

# Public Document Pack

## COUNCIL

A meeting of Council will be held at Council Chamber, Fenland Hall, County Road, March on MONDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2022 at 4.00 PM and I request you to attend accordingly for transaction of the following business:

Whilst this meeting will be held in public, we encourage members of the public to view the meeting via our YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/nUizRKeG17g>

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Previous Minutes (Pages 3 - 16)  
  
To confirm and sign the public minutes of 11 July 2022.
- 3 Civic Engagements Update. (Pages 17 - 18)  
  
For information only.
- 4 To receive any announcements from the Chairman of the Council and/or the Head of Paid Service.
- 5 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.
- 6 To receive questions from, and provide answers to, councillors in relation to matters which, in the opinion of the Chairman, accord with the provisions of Procedure Rules 8.4 and 8.6.
- 7 To receive reports from and ask questions of Cabinet members with portfolio holder responsibilities, in accordance with Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2. (Pages 19 - 64)
- 8 Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report (Pages 65 - 76)  
  
The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report reflects what has been undertaken and achieved by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel during 2021/22 and takes a forward look at the programme of work and challenges for the Overview and Scrutiny in 2022/2023.
- 9 Constitutional Amendments (Pages 77 - 80)  
  
The purpose of this Report is to seek Full Council's ratification of the changes that have been made by the Acting Monitoring Officer since its last meeting and to approve a further amendment following approval of a recommendation to Cabinet at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022.

- 10 Discretionary Policy to Stimulate Commercial Development (Pages 81 - 84)

The purpose of this report is to set out a discretionary business rate relief policy to help stimulate commercial development on greenfield and brownfield sites in the district.

### **CONFIDENTIAL - ITEMS COMPRISING EXEMPT INFORMATION**

To exclude the public (including the press) from a meeting of a committee it is necessary for the following proposition to be moved and adopted: "that the public be excluded from the meeting for Items which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as indicated."

- 11 Confidential Minutes (Pages 85 - 86)

To confirm and sign the confidential minutes of 11 July 2022.

Fenland Hall  
March



Chief Executive

Friday, 23 September 2022

**NOTE** The Council may, by resolution, as exemplified below, exclude the public from a meeting during the consideration of any item of business whenever it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100 I of the Local Government Act, 1972

"Resolved that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for Item No./Minute No. on the grounds that the item involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act"

## COUNCIL



**MONDAY, 11 JULY 2022 - 4.00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor A Miscandlon (Chairman), Councillor N Meekins (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor C Boden, Councillor G Booth, Councillor J Clark, Councillor S Clark, Councillor D Connor, Councillor Mrs M Davis, Councillor D Divine, Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor K French, Councillor A Hay, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor C Marks, Councillor A Maul, Councillor Mrs K Mayor, Councillor J Mockett, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor D Patrick, Councillor M Purser, Councillor W Rackley, Councillor W Sutton, Councillor M Tanfield, Councillor S Tierney, Councillor S Wallwork, Councillor R Wicks and Councillor F Yeulett

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Mrs S Bligh, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor S Count, Councillor D Mason, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor R Skoulding and Councillor S Wilkes

### **C13/22      PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of 12 May 2022 were confirmed and signed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of Minute C12/22 to reflect that Councillors Booth and Sutton made comments about there being no need, in their view, for this item to go into private session.

### **C14/22      CIVIC ENGAGEMENTS UPDATE.**

Councillor Miscandlon drew members' attention to the civic activities undertaken by himself in the weeks preceding Full Council.

### **C15/22      TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE.**

Councillor Miscandlon informed members that the Leader has exercised his delegated authority to appoint Councillor Count to Cabinet replacing Councillor Lynn and, therefore, taking over his portfolio holder responsibilities as well as representing the Council as the outside body representative for the Safer Fenland/Community Partnership and Police and Crime Panel, with these in-year changes having been made under the Acting Monitoring Officer's delegated authority.

Councillor Miscandlon announced that former Fenland District Councillor, Joan Diggle, had passed away. She had served as a Fenland District Councillor from 1990 until 2003. Members observed a minute's silence in her memory.

Councillor Miscandlon advised members that he will be hosting the McMillan Coffee Morning at Fenland Hall on 29 September 2022 and hoped to see as many members attend in support of this extremely worthwhile cause and asked for donations of raffle prizes.

Councillor Miscandlon thanked all Town and Parish Councils and other organisations who made such a tremendous effort in contributing to the Queen's Jubilee celebrations ensuring that it was a memorable event for all concerned.

The Chief Executive announced that the Council has once again been reaccredited for Customer Service Excellence (CSE). He stated that CSE is a national standard that recognises public bodies that provide customer focused high-quality services and Fenland is one of the few councils that have consistently achieved this rigorous standard for all its services. The Chief Executive advised the following an assessment in June the CSE Assessor was highly complimentary stating that the Council provided a comprehensive evidence-based submission which demonstrated a commitment to delivering excellent services in every area of the Council and that Fenland are truly committed to putting their customers at the heart of everything. He stated that the Assessor noted several key strengths which related to:

- the Council's comprehensive consultation strategy which stresses the importance of consultation and how consultation is linked with Corporate Business Plan objectives
- the Council's corporate values which drive a focus on the customer
- the Council's framework of core and management competencies which support service improvement
- the use of staff insight into delivering excellent services is at a high level through people taking ownership and being able to implement ideas
- a commitment to creating new access channels to services and enhancing the Council's digital offer whilst maintaining traditional channels for those residents that need them.

The Chief Executive asked Councillor Steve Tierney, Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Communication and Environment, to receive the CSE Reaccreditation Certificate from the Chairman.

Councillor Tierney made the point that the reaccreditation has nothing to do with him, it is often that councillors have to accept these awards due to the excellent work of staff and he does not want to take the credit away from the fantastic staff.

**C16/22**      **TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM, AND PROVIDE ANSWERS TO, COUNCILLORS IN RELATION TO MATTERS WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIRMAN, ACCORD WITH THE PROVISIONS OF PROCEDURE RULES 8.4 AND 8.6.**

Councillor Miscandlon advised that no questions had been submitted under Procedure Rule 8.6 and as Councillor Cornwell was not present at the meeting and had not nominated anyone to ask questions on his behalf there would be no questions under Procedure Rule 8.4.

**C17/22**      **TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM AND ASK QUESTIONS OF CABINET MEMBERS WITH PORTFOLIO HOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULES 8.1 AND 8.2.**

Members asked questions of Portfolio Holders in accordance with Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 as follows:

- Councillor Wicks asked Councillor Hoy how many military personnel are on the housing waiting list for the area? Councillor Hoy responded that she would provide the number following the meeting.
- Councillor Wicks asked Councillor Hoy that, given the Council is trying to reduce the number of long-term empty properties, what action is being taken to encourage housing associations to bring their unoccupied properties back into use? Councillor Hoy responded that sometimes housing associations and social landlords are treated more leniently as the Council relies on them when it needs to place people and it is difficult getting exact numbers as there are so many different types of social housing providers, but it needs to be looked into, which is perhaps something that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel can do also.
- Councillor Sutton thanked the Leader for the Council for providing funding to the Fenland Road Safety Campaign for the forgotten corners bend which is now complete and asked if he would be prepared to support something similar in the future? Councillor Boden responded that he has great sympathy for the forgotten corners issue which affects a large

number of individuals and there has been too many accidents, he recognises that there are others, such as Boots Bridge, but could give no firm assurances on support to others but where there is a need he would be sympathetic. Councillor Sutton also thanked Councillors Connor and Mrs Davis who have been working together to deliver this scheme along with County Councillor Gowing.

- Councillor Sutton asked Councillor Boden to give an update on the finances for Fenland Future Ltd as he seems to remember that there was already £50,000 spent in officer time and a projected £100,000 this year and how long it is going to be before members see some bricks and mortar in the ground? Councillor Boden responded that many of the questions asked by Councillor Sutton were answered in the open papers of the Investment Board, which met today, and he would encourage all councillors to look at these as they are quite important so far as the overall finances of the Council are concerned. He stated that there does continue to be officer time which is utilised for Fenland Future Ltd and there will be many other areas, which are listed in a paper in today's meeting, where recharges will take place and authorisation was given today for these recharges to take place over the next few weeks, with back charges for those costs associated with HR, ICT and all other areas where expenditure has been incurred, which is important for transparency and financially as effectively it is converting what will eventually be a capital receipt and appreciation into revenue. Councillor Boden referred to when bricks and mortar would be in the ground and stated that there are still fundamental decisions to be made about the means by which the two projects will be going ahead, but they will be going ahead in so far as outline planning permission is concerned in the very near future, but some of the additional costs need to be carefully appreciated such as inflationary costs on the building side to ascertain the best way of moving forward and he cannot give a definite date as so many things are up in the air. He made the point that until you start selling the properties any new property company is always going to be a loss maker as it will have no or hardly any income and the Council is looking at approximately slightly less than £2 million costs in the first three years followed by £3.6 million of profit for the following two years, but you cannot just look at Fenland Future Ltd's profit and loss account but the whole equation is to do with the interrelationship with Fenland District Council and the way that capital appreciation becomes either a revenue stream or a reduction in revenue cost. He feels that at a guess in two years time there would be bricks and mortar in the ground in one or both of the two projects, but this position could change.
- Councillor Sutton asked Councillor Boden, with the benefit of hindsight, would it have been better rather than selling off these individual plots to put bricks and mortar on them and take that bricks and mortar premium as lots of plots went for "peanuts" compared to today's prices and his preferred option if he had been in the position would have been to start off with a two or three plots, build them out and then build up to something bigger. Councillor Boden responded that, with the benefit of hindsight, he believes the principle was entirely correct but he would not say in every case he would stick with the decision in practice but feels overwhelmingly the correct decision was made. He stated that the reason is that when you are talking about individual plots, some of which are very small and do not have the opportunity for any significant amount of development, the efficiency with which someone in the private sector can manage to develop these plots will be far greater than the Council with all its bureaucracy and there is an element of risk and reward, with there being greater reward if you do the building yourself but also greater risk and the Council is not set up to have these individual plots developed itself or under its control. Councillor Boden stated that when you are talking about a scheme which might have 90 or 100 dwellings it is a different form of control and there will be economies of scale if the numbers work out once the detailed work is undertaken over the next few months and it just does not make sense on the small plots for this Council or its trading subsidiary to do it itself and he thinks it would be developed more efficiently and effectively by the private sector recognising that the private sector is always going to be more ambitious and whenever it has been appropriate the Council has included claw back provision within the sale so if for example the land had outline planning permission for three properties but the purchaser of the site puts in

planning application for five and is granted permission the Council would get a claw back on those additional properties. He feels the small plots have been handled correctly, in an open way and via auction so it has been very clear what is possible and the Council has been quite surprised in some cases about how much has been received, doing better generally than was expected.

- Councillor Sutton referred to a motion that was submitted to Council in February 2021 on the Built Environment Conservation in Fenland and asked Councillor Mrs Laws what is the position with this? Councillor Mrs Laws responded that she will check but feels this work is incorporated within the Local Plan review. Councillor Sutton stated that he is happy to receive a written answer but the minutes state that something was going to be brought back to Council as there was concern over costs as it was brought forward with no costs attached. He stated that he brought this issue forward as particularly with energy costs having gone up and predicted to go up again in October there are many residents across Fenland that are stuck with wooden windows which are losing heat and he feels it is important that these residents have the same options for efficiency and fuel usage as those that live in more modern houses.
- Councillor Sutton referred to validation, where the Council was at 4-5 weeks, but is now down to around 3-3½ weeks, but, in his view, this is still too long when people are paying for a service and it is not coming down fast enough. He stated that he has had developers and householders inform him that they are not happy with this service that they are paying for and not getting any answers in a respectful time, which used to be 5 days and the sooner the Council gets back to this the better. Councillor Mrs Laws responded that when the service operated at 5 days there was not the volumes of planning applications that there are now, which she does not think will decrease, the service has taken on two extra staff but they obviously need training and two retired members of staff are working on an ad-hoc basis to assist and she praised the staff in the Technical Team that validation is down to around 3½ weeks. She made the point that developers have been offered training for validation, of which some have taken up, and there is a validation checklist available online and from next week a tougher approach will be taken as there has been 18 months grace and if things are missing it will be immediately rejected.
- Councillor Sutton stated that at the December meeting he asked for consideration to be taken into reverting Planning Committee meetings back to 4 weeks, which got dismissed, but was then implemented two weeks later. He thanked the Portfolio Holder for listening and requested assurances that there are no plans for the meetings to go back to 5 weeks? Councillor Mrs Laws responded that she does listen to all members and for several reasons the meetings were moved, with there being no plans for it to be reversed.
- Councillor Yeulett asked if there was a completion date for the March Town Centre re-development and what progress is being made in Acre Road, which has been outstanding for a long time? Councillor Boden, in the absence of the Portfolio Holder, responded that the work is not under Fenland District Council's control it will be undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council and their sub-contractors so this Council cannot say when it is going to be complete. He stated that Acre Road is completely out of the Council's control over what is happening with this area.
- Councillor Yeulett referred to reference within the report to Acre Road with it stating that local agents are to identify an alternative to deliver a scheme on with Barclays being currently the most viable option and asked if this is still the case? Councillor Boden responded to the best of his knowledge it is as far as the spend is concerned but there is a condition of the monies that they are meant to be spent by 2024, however, where there are extenuating circumstances, which may be the position with building and construction generally in the country, that deadline may be extended by Government.
- Councillor Patrick referred to the criminalising of parking within Fenland and asked Councillor Mrs French what the position was as people seem to be parking all over the place including double yellow lines. Councillor Mrs French responded that it is ongoing, she has a six hour Highway and Transport meeting tomorrow which she hopes afterwards to be able to provide an update. She stated the funding is available, the signage has been

checked across Fenland with the 70-80% of it being incorrect and needing to be corrected and the original dates being looked at are for the application to go to DFT in October with a final decision in early Spring 2023 to bring it into force in September but unfortunately the County Council are creating problems. She stated that she would provide an update to all members following her meeting tomorrow.

- Councillor Wicks referred to the indication that a quarter of a million pounds of potential income is being lost due to incorrect recycling and while the Council keeps on pushing and advertising what to recycle he does not believe the Council is communicating to residents the amount of money which is going amiss. Councillor Murphy responded that officers did go round to properties looking in the bins and knocking on the door informing residents what the bins should contain and this is re-checked later to see if the residents have taken notice, but unfortunately due to Covid this action has not been undertaken for about 18 months but will hopefully begin to commence again. He stated that this is the only way that works at the moment, officers can tell people what to do and they do not take any notice, but they do take notice when officers visit the properties, show them what is wrong in their bin and a sticker is placed on it saying do not collect and the householder has to remove the wrong items and will also get a well done sticker when they get it right. Councillor Wicks stated that his point was that it is not the amount but the actual income that is not coming into the revenue of this Council and residents should be enlightened of their implications as well as the one-on-one action already taking place. Councillor Murphy stated that he has explained what action is undertaken and that is how more revenue is achieved, together with receiving income for the goods making the point that recycling prices fluctuate and at the moment prices are high.
- Councillor Booth referred to a recent Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting where the issue was raised that there is not a loan agreement in place per se between the Council and Fenland Future Ltd and asked Councillor Boden what progress has been made on this since that meeting? Councillor Boden stated that it was undertaken this morning, although it is a loan facility rather than an agreement. Councillor Booth stated this is excellent news.
- Councillor Sutton referred to a Zoom meeting he attended some time ago where there was a suggestion at that time that the pump out facility that money was spent on about 5 years ago was to be taken out, which he feels is wrong and asked Councillor Mrs French if anything has been done to reverse that proposal? Councillor Mrs French responded that it was changed months ago that the pump out facility was not going to be taken out, it is going to be moved from the High Street and treated as how it should have been in the first place as a Council asset. Councillor Sutton stated this was great news and he is sure the boating fraternity and tourism will benefit from its continued use.
- Councillor Booth referred to Page 18 regarding bringing homes back into use, which quite rightly says how many properties have been brought back into use but it would be good to get an overall picture of what the trend is, are we experiencing more homes going into use as opposed to what is coming out of use and made the point that Councillor Hoy did agree to look at getting this information into the report. Councillor Hoy responded that this would not be a problem.
- Councillor Booth referred to issues he raised at an Overview and Scrutiny meeting about properties in Thorney Toll owned by a housing association are still ongoing and he has e-mailed the Director but is still yet to receive a report, which he feels is another example of what Councillor Hoy was raising about housing associations not bringing properties back into use. Councillor Hoy stated that they will monitor this issue but the Housing Team have had many priorities with the Rough Sleeper funding, Housing Enforcement Policy and changes within the team so it has been on the back burner but will now be moved forward.
- Councillor Booth asked Councillor Murphy, where the report talks about recycling rates and the rate for 2021-22, which he believes on the previous year was just over 40% and Fenland was the worst performing in Cambridgeshire, how does this Council compare to the other authorities with its provisional rate as it does not seem to be much of an increase and the average for other authorities was getting towards 50%, and he feels it is quite a drop to where the Council was some years ago. Councillor Murphy assured Councillor Booth that

the rate is a lot better than it was making the point that all authorities produce their figures in different ways with some not collecting garden waste or other items within the bins. He stated that the Council is doing exactly what it did before, it is doing well and is very comparable. Councillor Booth referred to the figures on DEFRA website which is the Government standard the Council has to report to and expressed the view that you can clearly see on here that this Council in 2021 was the worst performing authority and whilst it is being said that the Council has improved it was previously at 52% and now saying provisionally it is at a 41% recycling rate, which is an 11% drop in the last few years and he cannot see how this is an improvement. Councillor Murphy made the point that the DEFRA figures do include food waste and the Council does not collect food waste separately and it is all to do with how the figures are recorded. Councillor Booth stated that he cannot see how food waste can account for the full 11%. Councillor Murphy responded that members will have to wait and see.

