

## AGENDA

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

**MONDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2022**

**1.30 PM**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, FENLAND HALL,  
COUNTY ROAD, MARCH PE15 8NQ**

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: <https://youtu.be/hTvTqo9lfPU>

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Previous Minutes. (Pages 3 - 12)  
  
To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of 10 October 2022.
- 3 To report additional items for consideration which the Chairman deems urgent by virtue of the special circumstances to be now specified.
- 4 Members to declare any interests under the Local Code of Conduct in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting.
- 5 Update on previous actions. (Pages 13 - 14)  
  
Members to receive an update on the previous meeting's Action Plan.
- 6 Review of Clarion (Pages 15 - 38)  
  
Presentation attached.

7 Wisbech Rail Update (Pages 39 - 60)

To consider and note the Wisbech Rail Update.

8 Future Work Programme (Pages 61 - 66)

To consider the Draft Work Programme for Overview & Scrutiny Panel 2022/23.

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

Friday, 25 November 2022

Members: Councillor D Mason (Chairman), Councillor A Miscandlon (Vice-Chairman), Councillor G Booth, Councillor D Connor, Councillor A Hay, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor M Purser, Councillor R Skoulding, Councillor D Topgood, Councillor R Wicks and Councillor F Yeulett

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 10 OCTOBER 2022 - 1.30 PM



**PRESENT:** Councillor D Mason (Chairman), Councillor A Miscandlon (Vice-Chairman), Councillor G Booth, Councillor D Connor and Councillor M Purser

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor A Hay, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor R Skoulding, Councillor R Wicks and Councillor F Yeulett

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Anna Goodall (Head of Customer Services & Transformation), Dan Horn (Head of Housing & Neighbourhood Services), Paul Medd (Chief Executive), Annabel Tighe (Head of Environmental Health and Compliance Manager), David Wright (Policy & Communications Manager) and Linda Albon (Member Services & Governance Officer)

**GUESTS:** Councillor C Boden, Dr Jyoti Atri (Director of Public Health) and Val Thomas (Public Health Consultant, Cambridgeshire County Council)

### **OSC8/22    PREVIOUS MINUTES.**

The minutes of the meeting of 18 July 2022 were confirmed and signed subject to the following comment:

- Councillor Booth asked it to be noted that he had given his apologies prior to the meeting, which had not been recorded in the minutes.

### **OSC9/22    UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS.**

Members considered the update on previous actions and made the following comments:

- Councillor Miscandlon asked that any updates to the action plan are kept in alignment and dealt with, so members do not miss them.
- Councillor Mason requested an update on the Task and Finish Group. Anna Goodall advised that numerous dates have been circulated to the Group members in relation to their availability to conduct the review. Time is of the essence because for the review findings to be fed into the draft Business Plan, the Group needs to have concluded that work by the end of October so it can feed into Cabinet and full Council. Further dates can be circulated but if not, for the governance process to take place, members may need to reconsider whether the results from the Task and Finish Group will feed into the Plan for 2023/24 or if it will be delayed and therefore influence the Plan for 2024/25. Councillor Mason thanked Anna Goodall for the clarification.
- Councillor Booth pointed out that he had given his availability, but half the dates have now passed. He added that the goal posts are already changing to complete this task because a meeting has been diarised for 21<sup>st</sup> November. The main feeding point for the Business Plan is the Key Performance Indicators for measuring the objectives. If the objectives are okay, then do we have the KPIs to support the objectives? This is a point he has been raising all along. Councillor Booth added that he believes the Business Plan can still go ahead for consultation but wonders if we are setting too challenging dates to get this process finished. If the objectives are the right ones, then we need to ensure we have the right KPIs. He believes the end of October is not correct; the issue is if we can get usable KPIs by the time the new Business Plan

is adopted but it takes time to develop those.

- Anna Goodall advised the dates of either 31<sup>st</sup> October or 21<sup>st</sup> November were the potential for the additional meeting date of Overview & Scrutiny so the panel could agree whether the outcome of the review was acceptable to them and therefore those recommendations go to Cabinet. The potential meeting date of 21<sup>st</sup> November was a full O&S panel meeting for that reason rather than a Task and Finish Group. So, the results of the Group would need to be concluded by then to feed into that for that agreement for the Cabinet papers to be published on 2<sup>nd</sup> December.
- Anna Goodall confirmed the core Group consisted of Councillors Booth, Connor and Miscandlon, with subs being Councillors Hay and Wicks. Both Councillors Connor and Miscandlon advised they would be on leave during October. Anna Goodall said that If members are agreeable and still wish to pursue the Task and Finish Group and achieve the output to contribute to the Business Plan for 2023/24 then further dates can be circulated and we can work to that but there will be a point by which this will not be achievable within the timeframe, and we will have to postpone until 2024/25.
- Councillor Booth said he took Anna Goodall's points on board, but his point around KPIs measuring the objectives is still valid. Members will be consulted on the Business Plan anyway so by saying the end of October, this is too unrealistic a date. The key thing is are the objectives okay but that was not what part of the Task and Finish Group was looking at, it is looking at what the KPIs are. There is some leeway with these dates to feed into the process because with going to Cabinet for December, Cabinet will then go out for consultation with the public so the public could come back with comments. Not everything has to be concluded by December. The purpose was to have a workshop for each of the key priorities and we have not had any yet. Anna Goodall advised that if the Task and Finish Group are keen to pursue the outcome to influence the Business Plan for 2023/24, then new dates will be circulated accordingly.

## **OSC10/22 PUBLIC HEALTH PRESENTATION**

Councillor Mason welcomed Dr Jyoti Atri and Val Thomas from Public Health, and Annabel Tighe to the meeting.

Dr Atri shared a presentation giving some of the key health outcome data and gave a brief introduction to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the statutory Director of Public Health Annual Report.

Some key points from the demographic data:

- The population of Fenland is aging.
- Fenland Life Expectancy for both males and females is shorter in Fenland compared to Cambridgeshire and England.
- Fenland has one of the highest rates of early death (under 75) from cardiovascular disease in the East of England, much of which is preventable and linked to deprivation and behaviour.
- Since 2013, rates of premature mortality, not just caused by cardiovascular disease, have been increasing. Rates are significantly higher in Fenland than England and this is not declining.
- Childhood obesity is worse in children in Fenland than Cambridgeshire with about 20.5% of year 6 children being obese (up to 36% if looking at overweight and obese) and 15% of Fenland children are living in absolute low-income families.
- 2018 against 2021 data shows a decrease in children's wellbeing and mental health
- Fenland has one of the highest rates of death by suicide in the East of England.

Dr Atri explained that both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing boards have merged to form a single entity that meets as a committee in common with the Integrated Care

Partnership, with representation from the Combined Authority and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The mission statement is 'All together for healthier futures' with three overarching ambitions:

1. Have better outcomes for our children
2. Reduce inequalities in deaths under 75 years
3. Increase the number of years that people live in good health.

Dr Atri further outlined a series of priorities that have been agreed to fulfil these ambitions and the approach to health inequalities.

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

1. Councillor Mason said he thinks the report and presentations identifies the problems; it is a matter of getting to the solutions.
2. Councillor Booth thanked Dr Atri for the presentation. He said what Dr Atri is basically saying is that different tools are used to target different issues. In terms of using a universal approach to make improvements, it is his view that it is more at government level where that needs to be led. He would like a better understanding of what is being done to improve Fenland health outcomes. In the past there has been a list of action plans, and he remembers hearing a few years ago that smoking cessation was going in the right direction, but last year's report indicated that smoking was increasing in the working population so he would like to know what is happening there. The previous action plans involved holding workshops to target large employers to encourage smoking cessation in the workplace. So, it is more of an understanding of what is happening in Fenland to tackle the issues; it is his view that the current report is quite nebulous in what we are trying to achieve so would like to know more about what is happening for our district.
3. Dr Atri said that unfortunately the last two years have been distracted by Covid. Public Health is only now starting to recover activity and reinvigorate the Health and Wellbeing Strategy post Covid. Obesity is now the priority in Fenland as it affects many more people than smoking does, although that is still important, but obesity is the bigger risk factor.
4. Val Thomas added that smoking cessation is still on the agenda and work is continuing. GPs services are still commissioned for smoking cessation, but this has been hampered by the pressure on GP practices currently. Lifestyle services has picked up on this and looking at the data from last year we are starting to see a slight improvement, but we do rely on GP support, and they are compromised by multiple demands. There have been a few discreet projects in Fenland to tackle smoking in pregnancy, with targeted approaches in Wisbech involving health visitors and other professionals working with pregnant women and their families in the community. The Tobacco Control Alliance is being supported by the whole integrated care system, and the NHS has a focus on prevention of smoking currently, with a tobacco control plan. We are also looking at young people, although the landscape has changed due to the uptake of vaping, and we are concerned with some of the vaping practices and the way they have been targeted at young people. In addition, we are still looking at illegal tobacco sales, working with Trading Standards and traders. Our lifestyle services do go into workplaces, but we do not always find them receptive to stop smoking services, although they do like NHS health checks, but the offer is there and publicised.
5. Councillor Mason said there are two sides to health, physical and mental and Fenland District Council has a responsibility to assist with physical health and he thinks the Council is doing that. For example, upgrading the Manor Leisure Centre in Whittlesey. However, he has concerns about residents' ability to access healthcare across Fenland, particularly GPs and minor injury units due to capacity resourcing problems etc. and he asked Dr Atri what is being done to tackle these accessibility issues.
6. Dr Atri responded that this is not her responsibility but that of the Integrated Care Boards (ICB). However, they have been called to County Scrutiny and questioned over this and she believes a number of measures have already been put in around supporting people's access at the right

point. For example, 111 has been strengthened and people are directed to call that number first if they need minor injuries. In terms of access to primary care in the form of GP appointments, they are reporting that they are offering as many appointments now as they did pre-pandemic. Dr Atri suggested that it may be worth the Panel inviting the ICB to a meeting to ask them directly. Councillor Mason said although he accepted that this is not Dr Atri's remit it needs flagging up that it is not acceptable that people are having to queue for several hours to have a flu vaccination.

