

AGENDA

CABINET

THURSDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2022

2.00 PM

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, FENLAND HALL,
COUNTY ROAD, MARCH**

Committee Officer: Linda Albon

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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 Council still observing some Covid-19 restrictions.

The YouTube link for this meeting is: <https://youtu.be/9AyxH-qMtqU>

- 1 To receive apologies for absence
- 2 Previous Minutes (Pages 3 - 6)

To confirm and sign the minutes of 20 January 2022.
- 3 To report additional items for consideration which the Chairman deems urgent by virtue of the special circumstances to be now specified
- 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 Local Plan Update (Pages 7 - 16)

The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the revised timetable for the

emerging Fenland Local Plan.

6 Draft 6 Month Cabinet Forward Plan (Pages 17 - 18)

For information purposes.

7 Items which the Chairman has under item 3 deemed urgent

8 Wisbech High Street Project Review (Pages 19 - 54)

To provide Cabinet with an update on progress and issues arising related to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Wisbech High Street Programme and the ongoing projects relating to two properties at 24 Wisbech High Street and 11-12 Wisbech High Street.

This item comprises EXEMPT INFORMATION comprised in a Schedule 3 and Appendix 1 which is not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Wednesday, 26 January 2022

Members: Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor S Clark, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor A Lynn, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor C Seaton and Councillor S Tierney

CABINET



THURSDAY, 20 JANUARY 2022 - 4.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor C Seaton and Councillor S Tierney

APOLOGIES: Councillor S Clark

CAB34/21 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 8 December 2021 were agreed and signed.

CAB35/21 FREEDOM LEISURE JAN-MARCH

Members considered the Freedom Leisure - Covid-19 Impact and Fenland District Council Support Jan-March 2022 report presented by Councillor Boden on behalf of Councillor Clark.

Cabinet AGREED that:

- 1.1 Fenland District Council provides the Phase VII financial relief to Freedom Leisure set out in these recommendations and detailed in section 5 of the report.**
- 1.2 FDC defers the monthly management fee of £39,600 per month for January – March 2022, at an estimated cost to the Council of £118,800, repayable in accordance with the terms set out at paragraph 1.4 of these recommendations.**
- 1.3 FDC continues to support Freedom Leisure on an open book basis.**
- 1.4 Repayment of the £118,800 described in paragraph 1.2 of these recommendations shall become payable through an annual deduction of 75% of any profit generated in excess of the levels predicted in the LOBTA (Leisure Operators Base Trading Account). This is a change from the current 50/50 profit share and will be subject to the performance of the business over the contract period.**
- 1.5 The Monitoring Officer and s.151 Officer are authorised to put in place all necessary arrangements to give effect to the agreed recommendations to include entry into the necessary legal arrangements and expenditure of the amounts described from existing budget provisions.**

CAB36/21 MARCH HIGH STREET PROJECT UPDATE AND FUNDING REVIEW

Members considered the March High Street Project Update and Funding Review report presented by Councillor Seaton.

Councillor Mrs French asked Councillor Seaton when a decision is likely to be made on the planning application for Acre Road. She finds it disappointing that the applicant had not discussed this with Councillor Seaton before, as part of the land belongs to FDC and another to a third party. She said we have been trying to talk to the applicant for over twenty years and it may have a knock-on effect on Acre Road. Councillor Seaton agreed and said he shared her frustration; he has received no date for when that application will come forward but will let everyone know when

he finds out.

Cabinet AGREED to:

- 1. Note the positive progress of the project as detailed in the report.**
- 2. Authorise the Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility and Heritage to work with officers to enter into a memorandum of understanding with CCC to continue the collaborative partnership that already exists, taking the project through to its completion in 2023.**
- 3. Authorise the Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility and Heritage to work with officers to enter into an agreement with a CCC Joint Procurement Service Framework supplier to develop final designs and the open tender procurement package for the Broad Street public realm and Riverside workstreams, as approved by the Member Steering Group and Project Board.**
- 4. Authorise the Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility and Heritage to work with officers to expedite the most efficient way of procuring and entering into an agreement with a supplier to develop designs for the Market Place workstream as well as the construction of the final design, as approved by the Member Steering Group and Project Board.**

CAB37/21 AUTHORISATION TO DISPOSE OF PROPERTY BY AUCTION

Members considered the Authorisation to Dispose of Property by Auction report presented by Councillor Benney.

Councillor French asked Councillor Benney if he is aware that FDC rents the land on the site at Upwell Road to the dental surgery as they may like to buy it. Councillor Benney said he is aware they currently rent it as a car park and that they know we are looking to sell this land. If it does come up for sale, they will be contacted and will be given every opportunity to bid for it.

Cabinet considered the report and AGREED:

- 1.1 To approve the list of sites listed at Appendix 1 to the report as surplus and recommended for disposal.**
- 1.2 That authority to determine:**
 - a) The method and terms of sale either by way of auction, by openly marketed private treaty or by special purchaser private treaty and**
 - b) The reserve price at auction or acceptance of an offer pre or post auction the acceptance of an offer to purchase by private treaty**

is delegated to the Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth in respect of properties where the likely and actual sale price exceeds the existing delegated authority of the aforementioned officers and members.

