

Successful bids for the full £4m of CPCA capital funding have now been approved and will be used for a range of projects across all 4 market towns. Updates on these projects will be provided in subsequent Portfolio Holder Reports.

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

The draft plan is being finalised so that it can be presented to members in time for its publication and public consultation in December 2021

[https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/17752/Fenland-Local-Development-Scheme-2021-Update/pdf/Fenland LDS July 2021.pdf?m=637620460576570000](https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/17752/Fenland-Local-Development-Scheme-2021-Update/pdf/Fenland_LDS_July_2021.pdf?m=637620460576570000)

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

Manea Station

Work is now due to commence on site in August 2021. Planning approval for the scheme was given in September 2020 and all but one of the planning conditions were discharged in June 2021. The maintenance and operational plan for the car park is being finalised and which will be submitted to planning for approval in due course. The land acquisition is complete. The project is expected to complete in late Summer 2021

March Station

Work commenced on site in July 2021. The winning contractor for the detailed design and build was appointed in March 2021. The ticket office at the station has been temporary moved to a portacabin in the car park area to allow work on the platform building to commence. The work is expected to be complete in late 2021/early 2022. Greater Anglia and their contractors are overseeing the delivery of this project

Whittlesea Station

A second ticket machine is now operational at Whittlesea Station on the Peterborough bound platform. The new ticket machine was installed in May 2021. Significant technical and study work has been undertaken to develop an approach to provide a car park, bus and taxi facilities and create an improved access to the station. Additional economic and growth work was undertaken earlier in 2021 to assess the value for money of all the options. There are opportunities to link with a Network Rail project to upgrade the level crossing in 2023. The Project Board reviewed all the information on this project at its meeting in July 2021. It has now been agreed that a new Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) is to be commissioned that will review the vision and objectives for the scheme, consider all possible options (in light of all the technical evidence and plans for growth in the emerging Local Plan) and provide high level costs for these options.

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)

The project team continues to focus efforts on the highest priority sites at 11-12 High Street and No 24. Regarding 11-12, colleagues continue to liaise with the developer's

solicitor to agree the terms of the Freehold transfer of the site and await the updated Schedule of Works to complete the Grant Agreement. The freehold transfer and the grant agreement (once agreed) need to be completed simultaneously and this will enable the development to commence.

At the council-owned site at No 24, planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of the site. Detailed constructional design is now progressing which is necessary for the tender process. Expressions of interest have been sought from contractors prior to the formal tender process.

No 13-17 continues to progress with external repair works to the brickwork on the parapet and internally the layout of the flats is starting to take shape.

Colleagues in planning enforcement continue to process formal action where necessary to secure external improvements and this is having a positive impact alongside grant investment in the High Street.

The Activity Plan continues to be delivered with a series of online talks and workshops in the subject of conservation and historic building maintenance. A programme of further events will be developed for the remainder of the project.

Following the departure of Taleyna Fletcher, day to day activity is being managed by Simon Jackson and Simon Machen until a new dedicated staff resource is in place in mid-September.

Other Projects:

Economic Growth Team Activity (Cllr Ian Benney)

- Community Renewal Fund (CRF) – the Team await notification from central government as to whether the CRF bids have been successful or not and this is expected in the autumn – the Team are actively engaged with three of the Cambridgeshire CRF bids submitted by the Combined Authority to central government – West Suffolk College/Metalcraft training centre, Opportunity Peterborough/PECT business support to help grow businesses and reduce environmental impact & early stage/micro business support
- Wisbech and Whittlesey Business Capital Grants – the first grant payments are being made to businesses
- Continuing strong interest in growth as evidenced by the number of enquiries the team is receiving, planning applications received and those we are aware of are to be submitted
- The team continues to engage on a one to one basis with a number of key businesses and visits to key businesses such as Aerotron have been scheduled
- Combined Authority Employment & Skills Strategy – a draft Fenland response has

been created by the Team and has been discussed by CMT and shortly with relevant Members

- Wisbech High Street Project – the Team are providing interim support for the project until the replacement project officer is in place mid-September

Future High Streets Fund (Cllr Ian Benney, Cllr Chris Seaton & Cllr Jan French)

Members have received a recent update as follows;

Please find a brief update on the progress of the March Future High Street Fund project below.

FDC is appointing a Project Manager shortly to focus on this important project. The new project manager will focus entirely on this project bringing much needed capacity during the delivery phase. Having a specific experienced lead is important to ensure we deliver as efficiently as possible, as well as developing a comprehensive comm's plan with the FDC Comm's team. This will ensure that FDC Members are fully informed, whilst also involving March Town Council in progress updates. Effective communication with local businesses on the designs and plans and the timeframes for work is critical, as is keeping residents up to date with how their town will change for the better over the next three years. It is anticipated that there will be an information hub developed within the FDC website to ensure that there is one up to date and accurate source of information for this project.

In summary, following receipt of FDC's revised grant sum from Government and their sign off of the revised project plans in May, current progress on the project workstreams are as follows;

Vacant Units Activation Programme;

FDC is altering previous grant documentation to fit with the vacant units activation approach. It is anticipated that the documentation will be in draft for senior officers in June, with Member sign off in July for the scheme to go live in July or early August. 2 business owners have already expressed an interest, although the scheme is yet to be publicised.

It is worth noting at this point that the scheme will focus on a tight geographical area around March Town Centre and will target small and medium sized enterprises.

Market Place / Broad Street / Riverside Projects;

FDC is working with the CCC Highways Major Infrastructure Delivery Team on an approach for delivering these three workstreams, as well as the Broad Street highway and roundabout that forms part of the March Area Transport Study.

Expectations are that the Broad Street works will be delivered by the CCC as the highway authority as they are responsible for the Highway and pavements & the

public realm that will be developed. The Riverside and Market place elements have more flexibility and officers are considering options including the delivery of these elements by FDC.

Once a delivery approach is agreed, detailed design works will take place with Member input requested in the draft designs. Cost control is critical for these significant elements of the FHSF project as a small % change in costs will represent a significant sum.

Skills Update (Cllr Chris Seaton)

We have applied to take part in the Kickstart Scheme, which is a new government scheme aiming to help and encourage the employment of young people (specifically those aged between 16 to 24) currently on Universal Credit. This is particularly key for the Fenland area due to unemployment rates and opportunities being lower than the national average. This scheme is a pathway for some young people to build the skills and confidence to apply for apprenticeships, particularly beneficial for this group of young people following the impact of the pandemic.

The scheme requires the Council to provide a contract of employment for a minimum of 25 hours per week for a 6-month fixed term contract, which must not replace any existing vacancy or cause any employee or apprentice contract to end.

The placement must help a young person become more employable and develop in the workplace enabling them to apply for longer term work.

The posts are fully funded at 100% of the National Minimum Wage for 25 hours per week for a total of 6 months, and any associated employer National Insurance contributions, any relevant workplace pension contributions plus £1,500 funding per job (This should be spent on setup costs and supporting the young person to develop their employability skills)

We are hoping to offer 8 such placements.

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)

The new, improved marketing material on Rightmove and the Council's website, along with the addition of video tours for the Council's Business Centres has

generated a good level of letting enquires and viewings recently, several of which have converted to new lettings at the Business Centres, particularly at South Fens Business Centre. Two light industrial units will be available for lease shortly, and a high level of interest for both of them has already been received.

Affordable Homes (Cllr Sam Hoy)

The pipeline forecast for new affordable homes in 2021/22 has reduced from 154 homes to 127 homes, with 27 completions slipping into 2022/23 for completion.

We have enabled a pipeline schedule of affordable homes being pursued by a named Registered Provider (RP) of 1003 affordable homes. This forecast fluctuates depending on the negotiations etc.

We are also looking at a further potential of 748 homes without a named RP that we are looking to encourage an RP to negotiate development.

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

The food safety and health and safety inspection programme continues. Due to staff absence and vacancies the inspection programme is being delivered by an agency 'Buckingham Futures' who have a contract to deliver the programme on behalf of the council.

During July 10 food businesses have received a supportive visit and 4 businesses have received a health and safety visit, these are close contact services including tattooists and body piercing establishments.

When contacted 5 businesses have responded to say they were happy with the visit and reported it was supportive and fair.

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%	75%	
CELP17	% of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks (or within extension of time)	99%	90%	91%	
EGA1	% occupancy of the business premises estate	87.8%	89%	86.4%	
EGA2	% of customers satisfied with our business premises estates (annual)	100%	95%	Annual	
MS1	Number of berth holders / occupancy of berths at Wisbech Yacht Harbour (85 berths)	85	85	78	
CELP18	Number of local businesses supported and treated fairly (quarterly)	96%	96%	100%	

Key:	
	Within 5% of target
	5-10% below target
	10% or more below target

Comments
EGA1 – Occupancy is expected to increase during September and October 2021 due to completion of new leases.

Quality Organisation

Projects from Business Plan:

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

The Commercial and Investment Strategy is operational and we purchased our first investment under this heading in March 2021. The commercial property purchased in Wisbech was subject to the full due diligence process and was approved by the Investment Board at their March meeting.

Further work is being carried out on Council owned sites and detailed appraisals are being completed for presentation at a future Investment Board meeting. Regular updates on these sites are provided to the Investment Board.

At its last meeting, the Investment Board approved recommendations to recruit a fixed term resource to drive forward the development of Council owned sites.

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

My Fenland is the first major corporate transformation programme under the Council for Future priority that focusses on modernising the way we deliver all aspects of our services to our customers. It has involved updating and streamlining our processes to improve consistency and efficiency across the organisation, investing in new IT solutions and technology to improve the process for both staff and customers.

The key focus has been ensuring we are putting the customer journey first and providing the best possible customer experience.

Why?

There are so many benefits and reasons for going through this transformational programme, such as:

- Improved customer experiences and smarter ways of working
- The opportunity to explore and introduce new technology to streamline the customer journey
- Bringing together a range of discreet/defined services as a single point of contact and delivery, providing a more joined-up approach across the Council
- Reducing the number of staff handling customer data, which reduces error and the potential GDPR risk

- Better resilience in teams, and so a more consistent and effective customer service
- Improving our talent pipeline and succession planning for the My Fenland resource but also the wider Council.
- Improving service, driving down costs

So far....

We have delivered Phase 1, with the creation of the My Fenland team that has been successfully working as one newly formed team since July 2020.

Phase 2 is nearly complete, with a focus on customer interactions, opportunities for our customers to self-serve as a wider range of services and activities are consolidated in to the 'My Fenland' team. This involved process mapping a large number of new activities from the 'legacy' teams.

We have had some Key Successes.....

- Creation of new MF team
- Implementation of Paypoint – over £1 million payments made
- Launch of the Council's new website.
- Development and implementation of the Technical Officer role to free up the capacity of specialist officers.
- The upgrade to the Telephony switch to enable Web chat, enhanced call routing and use of a CRM
- The development of new forms to enable customers to self-serve via our website (e.g. missed bins; removing the need for back office intervention. These requests will be sent from our website into Bartec's in-cab technology
- Process mapping of tasks and activities identified as a priority and agreed by the project team
- New structure and roles implemented, supported by a detailed and comprehensive training plan
- MF Management team recruited (Welcome to Rosie – our new Supervisor who joined us yesterday)
- Transformation Officer and Business Improvement officer successfully recruited.
- All 'at risk' staff have been through recruitment process for the new structure.

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

The list of projects is identified in the Business Plan and updates are given elsewhere in this report. These include My Fenland, Website, Empty Homes and Private Sector Housing Enforcement.

Other Projects:

Elections Update (Cllr Chris Boden)

Elections were successfully completed on 06 May 2021 in respect of the Police and Crime Commissioner, County Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Mayoral elections. In addition by elections also took place in respect of Lattersey ward of the District Council, Lattersey Ward of Whittlesey Town Council, Stonald Ward of Whittlesey Town Council and Octavia Hill Ward of Wisbech Town Council. The elections were particularly complex on this occasion due to the combination of electoral events but also due to the requirement to ensure COVID compliance in all aspects of the electoral process including postal vote issuing and opening, within Polling stations and also at the verification and count venue. In spite of the complexities the elections were successfully administered.

The total number of votes recorded for the County Council elections represented 29.95% of the registered voters

The total number of votes recorded for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Mayoral elections represented 29.69% of the registered voters

The total number of votes recorded for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections represented 29.72% of the registered voters

The total number of votes recorded for the by election of the Lattersey ward of Fenland District Council represented 33.19% of the registered voters.

The total number of votes recorded for the by election of the Lattersey ward of Whittlesey Town Council represented 33.19% of the registered voters.

The total number of votes recorded for the by election of the Octavia Hill Ward of Wisbech Town Council represented 28.75% of the registered voters.

The total number of votes recorded for the by election of the Stonald ward of Whittlesey Town Council represented 38.49% of the registered voters.

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 = 10

Monthly update on FDC social media sites:

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

Twitter = 147

Facebook = 138

We currently have 4,653 likes on Facebook and 8,640 followers on twitter.

Consultation Summary:

- Whittlesey Heritage Walk – 1 August to 31 August 2021

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.

Key Cambridgeshire wide messaging includes the vaccination roll out programme, rapid testing information and financial support available for businesses and households.

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 over 110,000 Coronavirus web page views since their launch.

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

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

Annual Report 2020/21

The Annual Report of the Council 2020/21 describes the performance of the Council over the last year, linking to the priorities detailed in our Business Plan. These are designed to deliver outcomes that improve the quality of life for Fenland residents and are listed under the key headings of Communities, Environment, Economy and Quality Organisation.

The achievements listed in the Annual Report are not exhaustive but reflect some of our successful projects over the last year. Notable examples are given of how we have worked closely with the community and partners to tackle important local issues in a collaborative and efficient way.

As like other local authorities, Fenland District Council faces significant financial challenges due to the impact of Covid and increased demand upon services. Nevertheless, we continue to provide high quality services whilst keeping our budget balanced.

Our Cabinet members have selected a number of projects to contribute towards our 'Council for the Future' agenda. These projects have a variety of aims, from tackling areas of particular need within the district, to transforming services and the wider organisation sustainability to be fit for the future. Some of these projects are also interlinked with our Business Plan priorities.

The Annual Report was approved at Cabinet on 15 July 2021.

[Link to Full Annual Report 2020/2021](#)



Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Target 21/22	Cumulative Target	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries resolved at first point of contact	Rolling monthly target of 85% per month	85%	99.4%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (March 2021)	90%	90%	75%	
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	Rolling monthly target rising to 46.5% by March 2021	22.5%	24%	
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	Rolling monthly target rising to 80% by March 2021	52.5%	73%	
ARP1	Days taken to process Council Tax Support new claims and changes	8.0		7.21	-0.79
ARP 2	Days taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and changes	8.0		7.32	-0.68
ARP3	% of council tax collected	96.8%	38.33%	38.62%	0.29%
ARP4	Council Tax net collection fund receipts	£61,172,317.00	£ 23,351,957.30	£23,454,913.03	£102,955.73
ARP5	% of NNDR collected	97.51%	32.73%	34.43%	1.7%
ARP6	NNDR net collection fund receipts	£21,998,313	£7,349,233	£7,885,927	£536,694
PRC5	Number of visits to our website	969,000	825,000	67,275 (July)	
				278,550	

Key:	
	Within 5% of target
	5-10% below target
	10% or more below target

Comments

The customer satisfaction survey undertaken during February 2021, took place during the COVID 19 pandemic and therefore was undertaken during unprecedented times and on this occasion during a second national lockdown period. The satisfaction survey ordinarily tends to reflect customers experience and level of satisfaction with the overall service delivered by the District Council rather than as a direct result of their experience with Customer Services. Customer feedback, whilst an optional element of the satisfaction survey and therefore was not completed by all participants, reflected customer frustration with national Covid restrictions. This factor may have impacted overall satisfaction scores

The time taken to assess Council Tax Support new claims/changes Target 1 has been achieved this month and exceeded. The target for year to date has also been exceeded.

The time taken to assess Housing Benefit new/claims Target 2 has been achieved this month and target has been exceeded. The target for year to date has also been exceeded.