7. Councillor Mason said in respect of mental health, he understands there is a service provider, Centre 33, providing a drop-in centre. Dr Atri responded that this service is commissioned by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and Public Health pays a small contribution, to improve mental health provision for young people. There is a keen interest in this area as children and young people are waiting too long to be seen. There is a strategy around early access and prevention as this leads to better mental health outcomes; discussions are ongoing to improve this issue, but part of the problem is that there is not enough money in the system. Needs have increased but the budget has not. Public Health are looking at interventions to support people on the waiting lists. Councillor Mason said that there has been talk of inequalities in health and deprivation in Fenland, but he had noted that Centre 33 is open for 23 hours a week in Cambridge, but only 4 hours in Fenland and that needs to be addressed.
8. Councillor Miscandlon asked what is being done to target groups who either drink, smoke or eat unhealthily to help them control their lifestyle. He stated that the district has many immigrants who bring their problems with them. Dr Atri advised that nobody is called a problem group or individual; people have different needs across the population. Needs assessments are routinely carried out so if there is a higher prevalence of smoking in Eastern Europeans, services are promoted in those languages. Val Thomas added that they have health trainers with appropriate language skills realising a variety of needs to try to shape the service accordingly.
9. Councillor Purser stated that he had mixed views on the statistics shared in the presentation. He has never smoked but has health problems so good health and a good lifestyle are not always linked. Councillor Purser commented that March has a free park run and wondered what Dr Atri's thoughts were on that sort of scenario. Dr Atri agreed that there are many cheaper, free, or cost-effective interventions for exercise. Obesity has become the priority over and above smoking because of the number of people affected; it has become normalised, and people do not recognise it. It is a fact that 60% of our population are obese or overweight. Although Public Health is tackling both, in terms of strategy then obesity is the focus. Early intervention in schools will help, for example introducing a daily mile walk, reducing sugar in school meals, and looking at tuck shop/vending machine provision.
10. Councillor Miscandlon asked what is being done by the medical services to alleviate the problem of increased air pollution in our towns. Dr Atri advised that this is an issue for national Government to cap pollutants. However, Public Health advocates active travel, promoting improved public transport and encouraging good routes for walking and cycling and this is something that they are working on with the Combined Authority.
11. Councillor Miscandlon stated that as he lives in a rural area, unfortunately public transport is not an option and there is no infrastructure for electric cars. Travel in rural areas will not change.
12. Councillor Mason commented that there is a lull in the recruitment of GPs and asked what is being done nationally to address this. Dr Atri responded that this is a matter for the ICB and not something she has any control over.
13. Councillor Booth said that although Dr Atri made the comment about not having control or involvement, he got the impression from the report that they are working much more closely together now, but this is not the impression he is getting from her answers. He asked if there is still more work to do to overcome these structural and bureaucratic barriers. Dr Atri responded that they are working together on health and wellbeing, but not the entirety of the health service remit. There has been agreement to work more on preventative and public health measures. As Director of Public Health, Dr Atri does have an interest in primary care and GP recruitment, recognising that easy access is important. However, she does not have direct control over this,

and she would suggest the Panel approach the ICB.

14. Councillor Connor said that Dr Atri had commented that she has no say in the minor injury units, but he has been trying to get in touch with the CCG. They are doing some work in Wisbech, but no mention has been made for the upgrade of Doddington. Fenland will be building several thousand more homes and so we need to make gains with those services. People now need to travel further afield just to get their Covid vaccinations and it is a job for some people to get to other hospitals. Given the deprivation levels in Fenland, he had thought this would be something that Dr Atri could assist with. Dr Atri responded that Public Health are trying across the country to ensure that when developments are planned, then health provision is linked in at an early stage.
15. Councillor Purser said that he wanted Dr Atri to report back that he has personally received superb medical treatment and he cannot thank medical staff enough.

Councillor Mason thanked Dr Atri, Val Thomas and Annabel Tighe for their attendance and contribution to the meeting.

*(Dr Atri, Val Thomas, and Annabel Tighe left the meeting).*

## **OSC11/22 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN - ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS**

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

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

1. Councillor Mason said he was pleased to see there were more compliments than complaints and was keen to note that senior officers are very helpful in addressing and resolving complaints, for which he would particularly like to thank Dan Horn and Phil Hughes. It was also pleasing to see that officers are attempting to identify themes resulting from complaints in the last 12 months. Councillor Mason asked if these could be broken down into some form of data so the Panel can see where most complaints are coming from.
2. Councillor Boden said we need to think about what we are trying to do. It is not merely that we have a process in place to deal with complaints, and that so long as they are dealt with satisfactorily, they progress no further and do not end up going to the Ombudsman. So far as the three Ombudsman complaints are concerned, they are assessed, and it is not just about resolving the individual problem that exists but looking to see if there are underlying themes within those problems that need resolution to ensure change takes place to prevent problems reoccurring. It is by being open and positive about dealing with complaints, that changes to the good do take place. So, the grouping together in themes is valid, and there is no reason why that information cannot be more available. We want to better publicise our 3Cs service; complaints can be productive, and the Council wants to hear from people if things go wrong because we want to do better than we do now. There are always things that can be done better. Our attitude is that we will listen to people, and we will respond to them.
3. David Wright stated that every complaint is logged under a service and then broken down into areas or topics. After examination, there are no topics in each area that have recurring themes this year, although that is not to say that has not been the case in previous years.
4. Councillor Mason said looking at the data, most complaints seem to be for Refuse and asked if they are common or multiple complaints. David Wright advised that because Refuse is a frontline service, many complaints relate to missed bins. However, an online missed bins form has been developed for customers to report quickly and if it is a correct missed bin, the issue can be resolved quickly by going back to them for collection. If it is not a correct missed bin, then this can be followed up with the customer to explain why it has not been done.
5. Councillor Boden added that the figures relating to missed bins are slightly misleading, it is not that a certain number of bins were missed, but these are complaints where people felt that the

service provided was wrong. When investigations take place, it is interesting how often we find that it was not the Council's service at fault. This is also one area of work which interacts with the public daily, far more than anything else we do, but put in perspective, when comparing Fenland's performance with some other local authorities, ours for missed bins is much better.

6. Councillor Booth said having a breakdown in the statistics is a step in the right direction and this is something he has been asking to see for years. He asked if there are any outliers in the figures that we feel do not represent what the true situation might be; there could be an issue whereby complaints are not being recorded in the first place. For example, Benefits is quite a contentious area yet only ten complaints are recorded, therefore it is probably something we need to look at around the culture of getting complaints recorded. It is not just about looking at the figures but about how we improve going forward which is what he has been espousing for years.
7. Councillor Boden responded that he has seen for himself when officers have taken it upon themselves to treat something as a complaint. They recognise it is to our advantage for complaints to be investigated. It is ingrained in the culture at Fenland District Council, and it is one of openness. The complaints procedures are clearly advertised, and officers are willing to advertise even further.
8. Councillor Connor commented that he agreed with Councillor Boden and said that he has very few complaints regarding missed bins. Each time a resident contacts him about a missed bin, he calls Adam Pratt who then deals with it straight away and when he goes back to the resident, they are very happy. This is one of the things that Fenland does exceptionally well, and he would like it placed on record that Adam is a great ambassador for Fenland District Council.
9. Councillor Miscandlon agreed, stating he had a vulnerable lady in his ward who had an issue with her bins; the problem was resolved by Adam who gave her his direct number. He paid credit to the services that Environmental Services provides.
10. Councillor Purser said that the service developed a special app for reporting missed bins or finding out which bin is due to be collected. The app works superbly, and it is a credit to whomever set it up and added that out of everything negative comes something positive.
11. Councillor Boden commented that this just shows what a large percentage of interaction there is regarding bins. No complaints have gone to the Ombudsman that have been upheld recently, the last one upheld was in 2018 and officers must be congratulated on in the way they deal with complaints. Unfortunately, some people go to the Ombudsman because they do not like what we do, but the Ombudsman finds our processes to be right time after time. He added that if comparing to other councils, it would be a surprise to see how much better ours is. It is something to be proud of and live up to but not to become complacent.
12. Councillor Mason said this is a very encouraging report.

**The Overview and Scrutiny Panel AGREED to note the draft Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report for 2021-22.**

## **OSC12/22 ANNUAL MEETING WITH THE LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Members had received the presentation from the Leader and Chief Executive prior to the meeting.