## **C18/22      MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR HOY**

Councillor Hoy presented her motion regarding Government consultation on two measures in relation to the private rented sector.

Members made comments as follows:

- Councillor Tierney expressed the opinion that landlords are an easy target for people as like other types of professions it is easy to look at them and say big rich landlord preying on the poor tenant and whilst there are some landlords like that the vast majority are not like that, most smaller landlords are those looking to supplement their income in difficult times to boost their pension, make a little extra money and most want to provide a nice home for people to live in. He acknowledged that there are obviously bad landlords but a policy must not be made for the worst cases and the best cases forgotten as there are consequences to that and Councillor Hoy pointed out a number of those consequences, with one that he feels she missed was that if you are a landlord and you know you are going to be stuck with someone forever that you cannot make leave whatever happens unless they do set actions then you would be very worried about taking a tenant in and you are going to want the best references, the best background, which is fine for those people who have these. Councillor Tierney questioned what about the people who need a chance and the people who have for one reason or another have made a mistake in the past and have moved on or have fallen on hard times and it looks bad on their references, they will be unable to rent a house because it will be too frightening to let them in so basically locking people out of housing forever which will place a huge burden on the public sector, there would not be the space or the place for them to live, which he feels it is a terrible idea. He expressed surprise that a Conservative Government has pushed on this, property rights are fundamental to him as a Conservative but just as a human being wanting people to be able to find an affordable place to live without having to roll through a thousand levels of bureaucracy created by making it so difficult to be a landlord is not a country he wants to live in and he hopes that members will support this motion today.
- Councillor Patrick agreed with Councillor Tierney that people should be given a chance but what he would actually like to see is that put into operation because all too often people fall by the wayside and he knows from personal experience do not get that chance as when they go to get on the housing list there is no opportunity for them as they are barred due to what has happened for six years. He feels that ways of dealing with this need to be looked at and may be this is something that the Council should be looking at in the future.
- Councillor Boden stated that the one word he heard Councillor Hoy use which is relevant is balance and there does need to be a balance between the interests of tenants and the interests of landlords. He expressed the view that if that balance goes too far in the wrong direction then the losers will be the tenants as if you over-regulate and over-charge through the requirements that exist for landlords you will end up with a position where there just will not be the supply of rented properties for tenants. Councillor Boden made the point it is not



as though the country has not been here before as Government made this sort of mistake previously referring to the National Dock Labour Scheme set up to protect the interests of dock workers which went too far and actually made the dock owning companies uncompetitive only covering the large ports so the very small ports had a massive competitive advantage and took an enormous amount of business away from the large ports and dock workers lost their jobs as a result and he feels that Government is in danger of doing the same here as far as private landlords are concerned. He feels it is really important that tenants have their rights respected and that action is taken against rogue landlords and he is delighted that, with Councillor Hoy's leadership on this issue politically, the Council has been taking strong action against rogue landlords in Fenland, but just because some landlords are rogue there is no reason to say that the whole private rented sector is rotten as it is not, there is a service that is provided and a need that is satisfied and it is in danger of being regulated so that it becomes far smaller than it is now.

- Councillor Booth referred to what will happen with the supply and demand with people thinking that if properties are not rented that they will go into the private housing ownership sector and he is not sure that this would be the case but feels what the Government is trying to do is attempting to crack down on these rogue landlords, which is believed to be around 20% of landlords. He recognised the work the Council has done with its Enforcement Policy to use the powers available to it but feels it should have been implemented years ago. Councillor Booth expressed reservations, he can see what the Government is trying to achieve by removing the Section 21 and potentially changing the way that tenancies are dealt with in the future. He can see issues with the EPC standard improvements, with the Government expecting improvements but are not willing to help, which is a role Government should be there to assist and he feels that this country is probably one of the worst for home insulation and with the issue around energy costs at the moment it is something that should be tackled as a national crisis. Councillor Booth made the point that it is only a white paper at this stage and it does not mean it is going to be legislation but this is the opportunity for people to raise valid concerns.
- Councillor Mrs French expressed the view that balance is what is needed as there are some very good landlords and some landlords have contacted her, none of which are councillors, concerned that if this does happen they may have to sell their properties. She fully supports the motion.
- Councillor Hoy in summing up stated that she understands Councillor Booth's concerns but there is no hard evidence to say someone might sell if these changes happen. She stated that previously from working in the private rented sector she knows where rents come in and that landlords are already working to tight margins before tax changes came in and previous energy changes so it has been one piece of legislation after another and she is particularly worried about the cumulative effect of it. Councillor Hoy stated that the Council has the powers to prosecute landlords as it is, whilst not perfect, the Government do not always look at right solutions they look at what they think is potentially the easy solution. She agrees with the comments of Councillor Patrick regarding taking a chance on people and if options are being taken away people are not going to get a chance.
- Councillor Booth asked Councillor Hoy for assurances that the unintended consequences be stressed in the Council's consultation response. Councillor Hoy stated that she was happy to do this.

**Proposed by Councillor Hoy, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED that the DHLUC be written to expressing the Council's concerns and asking them to reconsider the changes to the EPC and Section 21.**

*(Councillors Benney, J Clark, Connor, Mockett, Purser and Sutton declared that they are landlords and whilst recognising the advice given and that the Council is not the ultimate decision maker did not feel that it was appropriate to take part in this item which could potentially affect landlords. They left the room for the duration of the discussion and voting thereon)*

*(Councillor Yeulett left the meeting at 5.08pm following this item)*

**C19/22      MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BODEN**

Councillor Boden presented his motion regarding air quality monitoring in Whittlesey.

Members made comments as follows:

- Councillor Mrs Laws asked members to support this motion as Councillor Boden is not exaggerating, Whittlesey members phones have been “red-hot” and there are residents who cannot open their windows, cannot open their doors and are fearful of the children playing in the garden by what is quite a throat gripping smell. She stated that members are concerned about the A605 HGVs, Saxon Pit and Forterra. Councillor Mrs Laws praised the Environmental Team but made the point that it is also in the hands of the Environment Agency and she feel this motion is imperative for the people and residents of Whittlesey.
- Councillor Booth stated that he supports the aims of what is trying to be achieved with this motion but asked, as part of due diligence, if there is a ballpark figure of the capital revenue costs and would the Leader be willing to amend point b regarding online reporting and monitoring to say the whole of the District not just Whittlesey. He said from a quick online search there are around 25 locations in a report from 2020, with Broad Street March being an area where concerns had been raised previously so if it going to be undertaken in Whittlesey why is it not undertaken across the whole district.
- Councillor Mrs French agreed with Councillor Booth, with March being on maximum and that is one of the reasons that a March Area Transport Strategy is going to be undertaken with the High Street improvements, with it not just being the traffic flow but to get the emissions out of Broad Street as the people that work and shop in Broad Street do not realise how bad it is.
- Councillor Tierney made the point that when your residents are coming to you and repeatedly telling you something you have to listen and if so many different people are telling you the same thing there must be something to it. He stated that the information is not always right and you need to check the data so that you are transparent so in this case you are going to show residents that their fears are unfounded or you will find something so action can be taken to address it.
- Councillor Patrick referred to the incinerator which is being proposed in Wisbech and he feels that Whittlesey will have other problems as he believes that the fly ash from that incinerator will be taken and transported to Whittlesey so, in his view, the whole district should be checked as there will be readings and if the incinerator is built the Council can see what pattern is developing and what sort of pollution there is.
- Councillor Sutton stated that he has no overall problem with this motion, although he is not sure why it needed to come before Council. He feels there are lots of questions, is the fear greater than the reality and as Councillor Tierney has said the results will identify this one way or the other but his main concern it whether it is the Council’s responsibility to be funding this as there should be some monitoring at Saxon Pit through its licence so should the Council be utilising this rather than doing something it does not necessarily have the power to do. Councillor Sutton stated that he will not go against the motion as all members want their residents to be safe, but he just has concerns about the Council responsibility for doing something that either the private sector or the Environment Agency should be doing.
- Councillor Connor made the point that he is the County Councillor for Whittlesey South and he gets many complaints from residents on the A605 and in all the surrounding areas so he feels members should listen to residents, they know their area best, and he will be supporting this motion, which he feels should be implemented sooner rather than later so residents have confidence.
- Councillor Boden in summing up referred to Councillor Sutton’s question about why this motion needs to come before Council and the reason is that there are an increasing number of residents in Whittlesey who feel let down by the whole system, let down by a polluting enterprise that has been given planning permission to operate right on their doorstep, let

down by the amount of pollution that is being experienced by people on a regular basis, let down by the fact that they have to clean the dust of their windowsills because it builds up and action has not been taken, with the first port of call for many of these if it is suspected that it comes from a regulated site is the Environment Agency and, in his view, the Environment Agency is less than perfect in the way in which it responds to the fears and concerns of residents, it does not work effectively as has been seen by the area's MP getting involved with the Environment Agency and bringing in the relevant Secretary of State to see for himself just how badly things have gone wrong under the Environment Agency's watch, which is why it is before Council so the residents know that they are not being let down by their representatives and the local Council. He stated the Council does have the power to do this and there is a responsibility in terms of the monitoring of air quality and to institute air quality action areas if it is appropriate and as Councillor Booth suggested this responsibility is not restricted to Whittlesey it is Fenland-wide and the Council already carries out a lot of that responsibility by the monitoring that is undertaken, but some is not suitable for real-time online reporting, such as the diffusion tubes. Councillor Boden stated that he is happy to say, if this will satisfy Councillor Booth, that when this report comes back to Cabinet, as the priority at the moment is where the greatest problem is where people are telling us they are choking and not being able to breathe the air, that it is the start of a programme for the whole of the District so that the whole of Fenland is covered by the sort of online reporting which is being asked for as a matter of urgency in Whittlesey. He made the point that there will be more responsibility over the course of the next few years if Government is to be believed on what the Council needs to do and it might be required that a lot of additional equipment be purchased. Councillor Boden stated that he does not have a ballpark figure for the costs, the Council does have some PM2.5 monitors available but whether they are sufficiently accurate and reliable to provide the evidence that may be required is something that will be in the report that will be received in 6-7 weeks time. He advised that a ballpark figure for the modern machine itself is around £10,000 for a VM 10 PM2.5 machine, with this figure being off the top of his head, but ultimately what is the price to pay for clean air, being able to breathe and some members would be shocked by the stories that have been heard from residents in Whittlesey.

- Councillor Booth indicated that he was satisfied with the comments made by Councillor Boden.

**Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs Laws and AGREED to:**

- 1. support in principle the siting within Whittlesey of monitoring equipment measuring particulate matter, particularly PM2.5;**
- 2. that officers be required to present a report to the next scheduled meeting of Cabinet outlining:**
  - a. the capital and revenue costs and preferred location(s) for such additional monitoring equipment**
  - b. how Fenland District Council may facilitate online up-to-date public reporting of monitored air quality in Whittlesey (including, where possible, from third party monitoring equipment) recognising that whilst some monitoring data may be available real-time, other data (such as that from diffusion tubes) is necessarily only available historically.**

## **C20/22      MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR TIERNEY**

Councillor Tierney presented his motion on the Council's Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Policy.

Members made comments as follows:

- Councillor Booth stated that he finds the preamble text to the resolutions fairly sceptical and does not agree with the way some of it is worded as it is, in his view, a cynical way of

presenting the facts, however, looking at the resolutions he has always said the Council should be pragmatic in its approach and item b does actually commit to being legally compliant, with the legal requirement being to be net zero by 2050 so he does not disagree with this but he does disagree with the way that it is been framed in the preamble. He feels that what Fenland needs to do is to push the Government to get better investment and it is a disappointment that when the Council was looking at the garden town in Wisbech that it all came to a halt due to the threat of flooding and the Government was not willing to invest in our area and there is a proposal for a tidal barrier to be installed but nothing has happened for around 3 years in relation to this and these are the type of measures that should be pushed for to protect residents as it is known that Fenland is a particularly area of concern due to sea levels. Councillor Booth agreed that the Council should be meeting its 2050 net zero target in a proactive way as Councillor Tierney has tried to outline.

- Councillor Patrick stated that he is struggling with this motion, on a good summer's day for example with a bit of wind this country is already self-sufficient in the electric power that it produces. He stated that he has solar panels and if the Council is going to do this he asked why cannot when people build houses the Council require developers to put solar panels on the roofs, which will contribute towards electricity and take Fenland towards net zero and he feels these are the things the Council should be looking at and not ignoring what is happening to this world with severe climate changes. Councillor Patrick made the point that this country does not have snow anymore, there is warming and sea levels are rising so action is required quickly as there will be a catastrophe and it can be undertaken at a local level by encouraging people to invest in a means of producing free energy.
- Councillor Sutton referred to Councillor Cornwell asking at two consecutive meetings about a climate change policy and if this is it and the quality of it he feels it is very poor as it does not say anything. He questioned how the twin-hatted members of the County Council can support it when they approved a couple of years ago what was felt to be a very good climate change policy and many councils up and down the country of all political persuasions have adopted a proper policy. Councillor Sutton questioned how Whittlesey Town Council can support it when in their own Neighbourhood Plan there was a specific case around climate change and flood risk.
- Councillor Mrs Davis stated that she supports this motion, she knows that Councillor Tierney himself would say that he is very cynical, but this time she feels he has been practical. She made the point that members all know there is a need for climate change and there is a great cost to this and in the present financial climate it will have to slow down simply because of costs and in practical terms this motion keeps the Council moving towards those levels but is careful to note that it may take longer than Government think.
- Councillor Hoy referred to Councillor Sutton's comments and suggestion that the County Council's last administration policy on climate change was successful when it lost control of the Council so you could argue about how successful they were. She said since the new alliance has taken over every single climate change decision they have made they have gone against what they have said, referring to a change of energy supplier where the greener supplier with the best carbon footprint was rejected as it was too expensive and she recognises why as she would have made the same decision, but everyone wants to virtue signal and say how green they are and how wonderful they are about reducing CO<sup>2</sup> emissions but this does have real costs and consequences, which is alright if you can afford to pay those costs and consequences but a lot of people cannot and are going to struggle. Councillor Hoy feels that when this starts to 'bite' in a year to two years' time and people start to see the consequences more people will start speaking out.
- Councillor Clark stated that he struggles to support this motion as he has seven grandchildren and he wants a greener world for him to leave them and feels that everything that can be undertaken should be continued. He recognises it comes at a price, but asked what price is put on a human being or a child's life.
- Councillor Boden stated that Councillor Hoy is correct that there is an awful lot of virtue signalling taking place on the subject of the environment and the value of the first 16 items under this motion are facts, which may be considered to be inconvenient truths as these are

in reality the way in which the direction of travel and the speed of travel need to be taken in context of and what is clear that on a global basis the actions the Council takes will have an almost negligible impact, which is not to say there are not problems but if Fenland were to go net zero tomorrow the effects would be swallowed up by Brazil, India, Africa and especially by China in the space of a few months. He feels this needs to be recognised so that when members are talking about what the Council is going to do that members are realistic and he was happy that Councillor Booth said he was happy with the resolutions, which he thinks are correct that the Council should promote measures which alleviates the anticipated effects in Fenland of future global climate change and Councillor Clark asked what price is put on this and this motion is saying that measures should be promoted which are affordable and financially viable, he questioned what is the alternative should the Council be promoting measures which are unaffordable and financially unviable. Councillor Boden made the point that members need to be realistic and realism is beginning to strike around the world at the moment when you look at what is happening with the global energy markets and the global situation that exists referring to the position in Germany. He made the point that this agenda cannot be implemented with no price tag at all and members need to accept there are costs involved, which may be very big and the Council needs to be clear that it does not have unlimited resources and those limited resources need to be allocated in the most cost effective way, with in some cases will mean taking action to reduce carbon emissions and in other cases it will mean taking preventative measures to account for the effects that there will be in the years, decades and centuries to come of a change in climate. Councillor Boden expressed the view that the motion states very specifically that the Council will meet all of the climate change targets which exist and resolution c makes it clear that the Council will record, highlight and increase as much as it can the level of CO<sup>2</sup> emission reductions achieved through the policies being followed on a day-to-day basis, it not being undertaken just because it is a green policy but because these are green policies which are applicable and sensible for the needs of Fenland. He feels that everyone can very easily be priced off the road in Fenland, there are individuals who feel that private cars should not be permitted or that fuel prices should be higher to deter as many people as possible from using private cars, which is fine for the rich but does not do much for the majority of people who live in Fenland. He hopes that all members when they read the resolutions can support this motion.