The team have continued to develop on the good start made to this financial year.

Fenland has managed to spend 19.80 % of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funds.

Most staff continue to work from home and maintain high performance and productivity levels.

COUNCIL TAX - The time taken to assess Council Tax Support new claims/changes Target 1 has been achieved this month and slightly exceeded. The target for year to date has also been exceeded.

The time taken to assess Housing Benefit new/claims Target 2 has been achieved this month and target has been also been exceeded. The target for year to date has also been exceeded.

Across the partnership at the start of the month there were 7,454 outstanding processes, and this has increased to 8,409. We continue to see a large volume of moves being received each week; we have received 5,768 moves in July. Year to date we have received 22,991 moves compared to 14,380 for the same period last year, an increase of 59.88%

Council Tax Collection Fund remains above target as does the % collected.

Total reminders issued in July was 1,351 with a value of £718,611.67

Total Finals issued in July was 683 value of £572,658.43

Fenland has managed to spend 30.4% of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funds. However, the funding method has changed this year. DWP may pay another amount after quarter two. An estimated value as to this second payment has been provided by the DWP. Based on the estimate Fenland has spent 21.6% of the actual and potential funding combined

BUSINESS RATES - At end of July there are 201 items of post outstanding for Fenland (2278 across ARP). NDR Collection continues to meet targets.

During July the following recovery documents were issued:

Reminder notices issued 1: 189 with a value of £174,215.77

Final notices issued: 56 with a value of 163,846.75

There were no summonses issued as there is no court date for August. Next summons run due on 23rd August for 22 September court

The team continue to achieve call answer rates in excess of 95%

While the number of processes outstanding remains similar the age of work is reducing. Further steps to reduce this are planned which will include a focus day for processing early in August.

We still await guidance for the Material Changes of Circumstance (MCC) grants that Government proposed that will require a local scheme. It is unlikely that this will be received prior to the legislation preventing the MCC claims which, due to the summer recess is unlikely to happen until September 2021.

Motion submitted by Councillor Sam Clark regarding the Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Government has advised that eight hospitals in England are going to be built or fully rebuilt. The decision as to where those eight hospitals are will be announced in November. Given conditions at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn, local MPs Steve Barclay and James Wild have called on the Government to ensure that QEH is selected as one of those eight new hospitals, and this has also been supported by a massive petition in the Eastern Daily Press.

Fenland District Council strongly supports the call for Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn to be rebuilt, given how poor the physical condition is of the current hospital there.

The Council resolves:

- (a) to write to the new Secretary of State for Social Care, Sajid Javid, urging him to visit the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as soon as possible to see for himself the unacceptable dilapidated state of the structure of the hospital, so that he may announce in November that QEH has been selected as one of the eight new hospitals in England to be built or completely rebuilt.
- (b) to write to the Eastern Daily Press to express our support for their petition.
- (c) to send a copy of this resolution to Steve Barclay MP and to James Wild MP.

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Agenda Item No:	8	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	16 September 2020	
Report Title:	Corporate Governance / Audit and Risk Management Committee Annual Report 2020/21	

1 Purpose / Summary

To Report to Full Council the commitment and effectiveness of the Corporate Governance Committee and Audit and Risk Management Committee's work from April 2020 to March 2021.

2 Key issues

- The Audit and Risk Management Committee considered its Annual Report at its meeting on 19th July 2021
- 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

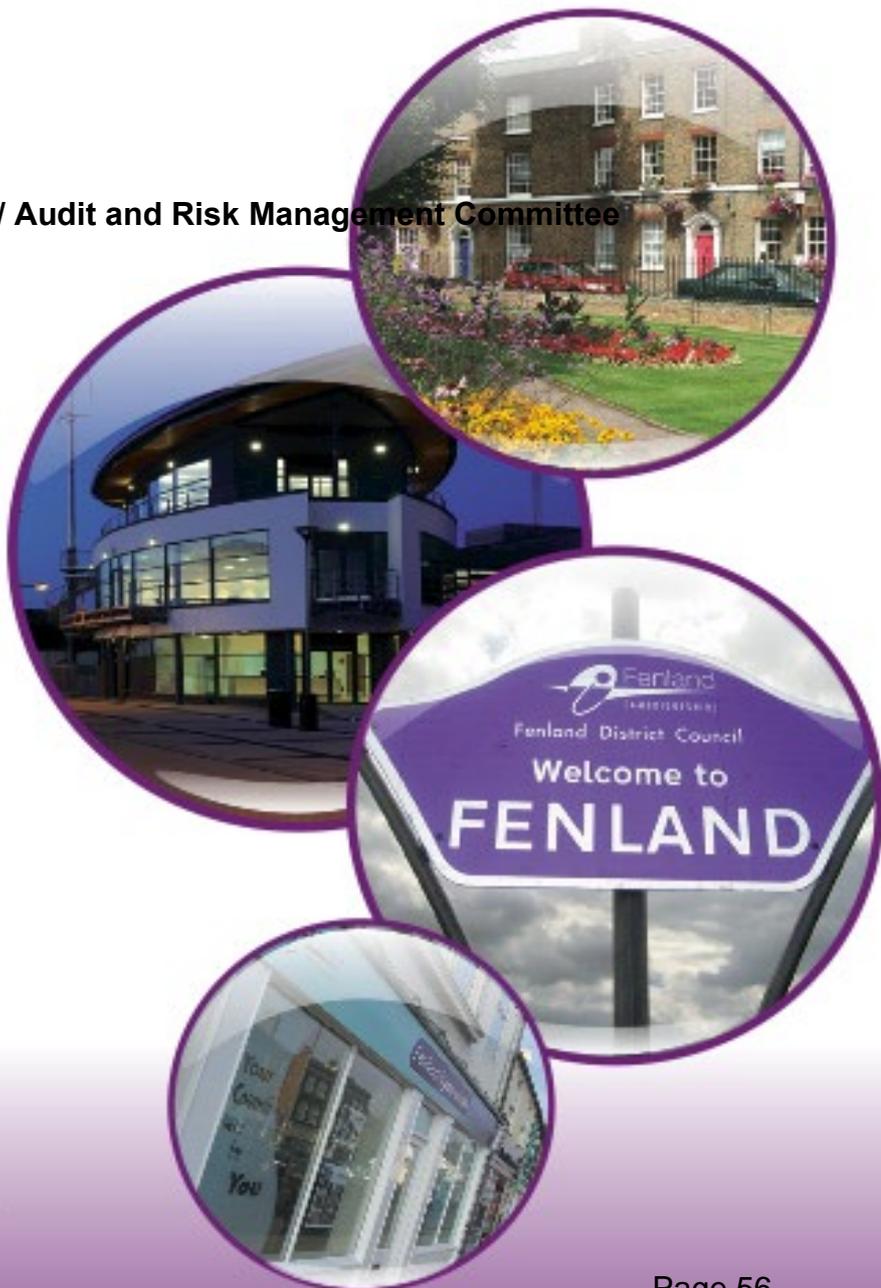
That full Council acknowledges the work of the Corporate Governance Committee and Audit and Risk Management Committee and it's compliance with CIPFA's annual checklist for 2020/21.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Kim French, Chairman of Audit and Risk Management Committee
Report Originator(s)	Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Kathy Woodward – Internal Audit Manager
Contact Officer(s)	Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Kathy Woodward – Internal Audit Manager
Background Paper(s)	Corporate Governance Committee agendas and minutes 2020/21 Audit and Risk Management Committee agenda and minutes 2020/21 Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (CIPFA 2018)

Appendix: Annual report

Report of the Corporate Governance / Audit and Risk Management Committee

April 2020 - March 2021



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 Following the creation of the Audit and Risk Management Committee a review of the committee's rules, as listed in Part 2 (rule 10) of the constitution were updated in line with best practice guidance. The new terms of reference encompass all previous aspects of the role of the Corporate Governance Committee, whilst incorporating a new format and layout consistent with best practice guidance and also includes a statement of purpose.
- 2.2 The Committee's purpose identified in the terms of reference states:
The purpose of our Audit and Risk Management Committee is to provide independent assurance to the members and other parties of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides independent review of Fenland District Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It oversees internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place. It also ensures the Council is managing the risk of ensuring services have the resources to deliver on the Council's statutory responsibilities and corporate priorities whilst recognising the Council's financial position.

3 Members commitment to corporate governance in 2020/21

- 3.1 As a result of the Coronavirus pandemic a number of meetings of the committee were postponed or cancelled due to pressures facing the organisations. All meetings were held virtually in line with national guidance.
- 3.2 However the committee was still committed to delivering governance oversight for the Council and 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. Update report on audits completed is provided which includes the number of and theme of recommendations;
 - risk management;
 - updates on the impact of Covid-19 on delivery of the Internal Audit Plan and Annual Audit Opinion
 - Data Protection updates
- 3.3 The Chairman and Vice Chairman of Audit and Risk Management Committee also attended external training sessions on the role of the Audit Committee in Local Government.

- 3.4 Members of the Corporate Governance Committee also received a briefing document during the period that meetings were postponed or cancelled, detailing the Council's response to the pandemic and how areas of risk, governance and control were being managed and maintained throughout the period.

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 2019/20	<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 2019/20 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 2019/20, 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 2019/20, • 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 • The impact of Covid-19 on delivery of the Internal Audit Plan and Annual Audit Opinion <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 2019/20</p> <p>.</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
<p>External Audit Assurance</p>	<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 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>

APPENDIX 1

For the year 2019-20

Fenland District Council
Audit and Risk Management Committee Self-Assessment Exercise

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 the Audit and Rick Management 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?	Y			The Audit and Risk Management Committee was newly formed in December 2020 and has a Terms of reference that follow CIPFA's guidance on Audit Committees	
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 Audit and Risk Management 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?	Y			The Committee's Terms of Reference were updated in 2019/20 and now cover all area's identified in CIPFA's Position Statement	
	good governance	Y				
	assurance framework, including partnerships and collaboration arrangements	Y				

	internal audit	Y				
	external audit	Y				
	financial reporting	Y				
	risk management	Y				
	value for money or best value	Y				
	counter fraud and corruption	Y				
	supporting the ethical framework	Y				
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 and Risk Management 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.	
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 has been completed.	
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?		P		The Audit and Risk Management Committee has a sub-committee with delegated decision making powers for staffing arrangements and policies.	
MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT						
12	Has an effective audit committee structure and composition of the committee been selected? This should include:	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	Consider whether an independent member should be included on the committee.

	<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) 				<p>current policies.</p> <p>The Committee gave due consideration to appointing and independent member and requested that the item be included on the Committee's action plan to review the need and requirement on an annual basis.</p>	
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?				Not applicable	See 12 above
14	Does the chair of the committee have appropriate knowledge and skills?	Y			<p>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.</p> <p>Training is given to all members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee to ensure appropriate skills are up to date and relevant.</p>	
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			<p>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.</p> <p>A formal assessment has not taken place, but could be considered.</p>	Consider undertaking as assessment of current members against the core 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 Audit 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?	Y			An action plan for the Committee was introduced this year to monitor actions and is included as part of the workplan	Conitinue to monitor the action plan and how it adds value to the organisation
25	Does the committee publish an annual report to account for its performance and explain its work?	Y			Audit and Risk Management Committee Annual Report.	

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Agenda Item 9

Agenda Item No:	9	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	30 September 2021	
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 2020/21 and takes a forward look at the programme of work and challenges for the Overview and Scrutiny in 2021/2022.

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 2020/21.

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 Transformation, Customer Service and Democracy Amy Brown - Head of Legal Services and 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 2020/21

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

ANNUAL REPORT 2020 - 2021

1 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 2021/22.

The continuation of the global COVID pandemic during 2020/21 has brought about significant challenges to local residents and businesses, as a result the Council has changed its approach to service delivery as well as delivering new services, to ensure those most vulnerable in our communities receive support during these unprecedented times. These changes have included the introduction of the Community Hub, providing support to individuals directly impacted by the pandemic, as well as delivering a wide suite of business grants, to help support local businesses that have suffered a financial impact as a result of the pandemic.

One significant change arising from the coronavirus pandemic has been to the operation of the Council's public meetings. During 2020/21 the government temporarily removed the legal requirement for local authorities to hold public meetings in person. The District Council quickly adapted and made use of the technology available to hold public meetings virtually, therefore continuing to make critical decisions on the delivery of its services for Fenland residents in a way that was both transparent and accessible to the public. More recently the legal requirement to hold public meetings in person has been re-introduced in addition to ensuring meetings are COVID secure. The District Council continues to ensure meetings are accessible online to continue to facilitate public engagement

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel continues to hold our Cabinet colleagues to account for the performance and delivery of services within their portfolios. The Panel has received regular performance updates and have been reassured that services continue to perform well. The work programme remains ambitious and focusses on issues that are of paramount importance to local residents and businesses, as we remain steadfast in our approach of adding value to the decision-making process whilst utilising the Overview function to ensure new and emerging policies and procedures are fit for purpose and can successfully achieve their objectives.

2020/21 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.

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

2 THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 2020-2021

Councillor David Mason - Chairman

Councillor Alex Miscandlon - Vice Chairman

Councillor Gavin Booth

Councillor David Connor

Councillor Steve Count

Councillor Mike Cornwell

Councillor Michael Humphrey

Councillor Mark Purser

Councillor Robert Skoulding

Councillor David Topgood

Councillor Bob Wicks

Councillor Fred Yeulett

3 INTRODUCTION

What is Overview and Scrutiny?

- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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.

- 3.4 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
- 3.5 All Overview and Scrutiny meetings are held in public session and attendance and involvement of the public is actively encouraged either via questions or suggestions for our work programme.

Main responsibilities of Overview and Scrutiny

- 3.6 The role of Overview and Scrutiny has five broad functions:

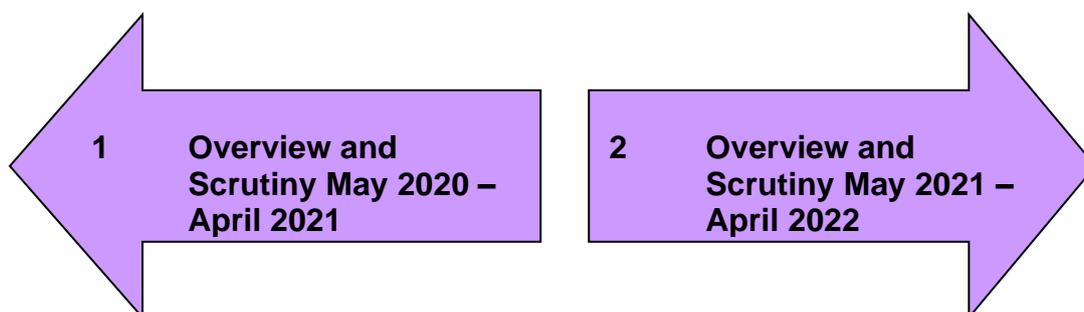
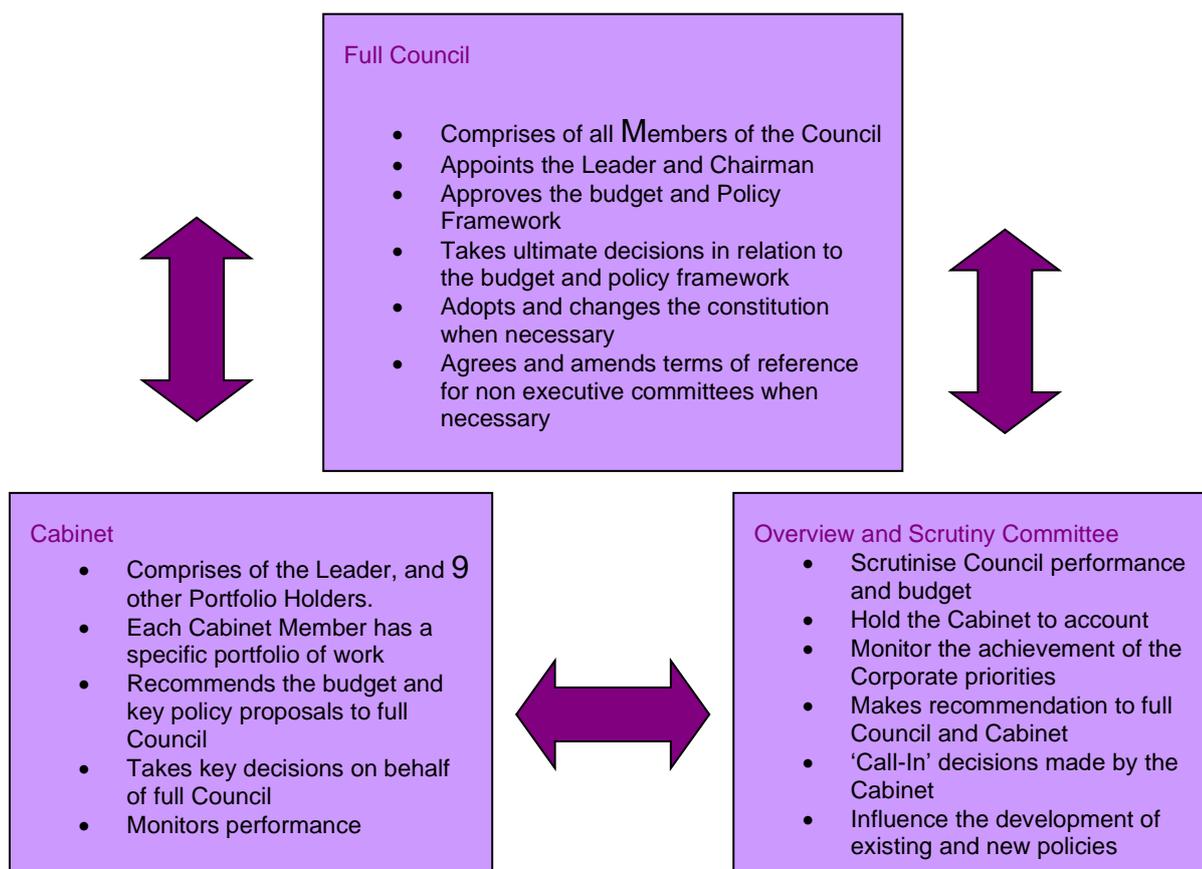
- Holding the Council’s Executive and its statutory partners to account in the public interest. This enables more transparent and effective decision making.
- Supporting the development of effective policies and initiatives which have a beneficial impact on the community through policy overview and development.
- 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