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

1. Councillor Boden said he noted that several of the questions received from the pre-meet are more operational than strategic and asked if the report is being produced in a way which is not helpful for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to question the strategic side of what the Council does.
2. Councillor Mason said he was satisfied with the presentation of the report as it highlights the indicators, although it was important to concentrate on the RAG. However, there are only two

- points to bring up on this, one being the homeless situation, which is being dealt with positively.
3. Councillor Boden said this is not an easy area to work in and it is getting more rather than less difficult for various reasons; he has a great deal of respect for the officers working in this field, they do a lot of work behind the scenes daily to prevent further homelessness. Councillor Boden added that it is recognised there is insufficient resource, which is why we have acted with many partners to have greater resource available so we can deal with individuals who find themselves in that terrible situation of being statutorily homeless more efficiently, effectively, and compassionately.
  4. Councillor Mason said the other red area relates to Planning. Minor issues seem to be in the red as opposed to major planning applications and he would like to know why.
  5. Paul Medd responded that is always a concern when performance targets are either amber or red. In respect of the minor planning applications, this can be put down to two key issues, namely the unprecedented volume of applications over the last 12 months, although it is good to see active development in the district, coupled with a degree of staff turnover, which impacts on continuity and time taken to induct new staff.
  6. Councillor Mason asked if there are the staff to deal with minor applications. Paul Medd responded that there is a continuum, always making sure there is a fit-for-purpose staff structure to deliver on Council objectives, but it is also about finding the balance between having adequate skills and capacity against the sustainable financial situation and challenges the Council is confronted with. One of the other issues that impacts on timescales is that applications need to be validated which puts further pressure on the system.
  7. Councillor Boden said that the importance of looking at the planning team processes cannot be overemphasised, streamlining to achieve more with the same number of staff. There is currently a lot of work going on behind the scenes which will lead to a significant improvement of team performance overall. He is not sure that that the numbers always tell the truth that may be useful to us, and they are not always direct measures of our failure; in some cases it is down to third parties, and it may be better to produce some statistics to show where we have failed rather than a failure to achieve a particular target. It should not be assumed that every failure to achieve a target is a failure of the Planning team itself.
  8. Councillor Booth said that we do have an annual review of the planning service, but he would like to point out that he has stated before that he has received feedback that the actual validation process can be quite pedantic at times. There is a balance to be had but when looking at other authorities, they do not have as many rejected applications as we do. This goes back to the point around the shared service with Peterborough and how it is working and the impact there, i.e., have they had a massive increase in applications, so we are not seeing the benefits of this shared service. Councillor Boden agreed that was a valid point and commented that we are a victim of our own attempts to be helpful but that is nothing new. The Council's planning team have been as helpful as possible to applicants, repeatedly assisting people to put in valid applications but because they have been so helpful, they are now being used by many professional planning companies effectively to do their validation for them which is work they should be doing for their clients. Interestingly, the best rate of first-time success comes from applicants themselves when they follow the tick-box plan provided by Planning to what they need to do to put in a successful application. The percentage of first-time right applications from agents remains low but the Council is taking action on this and have started rejecting more applications to encourage them to get it right first time.
  9. Paul Medd stated that Councillor Booth's point is fair, we want to strive to find the right balance. Validation needs to be robust, but we do not want to be over bureaucratic.
  10. Councillor Miscandlon referred to the homeless statistics and asked if the Council is expecting more money from central government. Councillor Boden said there has been a failure in the way in which central government has dealt with local government in recent years in respect of lack of transparency over future funding. We are finding more cases where funding was made available at too short notice to put in the budget. That makes it difficult to answer Councillor Miscandlon's question, so he has no information currently. Paul Medd said we do expect further relief from government, we would not expect it, but we demonstrate proactivity around seeking government funding or whatever external funding may exist. This is a demand-based pressure

and based on our experience, we are always making representation to government about the challenges we have, and we are on the front foot in terms of making our case.

11. Councillor Miscandlon suggested that planning applicants receive a holding email to advise their application is being dealt with and the projected timeframe of when they will hear back so they are not left in limbo. The lack of communication is a particular bugbear of his and it needs to be corrected for clients to be kept abreast of what is going on. Paul Medd agreed that to be a point well-made around effective communication, and this will be looked at as part of the ongoing service review.
12. Councillor Booth said he understands that the homeless KPIs involve a survey done once a year but asked if that is that a correct picture of what homelessness looks like. Paul Medd responded that homelessness is not measured in that way, that is a count of rough sleepers, and it is difficult to tie down the precise number of these. Although homelessness and rough sleeping are interconnected, there are different approaches to how these are measured.
13. Dan Horn commented that there is annual rough sleeper count, but there are also more counts during the year, and these are showing a reducing trend since Covid. The count led to the Council being able to secure bespoke funds for that aspect. It must be recognised though that there are often complex issues involved where loss of accommodation is a symptom not a root cause. Councillor Booth said in that case Dan Horn is talking about additional funding as opposed to the basic local government settlement, but does that not feed in? Dan Horn responded that the local government settlement figure is based on a different calculation.
14. Councillor Boden said that not all rough sleepers are statutorily homeless and in terms of the number of individuals, it is a small proportion of potential number of homeless in Fenland. Dan Horn agreed and said that there were around 10-12 rough sleepers at the last count, whereas the overall presentation of people threatened with homelessness is around 2000 households, which creates an enormous workload. The main reason for this is a loss of a private rented home.
15. Councillor Miscandlon said he was disappointed to read that South Fens business centre has an occupancy rate of 71% and asked if this relates to the main office building or small factory units, and what is being done to improve this figure. Paul Medd said it can be down to various factors, of course the Council wants to see high occupancy figures and the report does not provide this detail. However, some businesses cause turnover because they require larger accommodation as they become more successful, which will lead to a fluctuation in the occupancy figure.
16. Councillor Booth said these are effectively incubator units and not supposed to be long term, so having 71% occupancy is not a bad thing as it indicates success. It may be more prudent to examine the Boathouse rate of 95.8% and why businesses are not moving on. Paul Medd replied that we do know there is a shortage of move-on accommodation within the district, so we are trying to be proactive, whether that be work we do ourselves to bring forward move-on accommodation, and the extension of South Fens is an example. We are looking at drawing on £1m of regional growth funding that has been made available to us from the Combined Authority to further extend South Fens Enterprise Park, but we are challenged in other parts of the district as well. It is important to support that thriving small business network across the district to allow them to flourish and continue to grow and that we can provide suitable accommodation, otherwise the impact could be to stifle their growth or encourage them to seek other accommodation away from the district.
17. Councillor Boden said that the Council has been aware of these potential failings in the system in drawing up the draft local plan to encourage more units to be built to meet demand. Office based move-on accommodation is difficult to find in Fenland and that is why at the last full Council meeting a motion was put forward to give some NNDR relief to developers who want to build such units. Paul Medd added that the Council is also proactive in pursuing the government announcement on investment zones which seek to give incentives to businesses in a particular geographic area. This is likely to pass on business rate concessions as well as flexibilities around planning so we are looking at investment zones and where they may sit within the district. We are currently liaising with the Combined Authority who will submit our representations to Government in due course.

18. Councillor Mason asked if there is a reason why the Fenland Business Awards are not taking place this year. Councillor Booth suggested that it is because the main publication is no longer printed but is now a digital publication. Councillor Mason himself suggested it was likely budgetary constraints.
19. Councillor Mason commented that he noted contact centre figures had dropped against target and would like reassurance that these are now improving. Paul Medd responded that there had been an issue around resourcing which had an impact on continuity. We are looking at how we provide customer services, so there have been some channel shift changes also but his understanding is that performance is improving and recovering from where it was.
20. Councillor Mason asked if more information could be given on grant funding that is available. He is often alerted to funding opportunities by the MP's office but not through FDC. Paul Medd replied that there are many different sources of grant funding available but not all of which is appropriate to FDC and which we do not qualify for, so the Council needs to be selective in what it pursues and that they align with our key priorities. During the past year we have sought to be proactive around external funding and we have a successful track record, getting money for the Wisbech High Street project and the March Future High Street project for example. We are also putting in a significant bid to the government's Levelling Up programme. But also, the way we assess what is available, how much is available, the criteria for it and the information we put together along with a robust assessment of the cost of delivering a project is paramount. Unfortunately, nobody could have predicted the impact of inflation and a number of projects have been caught up in that inflationary environment. To safeguard against that we presented a report to Cabinet last week on project management. Councillor Boden added that the paper did not need to go before Cabinet and the public domain, but it was important that it did and that councillors saw it as we realised we had to tighten up our methods of evaluating, whether to bid, how to bid and how to deliver a project.
21. Councillor Boden added that some government departments are now putting in their bid terms a requirement that the Section 151 officer gives a guarantee that to the extent a project needs more money, that additional money will be found from the authority itself. That places a greater onus upon us and will cause us to be more risk averse; for an authority that wishes to be ambitious, it is a constraint he is not happy about.
22. Councillor Miscandlon said in view of that, do we have sufficient staff to alleviate the complexities of what is going on without putting too much strain on our Section 151 officer or would it be more prudent to engage someone specialised in that area of work. Councillor Boden responded that some city councils have departments devoted to this, but we are a small district council and not at that scale; it would be inappropriate to gear up to that and we need to act smarter. To do this, we are trying to get things in place in advance; we have flexible officers who prioritise what needs to be done and we have a very competent procurement officer, so we are going in the right direction now. Paul Medd agreed and added that pre-austerity we could have had dedicated funding officers, but this is no longer possible, and roles have developed in a way that service teams have all absorbed that responsibility, keeping an eye out for funding opportunities, submitting expressions of interests and formal bids, leaving only the most complex processes for external expertise.
23. Councillor Mason thanked the Chief Executive and Leader for their attendance, and presentation which was noted.