- Councillor Tierney in summing up thanked members for the debate, which he feels is important, and he recognises that there are things that can be agreed on such as sensible policies that save people money and also make the world cleaner and greener. He expressed the view that if solar panels do this, and he feels there are some questions about solar panels around construction costs and how much they are subsidised, but it is consistent that they might be a good viable way to produce energy and the point was made about one good Summer's day with wind but asked what about all the Winter days when there would be blackouts and it has to be supported by endlessly running coal and gas facilities but these ideas are good. Councillor Tierney referred to Councillor Sutton's comments and stated that the point of his motion was not to say much because what he is trying to do is push back a little as nobody is pushing back and the trillion plus pounds of costs at least this is going to levy on the world on top of all the other things, the money the country borrows, the money it prints, the cost of wars and pandemics, the consequence is going to be nothing this country has ever seen before and there are some people who as Councillor Boden said do not want people to be driving cars anymore and there are people at County Council proposing housing estates with no parking. He referred to Councillor Clark's point about his grandchildren and stated that he hates that argument as everyone loves their children and he wants his own child and future grandchildren to have a fantastic life but made the point that they will not have a fantastic life if they are in desperate poverty, if they cannot drive, they cannot get a job and cannot afford food and he feels these are things that are going to happen soon not a maybe one degree temperature rise in 100 years and he would propose that the consequences both sides need to be considered and that our children should not be used as a moral lever in a debate. Councillor Tierney hoped that

what he has done in producing this motion, which he has worded quite strongly, is that members can agree on the resolutions, which are a very gentle push back as this is going to start hurting people and they are going to say push back or we will not elect you so it is for the Government to think about the consequences of its actions.

It was requested by Councillor Hoy that a recorded vote be taken, which was supported by Councillors Benney, Boden, S Clark, Connor, Mrs Davis, Mrs French, Hay, Humphrey, Mrs Mayor, Purser, Rackley, Sutton and Wallwork.

**Proposed by Councillor Tierney, seconded by Councillor Boden and AGREED to:**

- **promote measures which alleviate the anticipated effects in Fenland of future global climate change that are affordable and financially viable and which are believed to have a good chance of achieving their proposed end results**
- **commit to meeting all climate change targets which are legally required by the UK Government**
- **measure accumulatively the CO<sup>2</sup> emission reductions achieved by the Council's actions, both through the Council's own activities and through the funding of schemes directed by or channelled via the Council to third parties in the District using 2018 as the base year.**

**In favour of the recommendations: Councillors Benney, Boden, S Clark, Connor, Mrs Davis, Divine, Mrs French, Miss French, Mrs Hay, Hoy, Humphrey, Mrs Laws, Marks, Mrs Mayor, Meekins, Miscandlon, Mockett, Murphy, Purser, Rackley, Tanfield, Tierney, Wallwork and Wicks.**

**Against the recommendations: Councillor Sutton.**

**Abstained: Councillors J Clark and Patrick.**

*(Councillor Booth left the meeting at 5.40pm during the discussion on this item and was not present for the vote)*

*(Councillor Mrs Hay left the meeting at 5.56pm following this item)*

## **C21/22      AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22**

Councillor Miss French, Chairman of the Audit and Risk Management Committee, presented the Audit and Risk Management Committee Annual Report for 2021/22.

Councillor Miss French thanked the members of the committee for their participation and enthusiasm and officers for their hard work in servicing the needs of the committee.

**Proposed by Councillor Miss French, seconded by Councillor Wicks and AGREED to acknowledge the work of the Audit and Risk Management Committee and its compliance with CIPFA's annual checklist for 2021/22.**

*(Councillor Tanfield left the meeting at 6.02pm following this item)*

## **C22/22      TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22**

Councillor Boden as Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2021/22.

**Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs Laws and AGREED that the Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22 be noted.**

*(Councillor Patrick left the meeting at 6.09pm following this item)*

**C23/22      24 HIGH STREET, WISBECH - CONTRACT AWARD**

In the absence of Councillor Seaton, Councillor Boden presented the report on 24 High Street Wisbech and the award of contract and approval of associated finance and officer delegations.

Councillor Sutton indicated that he wished to comment on the exempt schedules and, therefore, this item was considered in confidential session.

**Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Hoy and AGREED that**

- **the current position in relation to the Council's redevelopment plans for 24 High Street, Wisbech be noted;**
- **the anticipated total value of redeveloping 24 High Street capped in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Crown Commercial Services Government Construction Framework RM6088 be noted;**
- **the options available for funding the redevelopment of 24 High Street based on the value anticipated by the preferred bidder and as set out in Schedule 3 be approved with authority delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Leader, to identify and utilise the most appropriate combination of funding having regard to the Council's wider budgetary duties and obligations;**
- **subject to the above, the negotiation and entry into a contract with the preferred bidder be approved in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Procurement and the legal advice and due diligence requirements as set out in Schedule 1 seeking at all times to ensure that the Council maintains its best value obligations.**

*(Members resolved to exclude the public from the meeting for this item of business on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)*

6.24 pm

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank





Fenland District Council Fenland Hall County Road March Cambridgeshire PE15 8NQ  
 Tel 01354 622281 DX 30955 March Minicom 01354 622215 [www.fenland.gov.uk](http://www.fenland.gov.uk)

## Civic Engagements

**From July 1, 2022 to September 22, 2022**

July 1, 2022	RAF Alconbury Independence Day Celebrations Attended by the Chairman
July 2, 2022	St Neots - Armed Forces Day Event Attended by the Chairman
July 11, 2022	Royal Visit -HRH Duchess of Gloucester Attended by the Chairman
July 17, 2022	Mayor of March Afternoon Tea Attended by the Chairman
July 21, 2022	High Sheriff Summer Garden Party Attended by the Chairman
August 7, 2022	Mayor of Boston Morning service Attended by the Chairman
September 3, 2022	Rushden Town Council – Proms in the Park Attended by the Chairman
September 4, 2022	March Armed Forces Fair Attended by the Chairman  Mayor of Wisbech Afternoon Tea Attended by the Chairman  RAF Sutton Bridge Memorial Service Attended by the Vice Chairman
September 8 ,2022	RAF Wyton Annual Reception Attended by the Chairman
September 11, 2022	Proclamation of King Charles III Attended by the Chairman and Vice Chairman
September 16, 2022	Fenland District Council Service of Thanksgiving for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Attended by the Chairman and Vice Chairman
September 18,2022	Ely Cathedral Service of Thanksgiving for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Attended by the Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank



# **Cabinet and Corporate Management Team**

## **Portfolio Holder Briefing Report**

**September 2022**  
**(For performance in June & July 2022)**

# Cabinet Members



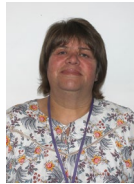
**Councillor  
Chris Boden**

Leader of the Council  
& Portfolio Holder for  
Finance



**Councillor  
Ian Benney**

Portfolio Holder for  
Economic Growth



**Councillor  
Sam Clark**

Portfolio Holder for  
Health



**Councillor  
Steve Count**

Portfolio Holder for  
Licensing &  
Community Safety



**Councillor  
Mrs Jan French**

Deputy Leader of the  
Council



**Councillor  
Miss Sam Hoy**

Portfolio Holder for  
Housing



**Councillor  
Mrs Dee Laws**

Portfolio Holder for  
Planning



**Councillor  
Peter Murphy**

Portfolio Holder for  
Open Spaces, Street  
Scene & Waste  
Management



**Councillor  
Chris Seaton**

Portfolio Holder for  
Social Mobility &  
Heritage



**Councillor Steve  
Tierney**

Portfolio Holder for  
Transformation,  
Communication &  
Environment

## Communities

### Projects from Business Plan:

**Work with landlords to improve housing conditions and management standards in the district's private sector, including using the Council's enforcement powers** (Cllr Sam Hoy)

The Council has undertaken 15 positive interventions in response to new requests for service for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) across the district.

The Council has also inspected 53 properties as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme and investigated 61 complaints from tenants occupying privately rented accommodation in the same period. Council officers intervened to remove Category 1 hazards (serious faults) and Category 2 hazards (less serious faults) from properties to make them safe for the residents.

The geographical spread is as follows:

Town	HMOs investigated	Privately Rented Homes investigated
Wisbech	14	47
March	1	21
Chatteris	0	20
Whittlesey	0	8
Villages	0	18

Enforcement:

- In the first 2 quarter of 2022/23 Officers have served:
  - 3 improvement notices.
  - 8 Notices of Intent to fine landlords / agents in relation to breaches of Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR)
  - 6 Notices Of Intent to serve a Civil Penalty Notices
  - The above fines total £98,723 and £19,815 has been collected informally, with the remaining debt being recovered pursuant of the corporate debt policy and referrals to the High Court Sheriff service.

Other

- The revised Housing Enforcement Policy was approved in July's council meeting and has been operative since 22<sup>nd</sup> July. Additional delegated powers relating to new legislation will allow officers to enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency regulations.
- Officers continue to inspect properties to identify health and safety compliance. A recent example is a case whereby the landlord has subsequently removed

occupants of a property as a result of the council's intervention and is currently being investigated for having carried out an illegal eviction. This has required the officer to undertake a number of interviews with the displaced occupiers, with the support of an interpreter. As this is an alleged criminal offence, the landlord is also being interviewed under caution. The officer is also pursuing breaches of HMO regulations and failing to licence the property whilst it was occupied pursuant of the Civil Penalty procedure.

- Officers continue to support the Homes for Ukraine scheme in Fenland. Inspection of hosts properties, delivery of sustenance payments and welfare checks continue on a weekly basis and are being carried out in a timely fashion. Due to breakdown between hosts and guests, the team are also witnessing a number of rematches within the district which often require an immediate response to prevent guests becoming homeless.
- The Council is working closely with CCC who receive the money for the homes for Ukraine from central government to ensure that the Council's costs are recovered.

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

	<b>LTE 6-23 MTHS</b>	<b>LTEP 24 MTHS +</b>
<b>Total Officer involvement</b>	25	7
<b>Total for the period</b>	1.4.22 – 31.3.23	32

The officer continues to support owners with bringing their properties back into use and has assisted several of them to apply to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) to request removal of the property from Council Tax (CT) whilst they renovate. Through engagement with the owner and monitoring the renovation progress they inform CT when the property is near completion. They issue a completion notice and the property is brought back into council tax. This ensures the property is brought back into the system, council tax is paid and prevents the property being wrongly categorised on the system.

Below is an example of when the officer supported an owner to sell his property and obtained agreement for him to repay his CT debt of £14k. The officer then worked closely with the new owner to get the property removed from CT so they could renovate the property. This was an extensive renovation project due to the poor state



of the property which also required an extension. The property is on the market for sale and has received two offers. It has been bought back into CT and in the next few months will become occupied as a family home.



**Prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping through working with individuals, families, landlords, housing associations and providers to meet the housing needs of residents in crisis (Cllr Sam Hoy)**

The Housing Options team has successfully prevented 80 households from becoming homeless since April 2022 (up to end of July 2022). Housing advice has been given to 398 households where no duties were owed. Total homeless presentations for this period were 670.

There continues to be a high number of B&B placements as emergency accommodation. To date there have been 65 placements (up to end of July 2022). This has been increasing month on month since April. Officers are working to improve access to more temporary accommodation that can be used to get households out of B&B quicker and reduce budgetary pressure. Since April the Council has enabled:

- 6 modular homes in Wisbech for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping (Funded from the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) with subsidy from Places for people / Ferry Project)
- 4 properties purchased by Clarion ringfenced for Rough Sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping. There are 3 more in the pipeline to be bought through funding secured from the RSAP and Clarion subsidy.
- All with support to reduce the risk of the tenancy failing.
- Clarion are also looking to provide 5 additional homes to the 10 we have already to use as temporary accommodation.

The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing Options work is currently 48% (up to end of July 2022). (80 preventions divided by 166 prevention and relief duties owed). This KPI is moving in the right direction with a month on month increase since April 2022.

We have also successfully recruited a new member to the housing options team. They will split their time between homelessness case work and assisting with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation we are working towards.

The team continues to be focussed on homeless prevention and supporting those in need within the Fenland community. We continue to be successful in placing a good number of homeless households into private sector accommodation and are above the national average on this. This was recently commended by DLUHC.

We anticipate that there will be a further uplift in the number of households requiring housing advice as the cost of living crisis continues into the autumn and winter period.



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

The Golden Age Fair joined the Whittlesey Big Bash II on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at the Manor Leisure Centre. The following organisations joined us at the event; Breathe Easy, RAF Benevolent Fund, Poppy Appeal, Cambridgeshire Libraries, PECT (Peterborough Environment City Trust), Cam Sight, Age UK, Rosmini Centre, East of England Ambulance Service, Citizens Advice – Rural Cambs, Versus Arthritis, Whittlesey Community Car Scheme, Neighbourhood Watch, GoodCompany, Care Network, Healthy You and Cambridgeshire County Council – Think Communities Team.

We look forward to our next event at the King Edward Centre on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 between 11am – 2pm.

Future events include:

- International Golden Age Fair – Rosmini Centre – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 – 09:30 until 12.
- Wimblington – Venue TBC – February 2023

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

Active Fenland is running wellbeing walks in open spaces, with more walk leaders being trained to offer more opportunities across the district. ICS is funding the increase in sessions over the next 2 years with the scheme expecting to be sustainable using volunteer walk leaders in the future.

FDC has received grant support from Government to improve provision in Wisbech Park as part of a Levelling Up Parks grant. The funding will pay for tree works, refurbishment of the play area and support an initiative to introduce Green Social Prescribing (GSP) into the park.

Freedom already runs a scheme of Exercise Referral from GPs to the leisure centres to help the community access high quality physical exercise opportunities with qualified support at a competitive price.

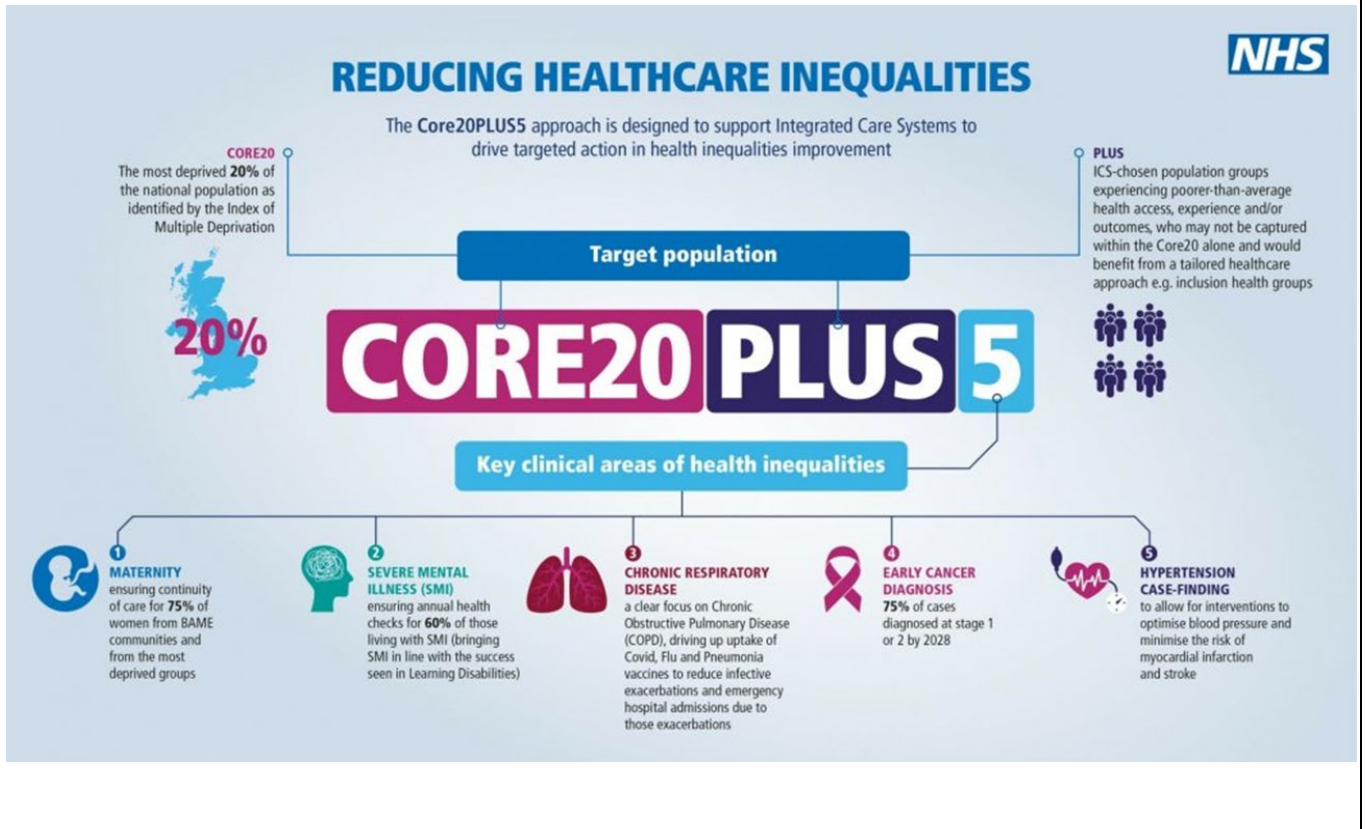
The GSP will be a scheme where GP's can refer patients to schemes being run in the park. This is in the early development phase at present, but would include group walks initially, might include working with the Friends Group on horticultural aspects of the park, potentially carrying out Street Pride style activities in the park and once the Community Hub is built engaging in activities in the Hub; yoga / Pilates / tai chi / volunteering at the cafe etc.