CAB38/21 FEES AND CHARGES

Members considered the Fees and Charges 2022/23 report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Tierney referenced the proposed increase in Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Licence

charges to include the recovery cost of new software. He said that if he was a driver and was told that fees are going up for new software, he may accept it because it will save money in the future, but will we see a lowering in costs in the future to reflect that? Councillor Boden thanked Councillor Tierney for the comment and said we must consider that point when setting the next budget. If less officer time is required for this matter because of the software purchase, then potentially we can look at less of an increase than otherwise for 2023/24.

Cabinet considered the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and AGREED to approve the Fees and Charges for 2022/23.

CAB39/21 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Members considered the Council Tax Support Scheme 2022/23 report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Hoy asked how do we think that rates are going up given that the country's financial situation will become more difficult, causing more financial hardship and benefit claimants; will this have a massive impact or not? Councillor Boden responded that there was a lengthy discussion 12 months ago at the corresponding meeting of Cabinet and all that he said then turned out to be wrong. We underestimated the effectiveness of the furlough scheme and the way the country was going to bounce back after COVID-19. As a result, he is reluctant to give a forecast for the next year. Currently it is difficult to see how the labour market is going to easily satisfy the requirements that there are for the economy but there should not be a significant amount of additional pressure in terms of the numbers of benefit claimants, but we cannot be certain. However, we have carefully consulted with everyone, and we have not considered at this time that it is necessary to make any significant changes to the system.

Councillor Hoy said the report mentions about the shortfall last year being made up due to the change in the way we charged for council tax on empty homes. However, the Empty Homes Officer has been very proactive in bringing them back into use which means council tax on those properties reverts from the enhanced rate to the normal rate, therefore we will not have so much money coming in. Effectively this solves one problem in having less homes that are falling apart, but it creates another by creating a funding gap, so will this change much in the next year or two? Councillor Boden responded that although the report is factually correct, it can be argued we are not quite comparing like with like because there is no substantial correlation between the monies received by bringing empty homes back into use and the way the council tax support scheme works. Therefore, whilst he is not disputing the figures in the report, they are not entirely relevant.

Cabinet considered the report and consultation responses and AGREED to recommend to Council that the proposed changes detailed in Section 4 of this report be implemented in the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022-23.


CAB40/21 DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Councillor Boden presented the Cabinet Forward Plan for information.

4.21 pm

Chairman

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Agenda Item No:	5	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	3 February 2022	
Report Title:	Fenland Local Plan updated timetable	

1 Purpose / Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the revised timetable for the emerging Fenland Local Plan.

2 Key issues

- Since the first round of public consultation in October 2019 there have been several delays to the Local Plan timetable.
- Firstly, the site assessment work and site visits were put on hold due to the Covid 19 pandemic and restrictions in place last spring.
- Then in summer 2020, the Council decided to carry out a second call for sites exercise which led to further delays with additional site assessment work required.
- A revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) was approved by Cabinet in July 2020 setting out public consultation in on the draft version of the Local Plan in February 2021.
- Then in August 2020 Government consulted on proposed changes to the current planning system, which included proposed changes to the standard method used to calculate housing need figures for Local Plans, which resulted in further delays to the site assessment work.
- A Local Plan update report was presented to Cabinet in March 2021 setting out some of the proposed changes and new policy approaches to better facilitate economic and housing growth.
- In July 2021 a revised LDS was approved by Cabinet setting out public consultation in December 2021 and January 2022.
- However, since July 2021 there have been further delays to the Local Plan evidence base, particularly relating to Transport Assessment work, which means the above timetable cannot be met.
- Therefore, there is a need for a revised LDS setting out the new timetable to produce the Fenland Local Plan.
- Appendix 1 sets out the revised timetable

3 Recommendations

- That Cabinet approves the attached Local Development Scheme (LDS) (Appendix 1) which sets out the revised timetable for production of the Fenland Local Plan.

- Delegate to Acting Assistant Director the ability to approve any future changes to the Local Plan timetable (and LDS) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Dee Laws, Portfolio Holder for Planning
Report Originator(s)	Gemma Wildman - Local Plan Manager Dan Horn - Acting Assistant Director
Contact Officer(s)	Gemma Wildman - Local Plan Manager Dan Horn - Acting Assistant Director
Background Paper(s)	