- 3.7 During 2020-2021, 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 twelve 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



4 A BACKWARD LOOK TO 2020 - 2021

What the Overview and Scrutiny Panel achieved in 2020/2021

External advisors/partners

- 4.2 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.

- 4.3 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 collaborative approach. The table below highlights the external partners the Overview and Scrutiny Panel have already engaged with, when undertaking the scrutiny function during 2020/21:

Agenda item	External Advisor/Partner	Organisation
Anglia Water	Briony Tuthill	Anglia Water
Wisbech Rail Project Update	Roland Potter	CPCA
Fenland Projects Update	Russell Beal	Anglia Water
CPCA Growth Service	Paul Webster Alan Downton	Gateley Economic Growth Service -Director CPCA Senior Responsible Officer
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 Adrian Mills	Anglia Revenues Partnership

- 4.4 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 continue with this successful approach during 2021/22.

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

- 4.5 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 in meaningful priority areas is achieved.
- 4.6 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				
CPCA Economic Growth Service				
Fenland Project Update				
Annual meeting with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive				
Draft Business Plan and Budget				
Council Tax Support Scheme				
Fees and Charges				
Anglia Water				
Review of Anglia Revenues Partnership				
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy				
Commercial Investment Strategy				
Culture Strategy				
Wisbech Rail Update				

5 Specific reviews undertaken in 2020- 2021

- 5.1 A Member Led Review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership was commenced during 2019-20. The review was initiated as 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.

- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 The Member Led Review of ARP recommenced in October 2020 and the resulting recommendations were presented to and full endorsed by the December 2020 Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting.
- 5.5 The Review group identified the following findings:
- 5.6 that the COVID pandemic undoubtedly has had an impact on the work of the ARP. As a result the partnership is seeking to further improve the digital offering to customers therefore ensuring that those who can self-serve do so.
- 5.7 The use of 'friendly reminders' in terms of non-statutory reminders for council tax has shown that people can change their behaviour without receiving statutory notices, which are harsher in nature because of the legislative information they have to contain. Therefore, ARP have identified that more people respond positively and pay when targeted with the 'softer' approach and ARP are investigating that further
- 5.8 Regular data cleansing is required as during the work to provide business rates relief it is evident that ARP are not always notified when one business leaves a premise and another moves in.
- 5.9 ARP has taken a more holistic approach to help vulnerable customers who cannot engage digitally; it is therefore not a case of just ensuring these customers pay their council tax but also seeing how they can be signposted to other areas of support.
- 5.10 The COVID pandemic has resulted in FDC and the partnership working more closely together and in terms of the grants available, track and trace payments, hardship fund, council tax support consultation and the various reliefs. This close working partnership approach has made service delivery seamless to resident and business customers.
- 5.11 The review team learnt that good work is being done with the FDC empty homes officer and the staff at ARP to build a complete picture in relation to empty properties which has resulted in successfully bringing a number of these properties back into use within the district.
- 5.12 A disaster recovery process exercise had been undertaken just prior to the start of the initial national lockdown. One of the outcomes was the need to provide laptops for staff should a requirement arise for them to work from home if an office had to be shut down. As a result, and with the relevant IT teams working together, almost half the staff had

already been issued with the equipment before and there was already a programme in place to supply remaining staff with laptops before the pandemic peak hit the Country initially. ARP are now considering a longer-term series of projects in respect of what working arrangements for staff will look like as part of the 'new normal'. Staff have been consulted regarding the future and 75% would like to work more from home. ARP will be reviewing desk sharing and accommodation requirements, which could bring about further potential savings. Early indications are that people find the work/life home balance is better and where measurable, it has been found that productivity has been higher.

- 5.13 Members previously raised questions during the January 2020 Council meeting in relation to perceived performance issues within the partnership. ARP acknowledge that they had several vacant posts across the service, which was impacting performance in some areas. A successful recruitment exercise took place during the spring of 2020. All staff have been successfully inducted and trained electronically during the pandemic. In addition generic roles were created a year ago where colleagues are trained in benefits and council tax billing; this creates upskilling but also greater resilience and flexibility to deal with peaks and troughs of work. Feedback from staff is that they have welcomed that, and it has provided them with reassurance that as housing benefit claims reduced due to the onset of universal credit, there was no need for uncertainty in respect of their job security or the ability of the partnership to accommodate this change of focus.
- 5.14 Members of the review team noted that at one time Cambridgeshire County Council in addition to FDC provided funding in respect of Council tax debt recovery work as both organisations benefit from collecting any associated outstanding debts. Currently CCC do not fund debt recovery within Fenland which has impacted the approach to debt recovery in this area in spite of the fact that FDC do continue to fund this work.
- 5.15 The Recommendations resulting from the Member Led Review were as follows:
- 5.16 That the Overview and Scrutiny panel encourage the relevant Portfolio Holder and officers to continue to encourage the County Council to provide funding for the Council Tax debt recovery work. **(This Recommendation has now been successfully achieved with the implementation of the Cambridgeshire Fraud Hub)**
- 5.17 The group also recommend that when the Anglia Revenues Partnership is considered on an annual basis within the Overview and Scrutiny Panel that the Panel are provided with a broader context of the partnership to help inform their understanding and associated discussions.

6 Overview and Scrutiny Call – In

- 6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel have the opportunity to scrutinise Executive decisions that have been made, but not implemented through the 'call-in' mechanism.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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.

- 6.4 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. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel or in his/her absence the Chairman of the Council must agree that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency. Decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel together with the reasons for the urgency.
- 6.5 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.
- 6.6 The call-in procedure is therefore utilised when other means of influencing decision making have failed. Fenland District Council did not utilise the call-in procedure at all during 2020/21.
- 6.7 Decisions made by the Executive where the matter was deemed urgent were taken on 4 occasions during 2020/21. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel were updated on these matters accordingly.
- 6.8 The urgency decision making powers were utilised in relation to the following matters and discussed at the next available meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel
- Freedom Leisure, June 2020
 - Council Tax Support Scheme, September 2020
 - The purchase of land in Manea, December 2020.
 - Funding Agreement, December 2020

7 A FORWARD LOOK TO 2021/2022

Policies and measures affecting scope of Overview and Scrutiny

- 7.1 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

- 7.2 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

- 7.3 In Fenland's Business Plan 2021-2022 the Council's corporate priorities are:
- Communities
 - Economy
 - Environment
 - Quality Organisation
- 7.4 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. In addition, the current Business Plan outlines the fact that Our Cabinet members have selected a number of projects to contribute towards our 'Council for the Future' agenda. These projects have a variety of aims; from tackling areas of particular need within the district, to transforming services and the wider organisation sustainably to be fit for the future. The Overview and Scrutiny work programme will also be informed by the Council for the Future agenda.

What the Overview and Scrutiny Panel will achieve in 2021-2022

Strategic Priorities

- 7.5 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

- 7.6 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
 - Council for the Future Transformation Projects
 - Commercial Investment Strategy annual Update
 - Anglia Water
 - A key area of focus for the future will inevitably be the impact of the Coronavirus including its impact on services and the Council's finances. We will also need to look

at what lessons can be learnt from the Council's response to the crisis and plans for recovery both in the short, medium and longer term.

8 CONTACTS

- 8.1 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. If, therefore, 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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Agenda Item No:	10	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	30 September 2021	
Report Title:	Treasury Management Annual Review 2020/21	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

The purpose of this report is to consider the overall financial and operational performance of the Council's treasury management activity for 2020/21.

2 Key issues

- In accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy approved in February 2021, Council receives an annual review of its' treasury management activities after the financial year-end.
- The Treasury Management Annual Review 2020/21 as presented to Cabinet on 15 July 2021 is attached. This report has also been presented to Audit and Risk Management Committee on 19 July 2021.
- The report highlights all the key activities carried out within the Treasury Management function during 2020/21. All activities have been conducted in accordance with the approved strategy and policies.

3 Recommendations

- It is recommended that members note the report.

Wards Affected	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Boden, Leader & Portfolio Holder, Finance
Report Originator(s)	Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
Contact Officer(s)	Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
Background Paper(s)	Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy 2020/21

Agenda Item No:	6	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	15 July 2021	
Report Title:	Treasury Management Annual Review 2020/21	

Cover sheet:

4 Purpose / Summary

The purpose of this report is to consider the overall financial and operational performance of the Council's treasury management activity for 2020/21.

5 Key issues

- Outstanding loans and finance lease liabilities of £8,043,210 and temporary investments of £24,000,000 as at 31 March 2021.
- Due to the Council's long term PWLB debt portfolio (£4.5m at 31/03/21) currently attracting excessive premiums it was not financially advantageous for the Council to comply with the Gross borrowing and Capital Financing Prudential Indicator in 2020/21. This is consistent with the strategy approved by Council in February 2020.
- No new borrowing was undertaken and the authorised limit was not breached during 2020/21.
- The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy and the Council had no liquidity difficulties.
- Amount received from external investments £52,144 (compared with an estimate of £55,000).
- Overall interest rate achieved from investments 0.25% (7 day LIBID un compounded rate for 2020/21 -0.07%).

6 Recommendations

- It is recommended that members note the report.
- It is recommended that Council receive the Treasury Management Annual Report.

Wards Affected	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Boden, Leader & Portfolio Holder, Finance
Report Originator(s)	Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
Contact Officer(s)	Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
Background Paper(s)	Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy 2020/21

Report:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is required through regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2020/21. This report meets the requirements of both the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).
- 1.2 During 2020/21 the minimum reporting requirements were that Council should receive the following reports:
- an annual Treasury Strategy in advance of the year (Council 20/02/2020);
 - a mid-year treasury update report (Council 14/12/2020);
 - an Annual Review following the end of the year, describing the activity compared to the strategy (this report).
- 1.3 The regulatory environment places responsibility on members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by members.
- 1.4 The Council confirms that it has complied with the requirement under the Code to give prior scrutiny to all of the above treasury management reports by the Audit and Risk Management (previously Corporate Governance) Committee before they were reported to Council.

2 The Council's Capital Expenditure and Financing

- 2.1 The Council undertakes capital expenditure on long-term assets. These activities may either be:
- Financed immediately through the application of capital or revenue resources (capital receipts, capital grants, revenue contributions etc.), which has no resultant impact on the Council's borrowing need; or
 - If insufficient financing is available, or a decision is taken not to apply resources, the capital expenditure will give rise to a borrowing need.

The actual capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. The table below shows the actual capital expenditure and how this was financed. Expenditure associated with the Council's Commercial and Investment Strategy is excluded from this table as it is reported separately in this report.

	2019/20 Actual £000	2020/21 Revised Estimate £000	2020/21 Actual £000
Capital expenditure	4,926	4,519	2,971
Financed In Year	3,621	3,239	2,418
Unfinanced capital expenditure	1,305	1,280	553

3 The Council's Overall Borrowing Need

- 3.1 The Council's underlying need to borrow to finance capital expenditure is termed the capital financing requirement (CFR).
- 3.2 **Gross borrowing and the CFR** - in order to ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term and only for a capital purpose, the Council should ensure that its gross external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current (2021/22) and next two financial years.
- 3.3 In February 2020 Council allocated £25m in the capital programme to enable the Council to take forward projects linked to its Commercial and Investment Strategy. At the time of presenting the 2021/22 Budget to Cabinet and Full Council in February 2021, it was not anticipated that the Council would make use of any of the £25m allocated before 31 March 2021. Instead it was forecast that the money would be utilised over a three-year period ending on 31 March 2024. However, subsequently the Investment Board was made aware of an opportunity at short notice and following a meeting in March 2021 the acquisition of an investment property in Wisbech was approved. This acquisition completed prior to 31 March 2021 and was funded from internal borrowing. This impacts on the Capital Financing Requirement as explained in the table below.
- 3.4 The table below highlights the Council's gross borrowing position against the CFR (See Appendix A).

	31 March 2020 Actual £000	31 March 2021 Revised Estimate £000	31 March 2021 Actual £000
CFR opening balance	1,212	2,274	2,274
Capital expenditure – Capital Programme	1,305	1,280	553
Capital expenditure – Commercial and Investment Strategy	0	0	3,698
Less Minimum Revenue Provision	(243)	(349)	(349)
CFR Closing balance	2,274	3,205	6,176
of which: Capital Programme	0	3,205	2,478
Commercial and Investment Strategy	0	0	3,698
Gross Debt (see table at 4.1 below)	8,206	8,043	8,043

- 3.5 The CFR includes finance leases. A finance lease is a commercial arrangement between the Council and a lessor (finance company), where in consideration for a series of payments the Council has the right to use an asset (e.g. refuse vehicle) for the lease duration (typically 7 years). The annual lease payment is made up of a capital and interest repayment.
- 3.6 Although legally the Council doesn't own the asset during the lease duration, International Accounting Standards require that the Council capitalise the asset and liability on its balance sheet, much like a loan.
- 3.7 As a result of the Council's long term Public Works Loan Board (PWL) debt portfolio of £4.5m (31/03/21) currently attracting excessive premiums (£2.716m at the time of writing this report), if it were prematurely repaid and the fixed rate market loan of £3.3m

(31/03/2021), attracting a premium charge on application to prematurely repay, it is not financially advantageous for the Council to fully comply with this prudential indicator. This has been the case since the housing stock transfer in 2007 and has been acknowledged and approved by Council since then. In addition, the Council's external auditors have also acknowledged this situation and have not raised any issues with our strategy.

- 3.8 The authorised limit - the authorised limit is the “affordable borrowing limit” required by s3 of the Local Government Act 2003. Once this has been set, the Council does not have the power to borrow above this level.
- 3.9 The operational boundary – the operational boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Council during the year. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the boundary are acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.
- 3.10 Neither the authorised limit or operational boundary were breached during 2020/21.