The following short films have been produced by NHS England to highlight Green

Social Prescribing successes in other areas of the country:

[Green Social Prescribing in Nottingham Partnership working & Green Social Prescribing](#)

Green Social Prescribing will support the ICS and Government focus on Core20+5 of the population to reduce health inequalities and initially is likely to link to Trinity Surgery in Wisbech. FDC will partner with the Strategic Parks and Green Spaces unit at CCC to move this initiative forwards.



## Other Projects:

### Leisure Update (Cllr Sam Clark)

Freedom continues to recover back to a more expected number of users following the pandemic. Swimming lesson numbers continue to exceed expectations considerably, however regular 'casual' swimming is still below pre-pandemic levels and memberships are still slightly behind too.

The energy crisis is impacting Freedom. Energy costs to run a leisure centre are high, despite FDC investing in energy efficient plant about 7 years ago. To mitigate initial increased costs of running the facilities FDC has worked with Freedom and the following, limited, changes have been made;

- Manor Leisure Centre sauna and steam rooms have been closed
- Swimming lesson fees have risen

Since the original discussions with Freedom regarding energy costs, the energy market has become even more volatile. A recent discussion has revealed costs that are expected to rise considerably in September and October – as business use has no price cap like a domestic household does.

Freedom awaits the new Government's decisions regarding energy and will then detail the impacts that the energy crisis is having on the business. FDC officers expect that Freedom will ask for additional support from the Council unless Government support caps prices at a realistic level.

### Pride In Fenland Awards (Cllr Sam Clark)

Pride In Fenland Awards for 2022 will be returning as a face-to-face event in November 2022 at The Boathouse with a slightly smaller event. The Fenland Citizen will once again be partnering with us to put on the event and promote the event over the next two months. Nominations will open early September for volunteers to be nominated for their great work in our communities and further communications will be published throughout September.

## Health & Wellbeing Update (Cllr Sam Clark)

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Health and wellbeing board met on 15<sup>th</sup> July. Papers for the meeting can be found here:

[Council and committee meetings - Cambridgeshire County Council > Meetings \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com)

Items of note included the Integrated Care Partnership and the Health and wellbeing Strategy. The next meeting will take place on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

During July, August and September the Joint Health and Wellbeing Board for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has been engaging on its new plan – **the Joint Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Overarching Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2030**.

This strategy will help inform the ambitions for the local Integrated Care Service, its strategy and the priorities for local health and care services.

The three main goals are:

- to increase the number of years people spend in good health
- to reduce inequalities in preventable deaths before the age of 75
- to achieve better outcomes for our children

There are four priorities to help achieve these goals:

- create an environment for people to be as healthy as can be
- reducing poverty through better employment and housing
- promoting early intervention and prevention measures to improve mental health and wellbeing
- our children are ready to enter and exit education prepared for the next phase of their lives

The engagement process began on 15 July and closed on 15 September.

To find out more about the strategy visit the [Joint Health and Wellbeing Integrated Care Strategy feedback page](#).

### Active Fenland

Throughout June and July, the continuation of the regular weekly Active Fenland programmes continued including:

- 4 x yoga programmes
- 3 x badminton programmes
- 1 x Strength & Balance programme
- 1 x Forever Fit programme

In this time Forever Fit saw the collaboration with the Tier 2 Healthy You service with the provision of health MOTs for the participants (Free service).

In addition, four new weekly programmes have also started including:

1. Junior Running sessions in Wisbech which enables junior runners to learn and develop into the local Junior Park Run, creating healthy lifestyle habits for life.
2. Junior tennis session in March as there is no Tennis club in March.
3. 'Cardio-Tennis' in March which is an adult session based on fun, social and fitness-based tennis drills to music. Participants do not need to have any tennis skills or to know the rules.
4. A targeted yoga session to the service users of the Cambridgeshire Recovery Service after receiving funding for this. Participants in this session will also be given a yoga mat to keep and practice at home with to further help with their wellbeing.

The first Fenland Ramblers Wellbeing Walk was launched in July, led by a volunteer walk leader in Wisbech, starting in Wisbech Park. Active Fenland are part of a Cambridgeshire scheme for the national Ramblers programme, and co-ordinate locally for Fenland providing training, support, marketing, and volunteer management. The Ramblers Wellbeing Walks are local, inclusive, group walks for health, which are no longer than 90 minutes (usually far less).

Active Fenland is currently looking for more volunteer walk leaders across the district in the market towns and villages to start walks for everyone to enjoy, be social and be active in their local community.

Link to the national scheme for information: [Ramblers Wellbeing Walks - Ramblers](#)

Active Fenland held an inaugural Tea Dance event in Wisbech as part of Innovate & Cultivate funding. There will be one run in each market town as a fun, active way for the community to come together and decrease social isolation. The events also provide a way to offer other key services, support, information, advice, and to signpost to other activities locally.

Active Fenland has also attended other events to share information on the service, to signpost, and provide key messages around health and well-being at, including:

1. A carers day event
2. Cambridgeshire Recovery Service open day.
3. Providing two tasters, walking netball and a Ramblers Wellbeing walk as part of the Whittlesey Big Bash.
4. Active Fenland has also provided 60 free sports bags and family healthy eating packs to March Cricket Club as part of their summer holiday children's sessions.

Active Fenland is now also part of the Joy App as part of the ICS services so that the service can be more easily referred into by health professionals.

**Key PIs:**

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 22/23	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP1	Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	277	250	111	
CELP2	NEW INDICATOR The proportion (%) of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing options work (%)	57%	57%	48%	
CELP3	Number of empty properties brought back into use	77	50	21	
CELP4	Amount of New Homes Bonus achieved as a result of bringing empty homes back into use	£93,099	£45,000	N/A (December 22)	N/A
CELP6	Number of Active Health local sessions per year that improve community health	504	500	90 (May)	
CELP19	Satisfaction with our leisure centres (Net Promoter Score)	85%	85%		
CELP20	Value of Arts Council Grants achieved in Fenland	N/A	£40,000		

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

Comments

## Environment

### Projects from Business Plan:

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

During the period 1<sup>st</sup> June – July, we have recorded 98 incidents of fly tipping. August's fly tipping figures are currently unconfirmed.

As part of our enforcement work from June - August 23<sup>rd</sup>, officers have been out to 53 fly tipped sites to look through waste found to try and find out who may be responsible, and this often leads to good evidence.

As a result of finds we have sent out 8 'Contact Me' letters to addresses found which has resulted in a further 5 formal Interview Under Caution postal documents being sent out. Our ongoing investigations have resulted in:

- 3 Fixed Penalty Notices of £400 to those who we believe were responsible for fly tipped waste found in Wisbech. 1 of which has already been paid.
- 1 Fixed Penalty Notice of £400 to Householders for failing in their duty of care and employing fly tippers to take their waste away. The offences relate to fly tipping found in Whittlesey.

Additional enforcement work carried out saw 1 Parking Fixed Penalty Notice issued to a car for parking on the market in March on a market day.

40 vehicles have been reported as abandoned between 1<sup>st</sup> June – 23<sup>rd</sup> August. Most of these were not deemed abandoned but we did require 4 to be removed by our contractor. The remainder had Notices served on them but were all removed by following the Notice.

As part of our work supporting local businesses through our Tidy Fenland Voluntary Code of Practice, we have been visiting town centre businesses in fenland. During this period, we have been to 15 premises and spoken with management staff to check on trade waste compliance. This resulted in 7 signing up to the Code and supporting the project. 1 business was referred for a follow up visit due to concerns. 4 businesses were given cigarette bins which we had available to prevent excess litter.



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

June was a spectacular month for Fenland Four Seasons events. We saw the return of Chatteris Festival surpassing previous years. Volunteers stepped forward to organise a vast array of entertainment across the course of the weekend, which was attended by over 3,000 people. Spectators were treated to a headline performance from Scooted n' Booted, an arena show from the acclaimed Dog and Duck company and a Battle of Britain Memorial Flight flyover.

Plans are already underway for 2023, in which the annual theme will be the 1920s. Fundraising events are already being planned including music bingo, generating money for the volunteer committee to add to the event further next year.

July has been a busy month as we prepare for an open evening event for Whittlesey Festival, which will take place on 1<sup>st</sup> September 6-8pm at Whittlesey Town Council. The evening will be an opportunity to celebrate the success of the Festival over the past decade with existing volunteers, to recruit additional volunteers and potentially sponsors for the 2023 event, which will take place on 10<sup>th</sup> September.

Work will be going on behind the scenes in August and September to bring events bookings online and into the Council's DMS system as part of the transformation agenda. Following testing in the autumn, from January 2023 traders will be able to book digitally.

**Community groups supported to deliver environmental projects including Street Pride, Friends of and Green Dog Walkers** (Cllr Peter Murphy)

An impressive 20 events were held in June by community groups to improve the environment. This included regular work parties as well as Murrow Street Pride putting on a Jubilee Tea and Cakes event for villagers to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The event was a great success with the group raising £258 on the day via a raffle which will enable them to put on future events.

Equipment was lent to six students from March town, in August, so they could undertake two litter picks around the town as part of their National Citizens Service course programme.

In July, there were 24 regular work parties held. One key event to highlight is Whittlesey Street Pride holding their annual summer party where members of Whittlesey in Bloom also joined in with the celebrations. In addition this month, both



Chatteris and Benwick were busy finalising projects prior to Anglia in Bloom judging day which took place on the 25 July. Chatteris judging for Britain in Bloom was held on 26 July.

Results of the In Bloom judging were received in early September. At an award ceremony held on 7<sup>th</sup> September, Chatteris in Bloom received a Gold award in the town category and Benwick in Bloom Silver Gilt in the village category. Chatteris were narrowly pipped at the post for title of Best Town.

There were also some special award categories, with Benwick receiving a silver for their project commemorating the Queen's jubilee and Chatteris receiving two silvers for Cross Keys and Bramley House under the pub/restaurant category.

## Deliver the Recycling Action Plan (Cllr Peter Murphy)

### Performance

Frontline collection colleagues are an important element in the maintenance of the quality of recycling collected and through this, they derive income to the authority. In the past 4 months they have found more than **1,000 issues** with blue bins, identifying where incorrect materials are obvious. Each of the properties identified is then delivered a standard letter advising of what can go in their blue bin and why this is important.



The active positive campaign work has recommenced at Councillor Murphy's request this year. As a result, the Environmental Services supervisors checked a total of **800 blue bins** in targeted areas over recent months. Of those visited, **(30%) were very good**, containing all the correct materials, and received a 'thank you' tag and 29 (4%) were found to contain incorrect materials and received information on how to improve.

### Income and Performance

The value of recycling materials continues to improve. The overall net income for materials collected in this financial year is more than £200,000 to the end of July.

So far in 2022/23, **2,954 tonnes** of materials suitable for recycling were collected in customers' blue bins. This gives a recycling rate for waste collected of 43% for the first 4 months of the year.

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

The income generated from commercial waste activities continues to develop, with 25 new customers so far this year. Currently the team have 498 customers using bins and 117 with sack-based services. An invoiced total of £270,000 to the end of August, is a 22% increase on the same period last year (£220,000).

The team now offer refuse, mixed dry recycling and a developing food waste service through a range of wheeled bin sizes and sacks where required.

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

Further information from Defra on the Extended Producer Responsibility and the Deposit Return Scheme is expected in the Autumn.

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

Fenland DC along with SCDC and HDC continue to meet regularly with Cambridgeshire County Council via a joint working group to collectively move the implementation of CPE forward and to track progress.

The County Council have made good progress to date in moving the implementation of CPE in SCDC forward. FDC are not far behind in terms of overall project progress, however the current lack of professional resources within the industry is likely to result in the programmed implementation date having to be pushed back. HDC are approximately 6 months behind FDC and aim to have their TRO survey work completed in October.

FDC progress to date and current focus:

- 1) Having undertaken a full Traffic Regulation Order survey for all 210 On-Street parking and waiting restrictions within Fenland DC administrative area, 1228 anomalies were found. This equates to 86% of all existing TRO's in the Fenland area requiring some form of corrective works. The survey works were completed in four phases and this information has since been passed to Cambridgeshire County Councils Policy and Regulation Team for review.
- 2) Cambridgeshire County Council have advised that the preparation of the design package works for the TRO corrections are to be prepared by an external service

provider due to limited County Council internal resources. The first phase of design queries has been put out to Milestone Infrastructure and Atkins for pricing.

- 3) A preliminary draft CPE Off Street Parking Places Order has been compiled for all FDC owned/managed parking facilities. This will continue to be developed by the FDC project team in preparation for the implementation of CPE.
- 4) A second draft of the FDC/CCC agency and service level agreement has been drafted by Cambridgeshire County Council for consideration by the FDC CPE project team. This will be further developed by FDC legal representatives before being put forward to FDC members for approval. The agreement will set out delegated authority to FDC and define responsibility for things such as sign and line maintenance, PCN income and operational deficit along with resolution of contractual issues associated with enforcement.
- 5) Cambridgeshire County Council formally consulted all statutory consultees and partner organisations on the implementation of CPE within Fenland in April 2022. Consultees were given one month to register their comments or objections and whilst no objections were received, some organisations integral to the CPE implementation process did not respond. These organisations have now formally been written to with a final date given for response of 2<sup>nd</sup> September. The collective feedback will be used to finalise the CPE application to the Department for Transport in 2023.
- 6) A draft application to the Department for Transport for a Civil/Special Enforcement Area Designation Order for the introduction of CPE in Fenland has been prepared by Cambridgeshire County Council in partnership with FDC. The application will be finalised using any further statutory consultee feedback post September. It is anticipated that the application will be put forward to the DfT in March 2023 providing the FDC/CCC Agency Agreement has been developed and approved by both Councils.
- 7) Following liaison with all neighbouring local authorities to ascertain what CPE enforcement and administrative services could be provided for the Fenland area, three Local Authorities have expressed an interest. These offers and the potential to enter into a section 101 shared service agreement shall be explored in greater detail by the CPE project team going forward.

Whilst the timeline required to implement CPE in Fenland was envisaged to be approximately 2 years, several factors including County Council and Contractor resources could now inadvertently result in project slippage. Currently it is estimated that the CPE designation order will be brought into effect early 2024.

### **Deliver the CCTV shared service with Peterborough City Council (Cllr Steve Count)**

The CCTV shared service has maintained its 100% service function across a 24/7 period.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022, the CCTV service has been able to respond to 522 incidents across our four market towns including incidents relating to anti-social

behaviour, criminal damage, violent crime, illegal drug use, possession of weapons and theft.

As a result of CCTV intervention from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022 has led to 37 arrests being made by Cambridgeshire Police. This highlights the work CCTV services do to support the Council and partners in responding to crime and disorder and helping to make our communities safer and reduce the fear of crime.

The CCTV service also continues to be pro-active in delivering services that helps reduce crime & disorder and anti-social behaviour by delivering regular camera patrols of our four market towns and other key locations. Since April and up to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022 the CCTV team have delivered 1,394 patrols. All patrols all conducted across the 24/7 period ensuring that no matter what time of day and night our local communities are being protected and that any issues or concerns are being identified as early as possible.

The CCTV service also provides the councils 'out of hours' telephone contact services for example, homelessness, stray and lost dogs, cleansing incidents, dangerous buildings and structures, environmental complaints, to name but a few areas. From April to July the CCTV service has responded to over 152 service requests from our out of hours telephone contact service.

The CCTV partner liaison meeting, which includes our town council partners was held in June via MS Teams and included a full and comprehensive update on the work of CCTV and performance. The next meeting will be held in the Autumn and again via MS Teams.