1 Background / introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of a Local Development Scheme (LDS) is to inform the public and stakeholders of the Council's timetable to produce Local Plans that form part of the statutory development plan for the area.
- 1.2 The LDS provides information for the local community about the planning documents that apply in Fenland at any one time i.e. it explains what the current documents are which collectively form the development plan for the area. The LDS is also a programme or timetable for the preparation of Development Plan Documents over the next three years.
- 1.3 To be absolutely clear, the LDS is a statutorily required 'programme management' document and does not contain any Council policy.
- 1.4 In February 2019 Full Council approved an LDS, which confirmed commencement of a new Local Plan for Fenland.
- 1.5 The Issues and Options Consultation took place in October and November 2019 in accordance with the approved LDS. The Key Issues Report summarised the main issues raised during the consultation. At the same time a call for sites exercise was carried out which asked local landowners, agents and developers to suggest suitable sites for housing and employment for inclusion in the emerging Local Plan. The Strategic Housing Economic Land Availability Report was published in February 2020 which listed all suggested sites to the Council.
- 1.6 In early 2020 work commenced on a Draft version of the Local Plan for public consultation in summer 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic work on preparing the Local Plan was delayed. In addition, a second call for site exercise was carried out in summer 2020 to ensure that the Council received all possible sites available to assess for inclusion in the emerging Local Plan.
- 1.7 A revised LDS was approved in July 2020 setting out a new timetable to take account of the above delays.
- 1.8 In August 2020 Government consulted on proposed changes to the current planning system, which included proposed changes to the standard method used to calculate housing need figures for Local Plans. The potential change to the Local Plan Housing target meant that The Local Plan team were unable to progress the final site selection work until the outcomes of this consultation were published in December 2020
- 1.9 In March 2021 a Local Plan update report was presented to Cabinet which set out some of the proposed changes and new policy approaches to better facilitate economic and housing growth, this proposed that the Draft version of the Local Plan would be available for public consultation during summer 2021.
- 1.10 In July 2021 a revised LDS was approved by cabinet which showed public consultation on the Draft Local Plan due to take place in December 2021 and January 2022.
- 1.11 However, further delays to the Local Plan evidence base and Transport Assessment work means that a new LDS is required to show the revised timetable and dates for the Draft Local Plan consultation.
- 1.12 The revised LDS is attached at Appendix 1. Table 1 shows the proposed updated timetable to take into account the above. The estimated adoption date for the Local Plan is now early 2024

2 Considerations

- 2.1 The delay to the Local Plan timetable will have minimal financial implications.

3 Effect on corporate objectives

- 3.1 Production of a new Local Plan will allow planning policies to be brought fully up-to-date with corporate objectives which amongst other things embrace growth for the area to improve the health, well-being and opportunity of Fenland residents

4 Community impact

- 4.1 The revised LDS will allow full community involvement with the Local Plan consultation process and opportunities to attend public hearings at the examination stage.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Local Plan process has been delayed due to the impacts of Covid 19, second call for sites and site assessment work and delays to important evidence base documents such as the Transport Assessment. The revised LDS (See Appendix 1) sets out the revised timetable. It is estimated that the new Local Plan will be adopted by February 2024.



Fenland Local Development Scheme 2022 update

February 2022

The Fenland Local Development Scheme (LDS) was approved by Cabinet at a meeting on 15 July 2021. This update was approved on **03 February 2022** and replaces the July 2021 version with immediate effect.

Preface

This Fenland Local Development Scheme (LDS) was approved by Fenland District Council on **3 February 2022** and came into effect immediately, replacing the previous LDS, dated 15 July 2021.

If you require any further information regarding the Scheme, please contact a member of the Local Plan Team at localplan@fenland.gov.uk

A 'live' update is published on our website (www.fenland.gov.uk/newlocalplan) each month. This sets out the current and next stages of preparation, with dates, of each of the documents included in this LDS.

This LDS is produced under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended.

Fenland Local Development Scheme 2019 to 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a timetable which sets out the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that a local planning authority intends to produce over the next few years. Such DPDs are also known as the Local Plans for an area.
- 1.2 This Fenland LDS sets out the timetable for any DPDs to be prepared in the period 2019 to 2024. It explains when Fenland District Council intends to reach key stages in the preparation of a new Local Plan.

The Local Plan and Supporting Documents

- 1.3 In summary, the framework of strategic planning in Fenland is:
 - **Development Plan Documents (DPDs):** These are documents (often referred to as 'Local Plans') that form part of the statutory development plan for the area and are subject to independent examination by a planning inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. For Fenland, as at July 2021, they comprise:
 - **The Fenland Local Plan –**
Adopted on 8th May 2014, it provides land use planning policies, allocates sites for development and identifies other areas designated for protection that will shape the growth and regeneration of the Fenland area over the next 15 years and beyond.
 - **Minerals and Waste Local Plans –**
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan, was adopted on 28 July 2021 and set out the framework and specific proposals for all minerals and waste developments until 2036.
 - **Neighbourhood Plans:** Local communities, including Parish and Town Councils, can prepare Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) putting in place policies to guide the future development of the area. Any NP must be in general conformity with 'strategic policies' in DPDs (Local Plans) and with national policy. NPs are not able to propose lower levels of development than those set out in up to date Local Plans but could propose higher levels, or offer other detailed policy proposals. It is up to local communities to decide if they want to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and so it is not appropriate for this LDS to specify when or where they will be produced. Any NP that has been made (brought into legal force) becomes part of the statutory development plan. Two Neighbourhood Plans have been made across Fenland, a few more Neighbourhood Plans are under preparation.
 - **Policies Map:** This is a map on an Ordnance Survey base for the whole of a local planning authority's area which shows where policies in DPDs apply. The Fenland Policies Map includes inset maps for some areas to show information at a larger scale. The Policies Map is updated each time that a DPD or Neighbourhood Plan is adopted/made.
 - **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):** These can cover a wide range of issues on which the planning authority wishes to provide guidance to supplement the policies and proposals in its DPDs (Local Plan). They do not form part of the statutory development plan and are not subject to independent examination. There is no requirement for this LDS to set out a timetable for the production of any SPDs, but for completeness and clarity they will be listed on the Fenland web site.