## **OSC13/22 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered the Future Work Programme.

1. Councillor Mason said he would be keen to bring forward the Clarion review in terms of getting ahead of the winter period. Anna Goodall said Clarion had confirmed they would be attending the December meeting.
2. Councillor Connor suggested that, following the discussion with the Director of Public Health, the Panel should invite the Clinical Commissioning Group to get some clarification on what is

going on with Fenland health-wise. Councillor Booth said Dr Aytri had recommended the ICB should be invited rather than the CCG.

3. Councillor Miscandlon said the Panel needs either a written update or presentation from Anglian Water. Their response times to leaks in Whittlesey is abysmal. Ten days ago he reported a leak on the A605 opposite the end of Victory Avenue, they thanked him for reporting it but ten days on it is still gushing water. Councillor Connor said he would speak to the Regional Manager to see what he can do. Anna Goodall highlighted that Anglian Water are scheduled to attend the July 2023 meeting. Councillor Booth said they should be invited sooner rather than later; one of the things they reported to the Panel was that there would be no discharges of pollution into waterways, but they have been fined quite heavily for that so either we were not getting the full information, or something has happened. Councillor Connor agreed, adding that come July we do not know who will be on the Panel. Councillor Purser said the Panel needs to be mindful that Anglian Water are not beholden to us. Councillor Miscandlon agreed but added that they have been very cooperative with us previously, we have had excellent responses from them, and they deserve some credit.

3.42 pm

Chairman

## UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS

REF	Date Requested	Question	Target Date
<b>COMPLETED ACTONS</b>			
Ongoing Actions Completed Since the O&S Meeting of 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2022			
<b>ONGOING ACTIONS</b>			
1.	07.02.22	<p><b>Request to invite the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to attend a future meeting of O&amp;S to discuss the levelling-up agenda for Fenland.</b></p> <p>Mayor Johnson was due to attend a meeting of the O&amp;S Panel on 5<sup>th</sup> December but is now on a 3-month leave of absence. Arrangements were made for Cllr Anna Smith to attend instead but notification was received on 24<sup>th</sup> November that this was no longer possible due to other mayoral commitments. Future attendance to be arranged.</p>	ASAP
<b>WATCHING BRIEF ITEMS</b>			
1.	8.11.2021	<p><b>Cllr Booth requested a watching brief on Peterborough City Council’s planning review and how this may affect Fenland</b></p> <p>The arrangements that Fenland District Council has in place with Peterborough City Council remain in the following areas:</p> <p>Development Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared support manager</li> <li>• Viability validation assessments that are required relating to S106 agreements Planning Policy</li> <li>• The work required to get a new adopted local plan.</li> </ul> <p>Peterborough City Council’s planning review is ongoing as is our continued engagement with them in relation to the possible outcomes. Meanwhile we have been pleased to announce that Nick Harding, Head of Planning, has agreed to continue his work as Head of Planning at FDC as he always has done, and this means no change in service for FDC as was emailed to all members before Christmas.</p> <p><b>A further update was provided from Dan Horn on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022 as follows:</b></p>	Under ongoing review.

	<p>“The arrangements that Fenland District Council has in place with Peterborough City Council remain in the following areas:</p> <p><b>Development Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shared support manager</li><li>• Viability validation assessments that are required relating to S106 agreements</li></ul> <p><b>Planning Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The work required to get a new adopted local plan.</li></ul> <p>Peterborough City Council’s planning review is ongoing as is our continued engagement with them in relation to the possible outcomes. Meanwhile we have been pleased to announce that Nick Harding, Head of Planning, has agreed to continue his work as Head of Planning at FDC as he always has done, and this means no change in service for FDC as was emailed to all members before Christmas.”</p> <p>The Head of Planning is a part-time post of 2.5 days per week. The post holder is making Tuesdays and Wednesdays their regular working days with the remaining half day ‘floating’ to enable attendance at corporate / team / staff / project meetings as necessary. There may be the need on occasion to change the Tuesday / Wednesday working days to cover the operational needs of the service, leave etc. All reasonable endeavours are used to monitor incoming emails and phone messages on non-working days so that any urgent matters can be responded to. The arrangements that are currently in place are near identical to those when the Head of Service post was shared with Peterborough City Council.</p>	
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# Clarion Housing - 2022 update

5<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022

Sally Greetham, Head of Operations

Yvonne Ogden, Neighbourhood Investment Manager

Daniel Read, Director of Partnerships – East and Central

John Ferman, Regional Director of Housing

# Intro to Clarion Housing

- 125,000 properties across UK
  - 4324 in Fenland (includes leaseholders)
  - 2294 in Wisbech
- Our Regulators
  - Regulator of Social Housing
  - Housing Ombudsman
  - Homes England



CLARION  
HOUSING

# Managing our homes



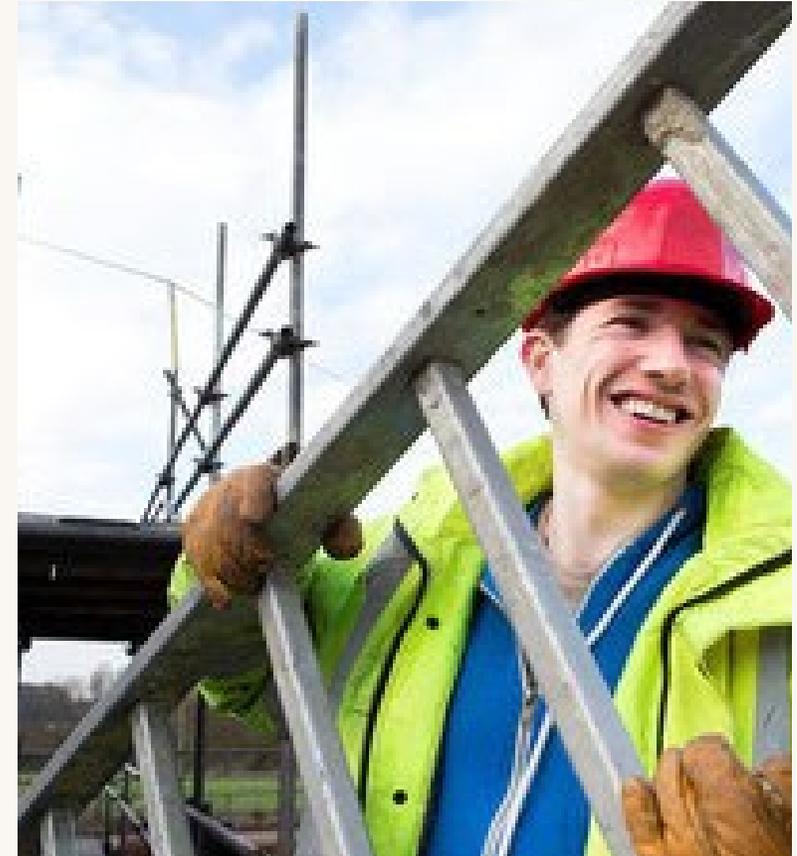
CLARION  
HOUSING

## Compliance

- Swale – Annual Gas checks - 99.74%
- Electrical periodic testing 97.59%
- Other compliance areas – Asbestos, fire systems, fire risk assessments, emergency lighting, waste water systems and lifts

## Day to day repairs

- New phone system installed at the contact centre
- Customer can raise their own repairs on line
- Emergency repairs attended in 24hrs
- General repairs completed in 28 days



# Planned Investment programme

## Social Housing Decarbonisation Project

- The project is to improve the energy of homes with an Energy performance rating of E or D and reduce space heating demand.
- Works include external wall insulation, loft insulation, triple glazing, ventilation and roof integrated solar PV
- An estimated bill reduction of up to £500 per year based on SAP modelling
- 50 properties to be completed by Christmas with and approx. 200 to be completed before end of March 2023
- £6.33 m investment



## Planned investment

- *We are working on a number of projects across Cambridgeshire which include bathrooms, kitchens, ASHP, entrance doors, windows*

# Aids and Adaptations in Fenland

## Year 2021/22

- 42 completed
- Clarion contribution £54,257.35

## Year 2022/23 – (up to 17/11/2022)

- 22 completed
- Clarion contribution £63,106.87
- 37 cases in progress – Clarion contribution £103,500.03, plus 3 extensions with Clarion contribution approx. £89,590





# Home-Link update

## New applications received

2020/21	2021/22	2022– sept
1507	1726	702

## Live applications/total on the housing register

	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Total
March 2021	127	350	450	432	<b>1359</b>
March 2022	153	458	463	361	<b>1435</b>
September 2022	202	504	488	374	<b>1568</b>