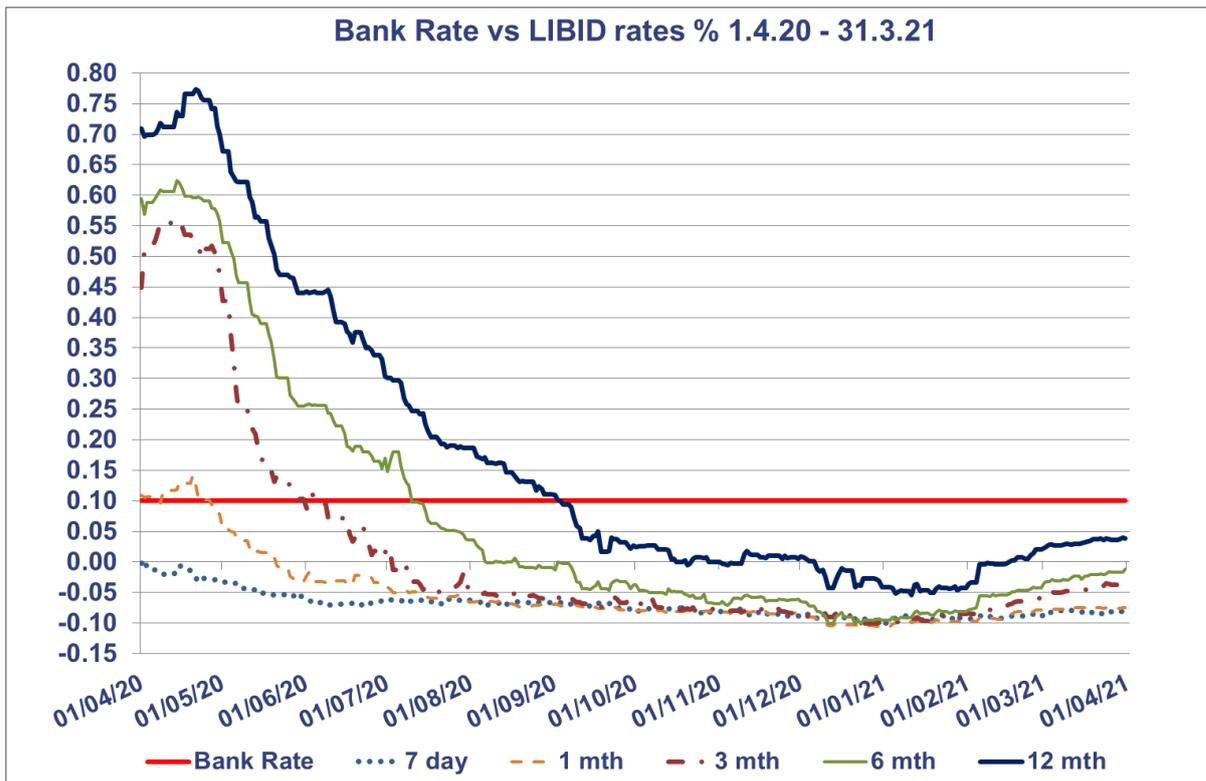
4 Overall Treasury Position as at 31 March 2021

- 4.1 At the beginning and end of 2020/21, the Council’s treasury position was as follows.

	31 March 2021 Principal £000	Rate / Return	Average Life years	31 March 2020 Principal £000	Rate / Return	Average Life years
Fixed rate funding						
• PWLB	4,500	7.29%	9.40 yrs	4,500	7.29%	10.40 yrs
• Market	3,300	4.70%	32.96 yrs	3,300	4.70%	33.96 yrs
• Finance Leases	243	3.71%	1.56 yrs	406	3.64%	2.56 yrs
Total debt	8,043			8,206		
Investments	(24,000)	0.25%		(18,300)	0.85%	
Net debt /(Investments)	(15,957)			(10,094)		

- 4.2 All investments held at 31 March 2021 are fixed term or callable deposits due for repayment within the next twelve months.

5 The Strategy for 2020/21



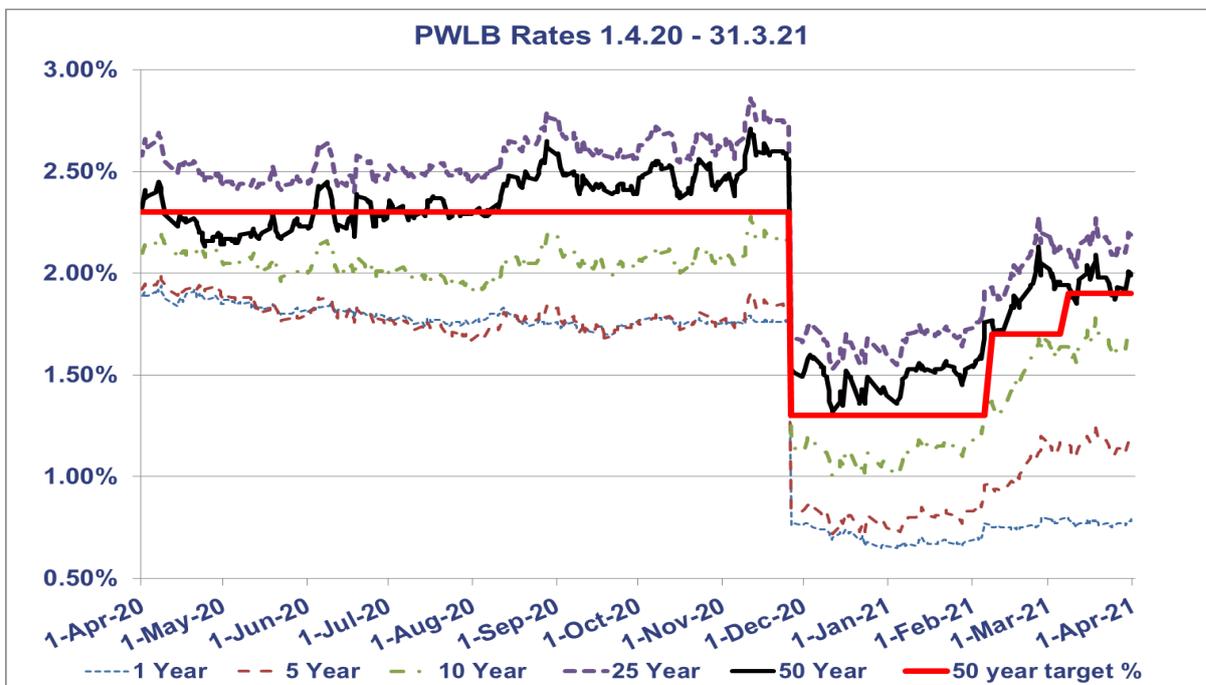
Investment Strategy

- 5.1 Investment returns which had been low during 2019/20, plunged during 2020/21 to near zero or even into negative territory. Most local authority lending managed to avoid negative rates and one feature of the year was the growth of inter local authority lending.
- 5.2 The expectation for interest rates within the treasury management strategy for 2020/21 was that Bank Rate would continue at the start of the year at 0.75 % before rising to end 2022/23 at 1.25%. This forecast was invalidated by the Covid-19 pandemic bursting onto the scene in March 2020 which caused the Monetary Policy Committee to cut Bank Rate in March, first to 0.25% and then to 0.10%, in order to counter the hugely negative impact of the national lockdown on large swathes of the economy. The Bank of England and the Government also introduced new programmes of supplying the banking system and the economy with massive amounts of cheap credit so that banks could help cash-starved businesses to survive the lockdown. The Government also supplied huge amounts of finance to local authorities to pass on to businesses. This meant that for most of the year there was much more liquidity in financial markets than there was demand to borrow, with the consequent effect that investment earnings rates plummeted.
- 5.3 While the Council has taken a cautious approach to investing, it is also fully appreciative of changes to regulatory requirements for financial institutions in terms of additional capital and liquidity that came about in the aftermath of the financial crisis. These requirements have provided a far stronger basis for financial institutions, with annual stress tests by regulators evidencing how institutions are now far more able to cope with extreme stressed market and economic conditions.
- 5.4 Investment balances have been kept to a minimum through the agreed strategy of using reserves and balances to support internal borrowing, rather than borrowing externally from the financial markets. External borrowing would have incurred an additional cost, due to the differential between borrowing and investment rates as illustrated in the charts shown above and below. Such an approach has also provided benefits in terms of reducing the counterparty risk exposure, by having fewer investments placed in the financial markets.

Borrowing Strategy

- 5.5 The Council was 'over borrowed' during 2020/21 the Council's gross debt exceeded its CFR, as has been the case since 2007 when the Council decided not to repay £7.8m of PWLB debt, following the Council's stock transfer.
- 5.6 Therefore, as opposed to taking on additional loan debt to fund capital expenditure in 2020/21, the Council followed a strategy of using cash, supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow as an interim measure. The strategy was prudent as investment returns were low and to reduce counterparty risk on placing investments.
- 5.7 The policy of avoiding new borrowing by running down spare cash balances, has served well over the last few years. However, this was kept under review to avoid incurring higher borrowing costs in the future when this authority may not be able to avoid new borrowing to finance capital expenditure and/or the refinancing of maturing debt.
- 5.8 Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution was adopted with the treasury operations. The Director of Finance therefore monitored interest rates in financial markets and adopted a pragmatic strategy based on managing interest rate risk, if it had been felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper rise in long and short term rates than initially expected, perhaps arising from an acceleration in the start date and in the rate of increase in central rates in the USA and UK, an increase in world economic activity or a sudden increase in inflation risks, then the portfolio position would have been re-appraised. Most likely, fixed rate funding would have been drawn whilst interest rates were lower than they were projected to be in the next few years.
- 5.9 Interest rate forecasts expected only gradual rises in medium and longer term fixed borrowing rates during 2020/21 and the two subsequent financial years. Variable, or short-term rates, were expected to be the cheaper form of borrowing over the period. Financial estimates were based on the interest rate forecasts in the table below.

Link Asset Services Interest Rate View													
	Mar-20	Jun-20	Sep-20	Dec-20	Mar-21	Jun-21	Sep-21	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23
Bank Rate View	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25
3 Month LIBID	0.70	0.70	0.80	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.10	1.20	1.30	1.30	1.30	1.30
6 Month LIBID	0.80	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.00	1.10	1.20	1.30	1.40	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
12 Month LIBID	0.90	0.90	1.00	1.10	1.20	1.30	1.40	1.50	1.60	1.70	1.70	1.70	1.70
5yr PWLB Rate	2.30	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.50	2.60	2.70	2.80	2.90	2.90	3.00	3.00	3.10
10yr PWLB Rate	2.50	2.50	2.60	2.60	2.70	2.80	2.90	3.00	3.10	3.10	3.20	3.20	3.30
25yr PWLB Rate	3.00	3.00	3.10	3.20	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60	3.70	3.80	3.80	3.90	3.90
50yr PWLB Rate	2.90	2.90	3.00	3.10	3.20	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60	3.70	3.70	3.80	3.80



- 5.10 PWLB rates are based on, and are determined by, gilt (UK Government bonds) yields through H.M.Treasury determining a specified margin to add to gilt yields. The main influences on gilt yields are Bank Rate, inflation expectations and movements in US treasury yields
- 5.11 Gilt yields fell sharply from the start of 2020 and then spiked up during a financial markets melt down in March caused by the pandemic hitting western countries; this was rapidly countered by central banks flooding the markets with liquidity. While US treasury yields do exert influence on UK gilt yields so that the two often move in tandem, they have diverged during the first three quarters of 2020/21 but then converged in the final quarter. Expectations of economic recovery started earlier in the US than the UK but once the UK vaccination programme started making rapid progress in the early months of 2021, gilt yields and PWLB rates started rising sharply as confidence in economic recovery rebounded. Financial markets also expected Bank Rate to rise quicker than in the forecast tables in this report.
- 5.12 At the close of the day on 31 March 2021, all gilt yields from 1 to 5 years were between 0.19 – 0.58% while the 10-year and 25-year yields were at 1.11% and 1.59%.
- 5.13 HM Treasury imposed **two changes of margins over gilt yields for PWLB rates in 2019/20** without any prior warning. The first took place on 9th October 2019, adding an additional 1% margin over gilts to all PWLB period rates. That increase was then, at least partially, reversed for some forms of borrowing on 11th March 2020, but not for mainstream non-HRA capital schemes. A consultation was then held with local authorities and **on 25th November 2020, the Chancellor announced the conclusion to the review of margins over gilt yields for PWLB rates**; the standard and certainty margins were reduced by 1% but a prohibition was introduced to deny access to borrowing from the PWLB for any local authority which included the purchase of assets for yield in its three year capital programme.
- 5.14 There is likely to be only a gentle rise in gilt yields and PWLB rates over the next three years as Bank Rate is not forecast to rise from 0.10% by March 2024 as the Bank of England has clearly stated that it will not raise rates until inflation is sustainably above its target of 2%; this sets a high bar for Bank Rate to start rising.

6 Borrowing Outturn

- 6.1 No long term or temporary borrowing was taken during 2020/21. The approach during the year was to use cash balances to finance new capital expenditure, so as to run down cash balances that were earning low investment returns and to minimise counterparty risk incurred on investments.
- 6.2 The Council has not borrowed more than, or in advance of its needs, purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed.
- 6.3 No rescheduling was completed during the year as the average 1% differential between PWLB new borrowing rates and premature repayment rates and the penalty position which can arise from early repayment of debt, made rescheduling unviable.

7 Investment Outturn

- 7.1 The Council's investment policy is governed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government investment guidance, which has been implemented in the annual investment strategy approved by Council on 20 February 2020. This policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties and is based on credit ratings provided by the three main credit rating agencies, supplemented by additional market data (such as rating outlooks, credit default swaps and bank share price).
- 7.2 The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy and the Council had no liquidity difficulties.
- 7.3 The Council maintained an average balance of £21.858m of internally managed funds. The internally managed funds earned an average rate of return of 0.25% (£52,144). The comparable performance indicator is the average 7-day LIBID rate, which was -0.07%.

8 Prudential and Treasury Indicators

- 8.1 During 2020/21 the Council complied with its legislative and regulatory requirements with the exception of gross borrowing (see paragraph 3.7 above).

Appendix A - Prudential Indicators

Prudential Indicators	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21
	Actual £000	Revised Estimate £000	Actual £000
1 Capital Expenditure (including Commercial and Investment Strategy)	4,926	4,519	6,670
2 Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream (external interest – investment income)	4.97%	7.01%	7.03%
3 Gross Borrowing and the Capital Financing Requirement			
Gross Debt	8,206	8,043	8,043
CFR	2,274	3,205	7,107
<hr/>			
Treasury Management Indicators	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21
	Actual £000	Revised Estimate £000	Actual £000
4 Authorised Limit for External Debt			
Borrowing	15,000	17,000	17,000
Other Long-Term Liabilities	1,000	1,000	1,000
Commercial Activities	0	25,000	25,000
Total	16,000	43,000	43,000
5 Operational Boundary for External debt			
Borrowing	10,000	12,000	12,000
Other Long-Term Liabilities	1,000	1,000	1,000
Commercial Activities	0	25,000	25,000
Total	12,000	38,000	38,000
6 Actual External debt (as at 31 March)			
Borrowing	7,800	7,800	7,800
Other Long-Term Liabilities	406	243	243
Total	8,363	8,043	8,043

Agenda Item No:	11	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	30 September 2021	
Report Title:	Council Consultation Response in relation to the Fenland Electoral Review - Proposed Future Council Size	

1 Purpose / Summary

- For Members to consider and agree the formal Council consultation submission in relation to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Electoral Review of Fenland District Council. This report forms the Council's response to the initial part of the electoral review process regarding the proposed future Council Size which is the numbers of Councillors required to run the Council in future.