### **Other Projects:**

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

An unusual period (June-Aug) for the grounds maintenance team with the heat wave reducing the need to mow the grass, but increasing the need to water and trim the hedges and bushes. All has gone to plan with minor errors and omissions corrected quickly. Standards remain high and particular mention should go to the Tivoli team (18 seasonal staff in total) where no sickness absence has been recorded since June.

Additional resources have been pushed into cemeteries with the Community Payback team prominent in Mount Pleasant, Wisbech undertaking clearance work to great effect. Similar tasks have been undertaken at New Road, Chatteris and Eastwood, March with noticeable benefits.

Much tree work has taken place – overhangs, branches dislodged, crown lifts – across the district. The largest single task was the removal of a fallen giant beech tree in

Wisbech Park which has now been lowered to ground level and removed. New trees planted across the summer have struggled despite the watering and random acts of vandalism, but the vast majority will survive

The opening of the new Splash pad in Wisbech Park went ahead smoothly (August 15) although a generator remains on site until the mains are connected. Attendances are high and feedback has been very good. Vandalism has been present but minimal and the area has been locked nightly at 5.30 with no fuss. Dates for autumn closure (and winter mothballing) are yet to be decided.

Play area improvements are currently taking place at Cricketer's Way, Chatteris (total overhaul), and Guyhirn play area. A tender for replacement of equipment has been completed for Doddington, Beech Avenue, contract awarded, in consultation with Doddington PC. The completion of the play area improvement at Burdett Grove, Whittlesey has not been issue-free, however, largely due to the increased volume of children and the associated dissatisfaction of the neighbours. Amendments to the scheme are being considered in collaboration with the Police.

The wildflower meadow, our first, at Manor Field, Whittlesey has been a resounding success with much public acclaim. 6,000 square metres and an array of plants and colour have prompted numerous public photographs and some of these will be displayed alongside prior to the cutting and collection in September

### **Street Lighting** (Cllr Jan French)

#### **Street Light Repairs & Maintenance**

Sixteen streetlight faults were reported and attended to between June and July by FDC's streetlight maintenance contractor on behalf of FDC, Clarion Housing Association and seven of the Parish Councils.

#### **Capital Street Light Replacement Works**

Unfortunately, limited progress was made in June and July on the outstanding programmed Capital replacement works due to material delays, UKPN connectivity work lead in times and a shortage of FDC streetlight contractor resources. It is anticipated that these works will now be concluded by the end of the financial year.

### **FDC Car Park Maintenance** (Cllr Jan French)

Overall, very few defects were reported or observed in FDC managed Car Parks throughout the District between June and July. The exception being a suspected arson attack to the BT building adjacent to the Somers Road Car Park in Wisbech on 30<sup>th</sup> June which unfortunately caused damage to the asphalt surface and recycling

centre. The Engineering Team are working with the adjacent property owner and will arrange for suitable repair works to be undertaken once the building has been secured and made safe.

General maintenance and minor improvement works will be scheduled for FDC managed Car Parks following programmed routine inspections in October.

### **Garden Waste Service Update** (Cllr Peter Murphy)

The Garden Waste Service this year has more than 22,700 properties with a total of more than 23,500 subscriptions. As a result, the service is forecast to deliver a cost neutral service again this year.

### **Community Safety Partnership Update** (Cllr Steve Count)

#### **CSP Workforce Development**

Training themes for CSP Workforce Development sessions are linked to the priorities within the CSP action plan. Frontline staff from statutory and the voluntary sectors who work across Fenland are invited to attend these free training sessions.

Those attending include staff from housing providers, FDC teams, police, probation, traveller teams, young people workers, family workers, children centres, food banks, volunteers, schools, healthcare workers, faith groups, community organisations and citizens advice.

#### **Hate Crime Awareness Training**

On the 09/06/2022 in partnership with the hosted a training session on Hate Crime Awareness. This was delivered in partnership with Tiff Lane Action Against Hate Co-ordinator with Cambridge constabulary and David Baily the Traveller & Diversity Manager with Fenland District Council.

#### **Scams & Cyber Crime Awareness Training**

On the 07/07/2022 in partnership with the hosted a training session on Scams & Cyber Crime. This was delivered in partnership with Karen Reid from the community protection team at CCC and Nigel Sutton, Fraud and Cyber Security Advisor from Cambridgeshire Constabulary.



## **Community Safety Newsletter 12<sup>th</sup> Edition**

The newsletter has been refreshed in a new format reporting back on the activity of the CSP. It is due to be published in October 2022, this will be available on the CSP webpage and be distributed to partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors.

Hard copies are available in local libraires. In this edition you will find updates on workforce development sessions, engagement events, CAPASP. Plus, support and advice and reporting links on a range of concerns for the Fenland community to refer to.

### **Community Engagement Chatteris**

On 04/08/2022 the Fenland Community Safety partnership held a multi-agency Community Safety event at Chatteris Library in partnership with Cambs police, Neighbourhood Watch, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Against Scams Partnership (CAPASP) Vision Zero—Road safety Partnership - Illegal Money Lending Team England and Neighbourhood watch.



During the event local residents were supported with information and advice on neighbourhood policing and reporting options loan sharks, road safety, cybercrime, scams and rogue trading and from neighbourhood watch

Fenland Community Safety Partnership will be delivering further community engagement events throughout 2022 and 2023. These will be advertised on the FDC website, partnership pages and in your local area. Residents are invited to come along and meet the community safety team and their partners for information and advice on a wide range of community safety matters.

### **Neighbourhood Watch Engagement Event**



On 11/08/2022 Neighbourhood Watch & the Community Safety team held an engagement event at Wisbech marketplace. Residents enquired about how to start a NHW scheme and were talked each step. 2 residents came forward for the Wisbech area requesting information to start their own scheme.

In this busy marketplace session, other residents took away information on scams and Domestic Abuse, including in Eastern European languages. Also, a new CSP Community Safety leaflet on how to report ASB. Other concerns

discussed included unhygienic pathways and refuse collection.

### **County Lines/Knife Crime**

On 11<sup>th</sup> and 13 July community safety officers co-delivered county lines within Neale

Wade Academy in March and Cromwell Community College in Chatteris.

This was delivered in partnership with the schools, Children Early Help, and neighbourhood police team. Further sessions to work with the other academies are being scheduled for the Autumn/winter terms. The sessions had excellent student participation and were followed up with an after-show talk. Further resources such as teacher packs have been sent to all schools for use in smaller groups with students who are identified as benefiting from this additional support.



### **Street Drinking Update (Cllr Steve Count)**

Community reporting to all agencies continues to be low. Those incidents of street drinking observed by CCTV have not involved ASB and therefore no requirement for police being notified. The area of interest has been St Peter's Church Gardens. A multi-agency monitoring, and response continues.

A police lead initiative to tackle street based ASB with a focus on Wisbech town is due to start in early September. Commonly referred to as Op Luscombe, although police led it is a multi-agency response, providing prevention and intervention opportunities before enforcement.

Some alcohol related litter has been found but the main concern is general litter. Youth related overnight litter and evidence of Nitrous Oxide use has been a regular occurrence.

The Council is part of a successful bid to Safer Streets 4 funding with the Police and other partners.

The grant is worth £634,285 over 15 months and will pay for a range of new initiatives and interventions to keep people safe in the Medworth Ward of Wisbech and Peterborough Central, some of which will include:

- The creation of two new posts within Peterborough City Council and Fenland District Council dedicated to tackling anti-social behaviour;
- Extra mobile CCTV cameras and an additional member of staff who is already trained in spotting predatory behaviours;
- Extended training to be delivered to Security Industry Staff and taxi drivers on



how to spot predatory behaviour and what to do when it is identified;

- The setting up of a Sexual Violence Ambassador Scheme within three schools to improve young people's knowledge of VAWG, promote equal relationships and prevent violence in dating and intimate partner relationships;
- Training for teaching staff and pupils in secondary schools to help identify predatory behaviour;
- Funding for a Street Chaplain scheme in Peterborough to provide support and assistance to those that wish to enjoy the city's nightlife;
- Resources for to develop local Neighbourhood Watch schemes with studies showing that for every 100 crimes committed an average of 15 crimes were prevented in active Neighbourhood Watch areas;
- Ring (video) doorbells will also be offered to homes within Peterborough Central and Medworth Ward as a preventative measure against burglary.

**Key PIs:**

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 22/23	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP8	Rapid or Village Response requests actioned the same or next day	95%	90%	97%	
CELP9	% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards (including graffiti and flyposting)	99%	93%	100%	
CELP10	% of household waste recycled through the blue bin service (1 month in arrears)	27.5%	28%	27%	
CELP11	Customer satisfaction with refuse and recycling services	96.3%	90%		
CELP12	Customer satisfaction with our garden waste service	98.75%	85%		
CELP13	Number of Street Pride, Green Dog Walkers, and Friends Of community environmental events supported	191	204	90	
CELP14	% of those asked who are satisfied with events	97%	96%	97.5%	

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

Comments

## Economy

### Projects from Business Plan:

**Continue to review council land and property assets to ensure they are fit for purpose and optimised to deliver better public services, improve efficiency and release surplus land for residential and commercial development as outlined in our Commercial Investment Strategy** (Cllr Ian Benney)

Following the completion of sales of the first group of three sites a further four sites have had planning applications submitted prior to disposal these being sites at Eastwood, Grounds Ave, Hurst Ave and Drybread Rd. The remaining tranche 1 sites are presently having planning applications prepared prior to submission in September.

Work continues with the Estates Dept and Portfolio holder to bring forward a set of tranche 2 properties for members to consider for disposal.

Cabinet will receive a detailed report on the proposed final phase development at the South Fens Enterprise park in October following the completion of the independent tender evaluation process.

**Continue to lobby for improvements to our transport infrastructure, including the A47 economic corridor** (Cllr Chris Seaton)

Wisbech Access Strategy

**There is no specific update on this project**

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. The latest information about the project can be found on the County Council website from the following link:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-funding-bids-and-studies/wisbech-access-strategy>

A Wisbech Access Strategy report was presented to CPCA Business Board in July 2021 and CPCA Board in September 2021. The report required a strategic decision on the way forward linked to timescales and budgets. It was agreed that funding would be made available to complete the detailed design and the land acquisition for the 3 schemes – A47 Broad End Road, A47 Elm High Road and A1101 Ramnoth Road/Weasenham Lane. The work is progressing alongside a full business case project. These projects are expected to now be complete in late Summer/early Autumn 2022. A copy of the main accompanying paper for the meetings mentioned above can be found from the following link:

[https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccc\\_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1529/Committee/62/Default.aspx](https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccc_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1529/Committee/62/Default.aspx)

### Kings Dyke Level Crossing

The deliverer of this project is through Cambridgeshire County Council, Growth Deal Funding by the former Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Transforming Cities Fund. In July 2022, the new Kings Dyke bridge opened to traffic. Please see the link below for further details and images.

[King's Dyke bridge opens after 50-year bid to replace level crossing - BBC News](#)

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

### March Area Transport Study

**There is no specific update on this project.**

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. It includes a range of transport projects across March to address transport issues and to facilitate new housing and employment growth.

The project is currently in detailed design stage and full business case project work which is due to complete in late 2022. Papers confirming the outcome of the previous Outline Business Case (OBC) work including recommendations to draw down funding for detailed design and the final business case, were part of CCC, CPCA and FDC meetings in November and December 2021.

A copy of the OBC report can be found on the County Council website from the following link:

[Council and committee meetings - Cambridgeshire County Council > Meetings \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

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

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-funding-bids-and-studies/march-transport-study>

### March to Wisbech Railway Line

**There is no specific update on this project**

This is a CPCA funded project with current study and assessment work being undertaken by Network Rail. FDC is currently awaiting the outcome of the study work which is now expected during Summer 2022.

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

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

#### A47 Dualling (CPCA Project)

**There is no specific update on this project.**

It was reported in late 2020 that National Highways (formally Highways England) Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) announcement did not include the A47 dualling project. Discussions between CPCA, National Highways and Government in early 2021 have since continued and negotiations are ongoing. In February 2021 National Highways agreed to undertake a review of the stage 0 work completed by CPCA. This review is to determine if there is any further work needed with a view to National Highways adopting the development work into their own programme. It was also agreed that the work will also consider proposals from East Tilney to A47/A17 junction in Norfolk. We are awaiting the outcome of this project.

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

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

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

All £4m of CPCA funding has now been allocated to Growing Fenland projects. Updates on the projects are shown below:

#### **Chatteris**

##### **Chatteris Town Renaissance Fund (£92k)**

The Chatteris Town Renaissance Fund project is progressing well and continues to consider and process applications for business grants as a result of the continued promotion of the scheme.

A total of 90% of all street furniture refurbishment work is now complete.

### **Chatteris Skills Development (£36,179)**

All of the ICT equipment ordered has now been delivered. The equipment should now be ready for use at the start of the academic year.

### **Chatteris Museum & Community Space (£771,821)**

Chatteris Town Council have now purchased 2 Park Street (the former Barclays Bank) and a contractor has been appointed to carry out the works. Unfortunately, like many construction projects, the cost of works has increased significantly, and so additional funding is being sought to complete the project.

Planning permission to extend and convert 14 Church Lane has been agreed in principle, pending further agreements being approved.

## **March**

### **Match funding for March Future High Street Project (£900k)**

Please click on the link to see the update for [March Future High Street Project](#) elsewhere in this document.

## **Whittlesey**

### **Whittlesey Interactive Highway Signs (£57,500)**

Project complete (please [click here](#) for further information).

### **Whittlesey Heritage Walk (£218,169)**

Work is progressing well with the Whittlesey Heritage Walk project, overseen by the steering group, with the project launch event programmed for Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October. This was initially delayed by 3<sup>rd</sup> party land permissions which have all now been resolved.

Updates include:

- The Whittlesey Heritage Walk long and short routes have been fully uploaded to the Love Exploring App. This will be made live on the project launch date. Voice clips are now being recorded to provide sound options for people with difficulty reading.
- Highway improvements have been commissioned through CCC Highways. Phase 1 dropped kerbs and replacement fencing/railings have been completed. Footpath surfacing and phase 2 of works are expected to take place this week.
- The design work for the 22 no. information boards is complete and this with the suppliers for printing.
- The supply and installation of the information boards is expected in late September.
- Brochure/Leaflet design for the route is underway.
- All 7 new benches have now been installed.
- Twenty20 productions have been commissioned to create a video to promote the

Walk. Filming for this will begin with the launch event.

- The date for the launch event has been confirmed. This will take place on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October where the Whittlesey Heritage Walk will be officially opened by the CPCA Mayor.

### **Whittlesey Heritage Visitor Centre (£500k)**

As part of the Growing Fenland work for the town of Whittlesey, the town team requested £500,000 to develop a heritage centre for the town. This facility was to be situated on Forterra land, adjacent to a local nature reserve about ¾ of a mile outside the town. Substantial work has been undertaken by third party consultants prior to the Growing Fenland project regarding this project.

Following the CPCA's approval of the grant to Whittlesey Town Council to support the development of the Heritage Centre, the Town Council put together a project working group consisting of three elected Members. Work on the design of the facility has been underway since 2021 until March 2022. Whilst a design now exists, there is a substantial gap in funding between the expected cost of the new building and the funding available. Other funders have been considered with no success – the funding gap is too large and requires a national funder such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. With the current climate in the construction market, alongside the abnormal inflation seen in the UK, any build project would need to add in a substantial inflationary contingency, as well as contingencies for unforeseen issues encountered during the build. These considerations increase the funding gap further.

The project team has considered the location and the gap in funding, alongside market conditions and believe that continuing with the project at this time is unlikely to produce a facility in a timely, affordable manner.

The project will not give good value for money to the taxpayer and work on the heritage centre has been suspended since early summer 2022.

Alternative propositions include:

- **Await further gap funding**  
Given the current estimated cost of the facility now exceeds £1m, it is considered that the facility will not represent good value to the taxpayer. Additional supportive gap funding will not change the poor value for money that the project would represent in the current construction climate and this option has been discounted.
- **Relocation and reduce facility scope**  
Consideration has been given to relocating the heritage centre to a more central position within the town and reducing the scope of the design. Whilst this is possible, the facility that would be developed as a result is unlikely to be able to provide the facilities necessary in an effective heritage centre and would not meet community or visitor expectations. The project group has discounted this option.

- Focus the remaining Growing Fenland funding on improving community provision within Whittlesey  
As the heritage centre either in its original form and location, or in a reduced form and different location has now been halted, local elected Members have discussed other options for the remaining funding to improve community assets within Whittlesey. Members are determined to retain the grant funding to improve the town for local residents.

Members focus has been drawn to the very popular community green space that is central within the town – the Manor Field and Leisure Centre - and the community assets in this location.