CLARION  
HOUSING

# Lettings stats

## Lettings information (Clarion only)

### **2021/22**

236 lets in Fenland

191 General needs

45 Retirement housing/LiveSmart

Average re-let time 31.9 days

### **2022/23 (Apr – Sept)**

83 lets in Fenland

62 General needs

21 Retirement housing/LiveSmart

Average re-let time 42.7 days



# Empty Homes

48 in total 'General Needs'

- 10 x full property appraisal
- 6 x lease direct with FDC to be signed imminently
- 2 x Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme
- 30 x being worked on or ready to let

43 in sheltered/ extra care



CLARION  
HOUSING

# Response to Damp and Mould

- Increased investment in humidity and ventilation monitoring devices, to enable early identification of problems
- Referring cases to specialist surveyors if there is a repeat instance of damp and mould
- Enhanced training for all colleagues and new reporting systems
- Using our 'Every Visit Counts' policy to ensure that if colleagues are in a property fixing a separate problem, they look for condensation damp and mould and raise any issue



# Other Updates

- Response to Eastfields

<https://www.clarionhg.com/news-research/2022/may/learning-lessons-from-eastfields-one-year-on/>



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# Other Updates

- Cyber attack
  - More online reporting
  - Increased presence on estates
- Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme & Next Steps
- Safer Wisbech
- TA – 9+



CLARION  
HOUSING



# Customer Feedback/ Performance

## Customer satisfaction responses

- Repairs Services – 91.68%
- Swale (gas engineers) – 91.4%
- Trust Pilot – 4.1 stars

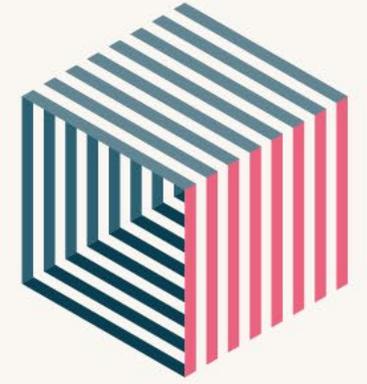


## Repairs and Maintenance

- First time fix – 91.72%
- Emergency Repairs completed on time – 99.12%
- Routine Repairs completed on time – 81.51%

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# Thank you



**CLARION**  
HOUSING

**Clarion Housing**

6 More London Place  
Tooley Street  
London SE1 2DA

[myclarionhousing.com](http://myclarionhousing.com)



**CLARION**  
HOUSING GROUP

# Fenland Scrutiny Panel Development Update

December 2022

## Fenland Scrutiny Panel - Development Update

- Latimer, Clarion's development arm, completed 2,276 units nationwide in 2021/23 86% of which were affordable tenures
- Latimer aim to deliver a similar amount of units in financial year 2022/23 despite the difficult conditions in the housing industry

### Fenland

- Gaul Rd, March – This opportunity has been aborted. The 65 unit scheme, which had been supported by a previous planning officer, was not supported by Fenland. The revision to 55 units which was requested by Fenland was unviable for Latimer. Rather than expend any further funds Latimer have withdrawn from the development contract with Partner at a cost of £45k. We understand that Partner are still pursuing the opportunity.
- Hassocks Way, Wimblington – This opportunity is no longer being pursued. This is due to the size of the contractor developer who has control of the site being considered unsuitable in the current market conditions
- The strategic land team continue to pursue a number of long term possibilities in the district. Due to various sensitivities these cannot be discussed at the moment
- The Land and Partnership Team continue to pursue S106 and package deals in the locality, including the large Persimmon development in March. This is a competitive tender so no guarantee that these will come to Latimer.

# Small Sites...



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Roman Court, Leverington

= 16 affordable homes for rent

= Reviewing financial viability – revert to Fenland in the new year

Springfield Ave, March

= 40 affordable homes for rent

= Planning application submitted. In dialogue with planning department to secure planning permission

= Completion estimated July 2024



CLARION  
FUTURES

# Clarion Futures

*November  
2022*

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# £212,000 invested in community partners and projects

632 young people engaged

206 Families in Fenland supported through the Money Team

3 partners supported with business planning

£38,750 of grant funding for partners

## highlight



702 positive outcomes

1327 people engaged

40 sustained jobs

Funded youth provision across Wisbech, Whittlesey and March

Funded food hubs March and Whittlesey

Funded solar energy for Wisbech Community Farm



## Clarion Futures Digital Online everyday, safely and securely

### Digital Support Service 21/22

**28,858 interventions**

- Device and connectivity access schemes
- Providing foundation and essential level digital skills

**Wisbech Online-** in partnership with Cambridge Acre, Oasis Centre and the Ferry Project

- Deliver digital skills training via weekly sessions
- Supply 30 laptops
- Digital Champions



## Clarion Futures Money

Clarion have just announced the new **£500,000** Cost of Living Emergency Fund to help residents manage through the cost of living crisis.

In 21/22 we increased our reach in Fenland by over 50%, providing money guidance and energy advice through **782** interventions to **206** households in Fenland.

We continue to be a champion for the Local Assistance scheme in Cambridgeshire delivering grant support in Fenland.

We have developed the 'You are not alone' campaign to support residents affected by costs of living backed up by new web resources and an increased money guidance phone team available for phone support Monday - Friday to all Clarion residents.

We are expanding our proactive outbound work to reach 2000 more households at risk of fuel poverty. and help them to engage in budgeting and income maximisation. In 22/23 we will distribute **£190, 000** in hardship support to households in need who are engaging in money guidance.

**You are  
not alone**

 **Five ways** to help  
you manage your  
**money** 

 SCAN ME

Find out how we can support you  
[myclarionhousing.com/money](https://myclarionhousing.com/money)

 CLARION  
FUTURES



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## Clarion Futures: Your Community, Your Future -the work continues

The report published in November 21 identified the need to take a different approach to working with residents in the Fenland area:

We are now focusing on upskilling residents, raising aspirations and promoting careers in traditional Fenland industries.

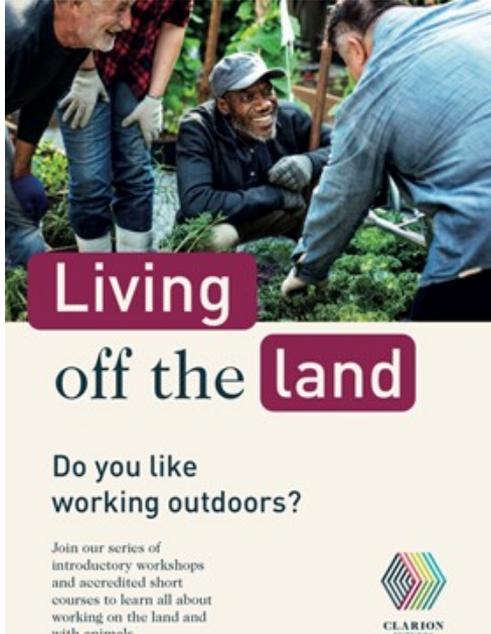
- Developed a range of opportunities in land based industries
- Introduced innovative ways of delivering Maths & English at GCSE
- Increased school's awareness of apprenticeship opportunities
- **40** people in to sustained employment

### **local to Global**

workshops have taken place with:

- 30 year 10 pupils from the Neale Wade Academy
- 30 year 12 pupils from the Thomas Clarkson Academy in Wisbech

# Living off the Land – Vocational Training



Our Jobs and Training Team have partnered with People and Animals at the Wisbech Community Farm.

Funded by CLLD the project will run in a cycle until the end of March 2023 and will deliver:

- Introductory Courses in Land based Careers

ASDAN short courses in:

- Equine Welfare and Behaviour,
- Horticulture and Grounds Maintenance.



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Thank you

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**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
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COMBINED AUTHORITY

Programme Update: Fenland District  
Council Overview and Strategy Meeting.

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05/12/2022

Version History

Revision Number	Revision Date	Nature of Revision	Checked by	Reviewed by	Approved by

## Purpose

To provide the Fenland District Council Overview and Scrutiny meeting with an update on,

- Wisbech Rail
- A47 Dualling
- Wisbech Access Strategy
- Fenland Stations

## Programme Update

### Wisbech Rail

At its meeting of the 16<sup>th</sup> of November, the Combined Authority Transport and Infrastructure Committee approved the drawdown of funding to enable an Options Assessment Report to be undertaken to consider rail modes for a service between Wisbech and March. The paper can be viewed here, [Wisbech Rail Committee Paper](#). Final approval will be sought from the Combined Authority Board on 30 November.

### A47 Dualling

In February 2021 National Highways, formerly Highways England, commenced a strategic assessment of the A47 between the A16 and the Walton Highway east of Wisbech. Using the project Control Framework (PCF) process National Highways reviewed existing evidence, including the work delivered previously by the Combined Authority. It assessed current and future network conditions, as well as reviewing and identifying improvement options for the A47 between Peterborough and Wisbech. The review was also informed by other highways proposals including options for the A47/A1101 roundabout junction currently being developed by National Highways.

A total of 19 options were considered as part of the study work and sifted to three options for further consideration. These were:

- Potential Solution 1 - Maintain the existing A47 alongside junction/access improvement (e.g., the consolidation of minor road junctions and private accesses).
- Potential Solution 2 - Maintain the existing A47 alongside junction improvements.
- Potential Solution 3 - Offline dual carriageway between Thorney bypass and the B198 roundabout at Wisbech.