- **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):** This is a document that explains how the local planning authority will engage the community in the preparation, alteration and review of planning documents, and in development control decisions. It is required to specify how and at what stages people will have the opportunity to be involved in planning for their area. The latest Fenland SCI was adopted in July 2018.
- **Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR):** This is a report which must be produced by the local planning authority (on an annual basis) to explain how the local development scheme is being implemented and the extent to which policies in the Local Plan are being achieved.

Joint Working Arrangements and Joint Local Plans

- 1.4 No formal joint working arrangement or Joint Local Plans are currently being prepared, but long established informal joint working across Cambridge and Peterborough HMAs (including the Combined Authority) continues to proceed successfully.

2. Local Plan Timetable

- 2.1 Through monitoring of the Local Plan and as a result of changes to National Planning Policy, Fenland District Council decided to review the Fenland Local Plan at its meeting on 21 February 2019. An LDS was approved that set the timetable to 2022.
- 2.2 The Issues and Options Consultation was carried out in October 2019 in accordance with the LDS, which included a call for sites exercise.
- 2.3 However, in early 2020 due to the COVID- 19 Pandemic the production of the Local Plan was delayed, and an updated LDS was approved. The Local Plan has been further delayed and consultation on the draft version is due to take place June 2022.
- 2.4 An updated LDS was published in February 2022 which shows a revised timetable for the production of the Fenland Local Plan to 2024.
- 2.5 There are a number of stages involved in the preparation of a DPD (Local Plan). This process allows for opportunities for the public to be involved, early resolution of objections, and an Independent Examination. The stages in producing a Local Plan, and the intended timescales of those stages for the review of the Fenland Local Plan, are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Timetable for Production of Development Plan Document

[illegible]

No.	Stage	Description	Date's stage will/ is proposed to take place
1	Public Participation (Regulation 18)	Opportunities for interested parties and statutory consultees to consider the options for the plan before the final document is produced. This stage can involve one or more public consultation rounds. We intend two rounds for the Fenland Local Plan.	Issues and Option Consultation October 2019 Draft Local Plan Consultation June/July 2022
2	Pre-submission Publication (Regulation 19)	The Council publishes the Local Plan which is followed with a 6-week period when formal representations can be made on the Local Plan.	January 2023
3	Submission (Regulation 22)	The Council submits the Local Plan to the Secretary of State together with the representations received at Regulation 19 stage.	April 2023
4	Independent Examination	Held by a Planning Inspector into objections raised at Regulation 19 stage on the Local Plan	From the day it is 'submitted'
5	Inspector's Report Issued	This will report whether if the Plan is 'Sound' or 'Not Sound'. The Inspector may make recommendations to make the plan 'sound'	January 2024 (estimate – could be earlier or later, and subject to the examination)
6	Adoption of DPD (Local Plan)	Final stage, the Council will formally need to adopt the Local Plan and it will then be used in making planning decisions.	Adoption March 2024 (estimate - could be earlier or later, and subject to the examination)

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DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN – Updated 25 January 2022



(For any queries, please refer to the published forward plan)

CABINET

CABINET DATE	ITEMS	LEAD PORTFOLIO HOLDER
Thu 24 Feb 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business Plan 2022/23 2. Budget 2022/23 and Mid Term Financial Strategy 3. Economic Growth Strategy 2022-25 4. Authorisation of External Funding in relation to energy efficiency 5. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan 	<p>Cllr Boden Cllr Boden</p> <p>Cllr Benney Cllr Hoy</p> <p>Cllr Boden</p>
Tue 22 Mar 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update on Progress with Wisbech Levelling Up Fund Regeneration Project 2. Fenland Transport Strategy 3. Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) Update 4. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan 	<p>Cllr Boden / Cllr Hoy / Cllr Tierney / Cllr Lynn Cllr Seaton Cllr French Cllr Boden</p>
Thu 28 Apr 2022	Reserve Date	
Thu 12 May 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft Local Plan 2. Wisbech Levelling Up Fund Regeneration Bid 3. Whittlesey Neighbourhood Planning Referendum 4. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan 	<p>Cllr Boden / Cllr Laws Cllr Boden / Cllr Hoy / Cllr Tierney / Cllr Lynn Cllr Laws</p> <p>Cllr Boden</p>
TBC Jun 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appointments to Outside Bodies 2. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan 	<p>Cllr Boden Cllr Boden</p>
TBC Jul 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual Report 2021/22 2. Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22 3. Financial Outturn Report 2021/22 4. Capital Update Report 5. Council Tax Support Scheme 6. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan 	<p>Cllr Boden Cllr Boden Cllr Boden Cllr Boden Cllr Boden Cllr Boden</p>

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Agenda Item No:	8	
Committee:	CABINET	
Date:	3rd February 2022	
Report Title:	Wisbech High Street Project Update and Funding Review	

This item comprises EXEMPT INFORMATION comprised in a Schedule 3 and Appendix 1 which is not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an update on progress and issues arising related to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Wisbech High Street Programme and the ongoing projects relating to two properties at 24 Wisbech High Street and 11-12 Wisbech High Street.