Members have highlighted several aspects of the community facilities that require capital investment as follows;

- a) Community basketball / tennis / netball facilities; lighting upgrade and secure fencing
- b) Energy efficiency improvements added to the existing solar provision on the swimming pool building
- c) Community 5-a-side synthetic pitch; fencing and carpet replacement. In addition, on the same site, the following additional community provision should be developed
- d) Together with the County Council youth and community team, provide a youth facility attached to the Manor Leisure Centre using a Youth Investment Fund (YIF) grant and some of the remaining CPCA Growing Fenland grant. Should any YIF bid be unsuccessful or fall out of the anticipated timeframe, the project team proposes that the £125,000 set aside for YIF match funding be recirculated into further, Member-led, enhancements of community facilities on the Manor Field site.
- e) Development of cricket facilities at the Manor open space, including practice nets and improvements to the existing football pavilion in order for it to be used for cricket.

These projects, with the exception of the shared YIF funded youth facility, are deliverable in the short term (during 2022/23). The expectation is that the youth facility, if successful with a YIF grant, would be deliverable in 2023/24.

In summary, Members have been very committed to delivery of the Heritage Centre in Whittlesey. Unfortunately, the development of a facility to match local ambition has proved far more costly than originally envisaged due to a changing construction market and abnormal inflation levels.



The proposition regarding improvements in community facilities at the Manor facility in the town are subject to CPCA review and approval.

### **Whittlesey Business Capital Grants Scheme (£124,331)**

Please click on the link to see the update for [Wisbech and Whittlesey Business Capital Grants Scheme](#) elsewhere in this document.

## **Wisbech**

### **Wisbech Market Place Enhancement Scheme (£200k)**

Project complete. For further details please [click here](#).

### **Wisbech Football Counters (£19,500)**

Project complete.

### **Wisbech Replacement Shopwatch Radio Scheme (£33,800)**

This funding has been received in full by the Town Council but none of the money has yet been spent.

A meeting between the Wisbech Town Council Clerk and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, for the purpose of developing a Service Level Agreement in relation to the council "handing-over" the radio scheme to the Chamber of Commerce, has taken place. The Town Clerk is in the process of finalising the Service Level Agreement. A representative of the Chamber of Commerce (who is also a member of Wisbech Town Council) has been involved in discussions with the supplier of the equipment regarding some of the pre-installation technical issues. The delay in implementing this scheme is because of the need to secure access to the radio repeater system, which is installed at Exchange Square (the former FDC offices in Wisbech) alongside the CCTV relays. Aaron Locks, the Manager of the joint FDC and Peterborough City Council CCTV service is currently negotiating with the new owners of Exchange Square an agreement to continue to use that space for both the radio repeater system and the CCTV relays. It is understood that that an agreement is close to being reached. As soon as that situation has been resolved, Wisbech Town Council is ready to procure the equipment and issue it to the Chamber of Commerce. This project has been incorporated within the Safer Wisbech Action Plan.

### **Wisbech Splash Pad (£147,500)**

The community splashpad opened in the summer holidays and will continue to be open daily, closing on Sunday 25 September.

The new facility has proven exceptionally popular with people visiting being very happy with the new facility.

[Wisbech Splashpad Officially Opens - Fenland District Council](#)

### **Wisbech Park Community Hub (£299,200)**

The planning application for the community hub has been submitted and

procurement paperwork is being developed. Power and water are already in place as a result of the splashpad facility's development.

### **District Wide**

#### **Civil Parking Enforcement (£400k)**

Please click on the link to see the update for [Civil Parking Enforcement](#) elsewhere in this document **16**.

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

Following approval by Cabinet, the draft local plan is currently out for public consultation. The responses and any proposed revisions to the draft plan will be reported to members in Feb / March 2023 prior to reconsultation with the public. The live timetable can be viewed here: [Microsoft Word - 'Live' Timetable for Production of the Fenland Local Plan - August 2022](#)

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

#### Manea Station

Work is ongoing to complete the car park project following the lengthy weather delays earlier in 2022. The car park will be complete in early autumn 2022.

#### March Station

The platform 1 building project and the refurbished and extended station car park are now complete. The official opening event took place in May 2022.

#### Whittlesea Station

The second strategic outline business case and options appraisal work is nearing completion. The Project Board have reviewed early recommendations and work is ongoing to develop a way forward and next steps. These discussions will take place during Summer 2022 with ongoing plans for an outline business case phase in early development. Funding will need to be secured for future work.

**Work with partners to deliver property improvements and the activity plan as part of the National Lottery Heritage Funded Wisbech High Street Project (Cllr Chris Seaton)**

Following a successful online programme of virtual heritage talks and conversations, the Wisbech High Street Project partnership with Lincoln Conservation has now been expanded to provide in-person events. We were very excited to hold the first of these public events in July. One whole weekend the Wisbech High Street Project took over the use of the St Peter's Church Hall, and we opened the doors for our local people to book a place and try their hand at Medieval Tile making and a one-day course in Georgian and Victorian Brickwork with walking tour. These events were well-attended, and we enjoyed working with the expert workshop providers to provide both free, specialist, educational heritage skills training as well as a free enjoyable, entertaining day out where participants were able to be creative themselves and take their creations home. There were two more similar events in August which attracted a whole new audience, with another two scheduled for September.

From this we collected feedback forms, and everyone was impressed stating that they would visit Wisbech and like to engage with the project and its activities again. Thanks to the support of the Fenland District Council communications team, we were able to attract visitors by social media, newspaper and the website, and we have since published a blog post review of the weekend event complete with photographs.

After such a great first real-life event for the project post Covid-19 restrictions, we are delighted to be organising more similar workshops for people in Wisbech and the surrounding area to learn more about their High Street and access free, high-quality expert heritage skills training.

**Other Projects:**

**Economic Growth Team Activity (Cllr Ian Benney)**

Fenland Shared Prosperity projects have been submitted to the Combined Authority for inclusion in the Investment Prospectus submitted to Central Government for consideration.

Approval from CMT to progress a project to assess the infrastructure requirements to bring forward key commercial development sites in the district.

Meetings with various developers including:

- The proposed Whittlesey Science and Technology park. The company is preparing for discussions with the planning department, including at County level.

- A proposal for a commercial park near March.

Meeting with Force One based in March and the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth following their planning approval for a new facility at March.

Meetings were undertaken with 4 recipients of the Wisbech and Whittlesey Business grants scheme. Cllr Laws attended the meetings with the businesses in Whittlesey and Cllr Hoy in Wisbech.

The receipt of an **£8,000 grant** from the scheme allowed CN Tech to refurbish the Service/Support workshop area into a fully functional TEST lab so that they can start to repair customers instruments in house as well as being able to offer a test/measurement service for existing and new customers.



The receipt of a £10,000 grant from the Whittlesey and Wisbech Business Capital Grant Scheme allowed the purchase of a recovery vehicle and D Moore & Co is now able to arrange collection and delivery from customer sites. The increase of work allowed for the recruitment of an apprentice mechanic and a part time driver.

Grants from the scheme totalling **£17,000** allowed WEP Fabrications and WEP Powdercoating to purchase MIG & TIG welders which are more energy efficiency and a containerised blast room, a shot blaster built into a container which allows the company to offer a complete in-house service. The company has recruited two additional staff due to the increase in orders.

The receipt of a £6892 grant from the Whittlesey and Wisbech Business Capital Grant Scheme allowed the purchase of a reliable vehicle and so Dawson's are now able to deliver over a wider area.

Meeting with ARU Peterborough to discuss the courses available to businesses when the university opens in September. Many businesses are looking to upskill their workforce or recruit skilled staff and can work with the University to develop degree apprenticeships to meet their needs. For maximum impact and minimum disruption, the apprenticeship programmes will be delivered via a blend of online, work-based and face-to-face learning from the brand-new ARU Peterborough campus.

- Manufacturing Engineer Degree Apprenticeship
- Digital and Technology Solutions Professional Degree Apprenticeship
- Construction Management Pathway
- Environmental Practitioner Degree Apprenticeship

Meeting with West Suffolk College at the new North Cambridgeshire Training Centre at Chatteris to discuss the plans for the centre and support its engagement with the local

business community.

Interviews and appointment of additional Advisor located in the My Fenland Team who will also specialise in supporting the Economic Growth Team.

Adoption of the REiid property database which is a national database of larger parcels of land and property seeking investment, development or buyers. The EG Team will work with developers and landowners to populate the database to attract national and international investors

Start and Grow Programme - 120 people have registered an interest in the scheme. 50 are micro businesses with 3 or fewer employees and operating for less than 2 years. 70 are people who are planning to start a business. 55 have completed workshops and 110 are on the workshop waiting list.

Apprenticeships offered:

- Business, Finance & Management
- Engineering - General Welder Level 2, Engineering Fitter Level 3, Engineering Technician Level 3, Maintenance and Operations Engineering Technician Level 3, Engineering Manufacturing Technician Level 4
- Commercial Courses – 18th Edition - Wiring Regulations, Non-accredited Health and Safety / Working at heights, First Aid at Work, Emergency First Aid at Work & Paediatric First Aid, Awareness of First Aid for Mental Health, ILM Level 2 Award / Certificate in Leadership and Team Skills, ILM Level 3 Award / Certificate in Leadership and Management, Project Management, Level 1 Welding, Non-accredited Welding, Safe Use of Abrasive Wheels

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

Progress continues on track with final design works for the Broad Street element of the project. This should be completed in the coming weeks, with the resulting procurement pack then being put to companies on a framework agreement. Procurement should complete in December / January, with a start on site date around March 2023.

This date is important as the MATS funded section of the combined project must commence before 2024 financial year.

The marketplace design is almost complete, with work taking place in January per market trader's wishes. During the work the market will transfer to City Road car park. Trader's feedback was that there would be an impact on trade with the relocation, but as January and February are their quietest trading months, carrying the work out at that time would be ideal.

Grant for reopening or improving closed properties in the environs of Broad Street have gone live. 2 owners are in the process of applying and once those are completed further promotion will be distributed to encourage more applications. The living above the shops grant will also go live in the coming weeks. This grant will support the conversion of space above shops into residential accommodation.

**Promote and develop our Business Premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and Light Industrial Estates to encourage investment, business and job creation and skills diversification** (Cllr Ian Benney)

The Estates Department continue to work with tenants of all sites to ensure the properties remain occupied and profitable. As of August, all industrial units are fully occupied whilst the Boathouse is at 95.8% occupancy and the South Fens Business Centre is at 71%

The process of reviewing the occupancies of the industrial units is ongoing with offices taking action to renew expired leases across all sites before moving onto rent reviews which have not been actioned. To date the work has resulted in rent increases to the benefit of FDC of 13.25% on the estates actioned as well as the management benefit of the agreements being on new standardised modern lease terms

**Affordable Homes** (Cllr Sam Hoy)

**Affordable Homes Forecast 22/23**

Homes completed since April 2022	13
Remaining homes in the pipeline currently forecast to be completed 2022/23	163
Total projection for 2022/23	176

**Completed homes**

Scheme/Site Name	Total Affordable	Affordable / Social rented	Shared ownership
Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme	10	10	0
Bassenhally Phase 3	3	0	3
Total	13	10	3

### Food Safety Service Plan

In July, the new food safety service plan and food standards agency recovery plan have been agreed with our environmental health portfolio holder.

The document is available on the council website following this link:

[Microsoft Word - Food Service Plan 2022-2023 FINAL \(fenland.gov.uk\)](#)

The plan has a set of clear priorities to meet statutory requirements placed on the council:

- Ensuring by means of education and/or enforcement that food intended for human consumption which is produced and/or sold in Fenland District is safe to eat and complies with food safety requirements.
- Advising and educating consumers and service users on food safety matters.
- Delivering a programme of inspections and interventions in relation to food businesses, on a risk-based frequency (in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice and in line with the FSA Recovery Plan).
- Investigating complaints about food and food premises and taking appropriate action.
- Taking enforcement action on a consistent, transparent and proportionate basis in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy and the Enforcement Concordat.
- Supporting work on health inequalities in Fenland by working in partnership with others and with local businesses to improve food nutrition and quality.
- Sampling in response to emerging issues and in support of national studies.
- Preventing the spread of specified infectious and food borne diseases.
- Fulfilling our Port Health Authority functions in particular relating to food imports or exports.
- Working with stakeholders and customers to improve services delivered to them.
- Support relevant strategies for Health and Wellbeing.
- Engaging in an environmental health apprenticeship scheme.

Work continues to support our businesses through a difficult recover time and includes helping those with more complex food processing to remain compliant and provide safe food for public consumption.



**Key PIs:**

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 21/22	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP15	% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks (or within extension of time)	92%	70%	79%	
CELP16	% of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks (or within extension of time)	72%	70%	58%	
CELP17	% of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks (or within extension of time)	84%	80%	81%	
EGA1	% occupancy of our business estates	91.2%	92%	94.4%	
MS1	% occupancy of Wisbech Yacht Harbour (85 berths)	94%	95%	94%	
CELP18	% of businesses who said they were supported and treated fairly	100%	96%	100%	

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

Comments
<p>The performance in relation to minor applications is of concern having slipped further since the previous month. The service is continuing to be impacted on by recent staff turnover (including agency staff) and the legacy of high caseloads. Recruitment is underway for the vacant posts which included for the new Principal post and the change of a Senior post from part time to full time. In relation to the Government's 24 month 'rolling tracker' of performance we are exceeding the target as we are achieving 90% on Major applications and 83% on Minor applications. The current poor performance on minors will eventually filter through into the 'rolling tracker' statistics and so it is important that performance lifts by the year end.</p>



## Quality Organisation

### Projects from Business Plan:

#### **Deliver our Commercial Investment Strategy** (Cllrs Chris Boden & Ian Benney)

As part of the Commercial and Investment Strategy, a facility of £25m was granted to the Investment Board to finance capital expenditure to be undertaken in accordance with the aims and objectives of the agreed strategy. At the end of March 2022, £4m of this facility has been utilised to fund the acquisition of a commercial investment in Wisbech and a house in March. These acquisitions were approved at Investment Board meetings held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021 respectively. Further utilisation will be needed when the funding position of Fenland Future Ltd is fully agreed.

The Commercial Investment in Wisbech has delivered a rental income of £230k for the year to March 2022. Rental income continues to be on track for 2022/23. As we used our own funds to acquire this asset there is no external cost of capital and the loss of interest foregone on our funds is minimal at present. This acquisition has enhanced the Councils revenue position and has had a positive impact on the MTFS as presented to Full Council in February 2022.

Fenland Future Ltd has applied for Outline Planning permission on the two Council owned sites identified for development in their Business Plan. Work now progresses on options for the delivery methodology to be utilised in delivering the developments. Financing, SLA and Indemnity agreements were approved by the Investment Board in July 2022.

#### **Deliver the Transformation project to modernise customer service arrangements across the district** (Cllr Steve Tierney)

The Corporate Transformation programme under the Council for the Future priority continues to focus on modernising the way we deliver all aspects of services to our customers. The project aim of **“improving customer experience and making it even easier for people to interact with the council”** continues to be at the heart of service design as well as ensuring we exploit the use of technology to increase customer choice regarding accessing services at the same time as working efficiently and effectively, building resilience whilst driving down costs.

Key achievements to date have included

- **5** admin services brought together creating a single point of contact for

customers

- **29** staff in new roles
- **99.5%** of customer queries resolved at first point of contact
- **Over 16,000** payments made via PayPoint
- Over **£2m** in payments made via PayPoint
- New ways of working has released **2 days** per week chargeable support to Hunts DC
- **136** processes mapped across services
- **33** processes redesigned
- **8** service teams supported by Technical Officers
- **17** customer digital journeys launched including Licensing and Environmental Health
- **8** new online website forms launched
- Automated trade Waste Invoices
- **£203k** savings 2021/22

The Transformation Programme works with services across the Council

### **Current projects include**

**Planning Service** – Process mapping and business process redesign, maximising the use of technology and efficient working practices

**Cemeteries** – business process mapping/ process redesign, maximising the use of technology, building resilience

**Markets and Events** – Launching Digital Journey's enabling customers to book and pay for the service via one single electronic process

**Economic Growth** – Providing support to business at the first point of contact, releasing specialist Officer time to work more proactively with businesses with high growth potential

**Private Sector Housing** – Business process redesign releasing specialist officer capacity

**Tree Management Software**

**Estates Software**

**Housing Options**

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

Please see update included in the Council's Annual report for 2021/22.

## Other Projects:

### Elections Update (Cllr Chris Boden)

On 7 June 2022 a Parish Poll was held in Chatteris

The total registered electorate for the area was 8393, 1085 ballot papers were issued representing a turnout of 12.9%.