Potential Solution 1 records the highest BCR of 2.86, followed by Potential Solution 3, 0.95, which is in a lower value for money category. Finally, Potential Solution 2 has the lowest BCR of -5.45. This analysis highlighted Potential Solution 1 as the attractive option.

National Highways work concluded that Potential Solution 1 is being progressed further by incorporating it into a Route Optimisation Study which is looking to identify targeted safety solutions. This work started in September by National Highways and is expected to take six months. The other potential solutions identified by the study work are not being progressed by National Highways.

A briefing note about the A47 National Highways work was circulated to Transport and Infrastructure Committee members and is attached for information.

## Wisbech Access Strategy

The first phase of the Wisbech Access Strategy consists of three schemes,

- a) A47/Elm High Road Roundabout
- b) A47 Broad End Road Roundabout
- c) Elm High Road/Weasenham Land Roundabout

The detail design for all three sites is complete and technical approval has been granted from National Highways for Broad End Road and draft approval achieved on Elm High Road with the A47.

Whilst the majority of land parcels are either complete or completed there remains 3 outstanding plots, all three are on the Elm High Road/A47 site. Two of the sites are progressing well, however, one plot was owned by a company that went into receivership resulting in the plot being managed by Crown Land. This has led to increased work to satisfy their requirements.

The Business Case draft has been prepared and is being reviewed by an independent third party. An initial meeting was held to discuss feedback and a response to the points raised have been submitted by the Business Case team.

The Broad End Road scheme was considered for Transforming Cities Funding (TCF), however, the programme of construction does not fit within the timescales of the TCF and subsequently, it was agreed with Cambridgeshire County Council that other projects should be considered for TCF.

National Highways continues to develop their Road Investment Strategy 3 pipeline project which seeks to improve capacity at the Elm High Road/ A47 roundabout. Both the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council have engaged with National Highways and strongly recommended that any improvement to the Elm High Road/A47 roundabout would require the improvement to the Weasenham Lane/Elm High Road Junction. National Highways recognise the impact to the Weasenham Lane Junction if the Elm High Road/A47 roundabout is improved and therefore, have included the Weasenham Lane junction within their options.

The development and assessment work are expected to continue by National Highways with a view that the Department for Transport will decide about the future progression of the project and Roads Investment Strategy 3 being published in 2024.

A briefing note was circulated to members of the Transport and Infrastructure Committee about the Wisbech Access Strategy and is attached for information.

## Fenland Stations

The scope CPCA funded works at Fenland Railway Stations cover three elements Manea , March and Whittlesea Railway stations.

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### *March railway Station*

The works on the station waiting room, car park and CCTV system is completed and open to the public.

### *Manea Railway Station Car Park*

Works are now substantially complete. There have been delays with bad weather affecting progress. There is currently an issue with the CCTV mast preventing the commissioning of that system and the opening of the car park. FDC are actively investigating and seeking options.

### *Whittlesea railway Station.*

FDC have prepared an options report for consideration by CPCA for future funding

Report End



## Wisbech Rail

To:	Transport and Infrastructure Committee
Meeting Date:	16 November 2022
Public report:	Yes
Lead Member:	Mayor Dr Nik Johnson
From:	Anna Graham, Transport Programme Manager
Key decision:	No
Forward Plan ref:	N/A
Recommendations:	<p>The Transport and Infrastructure Committee is asked to decide the approach for Wisbech Rail, either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Continue to promote and lobby for heavy rail based on the information provided by the 2020 business case and GRIP 3b and recognise that potential delivery of Wisbech to Cambridge timeframe is linked to the delivery of Ely Area Capacity Enhancements (EACE) or,</li><li>b) Undertake an Options Assessment Report to provide the economic analysis on mode options, including existing information on heavy rail, based on a service operating between Wisbech and March which removes the current dependency on EACE whilst still being mindful of the future strategy to link into Cambridge.</li><li>c) If option b) is selected recommend to the Combined Authority Board to approve the drawdown of £80,000 from the Medium-Term Financial Plan for the development of an Options Assessment Report and to seek delegated authority to the Interim Head of Transport to enter into a Development Services agreement with Network Rail following consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer.</li></ul>

Voting arrangements: For items a) and b) A simple majority of all Members present and voting

For item c) A vote in favour by at least two thirds of all Members (or their Substitute Members) appointed by the Constituent Councils, to include the Members appointed by Cambridgeshire County Council or Peterborough City Council, or their Substitute Members

To be carried, the vote must include the vote of the Mayor, or the Deputy Mayor when acting in place of the Mayor.

# 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The paper seeks Members views on the next steps for Wisbech Rail and subject to approval of option b) seek Combined Authority approval for the drawdown of funding to enable an options assessment report to be carried out.

# 2 Background

- 2.1 A Business Case and Governance in Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) 3b was completed in the summer of 2020 and identified that a heavy rail, with a two trains per hour service direct to Cambridge from Wisbech, and a centrally located station, would be a viable option.
- 2.2 Following engagement with Department for Transport (DfT), Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and Network Rail, the March 2021 Combined Authority Board agreed that Network Rail would undertake a review of the existing work and assess options for the Wisbech to March line. It was intended the outcome of this work would coincide with the results of the Ely Area Capacity Enhancements (EACE) Outline Business Case.
- 2.3 Network Rail undertook:
  - Business Case review;
  - PACE (Project Acceleration in a Controlled Environment) review of documentation;
  - Engineering review; and
  - High Level Light Rail.

# 3. Network Rail Review

- 3.1 Network Rail's review concluded that there was a strong strategic focus within the 2020 business case, which supported the need for public transport links from Wisbech and the potential benefits of connecting to Cambridge.
- 3.2 Significantly, however, Network Rail recommended removing assumptions about EACE. The Wisbech to Cambridge 2020 business case assumed that EACE would provide the necessary infrastructure upgrades to enable increased services to Cambridge and as a result these costs were not included within the Wisbech to Cambridge Business Case. In Network Rail's view this assumption should not have been included and therefore all costs required for Wisbech to Cambridge should be part of the business case as a standalone project.
- 3.3 It was also assumed that one train path may be available at Ely North Junction and a further train path could be sought through EACE. Network Rail's work has shown that there is currently no capacity at Ely and securing future train paths is highly competitive and there is no guarantee the Wisbech to Cambridge would be successful.
- 3.4 Whilst the EACE Outline Business case demonstrates decarbonisation and connectivity benefits, it does, however, require a significant funding, with a total cost of over £450 million. Government have not yet announced the next steps for EACE.
- 3.5 Network Rail's review of the 2020 Wisbech Rail Business Case also noted that:
  - The passenger demand figures are different – higher - to those that have been prepared for the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement Business Case;
  - The assessment of cost for each mode option needed greater detail; and,
  - Further detail around timetabling at Cambridge would be needed.

- 3.6 In addition to the review of the existing work, Network Rail also produced a high-level feasibility study for light rail, this was produced following engagement with DfT and ORR whose view was that further options needed to be considered. The report concluded that there is potential for a light rail passenger operation between March and Wisbech highlighting Tram-Train or Very Light Rail could be used. However, economic assessment of each light rail mode and a potential autonomous pod initiative were not provided within the report and would require further development to understand Benefit Cost Ratios.
- 3.7 The Network Rail review concluded that lower cost light rail may offer a more credible transport solution and recommended further work be undertaken to examine light rail options.
- 3.8 An initial proposal for Wisbech Rail next steps outlined an approach which included the development of a business case for a service between Wisbech and March and sought to develop light rail to an outline business case standard. Engagement with Fenland District Council and Members it was agreed that transport connectivity for Wisbech was a priority, however, heavy rail continued to be supported.
- 3.9 Following this initial engagement two options are presented for consideration, the first is to continue to press for heavy rail recognising that potential delivery of Wisbech to Cambridge timeframe is linked to the delivery of EACE. Secondly, an Option Assessment Report is developed rather than a complete business case to provide the economic analysis on mode options, including existing information on heavy rail, based on a service operating between Wisbech and March which removes the current dependency on EACE whilst still being mindful of the future strategy to link into Cambridge.

### 3 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Network Rail has estimated £300,000 for the next phase of work to produce an options assessment Report. Wisbech Rail currently has £230,000 approved budget available. Subject to the approval of the Options Assessment Report option £80,000 to be drawn down from the Medium-Term Financial Plan, totalling £310,000. £300,000 needed for the Network Rail Options Assessment Report and £10,000 for any additional engagement with strategic stakeholders.
- 4.2 The MTFP has £5.7 million subject to approval for Wisbech Rail in 2022/23.

### 4 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Subject to the approval of recommendation b) the Combined Authority will enter into a Basic Services agreement with Network Rail to undertake the Option Assessment Report.

### 5 Public Health Implications

- 6.1 The objectives of increasing connectivity to Wisbech are to improve access to employment and educational opportunities, and to support economic growth in a sustainable manner which enables improved health.
- 6.2 In addition, the existing preliminary designs include a cycleway to encourage active travel supporting both health and improved wellbeing.

### 6 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 7.1 Wisbech Rail seeks to provide an alternative to car use – supporting economic growth in a sustainable way.

## 7 Other Significant Implications

- 8.1 None.