2 Programme Summary

- 2.1 There has been continued positive progress with the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Programme for Wisbech High Street. Through the months of September to December 2021 the programme has seen continued progress regarding ongoing property projects, new property improvements starting on site and some larger projects nearing completion.
- 2.2 Following regular contact with the NLHF regarding progress on the projects, the NLHF have confirmed in writing that they are willing to extend the project deadline into 2023 to ensure project completion.
- 2.3 Following an ongoing communications plan, the programme has also seen further property owners come forward to enquire regarding the final year of the grant being available for property improvements – two further properties within Wisbech High Street have now come forward and are now at early-stage development of their projects.
- 2.4 The report below outlines key projects and milestones achieved in delivering capital projects and the activity programme over the life of the project.
- 2.5 The two major projects regarding 11-12 High Street and 24 High Street have moved forwards to a position whereby each project has now undertaken and completed a formal competitive tender process for a contractor to develop the properties, as permitted with the current planning permission. This point in the process has solidified contractor market costs for the time being and the report below seeks Cabinet decisions regarding which option for each project is preferred.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet notes the positive progress that this project has made both on supporting third party owned property improvements as well as the continuing activity programme.
- 3.2 That Cabinet notes the current position in relation to 11/12 High Street.
- 3.3 That Cabinet considers the options for 24 High Street, Wisbech and approves a preferred option to take forward together with any associated budgetary implications;
- 3.4 Subject to the above, authorises officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility and Heritage, to put in place all required financial, legal and governance arrangements as required to facilitate the delivery of the best achievable outcomes for both buildings in line with existing delegations.

Wards Affected	Medworth Ward
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/21NOV21/01 KEY/03DEC21/02
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Ian Benney – Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth Cllr Chris Seaton – Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility and Heritage Cllr Chris Boden – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance
Report Originator(s) and Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd – Chief Executive Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director & Section 151 Officer Phil Hughes – Acting Assistant Director Simon Machen – Corporate Growth and Regeneration Advisor Matt Wright – High Streets Project Manager Amy Brown – Head of Legal and Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer Neil Krajewski – Deputy Chief Accountant
Background Papers	2020 Cabinet Reports June 2021 Cabinet Report Planning documents

4 Reasons for Exemption

- 4.1 Before deciding whether to deal with this report as an exempt item and to exclude the press and public the Cabinet must first decide whether there is exempt information in the report and secondly whether the public interest should override the application of that exemption.
- 4.2 The Council considers that this Schedule 3 and Appendix 1 of this Report comprises exempt information which is not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 1 & 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). This report contains information in connection with Paragraph 1, namely *“Information relating to any individual.”* and Paragraph 3, namely *“Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)”*.
- 4.3 The Council considers that this report contains details of commercially sensitive financial matters. The release of this information would significantly prejudice and compromise the Council's ability to competitively negotiate with and appoint contractors in connection with the design and construction phases of 11/12 and 24 High Street. Members will need to decide whether the sensitivity of the information relating to this proposal is so great that the public interest in transparent and accountable decision making is outweighed at this time. Members could decide that disclosing such detailed and sensitive information into the public domain at this stage will be detrimental to the Council.

5 Capital Programme Project Update

5.1 Property No 4 Wisbech High Street

Following a pause in progress last year, this property is now expecting to progress to delivery of a renovated shop front through utilisation of the grant. The owner has received and submitted quotes and the project will be progressing in early 2022.



5.2 Properties No 13 to 17 Wisbech High Street

An excellent example of an owner utilising a high-level intervention from the NLHF grant to deliver high quality historic shop fronts, supported by the creation of town centre residential properties located within the conservation zone. This project will complete in January 2022 and will significantly add to the streetscape of Wisbech High Street.



5.3 Property No 18 Wisbech High Street

Number 18 started delivery of their project in November 2021. Scaffolding is erected, works started and phase one now completed. The owner is anticipating the replacement of windows during February 2022 with completion following this date.



5.4 Property No 19 Wisbech High Street

NLHF are satisfied that works on the property can begin upon completion of the appropriate legal formalities. Works are planned to begin in Spring this year, this property will see a full repair and restoration of the already historic shopfront as an anchor point of the High Street.



5.5 Property No 21 Wisbech High Street

Following a recent communication drive the owner of number 21 has come forward with an expression of interest in the grant. The High Street Project Officer will work with this owner throughout 2022 to deliver a scheme on the property.



5.6 Property No 31 Wisbech High Street

Following a recent communication drive, the owner of number 31 has come forward with an expression of interest in the grant. The High Street Project Officer will work with this owner throughout 2022 to deliver a scheme on the property.



6 Activity Schedule Update

- 6.1 Schedule 2 of this Report sets out a detailed update regarding the activities that have taken place throughout the life of the programme as well as a description of activities planned for the final year of the NLHF project to utilise all remaining activity funding granted by the NLHF.