2 Key issues

- The LGBCE are responsible for conducting reviews of local authority electoral arrangements through an electoral review. Electoral reviews are usually an 18-month process which take a series of defined steps, to establish new electoral arrangements.
- Full Council, at its meeting on 19 May 2021, agreed to approach the LGBCE to commence an Electoral Review of Fenland District Council given the predicted electoral inequality that would be apparent by the next round of all out elections in 2023. The LGBCE subsequently agreed to this request and Fenland was added to the Electoral Review Programme.
- This submission sets out Fenland District Council's response to the LGBCE's request for us to submit a proposal regarding the future total number of Councillors to be elected to the Council, known as Council Size. Considerations regarding the future Council size form the initial part of the electoral review process and is a key factor in determining the type and scale of the review to be undertaken by LGBCE.
- In considering Council Size the Commission considers the following four parts:
 - Governance and decision making – what is the right number of councillors to take decisions and manage the business in an effective way?
 - Scrutiny functions – what is the right number of councillors to administer Fenland's scrutiny responsibilities in a convenient and effective way?
 - Representational role of councillors – what is the right number of councillors to represent and provide leadership to local communities in Fenland?
 - The future – what governance changes are being considered and how do these impact on the number of councillors needed in the future?
- The Council's submission has been developed by a cross-party Member Working Group which has been informed by evidence, contributions from all Members

through specific Member Focus groups, a Member survey and informal feedback via briefings, email and virtual face to face contact.

- Whilst the LGBCE seek the views of the District Council regarding the proposed future Council Size they will ultimately be the decision maker on all aspects of the review. The Commission will confirm a future Council Size which they believe will provide the appropriate basis for the preparation of warding proposals, which is the second key component of the electoral review process.
- The cross party Member Working Group has been involved in an iterative process to determine a recommendation to Full Council. Initially, the Member Working Group considered proposing a range of Council Size figures, which was 39-48 in order to inform but not fetter the debate at Full Council. However, on further discussion the majority of the Working Group were content to settle on a recommendation of 42 Members for future Council size which of course will be the subject of a full debate, therefore allowing all Members to have their views heard and an equal opportunity to influence the formal Council consultation submission in relation to this matter.
- The Member Working Group wishes for Council to consider a future Council size of 42 elected representatives. This reflects the Working Group's recommendation that the future Council Size should not be less than it is currently, as they assert this would impact the future effective running of the Council in addition to having a detrimental impact on effective community representation. 42 Members it considers would strike the right balance especially in the context of the changes that have happened since the last debate on this matter in 2012 including the additional representation required at the Combined Authority and the further opportunities to apply for external funding from this body which requires Members involvement and decision making. This recommendation is also a reflection of the increase in electorate requiring representation by 2027.
- Members should consider their thoughts and feedback in relation to the four LGBCE criteria as set out above as the final submission needs to provide relevant evidence and a rationale as to what Council Size the Council ultimately chooses including why other options were discounted.
- The selected Council Size, supporting evidence and rationale will be forwarded to the LGBCE by 5 October using the LGCBE template which is structured around the four criteria. Sections 5-16 of this report identify the necessary contextual information that will be submitted to the LGBCE and provides a background narrative to inform Members' views of their future Council Size figure.
- The LGBCE will consider the Council's evidence for its recommended Council size at its Commissioner's meeting on 19 October 2021. However, whichever Council size figure is agreed by the LGBCE they reserve the right to alter this figure up or down by 2 at the ward boundary stage.
- Members should also note that stage 2 of this process will commence post 19 October. Members are asked to note/discuss the following principles:
 - No ward should have an electoral variance greater than 10.00%
 - No Parish Council Area should be split between two different wards
 - Where unavoidable whilst adhering to the first two rules, a Parish Council Area may be joined with part of an adjoining Town Council Area in a single ward (as we have now with Benwick, Coates & Eastrea Ward).

3 Recommendations

- For Members to consider the Member Working Group recommendation that the future Council size should be 42 elected representatives.
- To delegate to the cross party Member Working Group in conjunction with Officers to add in the rationale for the selected Council Size figure and any discarded options within the proposed consultation submission Council Size range, prior to formally submitting the Council consultation submission to the LGBCE for consideration by 5 October.
- For Members to discuss and note the principles outlined above in relation to stage 2 of the LGBCE process in relation to warding arrangements.

Wards Affected	All	
Forward Plan Reference	N/A	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Member Working Group: Cllr Chris Boden Cllr Jan French Cllr Steve Tierney Cllr Sam Hoy Cllr Ian Benney Cllr Will Sutton Cllr Gavin Booth	
Report Originator(s)	Paul Medd - Chief Executive Carol Pilson - Corporate Director Anna Goodall - Head of Transformation, Customer Services and Democracy	
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd - Chief Executive Carol Pilson - Corporate Director Anna Goodall - Head of Transformation, Customer Services and Democracy	
Background Paper(s)	Full Council Paper - Electoral Review for Fenland District Council - 19/05/21	

1 Council Size - Consultation Submission

- 1.1 This submission sets out Fenland District Council's response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) request for us to submit a proposal regarding future Council size. This was the result of the Council requesting that the LGBCE undertook an electoral review, primarily as a result of the criteria in relation to electoral equality. The issue of Council size is the key factor in determining the type and scale of the review to be undertaken by LGBCE.
- 1.2 In considering Council Size the Commission considers the following four parts:
- Governance and decision making – what is the right number of councillors to take decisions and manage the business in an effective way?
 - Scrutiny functions – what is the right number of councillors to administer Fenland's scrutiny responsibilities in a convenient and effective way?
 - Representational role of councillors – what is the right number of councillors to represent and provide leadership to local communities in Fenland?
 - The future – what governance changes are being considered and how do these impact on the number of councillors needed in the future?
- 1.3 This document represents the Council's submission on Council Size after consideration of these four factors. This document constitutes the preliminary stage of the Electoral Review process and in keeping with guidance provided by the LGBCE the Council has not sought to address future ward patterns and boundaries as part of its submission.
- 1.4 The Council's submission has been developed by a cross-party Member Working Group which has been informed by solid evidence, contributions from all Members through specific Member Focus groups, a Member survey and informal feedback via briefings, email and virtual face to face contact.
- 1.5 The Member Working Group provided for a robust consultation process with all Members to ensure the views of all Members from across political groups and individual Councillors were sought and taken into consideration within this submission. The Member Working Group also considered the current and projected electorate figures for Fenland.

2 Background

2.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body established by Parliament in April 2010. One of its objectives is to work with principal local authorities to help them deliver effective and convenient local government to citizens. Every year, the LGBCE assesses electorate data for each local authority in England with the intention to intervene where “significant” electoral inequality exists. As a result the LGBCE intervention would be in the form of an electoral review should significant electoral inequality have been identified.

2.2 An electoral review is an examination of a council’s electoral arrangements. This means:

- the total number of members to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards / divisions) for the purposes of the election of councillors;
- the number of councillors for any electoral area of a local authority; and
- the name of any electoral area.

2.3 The LGBCE will aim to ensure its recommendations remain relevant for the long term delivering effective and convenient local government well after the completion of the review.

2.4 A review can be initiated for two reasons:

- 1. At the request of the local authority; or
- 2. If the local authority meets the Commission's intervention criteria, where significant electoral inequality exists, namely:
 - a) If one ward has a ratio of electors to Councillors in excess of +/- 30% from the average electorate for the authority.

b) If 30% of all wards have a ratio of electors to Councillors in excess of +/-10% from the average electorate for the authority.

2.5 In April 2021, the Council conducted a review of current electorate figures, and projected electorate figures in 2026 for wards within Fenland, taking into account County Council population forecasts, extant planning permissions and empty properties.

2.6 Reviewing current and future projections in relation to elector numbers illustrates that Fenland District Council will exceed the LGBCE intervention criteria therefore reviewing ward boundaries to correct these inequalities

ahead of the 2023 elections will ensure that Councillors represent closer to the average number of electors overall through an Electoral Review process.

- 2.7 If FDC's electoral arrangements are not reviewed in time for the 2023 elections, the electoral inequality between wards within Fenland may increase by 2027 to levels which would not be conducive to good governance in the District.
- 2.8 An example of this is the draft projection that, by 2027, if no changes are made to existing ward boundaries before the next District Elections, Wenneye ward in Chatteris (represented by 1 Councillor) is projected to have an electorate of 2,963, whilst Benwick, Coates and Eastrea ward (represented by 2 Councillors) is projected to have an electorate of 3,861. This would equate to 2,963 electors per Councillor in Wenneye ward and 1,931 electors per Councillor in Benwick, Coates and Eastrea. If a Councillor in one ward was to represent 65% more electors than a Councillor in another ward, there would be a level of inequality of representation within the District which may be undesirable.
- 2.9 As a direct result of the projected electoral inequalities arising in the short term (by 2027), during the Annual Council meeting in May 2021, elected Members agreed to approach the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to request an Electoral Review of Fenland District Ward Boundaries in time for this review to inform the 2023 Fenland District Council elections.
- 2.10 Whilst elected Members did not give an early indication of the future Council size, discussions during the Annual Council meeting suggested general early agreement that the number of elected Councillors that are needed in order to support effective, efficient and accountable local democracy would benefit from a review.
- 2.11 The LGBCE subsequently agreed to conduct an electoral review.
- 2.12 The most recent review of the Council's electoral arrangements was undertaken in 2012, with the new arrangements coming into effect at the May 2015 all out local elections. During the 2012 electoral review a number of boundary anomalies arose requiring resolution via a Community Governance review in Chatteris, Manea and Whittlesey.
- 2.13 Whilst the initial recommendation regarding Council size was to maintain the status quo at that time of 40 elected Councillors. When we moved onto the second stage of the electoral review process, namely to consider the names, numbers and boundaries of district wards in conjunction with the electoral review statutory criteria in relation to electoral equality, community identity and effective and convenient local government, the criteria could not be effectively achieved and therefore at that point the LGBCE decided that the Council size should reduce by one elected representative to 39 Councillors.
- 2.14 Following the changes introduced in the Local Government Act 2000, the Council has changed its governance model to the 'Strong Leader' model of Executive arrangements. Full Council appoints the Leader of the Council for a four year term. This model of governance has been in operation since 2003 following a change from operating a traditional committee system. There are no proposals to change the current approach to governance.

- 2.15 Fenland District is relatively unique in that it is served by 4 tiers of local government – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council, Fenland District Council and is fully parished at a town/parish council level, with 16 Town and Parish Councils. There are 9 Cambridgeshire County Councillors representing 8 county divisions, the entire district currently falls within the North East Cambridgeshire Parliamentary Constituency. Whilst financially beneficial to the area the emergence of the Combined Authority has undoubtedly increased the workload of those Councillors chosen to represent Fenland within the Committees and at the Combined Authority Board and at Leader Strategy meetings.

3 Context

Fenland District Overview

- 3.2 Located in East Anglia, Fenland covers an area approximately 550 square km (210 square miles) and is one of five districts within the county of Cambridgeshire. Fenland is a predominantly rural district located in Northern Cambridgeshire. Bordering with Peterborough, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, South Holland and East Cambridgeshire. Fenland District has a population of approximately 102,080. Fenland residents account for 15.53% of the population of Cambridgeshire.
- 3.3 There are around 45,770 dwellings in Fenland, the majority of which are owner occupied (2020) and 72% of residents live within the districts 4 market towns, with the remaining 28% residing in more rural locations interspersed between the district's 29 villages. Fenland has an ageing population with 28.2% of residents aged 65 or over, and indications are that this trend will continue.

State of the District

- 3.4 Fenland ranks 51st (out of 317) local authorities in the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 and is the most deprived area in Cambridgeshire with Cambridge City 205th, Huntingdonshire 247th, East Cambridgeshire 266th and South Cambridgeshire 300th. There are pockets of deprivation in the district, with the highest levels of multiple deprivation located in the North of the District in Wisbech.
- 3.5 Fenland has a set of unique and varied challenges as a district that the Council is working proactively with its partners to overcome.

These challenges include:

- High levels of deprivation.
- Low levels of educational attainment, aspiration and skills.
- Lowest levels of healthy eating and exercise in the East of England.
- Highest levels of smoking in the East of England.

- Lowest employment rates in Cambridgeshire (Fenland 70.1% employment rates in working age people compared to 76.6% across Cambridgeshire),
 - One of largest populations of Gypsy Travellers in the country.
 - Poor public transport links and infrastructure impacting accessibility to further education and employment opportunities.
- 3.6 Other issues also exist within the district which are not as visible such as rural isolation, literacy levels and levels of caring for family members.
- 3.7 Fenland has the lowest house prices in Cambridgeshire, with the average house priced at £182,549 (UK HPI: 2020), along with plentiful availability of commercial land. As a result, our population is growing quickly. By 2036, it is predicted that the population will have increased by 9% to 110,700 (ONS: 2019).
- 3.8 Relative poor connectivity in the Fenland area is an important factor in shaping both the recent and longer standing lower growth in the area (CPIER Report 2018)
- 3.9 The population of the Fenland district is predominantly white, with 97.2% of all residents of white ethnic origin which is higher than the average for Cambridgeshire (92.6%) and England (85.4%). The district has the lowest percentage of residents from a Black Minority Ethnic (BME) origin in Cambridgeshire (0.5%). The largest single BME group in the district is Asian/Asian British representing 0.8% of the total population.
- 3.10 In economic terms, 55.7% of the population of Fenland District are of working age (aged 16 to 64 years of age) which is lower than the Cambridgeshire average at 58%. 5.4% of working age people across the district were claiming either Universal Credit or Job Seekers Allowance, which is the highest monthly claimant rate across Cambridgeshire.

Fenland District Council

- 3.11 Fenland District Council was formed on 1 April 1974, with the merger of the Borough of Wisbech, Chatteris Urban District, March Urban District, Whittlesey Urban District, North Witchford Rural District and Wisbech Rural District.
- 3.12 Today, Fenland District Council (FDC) has 39 Councillors, representing 24 wards, with 2 political groups. The Council has majority Conservative control with 27 Conservatives and 12 Members of the Fenland Independent Alliance (which comprises of, 2 Liberal Democrats, and 1 Member of The Green Party, with the remaining 9 Members being Independent). The Council has adopted a Leader and Cabinet structure, with an Overview and Scrutiny Panel, and an Audit and Risk Management Committee.
- 3.13 Each of the 24 Fenland District Council wards is represented by 1, 2 or 3 councillors and whole council elections are held every four years with the next elections due in May 2023.

- 3.14 Fenland District is relatively unique in that it is served by 4 tiers of local government – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council, Fenland District Council and is fully parished at a town/parish council level, with 16 Town and Parish Councils. There are 9 Cambridgeshire County Councillors representing 8 county divisions, the entire district currently falls within the North East Cambridgeshire Parliamentary Constituency.
- 3.15 The Council underwent a Periodic Electoral Review in 2012 in order to implement the resulting changes at the 2015 'All Out' local elections. Since then the Council has seen a growing electoral variance in a number of wards. Based on the electorate figures for May 2021, there are electoral variances of 10% or greater in the wards of Birch (+18%), The Mills (+16%), Wenneye (-11%) and Stonald (+17%). When considering the electoral forecasting figures up to 2027, the electoral variance trend continues with eleven of the district wards having an electoral variance of greater than 10%, including one ward with a variance in excess of 34% and a second with a variance of 29%.

Shared Services

- 3.16 At the 19 December 2013 meeting of Full Council members endorsed the Council's approach to service transformation including the way forward in respect of Shared Services. This meeting approved that the Council's Revenues and Benefits service joined the Anglian Revenues Partnership (ARP) as of 01 April 2014
- 3.17 In December 2018 Freedom Leisure, a charitable trust, took over the operation and management of the Council's four leisure centres with a 15-year agreement. This arrangement, after Hudson Leisure Centre capital costs and gym equipment replacement costs, has saved FDC £351,000 p.a. Additionally, a review of contract management staff as a result of the new Freedom contract added £49,000 p.a. to the annual savings, equating to a total of £5.6 million of savings over the life of the contract.
- 3.18 At the September 2014 meeting of full Council the Council endorsed the proposal to join the CNC Building Control Partnership including the fact that full governance oversight would be achieved with Member representation on the CNC partnership Joint Committee, with Fenland established as a full partner.
- 3.19 On the 23rd July 2015, Fenland District Council agreed to join a Shared Planning Service arrangement with Peterborough City Council. The Shared Service consists of a Shared Head of Planning, Shared Technical Support Manager and the ability to buy and sell services between the Councils.
- 3.20 The Legal service provision within Fenland is currently being delivered through a partnership agreement with Peterborough City Council. This agreement has been in place since 2016 however the degree of service delivery has changed significantly over the duration of the agreement with the vast majority of legal support now being sourced via this successful agreement.