## 8 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Wisbech Rail Project Review
- 9.2 Appendix 2 – Options Assessment Report Scope
- 9.3 Appendix 3 – Wisbech to March Light Rail Potential Final Report

## 9 Background Papers

- 10.1 None.



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
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COMBINED AUTHORITY

# A47 Dualling: Briefing Note

16<sup>th</sup> November 2022



Version History

Revision Number	Revision Date	Nature of Revision	Checked by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1.0	26.10.2022	Update	AG	TB	TB

## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on the outcome of the Strategic Assessment of the A47 between Peterborough and east of Wisbech undertaken by National Highways

## 2 Background

- 2.1 In February 2021 National Highways, formerly Highways England, commenced a strategic assessment of the A47 between the A16 and the Walton Highway east of Wisbech. Using the project Control Framework (PCF) process National Highways reviewed existing evidence, including the work delivered previously by the Combined Authority. It assessed current and future network conditions, as well as reviewing and identifying improvement options for the A47 between Peterborough and Wisbech. The review was also informed by other highways proposals including options for the A47/A1101 roundabout junction currently being developed by National Highways.
- 2.2 An additional and secondary highway section was also considered along the single carriageway section of the A47 between East Tilney and the A47/A17 junction at Kings Lynn, located within Norfolk County Council's authority.
- 2.3 The Combined Authority had, until the commencement of the National Highways funded review, promoted this scheme on its own responsibility. Securing the National Highways review achieved a key objective of the Combined Authority – commitment from National Highways for the project's development.

## 3 Update

- 3.1 Following analysis of relevant traffic data – counts, journey times, accidents, and road closures, National Highways concluded from their perspective, that:
  - a) There is not a congestion problem along the route.
  - b) A lower number of incidents were recorded than expected for this type of road.
  - c) Expected growth in traffic is unlikely to lead to the route becoming over capacity by 2050; and
  - d) Road closure data for the route showed that, in a typical month over the years 2014 to 2019, there were 1.2 'medium' closures (delays of 1 to 3 hours) and 2.5 'major' closures (delays of greater than 3 hours).
- 3.2 A total of 19 options were considered as part of the study work and sifted to three options for further consideration. These were:
  - a) Potential Solution 1 - Maintain the existing A47 alongside junction/access improvement (e.g., the consolidation of minor road junctions and private accesses).
  - b) Potential Solution 2 - Maintain the existing A47 alongside junction improvements.
  - c) Potential Solution 3 - Offline dual carriageway between Thorney bypass and the B198 roundabout at Wisbech.
- 3.3 Potential Solution 1 records the highest BCR of 2.86, followed by Potential Solution 3, 0.95, which is in a lower value for money category. Finally, Potential Solution 2 has the lowest BCR of -5.45. This analysis highlighted Potential Solution 1 as the attractive option.

- 3.4 Whilst Potential Solution 1 has high value for money, it achieves this by addressing the incidents along the section of the A47. The offline dualling, Potential Solution 3, has the highest present value of benefits, reflecting its user benefits to road users as well as safety benefits due to shifting demand to higher quality road sections, and effectively reducing demand on the de-trunked section of the A47. However, its high-cost results in a low BCR.
- 3.5 National Highways undertook an Environmental Risk Assessment which identified physical environmental constraints in the proximity to the proposed options. This is a high-level assessment which RAG rates potential effect on a wide range of environmental factors such as air quality, cultural heritage, biodiversity, and noise. Offline dualling had the highest number of amber ratings of all the potential solutions, however, the study concluded that further analysis of the environmental effects would be required.
- 3.6 One key area for the project was regarding the potential for flooding and potential subsequent cost for flood mitigation. National Highways work concluded from the modelling data flooding was not a risk due to the existing high embankments of the Nene. The Environment Agency model did show risk of coastal flooding due to sea level rise, but it is understood as being a wider issue for the Fens and therefore was not further considered by the study.
- 3.7 The work concluded that further consideration is made for Potential Solution 1. Whilst this road experiences concentrations of collisions which overall are below the expected rate for this type of road there is a potential investment case for small, targeted interventions focussing on addressing safety issues.
- 3.8 The analysis of the offline dualling showed that the potential benefits were outweighed by the overall cost, resulting in a poor BCR.
- 3.9 National Highways confirmed that the work which identified the Potential Solution 1 is being incorporated into a Route Optimisation Study which is looking to identify targeted safety solutions. This work started in September by National Highways and is expected to take six months. The other potential solutions identified by the study work are not being progressed by National Highways.
- 3.10 The Devolution Deal recognises the importance of the A47 as an east- west connectivity and its potential to unlock economic and housing growth. This is reflected in the Combined Authority's current policy position as outlined in the adopted Local Transport Plan of 2020, which states that the Combined Authority supports "upgrades to the A47 and associated junctions between Kings Lynn, Wisbech and Peterborough, to improve labour market accessibility to and from the Fens and Wisbech Garden town."

- 3.11 The draft Local Transport and connectivity plan (LTCP) highlights the need for, “A package of improvements to the A47 between Peterborough, Wisbech and Kings’ Lynn, including much-needed upgrades to junctions and interchanges are necessary to increase accessibility across the region. In the longer-term, we will continue to explore the case to increase capacity on the A47, further reducing journey times and reliability as well as address safety for all road users including commuters and freight.” The Combined Authority will therefore, continue to engage with National Highways to improve the safety and journey time reliability of the A47.
- 3.12 The A47 Alliance, of which the Combined Authority is a member, continues to lobby for significant investment in and dualling of the A47. At the time of writing, the A47 Alliance is preparing a letter to the new prime minister asking for the A47 to be considered for investment.

## 4 Financial Implication

- 4.1 None

## 5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 None

## 6 Public Health Implications

- 6.1 Air quality is considered as part of National Highways Environmental Risk Assessment which identifies physical environmental constraints in the proximity to the proposed options.

## 7 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 7.1 Paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6 refer.

## 8 Other Significant Implications

- 8.1 None

## 9 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – A47 Improvement Scheme SOBC  
9.2 Appendix 2 – A47 Staged Overview of Assessment Report

## 10 Background Papers

- None



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
& PETERBOROUGH**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

# Wisbech Access Study: Briefing Note

16 November 2022



Version History

Revision Number	Revision Date	Nature of Revision	Checked by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1.0	11.11.2022	Update	AG	TB	TB