7 11-12 and 24 High Street, Wisbech

- 7.1 These two projects form the largest capital elements of the programme and are expected to have the most significant impact upon the streetscape and vitality of the town centre in general. Over the past few months significant progress has been made with the opportunity for the building work for both properties having been advertised and bidding contractors submitting their formal tenders. Despite this and the NHLF's continued commitment to working with Fenland District Council to overcome the impact of the pandemic there are resultant financial implications which need to be considered.
- 7.2 Having regard to the above and before progressing with the development phase, a review of the financial and risk profiling is required to achieve the best possible outcomes for Wisbech High Street. The information required to undertake this assessment is set out in exempt Schedule 3 and Appendix 1 of this Report.

8 Reasons for Recommendation

- 8.1 The recommendations set out in this Report have been designed to facilitate the decisions and/or recommendations that Cabinet are requested to take to facilitate the continued progression of the Wisbech High Street project.

9 Alternative Options Considered

- 9.1 All of the considered and/or discounted in relation to 11-12 and 24 High Street are set out in Exempt Schedule 3 and Appendix 1 to this Report.

10 Implications

10.1 Legal Implications

- 10.1.1 Due to the nature of the projects there are various legal implications. These include contractual rights and obligations, procurement, and subsidy control, each of which are relevant to the profiling of the proposed options. Detailed legal implications are set out in exempt Schedule 3 of this Report and Appendix 1 on the basis that they are both commercially confidential and subject to legal professional privilege.

11.1 Financial Implications

- 11.1.1 The financial implications associated with the progress of the project are set out in Exempt Schedule 3 and Appendix 1 of this Report.

SCHEDULE 1

ACTIVITY SCHEDULE UPDATE

Name of activity	Description of activity	Date/Information/Link
Wisbech Underground	Worked with Lincoln Conservation. Three 3D laser-scan surveys of underground locations. Results & historical interpretation available on website.	Started August 2020. 3 surveys have been completed so far. Budget available for more if appropriate venues are found. Wisbech Underground News, Activities, Wisbech Underground Wisbech High Street (highstreetwisbech.org.uk)
Nights at The Museum	4 events, the first worked with Wisbech & Fenland Museum and was very successful with over 300 visitors. Also held one at the newly renovated Wisbech General Cemetery Chapel working with the Wisbech Society.	October 2018, May 2019. Museums at Night Activities Wisbech High Street (highstreetwisbech.org.uk)
Heritage Open Days	Event focused on promoting High Street heritage and the aims of High Street Project, including 2 tours. Later open days showed project progress so far and plans for High Street renovations. As well as telling public about what events have happened, what they can get involved in and promotional material of activities like Merchants' Trail.	Annually in September. Wisbech High Street Project has attended 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. Opportunity to visit variety of heritage sites not usually open to public. Heritage Open Days New contributions, News, Activities Wisbech High Street (highstreetwisbech.org.uk)
Who is the next Lilian Ream?	12 photographic workshops and exhibition. Delivered by professional photographer Matt Emmet from Forgotten Heritage. Aimed to develop skills, learn about historic photographers in Wisbech and increase interest in High Street work to ensure that restoration process is documented.	Started October 2017, final exhibition was launched in the Museum library in June 2019. Photographic Workshops News, Activities Wisbech High Street (highstreetwisbech.org.uk)
Archaeological Building recording	Worked with Archaeological Project Services (APS), 2 free workshops to learn about recording old buildings in Wisbech venues including Rose & Crown hotel on High Street and the Castle.	8 th & 15 th June 2019. Archaeological Building Recording News, Activities Wisbech High Street (highstreetwisbech.org.uk)
Wisbech Big Dig	Worked with professional archaeologists from APS and local amateur archaeology group FenArch. Volunteers participated in real dig in Wisbech & Fenland museum	5-day event in May & June 2018. "The Big Dig" New contributions, Get involved, News, Activities Wisbech High Street (highstreetwisbech.org.uk)