Commercialisation

- 3.21 On 9th January 2020 Fenland District Council approved the Commercial Investment Strategy and the associated formulation of the new Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo), Fenland Future Ltd, for the purpose of facilitating delivery of the strategy. To date a full business case is currently being developed in relation to Council owned land that could result in the delivery of good quality local housing.

Fenland District Local Plan

- 3.22 The Council agreed to start production of a new Local Plan for the District in February 2019, which will eventually replace the Local Plan adopted in May 2014. This will address the changes in national policy, but also to take into account local visions and objectives to attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities in Fenland, and promote increased housing growth across the district. The new Local Plan will focus on commercial deliverability, market demand, and meeting growth targets as well as supporting and encouraging economic investment. A Draft Local Plan will be published for public consultation in December 2021.

Fenland District Council Corporate Priorities

- 3.23 The Council's corporate priorities were developed, following comprehensive consultation with local people, to address the key demographic issues in the district. These priorities are reviewed every year as a part of the corporate Business Planning process. The 2021/22 Corporate Priorities are illustrated below

Council for the Future	Quality Organisation	Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support vulnerable members of our community • Promote health and wellbeing for all • Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture and Heritage
		Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service • Work with partners and the community on projects that improve the environment and our street scene • Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting social cohesion
		Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses in Fenland • Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration across Fenland • Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements across the district

4 Governance Model

- 4.1 Following the changes introduced in the Local Government Act 2000, the Council has changed its governance model to the 'Strong Leader' model of Executive arrangements. Full Council appoints the Leader of the Council for a four year term. This model of governance has been in operation since 2003 following a change from operating a traditional committee system.
- 4.2 The role of a Councillor within this model of local governance is substantial due to the varying aspects of a Councillors role.
- 4.3 The Leader appoints the Cabinet, which is where most of the day to day decisions of the Council are made. Cabinet consists of the Leader and nine other councillors. The Cabinet meets collectively on a monthly basis.
- 4.4 Major decisions to be made by Cabinet are detailed in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions, which is updated as required and not less than on a monthly basis.
- 4.5 Individual members of the Cabinet are known as Portfolio Holders and are allocated particular service responsibilities aligned to the Council's corporate priorities. They have wide ranging decision-making powers in relation to these responsibilities. Portfolio Holders are able to make individual decisions within certain restrictions, which are documented, published and circulated to members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, and can be subject to the call-in function.
- 4.6 Portfolio Holders also have monthly briefings with their responsible Corporate Director and associated Head of Service, as well as joint meetings collectively with members of the Corporate Management Team around six times per year. Portfolio Holders also become involved with events and other meetings

associated with their portfolio area, ie. opening of play parks, award ceremonies, etc.

- 4.7 Portfolio Holders are also required to work in partnership with other agencies on issues and policies within their service area as well as representing the District Council within Executive Committees within the Combined Authority. For CPCA O&S, representation is drawn from the FDC O&S Panel.
- 4.8 The Cabinet delivers reports to Full Council on their respective Portfolio areas at every meeting and also to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on a regular basis.
- 4.9 The Council has 39 councillors, elected every four years at a single set of elections, the last being in 2019. Councillors have a duty to the whole community of Fenland and are democratically accountable to residents of their ward. All councillors are members of Full Council and meet on average 5 times per municipal year (normally in May, July, September, December and February). Full Council is responsible for appointing the Leader and Chairman of the Council, setting the overall policies of the Council and its budget, and approves the Policy Framework which comprises a series of major plans. The Council also receives recommendations from other committees and petitions from the public.
- 4.10 A comprehensive review of the Council's Constitution was conducted by a Member Working Group led by Cllr Mrs French (Deputy Leader) in 2011/12. This reviewed the entire Constitution including the scheme of delegation to ensure a greater degree of transparency, accountability of officers and to ensure Members were at the forefront of Council decision making. This review concluded the levels of delegation within the Constitution were appropriate and in keeping with the running of an effective Council.
- 4.11 An Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) recently reviewed Members' Allowances (May 2021). The previous IRP recommended that the Members' Allowances Scheme be subject to review 18 months after its last review in 2019, this was to ensure that the Members Allowances Scheme adequately reflected the changing Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) requirements and commitments as well as reflecting any impact from the implementation of the Commercial Investment Strategy (CIS).
- 4.12 The most recent Member Allowances Review researched and analysed the workloads and time commitments of all Members. The results of the interviews with elected members and survey responses evaluated, suggest that on average District Councillors spend 15 hours a week fulfilling their district council role or 60 hours per month. **This was an increase from 38 hours per month in 2011/12. This recognised that some Members committed substantially more time than the average due to the demands of the role in individual areas.** This was taken into account when considering an increase or decrease to Council size.
- 4.13 There are six main Council committees with a total of 65 seats, which are allocated in proportion to the size of each of the political groups, plus a number of smaller sub-groups for example the Non Licensing Act 2003 Committee, the Investment Board as a Sub Committee of Cabinet in addition to the Audit and Risk Management Determination Sub Committee.

- 4.14 In addition to attending Council Meetings and other constituency work, Councillors are required to sit as representatives of the Council on other organisations and agencies. These organisations and agencies are known as outside bodies. The Council appoints Elected Members to represent it on a range of Outside Bodies, both at a national and local level. Such appointments ensure that the Council's interests and therefore citizens of Fenland are represented within key agencies.
- 4.15 The Council recognises the value and contribution outside organisations make to the wider community. Members also welcome the opportunity for the Council to be represented on outside organisations which operate within Fenland. There are currently 54 Outside Bodies requiring representation to 111 seats 39 of which carry vacancies. Nominations and representation to Outside Bodies is reviewed annually by Cabinet. A previous Overview and Scrutiny review of Outside Bodies made recommendations regarding the criteria to assess requests for Outside Body representation these recommendations were later endorsed by Full Council and remain relevant. Prior to the Overview and Scrutiny review there were 73 outside bodies requiring representation.

5 Portfolios

- 5.1 The Cabinet is currently composed of 10 members (including the Leader) holding 10 positions as follows:
- Leader of the Council (also holds the Finance Portfolio)
 - Deputy Leader (also holds a Portfolio)
 - Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth
 - Portfolio Holder for Health
 - Portfolio Holder for Benefits, Anglia Revenues Partnership, Parking
 - Portfolio Holder for Housing
 - Portfolio Holder for Planning
 - Portfolio Holder for Licensing and Community Safety
 - Portfolio Holder for Finance
 - Portfolio Holder for Environment
 - Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility and Heritage
 - Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Communication
- 5.2 A detailed breakdown of each Executive Councillor's area of responsibility appears at Appendix A.
- 5.3 The positions of Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Portfolio Holder, although not deemed as being considered as full time positions, do require a

substantial commitment given the level of responsibility and significant additional time that needs to be spent to undertake those roles effectively.

- 5.4 Executive Members serve on other decision making partnerships, sub-regional, regional and national bodies. Appointments are considered on an annual basis. The Executive Leader represents the Council on The Combined Authority Board and a Leader Strategy meetings. Whilst the most recent review of Members allowances did not conclude that the additional commitments associated with local Government Devolution, and the representational requirements of the Combined Authority, warranted an additional separate Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA), the IRP did conclude that the proposed increase to the Executive Leaders existing SRA was in part to recognise the additional requirements and commitments resulting from the Combined Authority.
- 5.5 In addition the Investment Board comprising of the Leader of the Council in addition to two other Cabinet Members was formulated in 2019. It is a sub Committee of Cabinet and is the Council decision making body in relation to the Commercial Investment Strategy, overseeing the three key strategic themes, 1, Commercialisation, 2, Commercial and Property Investment and 3, Regeneration and Place Shaping Investment. The Investment Board currently meet five times per annum but this will increase as the LATCo further develops and matures.

6 Delegated Responsibilities

- 6.1 Decisions are made by the Council every day. These decisions cover a wide range of functions and some can affect large numbers of the district's residents, while others may affect only a single individual. The level of impact that a decision might have affects how the decision can be made.
- 6.2 The most significant type of decision is a 'key' decision. A key decision is one which:
- Results in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the budget relates;
 - Is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District.
- 6.3 The majority of day-to-day decisions are taken under delegated authority by officers under authority from the Leader, Council or a specific committee. The delegating of specific powers, duties or functions to officers can speed up council decisions and ensures that council meetings are not tied down by procedural and routine administrative decisions. It also enables councils to use the technical knowledge, training and experience of officers to support their decisions.
- 6.4 Decisions to delegate specific powers to members, officers or committees are made at a formal council, cabinet or committee meeting and specify what the delegation authorises the delegate to do. They are usually required to observe the strategies, policies and guidelines adopted by cabinet or the council and

may be required to report periodically to the council on decisions made. The Council's Constitution contains a full list of all delegations in Part 3 Responsibility for Functions.

- 6.5 The Council publishes, by way of decision notices, all member decisions taken outside of meetings under executive powers and all officer decisions that are key decisions or considered significant decisions. During both the municipal years 2019/20 and 2020/21, there were 17 decision notices issued per year in respect of decisions taken by members or officers that fell within these categories. These decisions ranged from the Leader making nominations to an outside body to the disposal of land.

7 Internal Scrutiny

- 7.1 The Local Government Act 2000 requires that where a Council has adopted an Executive model of governance it must make arrangements that "must include provision for the appointment by the authority of one or more [scrutiny] committees of the authority."

- 7.2 The Council must ensure that the scrutiny committees have the power to exercise the following functions:

- to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive;
- to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive;
- to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive;
- to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the executive; and
- to make reports or recommendations to the authority or the executive on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area.

- 7.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel has a challenging, wide ranging and in depth work programme which is set on an annual basis, led by Councillor Mason. This reflects the level of ambition within the Council and includes scrutiny of the Council's corporate priorities, council policies, Cabinet decisions and partners responsible for delivering services to the Fenland residents.

- 7.4 The Panel consists of 13 elected Councillors in accordance with political proportionality, in addition each political group can allocate up to 4 substitute members (again to reflect political proportionality rules). The Panel takes a

range of evidence from FDC Members and officers as well as officers and Members from other organisations. The Panel uses this information to make recommendations to Cabinet or to other organisations for implementation. This is followed up to ensure action or the Panel have made use of 'call-in' procedures to emphasise their viewpoint on particular policies.

- 7.5 The Council has traditionally taken an inclusive approach to scrutiny and encouraged non-scrutiny committee members to attend, speak or alternatively pose questions via a Panel member at meetings where they may have a particular interest or concern.
- 7.6 In addition the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee attends meetings of the Investment Board in an observational capacity only as well being consulted regarding urgent decisions. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. Any decisions deemed urgent have to be reported to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel as they are not subject to the 'Call In' procedure. During 2020/21 the Chairman was consulted on 4 urgent decisions.
- 7.7 Working groups are convened on a regular basis to scrutinise or review particular aspects of Council or partner organisation policy, for example the 2020 Member Led review of the Anglia Revenues Partnership
- 7.8 Special meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel are called to address emerging local issues, however ordinarily the Overview and Scrutiny Panel meets on a six weekly basis and no more than 12 occasions during the municipal year. The Panel also have pre meetings a week in advance of the formal public committee meetings to maximise engagement and ensure that Portfolio Holders, Officers and Partners are briefed in advance in relation to the anticipated key lines of enquiry therefore ensuring that attendees are able to give comprehensive, meaningful responses during the public meetings
- 7.9 The Panel does not generally cancel meetings from lack of business; indeed, they have in the past convened additional meetings to ensure the work programme and associated meetings agenda's do not become overly congested.
- 7.10 The Panel has a Work Programme report at every meeting to enable Members to monitor progress and plan ahead. The Panel is reliant on the goodwill and co-operation of external witnesses. This can mean that Agendas can sometimes be lengthy.
- 7.11 The District Council has previously (2011) had two Overview and Scrutiny Panels, the first responsible for scrutinising performance, therefore taking a backward look and the second responsible for scrutinising policy therefore taking a forward look.
- 7.12 Panel members previously feedback that they found the split confusing as key lines of enquiry would stray into the remit of the other panel resulting in a lack of clarity and the potential for an overlap or worse still contradictory recommendations.
- 7.13 A large number of our Members are either twin or triple-hatted and therefore represent their communities at County Council and Town and Parish Council

positions. 39 members is sufficient to ensure conflicts of interest do not arise too often, however, this could potentially increase if the number of Members are reduced resulting in it becoming difficult to manage Council business effectively.

- 7.14 It is the view therefore that the proposed option to retain one Scrutiny Panel enables the Council to continue to effectively hold the decision makers to account and ensure that the council can discharge its responsibilities to other organisations (e.g. other public sector bodies and partnerships) while not significantly increasing the workload for scrutiny committee members or weakening the ability of backbenchers to be involved in the scrutiny process.

8 Planning

- 8.1 The Planning Service is an important function within the Council which enables housing growth, regeneration and economic development in the District; creating more homes and jobs for residents to enjoy.
- 8.2 The Planning Service aspires to provide excellent customer service and sound planning advice in reaching decisions that have an impact on residents and the look and feel of our towns and villages.
- 8.3 Members and the Planning Committee have a crucial role to play in the above in determining larger and more contentious planning applications using the policies set out in the Local Plan and using sound planning reasons.
- 8.4 Planning Committee is a regulatory committee of the Council and consists of 13 members of the Council, which can include up to three members of Cabinet. Places are allocated according to political proportionality rules and there is a Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Each political group can appoint up to 4 substitute members, Planning Committee members approach the substitute Members to attend in their absence.
- 8.5 The committee ordinarily meets every five weeks basis, however more recently there have been additional Planning Committee meetings to consider applications (7 extra meetings so far this calendar year). All members of the committee and substitutes are required to undertake internal and external training on an annual basis and no new member of the committee is able to participate in decision making at a meeting until they have completed the internal and external training requirement. Training for Planning Committee members is also an on-going commitment during the municipal year.
- 8.6 The review of Members Allowances undertaken in 2019 stated the following 'The Panel considered the role of Planning Committee members, without exception feedback from all members confirmed that the Planning Committee meet more frequently compared to any other committees and the requirement to attend site visits, attend mandatory training, as stipulated in the constitution, in addition to reading significant volumes of reports in order to make informed decisions which directly impact on local residents, place additional responsibilities on committee members which are not comparable with other committees. Members also reflected that the time commitment associated with being a member of the planning committee could potentially be a barrier for some elected members'. Therefore, the panel recommended that all members of the Planning Committee should receive an SRA at a rate

of £500pa. In addition substitute members attending Planning Committee meetings on behalf of a substantive member should receive an SRA of £100 per annum. This recommendation was endorsed by Full Council. The 2021 member allowances reviewed continued to endorse the Planning Committee SRA introduced in 2019.