## 2 Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Wisbech Access Strategy

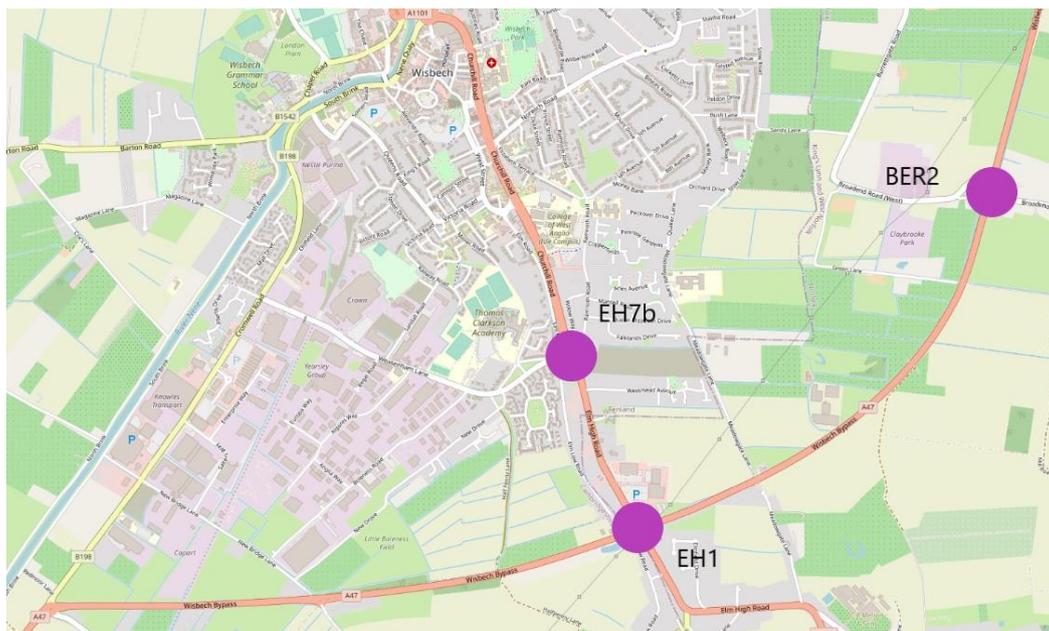
## 3 Background

- 3.1 The Fenland Local Plan (adopted May 2014) includes proposals for 3,550 new homes in Wisbech and 30 hectares of new employment land to deliver around 2,500 new jobs to 2031.
- 3.2 In order to stimulate this growth, £1m from the Growth Deal fund and £0.5m Combined Authority funding was approved at the October 2017 and March 2018 Combined Authority Board as part of the Priority Transport Schemes paper to undertake feasibility studies of potential transport interventions (highway and rail).
- 3.3 Cambridgeshire County Council and Fenland District Council commissioned the Wisbech Access Study, a large-scale option assessment of multiple highway improvement schemes in multiple locations within Wisbech. The purpose of the study was to facilitate the growth sites identified within Fenland District Council's Local Plan.
- 3.4 Further assessment of the Wisbech Access Study options took place to determine the preferred package of projects to progress to Outline Business Case.
- 3.5 During May 2018 Cambridgeshire County Council, Fenland District Council and Wisbech Town Council approved the Wisbech Access Strategy and recommended to the Combined Authority to release £10.5m Growth Deal funding.
- 3.6 Both the Business Board of 26 November 2018 and subsequent 28 November 2018 Combined Authority Board approved the release of funding specifying that the funding would expire at the end of March 2021.
- 3.7 The first package of the Wisbech Access Strategy consisted of 5 schemes. The five projects were later reduced to three with both Southern Access Road and New Bridge Lane/Cromwell Road Signalisation paused following concern regarding the effects on traffic flows of a proposed development of an energy from waste plant in Wisbech.
- 3.8 Pausing the two schemes was formerly agreed via change control to the Business Board on 27 July 2020. The change control also contained a new budget, £6m of Local Growth Fund would be provided with a further £3.9m available subject to approval from the Combined Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 3.9 The three projects continued with detailed design, however, by Autumn 2020 risks to the deliverability of the project were emerging. Land negotiations were stalling and options to mitigate the risk of progressing Compulsory Purchase were beginning to be explored. Later, further risks materialised, including, the diversion of a utility whereby the estimate received was significantly higher in cost and duration than was anticipated.

- 3.10 In June 2021 Cambridgeshire County Council reported to the Wisbech Access Strategy Project Board on the outcome of their review of the project. The review had shown progress with mitigating the key project risks, however, it identified that to deliver all three projects the total forecast project outturn cost would be £19.5m far exceeding the available budget.
- 3.11 In response, Cambridgeshire County Council provided a report which considered the available options for progressing the project, assessing each option on deliverability, price, and value for money. As a result, a change control was presented to the Business Board of 19 July 2021 removing the construction phase from the scope, creating a pipeline project.
- 3.12 The Business Board considered the Wisbech Access change control and rejected it as the project would no longer meet the Local Growth Fund Criteria. This was later discussed at the July 2021 Combined Authority Board Meeting.
- 3.13 It was recognised at the July Combined Authority Board meeting that there was merit to having a pipeline project and it was agreed that the Wisbech Access Strategy project would seek approval, via the production of a business case, to drawdown the £1.88m required to complete the procurement of land and detailed design from the Combined Authority's subject to approval funding in the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- 3.14 At its meeting of the 25 August the Combined Authority agreed to fund the project to the end of the current detail design stage and acquiring the necessary land, creating a pipeline project.

## 4 Update

- 4.1 **The three sites continue to be progressed to the scope as agreed by Board in August 2021.**



BER2 – Broad End Road  
EH1 – Elm High Road/A47

EH7b- Weasenham Lane/Elm High Road

- 4.2 The detail design for all three sites is complete and technical approval has been granted from National Highways for Broad End Road and draft approval achieved on Elm High Road with the A47.
- 4.3 Whilst the majority of land parcels are either complete or completed there remains 3 outstanding plots, all three are on the Elm High Road/A47 site. Two of the sites are progressing well, however, one plot was owned by a company that went into receivership resulting in the plot being managed by Crown Land. This has led to increased work to satisfy their requirements.
- 4.4 The legal agreements, Section 6 and Section 8, with National Highways and Norfolk County Council continue to progress, further meetings to finalise these agreements have been scheduled for the end of November.
- 4.5 The Business Case draft has been prepared and is being reviewed by an independent third party. An initial meeting was held to discuss feedback and a response to the points raised have been submitted by the Business Case team.
- 4.6 The Broad End Road scheme was considered for Transforming Cities Funding (TCF), however, the programme of construction does not fit within the timescales of the TCF and subsequently, it was agreed with Cambridgeshire County Council that other projects should be considered for TCF.
- 4.7 National Highways continues to develop their Road Investment Strategy 3 pipeline project which seeks to improve capacity at the Elm High Road/ A47 roundabout. Both the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council have engaged with National Highways and strongly recommended that any improvement to the Elm High Road/A47 roundabout would require the improvement to the Weasenham Lane/Elm High Road Junction. National Highways recognise the impact to the Weasenham Lane Junction if the Elm High Road/A47 roundabout is improved and therefore, have included the Weasenham Lane junction within their options.
- 4.8 National Highways have shortlisted their options to,
  - EH1 design (the Wisbech Access Strategy design developed by CCC)
  - EH1 design and the County Council design for the local road improvement on the A1101/Weasenham lane
  - Enlarge roundabout
  - Enlarge roundabout and including the Weasenham lane/A1101 Junction improvement
- 4.9 The development and assessment work are expected to continue by National Highways with a view that the Department for Transport will decide about the future progression of the project in the summer of 2023.

## 5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The refunds from utility companies is underway and these refunds will be returned to the Local Growth Fund as it was originally paid out of this funding stream. Due to this, the forecast is affected, and the financial reporting is under review to see how better it could be shown.

## 6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 Section 6 and Section 8 agreements are progressing as referred to in the main body of the report.

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# Overview and Scrutiny – Draft Work Programme 2022-2023

All Informal pre-meetings are held via Zoom until further notice,  
but Formal meetings will be held in the Council Chamber at Fenland Hall

## Meeting Dates

<u>Agenda Despatch Due Date</u>	<u>Informal pre-meeting</u>			<u>Formal Overview &amp; Scrutiny Meeting</u>		
	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Pre-Brief</u>	<u>Meeting</u>
6 January 2023	9 January 2023	2.00pm	Via Zoom	16 January 2023	1.00pm	1.30pm
17 February 2023	20 February 2023	2.00pm	Via Zoom	27 February 2023	1.00pm	1.30pm
TBC May 2023	TBC May 2023	2.00pm	Via Zoom	TBC May 2023	1.00pm	1.30pm
TBC July 2023	TBC July 2023	2.00pm	Via Zoom	TBC July 2023	1.00pm	1.30pm

## 16 January 2023

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/ Officer/ Guest
13.00 to 13.30 Pre Briefing			
13.30 to 15.30 Meeting	Draft Budget	All	Cllr Boden Paul Medd Peter Catchpole Mark Saunders All CMT All Cabinet
	Draft Business Plan	All	Cllr Boden Paul Medd Peter Catchpole David Wright All CMT All Cabinet
	Fees and Charges	All	Cllr Boden Peter Catchpole Mark Saunders All Cabinet (TBC) All CMT members (TBC)
	Progress in Delivering the Economy Corporate Objectives to include Planning 2022/23	Economy	Cllr Benney Cllr Seaton Cllr Mrs Laws Carol Pilson Dan Horn Anna Goodall Nick Harding Simon Jackson
	Commercial Investment Strategy and Investment Board Update	Economy	Cllr Boden Cllr Tierney Cllr Benney Paul Medd Peter Catchpole Dan Horn

			Anna Goodall Mark Saunders Adam Broadway Simon Machen
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2022/23	All	Chairman Amy Brown

## **27 February 2023**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Fenland Corporate Priority</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder/ CMT/ Officer/ Guest</b>
13.00 to 13.30 Pre Briefing			
13.30 to 15.30 Meeting	Annual Review of Anglia Revenues Partnership	All	ClIr Mrs French Peter Catchpole Sam Anthony Adrian Mills
	Update on CPCA Growth Service and impact on Economic Development in Fenland	Economy	ClIr Benney Peter Catchpole Simon Jackson Mark Greenwood Anna Goodall
	FDC Enforcement Review	Environment	ClIr Mrs Laws (Planning Enforcement) ClIr Murphy (Environmental Enforcement) ClIr Mrs French (ARP) ClIr Count (Licensing Enforcement) Annabel Tighe Dan Horn Sam Anthony Nick Harding Aarron Locks
	Progress of Corporate Priority – Environment	Environment	ClIr Mrs French ClIr Count ClIr Murphy ClIr Tierney

			Mark Mathews Annabel Tighe Garry Edwards Phil Hughes Dan Horn
	Transformation & Communications Portfolio Holder update	Quality Organisation	Councillor Tierney Peter Catchpole David Wright
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2022/23	All	Chairman Amy Brown

## **TBC May 2023**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Fenland Corporate Priority</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest</b>
13.00 to 13.30 Pre Briefing			
13.30 to 15.30 Meeting	Appointment of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year		
	Road Safety Partnership	Environment	Cllr Count Dan Horn Matt Staton
	Community Safety Partnership	Environment	Cllr Count Dan Horn Police (TBC)
	Freedom Leisure Review	Communities	Cllr Sam Clark Phil Hughes
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2022/23	All	Chairman Amy Brown

## TBC July 2023

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
13.00 to 13.30 Pre Briefing			
13.30 to 15.30 Meeting	Anglian Water	Environment	Cllr Murphy Anglian Water Contact: Rose Shisler (AW reps tbc)
	Commercial Investment Strategy and Investment Board Update	Economy	Cllr Boden Cllr Tierney Cllr Benney Paul Medd Peter Catchpole Dan Horn Anna Goodall Mark Saunders Adam Broadway Simon Machen
	O&S Annual Report	All	Chairman Amy Brown
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2022/23	All	Chairman Amy Brown

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