Name of activity	Description of activity	Date/Information/Link
Great Wisbech Gutter Clean	gardens. Four events delivered. Supported by Wisbech Town Council, Wisbech Society, Street Pride and FDC Conservation Officer on hand to answer questions from building owners and offer practical advice.	Coincided with SPAB's building maintenance week in November 2017. Annual Gutter Cleaning Activities Wisbech High Street (highstreetwisbech.org.uk)
Understanding Historic Buildings & Interiors	Series of popular talks and workshops. Four events delivered on wallpaper, paint, tiles, and shops.	July – November 2019. Understanding Historic Buildings and Interiors - A series of Talks and Workshops Activities Wisbech High Street (highstreetwisbech.org.uk)
Adult training in Heritage construction and conservation	Lincoln Conservation have so far delivered 6 online talks. Events are recorded and available online if not able to join live. Lots of interest in the talks both past and present. Highly skilled and educational. As we continue with these there will also be opportunity for hands-on learning experience alongside it. Most recent about Virtual Immersive Environments for heritage was well attended with good feedback and has sparked possibilities of more use of modern virtual reality technology to record history and heritage in Wisbech.	Started May 2021, most recent December 2021. More planned for Spring 2022. Live Recordings of Conservation Skills Talks now available on our YouTube Channel News, Activities Wisbech High Street (highstreetwisbech.org.uk)
Lost Images of Wisbech photobook & exhibition	Book formally launched with Wisbech & Fenland Museum in June 2021. Copies still selling well in both the museum giftshop and local Community Hub which specialises in local history books. Exhibition disrupted due to Covid-19 therefore was moved to digital online show and shop windows on High Street.	Sales continue to do well. Community Hub recently had a restock. Hub pays FDC £2.80 per book sold to cover costs / fund further print runs. New order of books will be required as so popular. Photographic Exhibition of old photos of Wisbech for Heritage Open Days 2020 Activities Wisbech High Street (highstreetwisbech.org.uk)
How to Look after your Listed building workshops and booklet.	3 free popular sessions delivered so far including Conservation Issues, Taking care of Listed buildings, Damp & Plastering. Final workshop was cancelled due to Covid-19. Can be planned for future as was working with Claire Fidler FDC Conservation Officer.	August 2018 – November 2019. Booklet was published as part of this work which is distributed at other events. Free Conservation Workshops "How to Look After Your Old Building" Activities Wisbech High Street (highstreetwisbech.org.uk)

Name of activity	Description of activity	Date/Information/Link
The Merchants Trail	Trail booklet and app has been updated. The Merchants' Trail walk continues to be very popular, and copies of the booklet are being restocked often. App can be promoted more and there is interest in 3D scanning Virtual Reality technology recording of the trail too.	Launched in summer 2019. Supported by volunteers, Wisbech Society, Street Pride and WISARD. Updating the Merchants Trail Activities Wisbech High Street (highstreetwisbech.org.uk)
Wisbech Christmas Memories	Partnered with Etcetera Community Hub CIC, oral history project during Wisbech Christmas Fayre. Interviewed and shared stories of memories of Wisbech, the high street, shopping, and Christmas. Conversation audio was recorded so opportunities to share in exhibition or podcast form in future and important to have documented and stories preserved from older generation.	December 2021
Hands-on learning activities & practical sessions	6 additional online events planned January-April 2022, with specialists at Lincoln Conservation providing the training. Plans are being made for there to be more opportunities alongside these. First of which is using Community Hub Studio as a venue for a group of people (Covid-19 restrictions pending) to design & paint own Medieval Tile pattern following online talk of same subject.	Aims to develop skills and provide more opportunities for learning. Beneficial for wellbeing in socialising and allowing conversation. First due to be January 2022, this model can then be carried across to other online events to provide a follow up practical session where appropriate. Open to public and students.
Art Competitions	Aim is to attract more engagement in Wisbech High Street project from children and families.	Easter Half Term 2022

SCHEDULE 2

PRESS RELEASES

Members are able to view progress of the overall project by accessing the [Wisbech High Street website](#). The site contains details of the activity programme and progress to date, including press releases regarding progress that the Council has produced.

A full list of all historic press releases relating to the projects can be found below:

[Learn how virtual reality is bringing historical sites to life](#) (2 December 2021)

Virtual reality technology and how it can be used to bring historical sites to life is the subject of the next online heritage talk being held as part of the Wisbech High Street Project.

[Last chance to apply for Wisbech High Street grant as more funded works get underway](#) (25 November 2021)

The countdown is on for Wisbech High Street property owners to apply for a National Lottery grant to restore their historic buildings – as more funded improvement works get underway.

[Wisbech property owners encouraged to take advantage of grant scheme before it's too late](#) (13 October 2021)

Property owners are being given a final opportunity to restore their buildings to their former historic glory as part of Fenland District Council's Wisbech High Street Project.

[Developer sought as historic Wisbech High Street renovation gets the go-ahead](#) (3 August 2021)

Wisbech is poised for an historic High Street transformation after revised plans for a new shop and flats at 'The Gap' were given the go-ahead.

[Learn how to protect historic homes from pest infestations at latest heritage talk](#) (30 June 2021)

Know your furniture beetle from your death watch beetle? Your silverfish from your wood weevil? Put your knowledge to the test!

[Lost images of Wisbech made available in new book](#) (11 June 2021)

Unseen historic photos of Wisbech that proved hugely popular when they went on display for the first-time last year have been made available in a new book.

[Award-winning stone carver hosts free Wisbech High Street Project skills training talk](#) (27 May 2021)

An award-winning stone carver who has worked on some of the world's most prestigious buildings will talk about his work and the use of architectural stone carving within the heritage sector at a free online talk next month.

[New series of free heritage skills training sessions launches as part of Wisbech High Street Project](#) (17 May 2021)

An exciting new series of free, traditional construction and heritage skills training sessions have been launched as part of Fenland District Council's National Lottery-supported Wisbech High Street Project.

[Wisbech Underground brought to life in mesmerising 3D surveys](#) (8 March 2021)

Deep beneath the streets of Wisbech lies a number of hidden vaults and tunnels and cells, cellars and crypts that help to tell a story of the town's steeped history.