- 8.7 The five weekly and additional Planning Committee meetings are often very lengthy. Experience has shown that providing interested parties with the opportunity to address the Panel on applications prolongs the process but Panel Members, and the Chairman in particular, strongly support the retention of this facility to aid their decision-making.
- 8.8 Members also undertake Site Inspections the week prior to committee. Prior to the COVID pandemic the Council organised a Site Inspection bus to enable all Members to attend collectively with the support of a Planning Officer. Since the start of the pandemic Members have attended site inspections individually including their own transport, thus ensuring compliance with COVID social distancing requirements. These Site Inspections are normally pre-empted site visits looking at sites and applications that will be considered by the committee at its meeting the following week.
- 8.9 The Chairman of the committee meets with the Chief Planning Officers on a monthly basis to discuss applications to be considered at committee and to agree a list of site inspections.
- 8.10 A Scheme of Delegation exists and the Planning Committee determine applications whereby they:
- Called-in by Member (the development must be within their ward area or adjacent ward area and the Member request has been granted by the Chairman of Planning).
 - 6 or more unresolved written opinions from 6 or more separate sources are received from within the ward area or adjacent ward area which differ from the officer recommendation.
 - Town/Parish views are in conflict with officer recommendation and the application is for more than 2 dwellings.
- 8.11 The number of applications determined by committee varies from month to month, with on average 5-6 applications being considered per month. The figures outlined below illustrate the number of Planning applications determined by the Planning Committee during the past 3 years.
- 2018/19 – 66
 - 2019/20 – 66
 - 2020/21 – 75
- 8.12 The number of applications determined by Committee remained consistent during 18/19 and 19/20 in spite of having a Planning Advisory Service (PAS) review, one of the recommendations from which was that the scheme of delegation should be reviewed, however Members wished to await the new administration in 2019 before making any changes. This recommendation remains outstanding. Members have made a further change to the scheme of delegation in that the Chairman of Committee is consulted on every

application that an officer is seeking to refuse and has the ability to recommend to the Head of Planning to place the application on the Planning Committee agenda which has seen an increase in business for the Committee to consider.

9 Licensing

- 9.1 Licensing Committee is another regulatory committee of the Council. The full Committee consists of 13 members of the Council. The same Members are to be appointed for the Licensing Act 2003 Committee and the Non Licensing Act 2003 Committee. These places are allocated according to political proportionality rules and there is a Chairman. In accordance with the Act, decisions affecting licensing conditions or policy making are all made at Committee level, ordinarily the Committee meets 2 -3 times per year.
- 9.2 The committee has the power to appoint panels of up to 3 members with 1 substitute to hold hearings considering individual cases in relation to the Licensing Act 2003, Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing and other miscellaneous licensing. These panels are formed from a rota of Licensing Committee members on a frequent basis, with the Chairman of Licensing Committee normally sitting as Chairman of the Panel. However, members cannot sit on a panel if the matter is in relation to something within their own ward or neighbouring area.
- 9.3 A new member appointed to the committee cannot take part in or vote on any decision until they have attended at least one internal and one external training session on Licensing related topics. Existing members should complete at least one internal and one external training session on an annual basis. Training for Licensing Committee is also an on-going commitment during the municipal year.
- 9.4 With the exception of the Licensing Act, which states that if an objection is received to an application it must go to a Committee or Sub-Committee, all licensing matters are determined by officers with a right of appeal to an Appeals Sub-Committee.
- 9.5 Members cannot sit on a hearing in relation to their area, therefore preventing any potential challenges regarding conflicts of interest, however this reduces the pool of Members available. Reducing Members could exacerbate the issue of servicing Licensing issues, however there has been a downward trend in relation to the number of Licensing Hearings in recent years as outlined below
- May 2018 - April 2019 = 4
 - May 2019 – April 2020 = 9
 - May 2020 – April 2021 = 2

10 Other Regulatory Bodies

- 10.1 During the December 2020 meeting of Full Council, changes were agreed in relation to the former Corporate Governance Committee, which as a result of those agreed changes has become the Audit and Risk Management

Committee in addition to the Audit and Risk Management Determination Sub Committee, the Sub Committee replaces the former Staff Committee.

- 10.2 The Audit and Risk Management Committee is a key component of Fenland District Council's corporate governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards. The purpose of our Audit and Risk Management Committee is to provide independent assurance to the members and other parties of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides independent review of Fenland District Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It oversees internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place. It also ensures the Council is managing the risk of ensuring services have the resources to deliver on the Council's statutory responsibilities and corporate priorities whilst recognising the Council's financial position.
- 10.3 There are a maximum of 13 members of the Council on the Audit and Risk Management Committee with seats allocated to political groups in proportion to the number of seats held by each group on the Council as a whole. In addition each political group can appoint up to 4 substitute members. Up to three members from Cabinet and three members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel may be members. A Cabinet member may not be Chairman.
- 10.4 The Committee holds no more than 5 ordinary calendar meetings of the Committee per annum. In addition, extraordinary meetings may be called from time to time as and when appropriate.
- 10.5 The Audit and Risk Management Determination Sub-Committee is a sub-committee of the Audit and Risk Management Committee and has decision-making powers in relation to the following delegated functions: (a) To receive reports from officers on strategic employment matters & policies; (b) To consider staffing restructures and changes to the establishment; (c) In collaboration with the Staff Side group to promote effective communications and consultation between the Council and its employees on general personnel matters; and (d) Exercise discretion allowed under the local government pension scheme, including the award of discretionary payments to employees.
- 10.6 The Audit and Risk Management Determination Sub-Committees comprises of six members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee including either the Chair or Vice-Chair but no more than 2 Cabinet Members. Political proportionality rules apply. There are no set number of meetings per annum of the sub committee as they take place as required, however the Sub Committee meets at least once a year to consider strategic staffing Policy updates and revisions.
- 10.7 The promotion and maintenance of high standards and conduct within the Council are the responsibility of the Conduct Committee. The committee comprises of up to 5 members of the Council. The Conduct Committee is advised by the Independent Person appointed in accordance with section 28 of the Localism Act 2011. The committee may appoint up to two non voting

members who are Town or Parish Councillors, in addition three additional substitute members can be appointed.

- 10.8 Amendments to the constitution and associated Conduct Committee procedures, which recently include a comprehensive pre sifting process have resulted in fewer conduct matters requiring referral to the Conduct Committee and therefore the number of occasions they are required to meet has reduced significantly, to date since the process changes have been implemented no conduct matters have required referral through to Committee.

11 External Partnerships

- 11.1 On 3 March 2017, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority was established as a Mayoral Combined Authority for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area.

- 11.2 It is made up of a directly elected Mayor and the following seven local authorities (referred to as the Constituent Councils) and the Business Board (Local Enterprise Partnership):

- Cambridge City Council
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Fenland District Council
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Peterborough City Council
- South Cambridgeshire District Council

- 11.3 There are a number of decision making committees within the Combined Authority that require representation from the constituent councils including the following:

- 11.4 In accordance with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Order 2017, each Constituent Council must appoint one of its elected members and a substitute member to the Combined Authority Board. This is usually the Leader of the Council

- 11.5 The Combined Authority Board is chaired by the elected Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and consists of the leaders of the seven constituent councils, the chair of the Business Board and co-opted members: the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Police & Crime Commissioner and representatives from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group.

- 11.6 The purpose of the Board is to ensure that the decisions and actions of the Combined Authority deliver key outcomes for the people of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

- 11.7 In addition there are several other decision making committees within the Combined Authority requiring Fenland representation. Nominated representatives are members of the Executive and more widely from elected members

- 11.8 The Audit and Governance Committee 1 Fenland representative in addition to 1 substitute member
- 11.9 The Employment Committee 1 Fenland representative in addition to 1 substitute member
- 11.10 The Housing and Communities Committee 1 Fenland representative in addition to 1 substitute member
- 11.11 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2 Fenland representatives in addition to 2 substitute members
- 11.12 The Skills Committee 1 Fenland representative in addition to 1 substitute member
- 11.13 The Employment and Skills Board 1 Fenland representative in addition to 1 substitute member
- 11.14 The Transport and Infrastructure Committee 1 Fenland representative in addition to 1 substitute member
- 11.15 During the 2021 Member Allowances Review the IRP stated the following 'The panel considered the roles that members undertake on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) both in respect of constituted committees in addition to the requirements associated with CPCA Board membership. Other constituent Councils of the CPCA have either already agreed to make SRA payments to members fulfilling roles on the CPCA or have been asked to consider making payments as part of their respective Independent Remuneration Panel deliberations. From the extensive feedback and evidence received in relation to this matter the panel recognises the significant responsibilities, extent of decision making and associated time commitment these roles carry above that expected of a District Councillor, which would suggest that an additional SRA was justifiable. The panel also acknowledge the importance and associated potential benefits of having Fenland representatives contributing to the role of the CPCA. The IRP asked all elected members about the potential for a further SRA in respect of the commitments and responsibilities associated with the CPCA. All members who were either interviewed or took part in the survey felt that an additional SRA could not be justified, particularly at this time due to the financial impact globally resulting from the COVID pandemic. As a result the IRP recommend that No New SRA is to be introduced in respect of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, however the SRA for the Leader of the Council is proportionately higher in comparison to the basic allowance to reflect the additional commitment associated with the CPCA Board role.
- 11.16 In addition due to the Council's commitment to exploring shared service where appropriate and where they meet the needs of the Council and the local residents we serve Fenland also provides representation from 1 elected member on the Anglia Revenues Partnership Joint Committee and 1 elected member to the CNC Board for Building Control.

12 Community Leadership

- 12.1 Fenland is a unique and diverse area with strong traditions and a variety of strong identities. This is characterised and supported by historical traditions and the isolated and sporadic geographical layout of the different settlements across the District. It is important to maintain effective elector representation within all communities' right across the District to take account of the variety of values, perspectives and outlooks, which can vary substantially from town to town and village to village.
- 12.2 The majority of Fenland District Councillors are also Town and Parish Councillors or County Councillors. Feedback resulting from the recent Member survey confirmed that the majority of District Councillors regularly attend Town and Parish meetings. This can be a substantial commitment for Members who have a number of Parish Councils to attend, especially in the rural areas. Members confirmed that attending Town and Parish Council meetings is important to keep in touch with local issues and developments and to support Councillors and residents at the local level to achieve the aspirations they have for their area. These meetings are an important two way communication between town/parish councils and the District Council.
- 12.3 Councillors are often a focal point for the community and therefore they are asked to participate in numerous community groups to provide advice and to lever in support from the District Council or other organisations if appropriate. With the introduction of the Localism Act, this role will increase as Members are looked to by the community to support them to take on new roles and responsibilities.
- 12.4 The Council has a high retention rate for Councillors with 25 returning Councillors and 14 new Councillors elected in May 2019. New members also come on to the Council as a result of by-elections.
- 12.5 The Council is 'One Team' with Councillors and officers working together for the benefit of the community. Councillors set policy which officers work to implement and are accountable to Members for this delivery. Residents contact Councillors regarding service issues which are passed to officers for resolution. Councillors will respond to the residents involved. Other mechanisms available to residents are our Fenland website, telephone contact centre and 3C's (Correspondence, Compliments and Complaints) system for resolution of issues.
- 12.6 Councillors are also the focal point for resident issues with other agencies which Councillors research, contact relevant officers and follow up on issues if required on behalf of residents.
- 12.7 Councillors often proactively work together, especially in multi member wards, to fulfil their responsibilities when a Councillor is on holiday or ill. Feedback during the Member workshops in relation to Council size stated that Multiple Member wards do not necessarily result in the workload being equally shared across both or all 3 elected representatives in that area and therefore in order to level up the workload members need to effectively work together, which can be easier if elected representatives are from the same political party.
- 12.8 Councillors undertake a variety of formal and informal training to carry out their roles effectively. All Councillors participate in a Member Induction

Programme which sets out what the Council does, committee responsibilities, the role of Members, the roles of Officers etc. Training is an important aspect of a Councillors role to ensure effective decision making. Compulsory training is set out in the Council's constitution for Planning and Licensing Committees which must be carried out before a Councillor can participate in the decision making process. For all other Committees, there is training associated with the role which is incorporated either before a meeting or within a separate session and is delivered by either an FDC officer or external trainer. Briefings on particular issues and legislative changes etc are incorporated on an as and when basis. Portfolio Holders, Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of committees will be consulted and briefed on a regular basis regarding on going or new issues affecting Council business.

- 12.9 Recent (July/ August 2021) survey information and focus group feedback has indicated that Members find time to fulfil their roles effectively and it is appropriate within the time they have to dedicate to the role. As one member described it 'there is enough work as a District Councillor to fill any time you are prepared to make yourself available. The more you make yourself available the more local people will approach you resulting in more work to fill your time'
- 12.10 Members confirmed that they are able to effectively sit on Committees, this includes training, briefings, report reading, research, and meeting attendance including travel, which is time consuming. Several Members commented that they were actually more productive during the pandemic when legislative changes enabled virtual meetings. When virtual meetings were allowed Members explained they could attend meetings relating to the Combined Authority, which would ordinarily be held across the whole of Cambridgeshire followed immediately by meetings about the immediate local area, without the need for any travel therefore being more available to attend meetings without any cost implications from the requirement to travel.
- 12.11 Many Members are self employed or retired, which enables those members to have greater autonomy about the use of their time. These Members reported they would find it difficult to fulfil all aspects of the role effectively if they had to cover a wider electorate and/or balance other substantial commitments, such as a young family or full time employment.
- 12.12 Councillors were concerned if the workload increased due to a reduction in Members then this would deter other members of the community from standing as a Councillor in future elections and this would reduce the diversity of perspectives and views available to set policy for the area. During 2015 there were 5 uncontested district council seats and this increased to 12 uncontested seats during the 2019 all out local elections, suggesting that recruiting potential candidates in already becoming increasingly challenging in the Fenland area.

13 Casework

- 13.1 The rapid increase in smart device ownership has resulted in 81% of people (nationally) having access to a smart device. This means that even people without traditional home internet access can now contact the Council and their

Elected Members through e-mail and social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) which supplements or replaces more traditional methods such as face-to-face contact, letter writing and the telephone. Whilst the use of social media and other online communication methods has provided alternatives to traditional contact methods with residents, the increased use of emails and social media has resulted in the public having greater expectations that the Council and councillors will be instantly contactable.

- 13.2 The Council places strong emphasis on “channel migration” with the aim of encouraging its customers to obtain information and services for themselves through electronic means. Councillors, however, believe that while this has realised benefits in terms of reduced transaction costs for the Council as an organisation, it has not decreased their levels of constituent casework. On the contrary, it is commonly found that technology has contributed to increased contact with Councillors because they are readily available via email and mobile telephone there is an expectation of a quick response.
- 13.3 The Council does not issue elected members with Council owned devices, largely because the majority of members are twin or triple hatters at parish and county level and therefore wish to avoid having multiple devices depending on the role they are fulfilling at any given time. All Members are however issued with council email addresses to facilitate contact and better assist their constituents. In turn, Members are also now more easily able to contact officers through email and find out information themselves on-line
- 13.4 The Council has a 3C’s process (correspondence, compliments and complaints) which enables residents to raise issues directly with the Council rather than through their elected representative however some residents ask their local Member to conduct this process on their behalf.
- 13.5 Members have support with ongoing training and development through their respective Committee responsibilities and can also request to attend training courses etc. The Council promotes the use of free resources such as those available through the Local Government Association.

14 Effect on Corporate Objectives

- 14.1 The Council strives to be a Quality Organisation and it is a matter of good governance as displayed by the LGBCE intervention criteria for Councillors to represent as similar number of electors as possible which can only be achieved through an Electoral Review of Fenland District Council.

15 Community Impact

- 15.1 The community would be fully consulted by the LGBCE in regard to any future electoral arrangements for Fenland District Council.

16 Conclusions

The Member Working Group wishes for Council to consider the future Council size of the Council. Initially the Member working group considered a range of between 39 to 48 elected representatives but have now narrowed this down to a suggestion of a future Council Size of 42 Members for deliberation by all Members at Full Council.

An increase is recommended from the current 39 Members to 42 Members to:

- Ensure the effective running of the Council and to ensure there is no detrimental impact on effective representation especially given the increase in electoral figures to 2027.
- Reflect the increase in workload associated with the creation of the Combined Authority – CPCA Board, Leader’s Strategy meetings and Committees - which has occurred since the last setting of Council Size through an electoral review in 2012.
- Reflect the additional workload associated with access to external funding which requires Members’ input and decision making for example CPCA £4 million Growing Fenland funding and £3.6 million Cambs Horizons monies.
- Reflect the creation of the Commercial Investment Strategy and Investment Board as well as Local Authority Trading Company.
- Reflect the Cambridgeshire County Council devolution plans to encourage local involvement in CCC services.
- Reflect extra Planning Committee meetings due to the Council’s pro growth agenda.
- Reflect the rise, as reported by Councillors, of the increase in workload of 38 hours to 60 hours.