### 3Cs Update (Cllr Steve Tierney)

June- July 2022	Total received	Total within time frame	%age within time frame
Correspondence	17	17	100%
<b>Stage 1</b>			
Community Environment Leisure and Planning (CELP)	19	19	100%
Growth and infrastructure (GI)	0	0	NA
Policy Resources and Customer Services (PRCS)	14	14	100%
<b>Stage 2</b>			
CELP	6	6	100%
GI	0	0	0
PRCS	0	0	0
<b>Stage 3</b>			
CELP	4	4	100%
GI	0	0	0
PRCS	0	0	0

## Communications Update (Cllr Steve Tierney)

### News update:

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media:

- June = 8
- July = 7

### Monthly update on FDC social media sites:

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

- June: Twitter = 91  
Facebook = 87
- July: Twitter = 105  
Facebook = 96

We currently have 5,981 followers on Facebook and 8,796 followers on twitter.

### Consultation Summary:

- Local Government Boundary Commission – 29 March – 6 June 2022
- Housing Enforcement Policy Consultation deadline – 5pm on 8 June
- Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan Examination – 8 July – 1 September 2022
- March Railway Station Redevelopment Survey – July 2022

### Annual Report 2021-22:

The Annual Report of the Council 2021/22 describes the performance of the Council over the last year, linking to the priorities detailed in our Business Plan. These are designed to deliver outcomes that improve the quality of life for Fenland residents and are listed under the key headings of Communities, Environment, Economy and Quality Organisation.

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

As like other local authorities, Fenland District Council faces significant financial challenges due to the impact of Covid and increased demand upon services.

Nevertheless, we continue to provide high quality services whilst keeping our budget balanced.

Fenland District Council  
Annual Report  
2021/2022



Our Cabinet members have selected a number of projects to contribute towards our 'Council for the Future' agenda. These projects have a variety of aims, from tackling areas of particular need within the district, to transforming services and the wider organisation sustainability to be fit for the future. Some of these projects are also interlinked with our corporate priorities. A new section of the report has been developed to detail progress on these projects over the past year.

Cabinet approved the Annual Report 2021-2022 on 11 July 2022.

### Other Updates:

#### Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) update (Cllr Chris Boden)

Information relating to the CPCA can be found on their website:

[Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority \(cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk\)](http://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)

Mayoral decisions can be found [here](#).

Office decisions can be found [here](#).

The papers for recent meetings can be found by clicking on the links below:

CPCA COMMITTEE	DATE OF MEETING	LINK
Combined Authority Board	31.08.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Combined Authority Board	27.07.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Audit & Governance Committee	29.07.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Employment Committee	24.06.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Housing & Communities Committee	11.07.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	25.07.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>

Skills Committee	04.07.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Employment & Skills Board	12.07.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Transport & Infrastructure Committee	13.07.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Business Board	11.07.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>

Forthcoming CPCA meetings include:

<b>CPCA COMMITTEE</b>	<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>LINK</b>
Combined Authority Board	21.09.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Combined Authority Board (reserved meeting date)	19.10.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Audit & Governance Committee	30.09.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Employment Committee	None scheduled	N/A
Housing & Communities Committee	12.09.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	19.09.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	17.10.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Skills Committee	05.09.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Employment & Skills Board	18.10.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Transport & Infrastructure Committee	14.09.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Business Board	12.09.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>
Business Board (reserved meeting date)	10.10.22	<a href="#">CMIS &gt; Meetings</a>

**Key PIs:**

Key PI	Description	Target 21/22	Cumulative Target	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries resolved at first point of contact	Rolling monthly target of 85% per month	85%	98.9%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (March 2021)	90%			
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	Rolling monthly target rising to 46.5% by March 2023	25%	50.5%	
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	Rolling monthly target rising to 80% by March 2023	52.5%	88.45%	
ARP1	Days taken to process Council Tax Support new claims and changes	7.00 days		6.72 days	
ARP 2	Days taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and changes	8.00 days		7.83 days	
ARP3	In year % of Council Tax collected	95.72%	38.31%	38.85%	
ARP4	Council Tax net collection fund receipts	£64,734,624	£24,820,786	£25,229,767	
ARP5	% of NNDR collected	96.70%	37.13%	36.93%	
ARP6	NNDR net collection fund receipts	£24,017,406	£9,187,237	£9,160,017	
PRC5	Number of online forms submitted via FDC website	22,000		8,319	


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

Comments



This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 8

Agenda Item No:	<b>8</b>	
Committee:	<b>Council</b>	
Date:	<b>3 October 2022</b>	
Report Title:	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report</b>	

## 1 Purpose / Summary

The Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report reflects what has been undertaken and achieved by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel during 2021/22 and takes a forward look at the programme of work and challenges for the Overview and Scrutiny in 2022/2023.

## 2 Key issues

The Local Government Act 2000 sets out the requirements of a modernised democratic structure for local authorities. The Act includes the establishment of an Overview and Scrutiny Panel or Committee.

Article 6 (3.4) of the Council's Constitution sets out the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's terms of reference. There is a stated requirement for the work and working methods of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to be reported annually to the Council.

## 3 Recommendations

That full Council acknowledges the broad scope of work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel during 2021/22.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	-
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor David Mason - Chairman - Overview and Scrutiny Councillor Alex Miscandlon - Vice Chairman - Overview and Scrutiny
Report Originator(s)	Amy Brown - Head of Legal, Procurement and Member Services Elaine Cooper - Team Leader, Elections, Land Charges and Member Services
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd - Chief Executive 01354 622202 <a href="mailto:paulmedd@fenland.gov.uk">paulmedd@fenland.gov.uk</a> Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director 01354 622201 <a href="mailto:petercatchpole@fenland.gov.uk">petercatchpole@fenland.gov.uk</a> Amy Brown - Head of Service <a href="mailto:amybrown@fenland.gov.uk">amybrown@fenland.gov.uk</a>
Background Paper(s)	Overview and Scrutiny reports, Agendas and Minutes 2021/22

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

### ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 2022

#### **1 CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD**

It gives me great pleasure to present to you the Annual Report for 2021/22 in relation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The report focuses on the work undertaken by the panel during the past twelve months as well as providing a forward look to 2022/23.

The continuation of the global COVID pandemic during 2021/22 has brought about significant challenges to local residents and businesses. As a result the Council has changed its approach to service delivery as well as delivering new services, to ensure those most vulnerable in our communities receive support during these unprecedented times. These changes have included the introduction of a revised approach to the layout of services on the Fenland District Council website making it easier for individuals and organisations alike to access relevant information. In particular I would like to congratulate Cllr Steve Tierney for his hard work as Transformation Cabinet Member in driving this initiative forward.

Continual support has been given to individuals directly impacted by the pandemic, as well as delivering a wide suite of business grants to help support local businesses that have suffered a financial impact as a result of the pandemic.

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

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

2021/22 was a busy year for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as the District Council continues to have significant ambition to transform the way services are delivered in order to secure sound outcomes for local residents whilst also being an effective, efficient Council that is fit for the future. As a committee we have reached beyond our usual remit to improve relations with outside bodies to address more directly public concerns. We are particularly obliged for the co-operation given by Anglian Water as an example of new partnerships.

I have been privileged to be able to work with a committee of elected members across the political parties who have all taken an active and enthusiastic role in the Overview and Scrutiny process and acted as a team in the best interests of our community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Members and Officers for their ongoing support and co-operation with the Overview and Scrutiny function this year. I would also like to thank Amy Brown, as our Monitoring Officer and Chief Advisor, and Member Services for their professionalism, in particular Niall Jackson for the meticulous recording of our pre-meet notes which are so valuable in examining the issues before us at regular meetings. Finally, thanks go to my Vice Chairman, Cllr Alex Miscandlon for his continued support and valuable advice.

I look forward to the coming year in the confident expectation that as a Committee we can maintain the high standards expected of us in performing the most important role of Overview and Scrutiny.

Cllr David K M Mason  
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## **2. THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL 2021-2022**

Councillor David Mason - Chairman  
Councillor Alex Miscandlon - Vice Chairman  
Councillor Gavin Booth  
Councillor David Connor  
Councillor Mike Cornwell  
Councillor Steve Count  
Councillor Anne Hay  
Councillor Michael Humphrey  
Councillor Mark Purser  
Councillor Robert Skoulding  
Councillor David Topgood  
Councillor Bob Wicks  
Councillor Fred Yeulett

## **3 INTRODUCTION**

### **What is Overview and Scrutiny?**

- 3.1 The Local Government Act 2000 requires Councils to have a committee with the power to review or scrutinise decisions or actions affecting the authority's area or residents. Scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring that local government remains effective and accountable. Scrutiny ensures that executives are held accountable for their decisions, that their decision-making process is clear and accessible to the public and that there are opportunities for the public and their representatives to influence and improve Council policies.
- 3.2 The power to scrutinise was further expanded by the Police and Justice Act 2006, which provided powers to scrutinise the work of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, known locally as the Safer Fenland Partnership.
- 3.3 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides more powers to local government to scrutinise other partner organisations. It also brings in other provisions that affect how scrutiny committees work, including powers over the creation of joint committees.
- 3.4 More recently, The Localism Act 2011 consolidated the wide range of scrutiny legislation into a single place, largely unamended from previous legislation. This aims to increase local accountability and transparency of public services as well as enhancing the involvement of local service users
- 3.5 All Overview and Scrutiny meetings are held in public session and attendance and involvement of the public is actively encouraged either via questions or suggestions for our work programme.

### **Main responsibilities of Overview and Scrutiny**

- 3.6 The role of Overview and Scrutiny has five broad functions:
- Holding the Council's Executive and its statutory partners to account in the public interest. This enables more transparent and effective decision making.

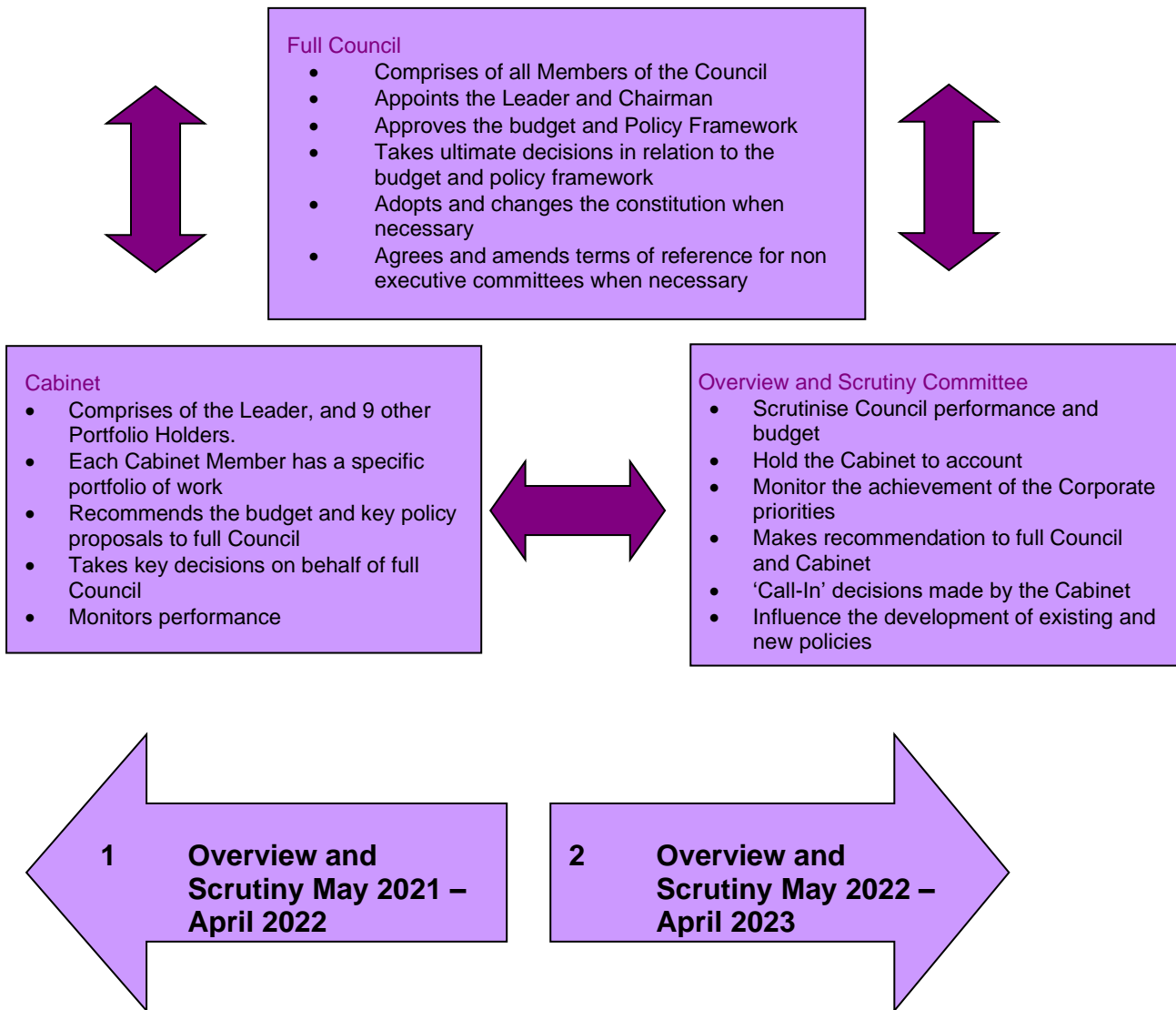
- Supporting the development of effective policies and initiatives which have a beneficial impact on the community through policy overview and development.
- Contributing to continuous improvement in the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities.
- Having a positive impact on the work and outcomes of external agencies and providers of public services.
- Aiding Councillors in engaging with their communities and undertaking the role of community representatives and leaders.

Overview	Scrutiny
Advising on the development of policies.	Ensuring that the Council's policies have been effectively implemented by the Cabinet.
Recommending how the Council's corporate priorities can be delivered.	Helping to monitor and drive improvements within the Council's corporate priorities.
Bringing a wider perspective to problem solving.	Holding decision makers to account
Examining broader issues affecting local communities.	Ensuring all service providers within a local community are providing 'value for money'

### **Appointing Members onto Overview and Scrutiny**

- 3.7 During 2021-2022, following a recommendation by the Leader of the Council, it was the responsibility of the full Council to appoint an Overview and Scrutiny Panel at their annual meeting in May. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel consisted of twelve members drawn from the political groups in the same proportion as they are represented on the Council as a whole.

## Relationship between Overview and Scrutiny, Cabinet and Full Council



### 4 A BACKWARD LOOK TO 2021 - 2022

#### What the Overview and Scrutiny Panel achieved in 2021/2022

##### External advisors/partners

- 4.1 The panel looked at an array of different topic areas; most could be dealt with by drawing on the knowledge and expertise of Fenland District Council Councillors and Officers. However, sometimes there is a need to call in external advisors to help the panel with their knowledge and to provide a different vantage point.
- 4.2 As will be explained later, a greater emphasis has been placed on Local Authority scrutiny, of and with partner agencies. Fenland's Overview and Scrutiny Panel is already undertaking this partnership working in a positive spirit, demonstrating its collaborative approach. The table below highlights the external partners the Overview and Scrutiny Panel have already engaged with, when undertaking the scrutiny function during 2021/22:



Agenda item	External Advisor/Partner	Organisation
Council Tax Support - 2022/23 Scheme	Adrian Mills	Anglian Revenues Partnership
Discussion with Anglian Water	Rose Schisler Briony Tuthill Hannah Wilson Johnathan Glerum	Anglian Water
Discussion with Anglian Water	Hillary Ellis Quinton Carroll Martin Brooker	Cambridgeshire County Council
Freedom Leisure Review	Matthew Wickham	Freedom Leisure
Review of Clarion	Sally Greetham Yvonne Ogden Daniel Read	Clarion Housing Association
Annual Review of Anglia Revenues Partnership	Adrian Mills Lorraine King Matthew Waite Paul Corney	Anglian Revenues Partnership
Wisbech Rail Update	Rowland Potter	Cambridgeshire County Council
Update on CPCA Growth Service	Steve Clark Richard Cuda Ed Coleman Fliss Miller	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

- 4.3 As well as working with individual partners, the panel have also scrutinised other elements of partnership working through each of the respective corporate priority areas. The panel will continue with this successful approach during 2022/23.