[Another Wisbech High Street redevelopment set to get underway](#) (13 January 2021)

Another redevelopment scheme made possible thanks to National Lottery players through Fenland District Council's Wisbech High Street Project is set to get underway.

[Council agrees largest Wisbech High Street grant to date for major improvement works](#) (15 December 2020)

Major improvement works are set to begin on four dilapidated Wisbech High Street properties before Christmas after Fenland District Council yesterday (14 December) agreed the largest grant to be awarded through the Wisbech High Street Project.

[Shop gutters in Wisbech High Street set for annual clean](#) (23 November 2020)

Work to help restore historic buildings on Wisbech High Street will take to the skies once again this week when the Wisbech High Street Project's annual Gutter Clean event takes place.

[Grant agreed for Wisbech High Street building improvement works](#) (12 November 2020)

A grant made possible thanks to National Lottery players has been awarded through the Wisbech High Street Project to enable improvement works to an historic Wisbech high street building.

[Contractor appointed for National Lottery-supported 'The Gap' redevelopment project](#) (2 November 2020)

Plans to breathe new life into 'The Gap' in Wisbech High Street with an ambitious, permanent development have taken a step forward with a key contractor appointment.

[Celebrate Wisbech's heritage with online photography exhibition](#) (20 August 2020)

Heritage fans will be able to step back in time from the comfort of their own home next month when unseen photos of Wisbech go on virtual display as part of Heritage Open Days.

[New plans for 'The Gap' after developments enable longer term solution for site](#) (3 July 2020)

A new development for retail and residential use could now be built at 'The Gap' in Wisbech High Street after major legal issues previously preventing a permanent building from being built have been successfully resolved by Fenland District Council.

[Lease signing paves the way for Wisbech High Street transformation](#) (7 November 2019)

Exciting plans to transform derelict buildings on Wisbech High Street into new shops and flats have moved forward after a regeneration agreement was signed this week.

[Further action required for Wisbech High Street building](#) (23 September 2019)

Fenland District Council is taking further urgent action to a derelict building in Wisbech after surveys revealed that part of its structure had deteriorated and now requires more localised demolition.

[New look heritage trail launched in time for summer holidays](#) (1 August 2019)

A trail which helps bring Wisbech's heritage to life has been given a revamp – with a new interactive mobile app putting history at your fingertips.

[Wisbech High Street re-opens following essential safety work to derelict building](#) (26 July 2019)

Wisbech High Street has re-opened to traffic this evening following the completion of urgent safety work involving partial demolition of a derelict building.

Wisbech High Street building to be partially demolished over safety concerns (15 July 2019)

Fenland District Council is taking urgent action to partially demolish a derelict building in Wisbech after surveys revealed parts of the building are at risk of collapse.

Love your old buildings or lose them! (21 January 2019)

A free and practical guide has been launched to help owners of historic properties to maintain their buildings and preserve them for years to come.

Second Gutter Clean takes to the skies (16 November 2018)

Work to help preserve and maintain historic buildings in Wisbech High Street gets underway next week when the second annual Gutter Clean event is held.

Council agrees action to bring derelict High Street buildings back into use (1 October 2018)

Fenland District Council and a local developer have moved to acquire and redevelop the site of 11-12 High Street from its London-based private owner to regenerate the decaying site once and for all.

Find out more about the Wisbech High Street Project during Heritage Open Days (2 September 2018)

A chance to learn more about plans to bring Wisbech High Street back to its former glory will be just one of the opportunities during this year's national Heritage Open Days.

Big Dig to provide hands on history in Wisbech (18 May 2018)

Budding archaeologists are set to uncover more of Wisbech's history during May half term as a 'Time Team' style community dig gets underway.

Plans for The Gap have the 'Marmite' effect (25 January 2018)

The heritage officer driving a National Lottery-funded project to regenerate Wisbech High Street has responded to a 'Marmite' reaction to plans for 'The Gap'.

Bold plans submitted to transform 'The Gap' (18 December 2017)

Exciting plans to bring a derelict eyesore back to life by transforming it into a new and inspiring area of public realm have been submitted.

Wisbech High Street set for gutter clean (10 November 2017)

Work to help restore historic buildings on Wisbech High Street will take to the skies this month when a special event is held to clean gutters and parapets.

Rich history to be documented through workshops (26 September 2017)

A new series of photography workshops will launch next week as part of the £1.9 million National Lottery funded Wisbech High Street Project.

Renowned photographer joins Wisbech High Street Project (25 August 2017)

An internationally renowned architectural photographer has joined a project aiming to breathe new life into Wisbech High Street – believing it will have a big impact on people's perceptions of the town.

Celebrate Fenland's history at heritage weekend (18 August 2017)

A chance to learn more about exciting plans for Wisbech High Street will be just one of the opportunities on offer during this year's national Heritage Open Days.

New website for Wisbech High Street project (23 June 2017)

An exciting project celebrating the history of a Fenland high street and driving its future restoration has been boosted with the launch of a new interactive website.

High Street project wins full backing from the Heritage Lottery Fund (11 July 2016)

Fenland District Council has been awarded a grant of around £1.9 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the Wisbech High Street Project.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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