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET

APPENDIX A

AUGUST 2021

Cllr Chris Boden



Leader of the Council

Portfolio Holder for Finance - Finance/Budgets (Financial & Performance Management), Benefits (strategic), Corporate Governance, Electoral Services, Business Rates, Policy & Resources, Capital Programme, IDBs (strategic)
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) – Portfolio Holder

<p>Cllr Ian Benney</p>  <p>Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Assets & Management • Growth • Inward Investment • Port & Marine Services • Job Stimulation • Asset Disposal • Renaissance • Emergency Planning Deputy 	<p>Cllr Sam Clark</p>  <p>Portfolio Holder for Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Development • Leisure Services • Health Inequalities • Health & Wellbeing • Supporting Vulnerable People • Golden Age Fairs • Community Partnerships • Community Grants • Pride In Fenland 	<p>Cllr Mrs Jan French</p>  <p>Deputy Leader of the Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits (operational) • ARP • Parking • Member Services • Street Lighting 	<p>Cllr Miss Sam Hoy</p>  <p>Portfolio Holder for Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing (including Regulated Providers) • Housing Strategy • Private Sector Housing • Homelessness • Rough Sleeping • Environmental Health (including enforcement) • Travellers 	<p>Cllr Mrs Dee Laws</p>  <p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan • Neighbourhood Planning • Building Control • Planning Policy • Planning Delivery • Planning (operational) • Building Communities & Neighbourhood Management • Section 106 & CIL • Flooding & IDBs (operational) 	<p>Cllr Andrew Lynn</p>  <p>Portfolio Holder for Licensing & Community Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Liaison • CCTV • Community Safety • Community Cohesion • Licensing (including enforcement) 	<p>Cllr Peter Murphy</p>  <p>Portfolio Holder for Open Spaces, Street Scene & Waste Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste & Recycling (operational) • Cleansing • Grounds Maintenance • Cemeteries • Parks & Open Spaces • Markets & Events • War Memorials • Street Furniture 	<p>Cllr Chris Seaton</p>  <p>Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility & Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills • Transport • Rural Affairs • Community Cohesion • Education • Children & Young People • Tourism • Conservation • Heritage • Dilapidated Buildings & Enforcement 	<p>Cllr Steve Tierney</p>  <p>Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Communication & Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Services • Marketing & Communications • ICT & Broadband • Waste & Recycling (strategic) • Energy Conservation • Equalities • Emergency Planning
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Cllr Mike Cornwell



Leader of the Fenland Independents Alliance

<p>Cllr Fred Yeulett</p>  <p>Shadow Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth</p>	<p>Cllr Andy Maul</p>  <p>Shadow Portfolio Holder for Health</p>	<p>Cllr Mike Cornwell</p>  <p>Leader of the Fenland Independents Alliance</p>	<p>Cllr Gavin Booth</p>  <p>Shadow Portfolio Holder for Finance</p>	<p>Cllr Will Sutton</p>  <p>Shadow Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>			<p>Cllr Bob Wicks</p>  <p>Shadow Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility & Heritage</p>	<p>Cllr Michelle Tanfield</p>  <p>Shadow Portfolio Holder for Transformation & Communications</p>
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Council	Number of Seats (2019)	Electorate (2020)	Total Population (2020)	Electorate per Seat	Electorate as % of Population	Population per Seat
Fenland	39	76,358	102,100	1,958	74.79%	2,618
Dover	32	88,434	118,500	2,764	74.63%	3,703
Bassetlaw	48	89,191	118,300	1,858	75.39%	2,465
Newark and Sherwood	39	91,160	123,100	2,337	74.05%	3,156
Erewash	47	87,416	115,300	1,860	75.82%	2,453
Amber Valley	45	100,530	128,800	2,234	78.05%	2,862
South Holland	37	71,556	95,900	1,934	74.62%	2,592
Breckland	49	105,228	141,300	2,148	74.47%	2,884
Nuneaton and Bedworth	34	99,884	130,400	2,938	76.60%	3,835
Wyre Forest	33	78,203	101,100	2,370	77.35%	3,064
High Peak	43	74,010	92,600	1,721	79.92%	2,153
Broxtowe	44	87,362	114,600	1,986	76.23%	2,605
Wellingborough (former authority)	36	61,838	80,100	1,718	77.20%	2,225
Rossendale	36	52,462	71,400	1,457	73.48%	1,983
Kettering (former authority)	36	76,761	102,200	2,132	75.11%	2,839
Bolsover	37	60,883	81,300	1,645	74.89%	2,197
43,635						
Average electorate per seat		2066				
Average population per seat		2727				

Geographical Nearest Neighbours – Council Size

	Number of Seats	Size of Electorate	Population	Electorate per Seat	Ranking (1 Smallest)	Population by Seat	Ranking (1 Smallest)	Electorate as Proportion of Population
Fenland	39	76,358	102,100	1,958	1	2,618	1	74.79%
Cambridge	42	95,765	125,100	2,280	2	2,979	2	76.55%
East Cambridgeshire	28	66,228	90,200	2,365	3	3,221	3	73.42%
Huntingdonshire	52	134,506	179,000	2,587	4	3,442	4	75.14%
South Cambridgeshire	45	122,643	160,900	2,725	5	3,576	5	76.22%

Ref No	Outside Body	Number of representatives required	Current nominated representatives 2020/21	Proportionality
1	Anglia Revenue Partnership	1 + 2 substitutes	Cllr Jan French Substitute members Cllr Connor Cllr Kim French	Conservative Party representation
2	Benwick Internal Drainage Board (IDB)	4	Cllr Laws Cllr Miscandlon Cllr Mrs Mayor Cllr Wicks	3 Conservatives 1 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)
3	Cambridgeshire Horizons Board	1	Cllr Boden	Conservative Party representation
4	Cambridgeshire Military Community Covenant Board	1	Cllr Tierney	Conservative Party Representation
5	Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel	1 + 1 substitute	Cllr Lynn substitute member Cllr Connor	Conservative Party Representation
6	Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Board + District Lead Members Group	1	Cllr Clark	Conservative Party Representation
7	Chatteris Community Centre Association	2	Cllr Murphy or Cllr Benney TBC Cllr Divine	1 Conservative 1 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)
8	College of West Anglia Governing Body	1	Cllr Topgood	Conservative Party Representation
9	Community Learning and Skills Partnership	1	Cllr Benney	Conservative Party Representation

Ref No	Outside Body	Number of representatives required	Current nominated representatives 2020/21	Proportionality
10	Curf and Wimblington Combined IDB	1	Cllr Davis	Conservative Party Representation
11	Feldale IDB	7	Cllr Laws Cllr Boden Cllr Miscandlon Cllr Mrs Mayor Cllr Wicks	5 Conservatives (1 Conservative vacancy) 2 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party) (1 FIA Vacancy)
12	Fenland Association of Community Transport	1	Cllr Seaton	Conservative Party Representation
13	Fenland Diverse Communities Forum	1	Cllr Tierney	Conservative Party Representation
14	Fenland Health and Care Forum	Open meeting		Open meeting available for elected members and members of the public wishing to attend
15	Fenland Tension Monitoring Group	1	Cllr Hoy	Conservative Party Representation
16	Fenland Transport and Access Partnership	1	Cllr Topgood	Conservative Party Representation
17	Fenland Transport Strategy	2	Cllr Seaton or Cllr Connor TBC Cllr Wicks	1 Conservative 1 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)
18	Fenland Twinning Association	4	Cllr Mrs Hay Cllr Mrs Mayor Cllr Topgood	3 Conservatives 1 Fenland Independents

Ref No	Outside Body	Number of representatives required	Current nominated representatives 2020/21	Proportionality
			Cllr Cornwell	Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)
19	Hanson, Fletton Brickworks Industry	1	Cllr Boden	Conservative Party Representation
20	Health Committee	1 + 1 substitute	Cllr Clark Substitute Member Cllr Topgood	Conservative Party Representation
21	Hundred of Wisbech IDB	15	Cllr Topgood Cllr Wallwork Cllr Lynn Cllr Hoy Cllr Rackley Cllr Sutton Cllr Booth Cllr Tanfield	10 Conservatives (5 Conservative vacancies) 5 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party) (2 FIA Vacancies)
22	Kings Lynn IDB	1	Cllr Rackley with effect Feb 21	Conservative Party Representation
23	LGA/ LGA Rural Commission/ LGA Urban Commission	1 + 1 Substitute	Cllr Boden Substitute member Cllr Tierney	Conservative Party Representation
24	Manea and Welney Drainage Commissioners	3	Cllr Marks Cllr Sutton	2 Conservative (1 Conservative vacancy) 1 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party) Councillor Sutton takes 1 Conservative seat
25	March Area Transport Study	2	Cllr Count or Cllr Skoulding TBC	1 Conservative 1 Fenland Independents

Ref No	Outside Body	Number of representatives required	Current nominated representatives 2020/21	Proportionality
			Cllr Cornwell	Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)
26	March West and White Fen Internal Drainage Board (Previously known as March and Whittlesey IDB)	6	Cllr Cornwell Cllr Wicks	4 Conservatives (4 Conservative vacancies) 2 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)
27	March East IDB	11	Cllr Purser Cllr Clark Cllr Topgood Cllr Cornwell Cllr Marks Cllr Yeulett	7 Conservatives (4 Conservative vacancies) 4 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party) (1 FIA vacancy)
28	March Education Foundation	1	Cllr Purser	Conservative Party Representation
29	March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners	8	Cllr Cornwell Cllr Jan French Cllr Yeulett	5 Conservatives (4 Conservative vacancies) 3 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party) (1 FIA vacancy)
30	March Sixth District Drainage Commissioners	4	Cllr Cornwell Cllr Jan French	3 Conservatives (2 Conservative vacancies) 1 Fenland

Ref No	Outside Body	Number of representatives required	Current nominated representatives 2020/21	Proportionality
				Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)
31	March Third IDB	5	Cllr Cornwell Cllr Jan French Cllr Yeulett	3 Conservatives 2 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)
32	Middle Level Commissioners	3	Cllr Laws Cllr Miscandlon Cllr Sutton	2 Conservatives 1 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)
33	Needham and Laddus IDB	1	Cllr Sutton	Conservative Party Representation FIA has Conservative seat
34	Nightlayer IDB	10	Cllr Benney Cllr Hay Cllr Murphy Cllr Divine	7 Conservatives (4 Conservative vacancies) 3 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party) (2 FIA vacancies)
35	North Level District IDB	7	Cllr Humphrey Cllr Sam Clark Cllr Laws Cllr Mrs Mayor Cllr Miscandlon Cllr Booth	5 Conservatives 2 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)

Ref No	Outside Body	Number of representatives required	Current nominated representatives 2020/21	Proportionality
			Cllr Wicks	
36	Wisbech Community Development Trust (Oasis Village Centre)	1	Cllr Rackley was the nominated representative but stood down in June 2020.	Conservative Party Representation
37	Ransonmoor District Drainage Commissioners	2	Cllr Connor Cllr Wicks	1 Conservative 1 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)
38	RECAP	1 +1 Substitute member	Cllr Murphy Substitute member Cllr Tierney	Conservative Party Representation
39	Rural Cambs CAB	3	Cllr Miscandlon Cllr Booth	2 Conservatives (1 Conservative vacancy) 1 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)
40	Safer Fenland Partnership	1	Cllr Lynn	Conservative Party Representation
41	The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership	1	Cllr Rackley	Conservative Party Representation
42	The Combined Authority	1 + 1 Substitute	Cllr Boden Substitute member Cllr Jan French	Conservative Party Representation
43	The Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee	2 + 2 Substitutes	Cllr Hay Cllr Miscandlon Substitute members Cllr Tierney	Conservative Party Representation

Ref No	Outside Body	Number of representatives required	Current nominated representatives 2020/21	Proportionality
			1 vacancy	
44	The Combined Authority Audit and Governance Committee	1 + 1 Substitute	Cllr Benney Substitute member Cllr Hoy	Conservative Party Representation
45	The Combined Authority Employment Committee	1 +1 sub	Cllr Miss French Cllr Mrs Davis (substitute)	Conservative Party Representation
46	The Combined Authority Housing and Communities Committee	1+1 Sub	Cllr Boden Cllr Mrs Laws (substitute)	Conservative Party Representation
47	The Combined Authority Transport and Infrastructure Committee	1+1 Sub	Cllr Seaton Cllr Boden (substitute)	Conservative Party Representation
48	The Combined Authority Skills Committee	1+1 Sub	Cllr Seaton Cllr Mason (substitute)	Conservative Party Representation
49	Upwell IDB	2	Cllr Rackley Cllr Sutton	1 Conservative 1 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)
50	Waldersley IDB	2	Cllr Rackley Cllr Sutton	1 Conservative 1 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)
51	Warboys, Somersham and Pidley IDB	1	No nominated representative for 2019/20	Conservative Party Representation (1 Conservative vacancy)
52	Whittlesey & District IDB	5	Cllr Mason	3 Conservatives 2 Fenland

Ref No	Outside Body	Number of representatives required	Current nominated representatives 2020/21	Proportionality
			Cllr Laws Cllr Mrs Mayor Cllr Wicks	Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party) (1 FIA vacancy)
53	Wisbech Access Strategy Member Steering Group	2	Cllr Lynn or Cllr Rackley TBC Cllr Booth	1 Conservative 1 Fenland Independents Alliance (including 2 Liberal Democrats and 1 Member of The Green Party)
54	Young People March	1	Cllr Purser	Conservative Party Representation

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Agenda Item No:	12	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	30 September 2021	
Report Title:	Appointment of Acting Monitoring Officer and Notification of Acting Deputy Monitoring Officer	

1 Purpose / Summary

- To approve the appointment of Amy Brown, Head of Legal and Governance as the Council's Acting Monitoring Officer to cover a period of maternity leave for the existing Monitoring Officer.
- To note the appointment of Kathy Woodward, Internal Audit Manager, as Acting Deputy Monitoring Officer for the Council, during the period in which Amy Brown is Acting Monitoring Officer.

2 Key issues

- The Monitoring Officer is a statutory appointment pursuant to Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The officer may not be the Head of Paid Service or the Chief Finance Officer.
- In general terms, the duties of the Monitoring Officer are to report to the authority any proposal, decision or omission by the authority which have given rise to or is likely to give rise to contravention of any law, any code of practice or of any maladministration or injustice.
- Carol Pilson, Corporate Director is the Council's Monitoring Officer and will be commencing a period of maternity leave from November/December 2021. To ensure adequate coverage for the Monitoring Officer role it is suggested Amy Brown, Head of Legal and Governance fulfils the role of Acting Monitoring Officer during this period of maternity leave.
- Amy is currently Deputy Monitoring Officer for Fenland District Council, Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, and has performed the role of Monitoring Officer at Fenland District Council previously. Therefore, Amy has a wide range of knowledge and experience of governance, code of conduct and constitutional matters.
- Further to section 2.3 of Article 12 of the Constitution the Monitoring Officer may designate another officer to deputise in their absence. During the period, Amy Brown is the Council's Acting Monitoring Officer (if agreed); Carol Pilson has designated Kathy Woodward, Internal Audit Manager as Acting Deputy Monitoring Officer for the Council. Kathy is an experienced Audit Manager and regularly reviews governance matters in line with the Internal Audit Plan making her well suited to the role of Deputy Monitoring Officer.

3 Recommendations

- For Council to approve the appointment of Amy Brown, Head of Legal and Governance as the Acting Monitoring Officer for the Council to cover a period of

maternity leave. These arrangements will come into immediate effect from the date the maternity leave commences.

- For Council to note the appointment of Kathy Woodward, Internal Audit Manager as Acting Deputy Monitoring Officer for the Council during the period in which Amy Brown is Acting Monitoring Officer.

Wards Affected	ALL
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Chris Boden, Leader of the Council
Report Originator	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Carol Pilson, Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer
Contact Officers	Paul Medd, Chief Executive 01354 622202, paulmedd@fenland.gov.uk Carol Pilson, Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer 01354 622360, cpilson@fenland.gov.uk
Background Papers	Section 5 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 Functions and Responsibilities (Amendment) Regs 2001 Constitution