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

- 4.4 Fenland District Council's Business Plan is the vision for the future of Fenland, clearly setting out a series of priorities that will be the focus of the organisation for the next twelve-month period. To ensure these priorities are correct, deliver on targets and achieve outcomes, the Overview and Scrutiny work programme reflects the Council's priorities to ensure robust scrutiny in meaningful priority areas is achieved.
- 4.5 The table below illustrates how agenda items link in with Fenland's priorities:

C – Communities  
 Env – Environment  
 E – Economy  
 QO – Quality Organisation

Topic/Issue	C	Env	E	QO
Progress against corporate priority: Environment				
Progress against corporate priority: Communities				
Transformation and Communications Portfolio Holder Update				
Progress on Housing Enforcement Policy				
Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020-21				
Council Response to COVID-19 - Future Implications				
Annual Ombudsman Letter and 3Cs Process				
Community Safety Partnership				
Freedom Leisure Review				
Clarion Review				
CPCA Economic Growth Service				
Annual meeting with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive				
Draft Business Plan and Budget				
Council Tax Support - 2022/23 Scheme				
Fees and Charges				
Anglian Water				

Topic/Issue	C	Env	E	QO
2021 Planning Shared Service Annual Review				
Review of Anglia Revenues Partnership				
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy				
Commercial Investment Strategy and Investment Board Update				
Culture Strategy				
Wisbech Rail Update				

## 5 Specific reviews undertaken in 2021- 2022

- 5.1 No Member Led Reviews have been undertaken during 2021-2022, however, it has been agreed that a cross-party Task and Finish Group be established to review the current Corporate Performance Indicators to ensure that they enhance the Council's corporate priorities and are both measurable and achievable in nature.
- 5.2 The Task and Finish Group will report its suggestions to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on or before its final meeting of 2022/23 to ensure any resultant recommendations can be incorporated into the draft Business Plan for 2023/24.

## 6 Overview and Scrutiny Call – In

- 6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel have the opportunity to scrutinise Executive decisions that have been made, but not implemented through the 'call-in' mechanism.
- 6.2 In accordance with the Council's constitution, decisions of the Executive or a Portfolio Holder decision are published within 3 working days. There is then a further 5 working day period prior to the implementation of the decision in which Members are able to call in the decision. If the necessary number of Members, either the Chairman or Vice Chairman of any panel, or any 3 members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel or any 10 Members of the Council, ask for a decision to be called in for scrutiny, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel has to meet within 15 working days to consider the issue. Whilst this process takes its course, the decision taking process is suspended. If no call-in occurs, the decision is adopted.
- 6.3 If, having considered the decision, the Panel remains concerned about it, then it may refer it back to the decision-making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns or, in exceptional circumstances, refer the matter to full Council. If referred back, the decision maker shall then reconsider the matter within a further 10 working days and amend the decision or not, before adopting a final decision. If however the Panel decides not to refer the matter back, no further action is taken and the decision can take effect.

- 6.4 The call-in procedure does not apply where the decision being made by the Executive is deemed to be urgent i.e. where any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. This should be clearly stated in the record of the decision. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel or in his/her absence the Chairman of the Council must agree that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency. Decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel together with the reasons for the urgency.
- 6.5 Because of the nature of the call-in procedure, it is generally recognised as a mechanism of last resort. Indeed Government guidance states that it would clearly be detrimental to efficient decision making if every individual decision of the Executive were called in for overview and scrutiny as a matter of course.
- 6.6 The call-in procedure is therefore utilised when other means of influencing decision making have failed. Fenland District Council did not utilise the call-in procedure at all during 2021/22. There were also no decisions taken by the Executive where the matter was deemed urgent during 2021/22.

## **7 A FORWARD LOOK TO 2022/2023**

### **Policies and measures affecting scope of Overview and Scrutiny**

- 7.1 The profile of scrutiny is changing nationally and as a result much is expected of us in response to the Localism agenda, more so now in the wake of the global COVID 19 pandemic. This could include community involvement, scrutiny of and with partners, scrutiny of crime and disorder issues, supporting the scrutiny of health services as well as supporting the scrutiny of the Combined Authority.

### **Overview and Scrutiny amending its role**

- 7.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel remains committed to achieving value for money and ensuring the Council is efficient and cost effective in the delivery of its corporate priorities. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel are also keen to focus on areas where they are able to add the greatest value being forward focused therefore making recommendations to Cabinet whilst also having a positive impact on the future direction and future focus of the Council and its policies.

### **Fenland's Priorities**

- 7.3 In Fenland's Business Plan 2022-2023 the Council's corporate priorities remain:
- Communities
  - Economy
  - Environment
  - Quality Organisation

- 7.4 It is important that the work of Overview and Scrutiny complements these priorities to ensure services are being delivered to highest quality and any scrutiny work adds value. In addition the current Business Plan outlines the fact that Cabinet members have selected a number of projects to contribute towards the 'Council for the Future' agenda. These projects have a variety of aims; from tackling areas of particular need within the district, to transforming services and the wider organisation sustainably to be fit for the future. The Overview and Scrutiny work programme will also be informed by the Council for the Future agenda.

### **What the Overview and Scrutiny Panel will achieve in 2022-2023**

#### **Strategic Priorities**

- 7.5 We will aim to raise the profile of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny work by better communicating our successes. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel will continue to articulate recommendations associated with the work plan and monitor how effectively the recommendations have been received and endorsed by the associated decision-making bodies.

#### **Work Programme**

- 7.6 The Overview and Scrutiny work programme is a detailed programme that indicates the topics that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel will scrutinise. The work programme will be developed early in the new Council year setting out what the key areas of focus will be. Topics already identified for inclusion include:

- Progress on Corporate Priorities
- Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review of Complaints
- 2022 Planning Service Annual Review
- Council Tax Support Scheme
- Clarion Review
- Portfolio Holder Updates - Transformation and Communications
- Road Safety Partnership
- Annual Meeting with the Leader and Chief Executive
- CPCA Growth Service and Impact on Economic Development in Fenland
- Annual Review of Anglian Revenue Partnership
- Freedom Leisure Review
- Wisbech Rail Update
- Draft Business Plan and Budget
- Fees and Charges
- Community Safety Partnership
- Enforcement Review

There will also be the Task and Finish Group to review the Council's current Performance Indicators.

## **8 CONTACTS**

- 8.1** Work of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel is enhanced by the involvement of Fenland residents, service users, our partners and local businesses as they bring an alternative perspective whilst also providing external challenge. If, therefore, you would like further details about any of the work mentioned in this report, or on how residents and partner organisations can contribute to the work of Overview and Scrutiny within Fenland we would very much welcome your input, please contact:

**Councillor David Mason - Chairman Overview and Scrutiny**

[DMason@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:DMason@fenland.gov.uk)

**Councillor Alex Miscandlon - Vice Chairman Overview and Scrutiny**

[AMiscandlon@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:AMiscandlon@fenland.gov.uk)

**Linda Albon - Member Services Officer**

[lalbon@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:lalbon@fenland.gov.uk)

**Amy Brown - Head of Legal, Procurement and Member Services**

[amybrown@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:amybrown@fenland.gov.uk)

<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	<b>9</b>	
<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Constitutional Amendments Update</b>	

## Cover sheet:

### **1 Purpose / Summary**

- 1.1 Paragraph 2.1(a) of Article 4 of the Constitution provides that Full Council will be responsible for approving and reviewing the Council's Constitution to ensure the continuous improvement of local democracy. Paragraph 3.1 of Article 15 of the further specifies that changes to the Constitution will only be approved by the Council after consideration of the proposals by Cabinet. However, in conjunction with this, the Monitoring Officer has delegated authority under Part 3, Table 4, paragraph 47 to make amendments to the Constitution in any way whatsoever in order to secure compliance with the law and the convenient, effective discharge of any Council function provided that such amendment is reported to and ratified at the following meeting of the Council.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Report is to seek Full Council's ratification of the changes that have been made by the Acting Monitoring Officer since its last meeting and to approve a further amendment following approval of a recommendation to Cabinet at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022

### **2 Key Issues**

- 2.1 On 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 the Business and Planning Act 2020 came into force amending the Licensing Act 2003 to automatically incorporate off-sales into existing licences and to introduce a temporary new regime in relation to the grant of pavement licences. At its meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020, Fenland District Council ratified the Monitoring Officer's amendments to paragraph 104A of the constitution which gave effect to this. The Government has since extended the timeframe for this provision to September 2023 and ratification of the associated constitutional amendment is therefore again required to ensure continued compliance with the law.
- 2.2 Further, and in or to ensure the convenient and effective discharge of Council functions, the Acting Monitoring Officer has recommended Cabinet approval of an amendment to Standing Orders so that motions on notice must be submitted by no later than 12 noon 5 clear working days prior to the meeting to which they relate as opposed to by 5 p.m. as is currently required. Subject to Cabinet's agreement, Full Council are subsequently recommended to approve that change.



### 3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are requested to note and ratify the change that the Monitoring Officer has made to the Constitution in exercise of the authority delegated to her under Part 3, Table 4, paragraph 47 of the Constitution and to approve Cabinet's recommendation to amend the paragraph 10.1 of the Standing Orders so that motions on notice are required to be submitted by 12 noon as opposed to 5 p.m.

Wards Affected	N/A
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Boden, Leader of the Council
Report Originator(s)	Amy Brown, Acting Monitoring Officer Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director with responsibility for Governance
Contact Officer(s)	Amy Brown, Acting Monitoring Officer Elaine Cooper, Team Leader – Elections, Land Charges and Member Services
Background Papers	Report to Full Council of 6 <sup>th</sup> August 2020: <a href="#">Report and Appendix A.pdf (fenland.gov.uk)</a>

### Report:

#### 1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 1.1 The purpose of this Report is to request that Full Council:
- 1.1.1 Exercise their delegated authority under Article 4, paragraph 2.1(a) to amend the Standing Orders on the recommendation of Cabinet so that paragraph 10.1 is amended to read 12 noon rather than 5 p.m. as the deadline by which motions on notice must be received; and
- 1.1.2 To ratify the constitutional amendments made by the Monitoring Officer in exercise of her delegated authority under Part 3, Table 4, paragraph 47 of the Constitution. so as to secure compliance with the law and the convenient, effective discharge of any Council function.

## **2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 As a result of the impact of the pandemic, a new fast-track process was implemented by the Business and Planning Act 2020 (BPA2020) for the purpose of enabling relevant businesses to obtain a pavement licence permitting furniture such as tables and chairs to be placed outside their premises thereby maximising capacity whilst still ensuring compliance with safety requirements. The Business and Planning Act 2020 (Pavement Licences) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 have extended these provisions so that they continue to now remain in force until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Fenland District Council must therefore incorporate these provisions into the arrangements for the discharge of its functions and the Constitution was amended accordingly.
- 2.2 Paragraph 10.1 of Fenland District Council's Procedure Rules (Standing Orders) provided that notice of any motion (other than those which can be moved without notice under Rule 11) must be delivered in writing or by electronic mail to the Chief Executive by not later than 5 p.m. at least 5 clear working days before the date of the relevant meeting (not counting the day of delivery or the day of the meeting). Similarly, notice of the meeting must be given to members of the public and the summons issued to all Councillors along with the publication of the Agenda and associated reports again at least 5 clear working days before the date of the relevant meeting. Whilst the Council's Procedure Rules and Access to Information Procedure Rules do not specify a time by which this must take place, in the interests of expedience every effort is made to ensure that these tasks are completed within ordinary business hours. In order therefore to ensure the convenient and effective discharge of the Council's functions, it is recommended that the deadline for receipt of motions is changed from 5 p.m. to 12 noon in order to enable Member Services colleagues adequate time to prepare and publish the final version of the Agenda before close of business.

## **3 CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 The Acting Monitoring Officer has exercised her delegated authority in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder, CMT and service leads. There are no specific consultation requirements in relation to the proposed amendment to Standing Orders which will only impact members who are collectively responsible for determining the recommended approach.

## **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The recommendation proposes that members of Full Council ratify the Monitoring Officer's amendments to the Constitution. As an alternative, members may decline to do so. Should this option be favoured, the Constitution would not reflect Fenland District Council's current legislative obligations in respect of pavement licences.
- 4.2 The recommendation also proposes, on the recommendation of Cabinet, that the time for receipt of motions is changed to 12 noon. Should this not be agreed, the time would remain at 5 p.m.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with the recommendations other than as already set out in this Report.

### **Financial Implications**

- 5.2 There are none.

### **Equality Implications**

- 5.3 There are none.

<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Council</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>3rd October 2022</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Discretionary Business Rate Policy - Commercial Development Sites</b>	

## 1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out a discretionary business rate relief policy to help stimulate commercial development on greenfield and brownfield sites in the district.
- 1.2 This policy would complement but be separate to the existing Local Discretionary Business Rate Relief Policy approved by Council at its meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019.
- 1.3 This policy would initially run as a pilot for 12 months to enable us to assess the success of the scheme and consider if it should be rolled out on an ongoing basis or not.
- 1.4 This policy will only apply to buildings completed by 31 March 2024.

## 2 Key Issues

- 2.1 As set out in the Council's Economic Growth Strategic Refresh 2022-25, one of the key issues restricting economic growth in the district is the lack of available commercial property. Start-up businesses, expanding existing business and businesses considering moving to Fenland are having to consider properties outside of Fenland for their business location.
- 2.2 If this policy is adopted, Officers will continue to monitor its effectiveness to ensure it meets its intended objectives and delivers the anticipated benefits.

## 3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Council is requested to adopt the proposed Discretionary Business Rate Policy - Commercial Development for an initial pilot period of 12 months.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Ian Benney
Report Originator(s)	Anna Goodall, Assistant Director Simon Jackson, Economic Growth Manager Ann Wardle, Business Engagement Manager
Contact Officer(s)	Simon Jackson, Economic Growth Manager

## **1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019 Council adopted a Local Discretionary Business Rate Relief Policy (LDBRR). The policy was aimed at providing business rate discounts for new inward investment businesses locating into Fenland who positively contribute to the wellbeing and prosperity of the District and its residents.
- 1.2 The Council's Economic Growth Team works closely with those wishing to start a business, those Fenland businesses looking to expand and with those businesses considering Fenland as a location for their business. The strong evidence is that due to the lack of available commercial property and in particular light industrial property that many of these businesses are having to consider locations outside of Fenland.
- 1.3 This report proposes a Discretionary Business Rate Policy - Commercial Development (DBRP – CDS) that is a separate scheme to the LDBRR and aimed at stimulating the local commercial property market. Consultations with key stakeholders such as developers suggests that removing the requirement to pay business rates until a commercial property is occupied would help reduce the financial risk of speculative building and encourage development.
- 1.4 Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by Section 69 of the Localism Act 2011) permits local authorities to determine and reduce the business rates of any local ratepayer provided it is in the interest of the Council taxpayer.
- 1.5 DBRP-CDS will provide FDC with the ability to award a business rate relief to businesses to encourage the speculative construction of commercial property in the District and help in the delivery of the Council's economic growth objectives.

## **2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

- 2.1. It is not intended to impose an upper or lower rateable value limit; however, any award must comply with current Government funding rules and businesses must demonstrate how they meet the following criteria to qualify for relief:
  - Only land or premises (brownfield) with no current rateable value will be considered.
  - Greenfield sites will be those with either planning permission or included within the districts Local Plan. Consideration would be given to provide in principle approval to rate relief to encourage sites included within the Local Plan to gain planning permission and be developed.

- Only speculative build projects will be considered i.e., where no end user has entered a contract to occupy the building

2.2 This policy will only apply to buildings completed by 31 March 2024.

### **3. PROPOSED DBRP-CDS PROCESS**

- 3.1. Applicants will be required to submit to the Council a completed application form and will be assessed within 20 working days of receipt by the DBRP–CDS Assessment Panel with reference to the above criteria.
- 3.2 The DBRP–CDS Assessment Panel will consist of representatives from the Council’s Finance, Property and Economic Growth Teams. The Corporate Director (Finance) & S151 Officer will be the responsible Officer for determining such awards and approvals will be confirmed in consultation with Leader & Finance Portfolio Holder, together with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth.
- 3.3 A DBRP–CDS award will be made for up to 100% relief of the Rates Payable for the application property or properties for a period of up to 12 months or until the 1<sup>st</sup> tenant occupies the property or one the properties, whichever is the lesser period. Consideration will be given to providing more than one award where more than one commercial property is constructed on a site.
- 3.4 The exact amount of discount and award period is subject to the decision of the DBRP–CDS Assessment Panel.
- 3.5 The Council will notify the applicant of the outcome in writing within 5 working days from the date of the confirmed DBRP–CDS Assessment Panel decision. Where the DBRP–CDS award is unsuccessful or not met in full the Council will explain the reasons why.
- 3.6 DBRP–CDS awards are administered under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (As amended) and awards are not subject to a statutory appeals process. Appeals will therefore be decided by the Council within 20 working days. Decisions on appeals will be made by the DBRP–CDS Assessment Panel. If the Council decide that the original decision should not be revised, the applicant will receive a full written explanation within 10 working days.

### **4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 As one of the Council’s 3 outward facing Corporate Priorities it is important that the Council supports economic growth in as effective way as possible and this DBRP-CDS is an important new tool in providing that support.

### **5 CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 Engagement with relevant Council officers and with key external stakeholders has enabled external views and policies to be incorporated into the proposed DBRP–CDS.

## **6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 An alternative to actively and proactively encouraging commercial development would be for the Council not to do so. However, the evidence demonstrates that the market is not bringing forward sufficient commercial development to enable Fenland to maximise its economic growth potential. Moreover, the continuing lack of supply of commercial premises is acting as a significant break on economic growth.
- 6.2 This alternative option was considered and rejected as it would not help to address the lack of supply of commercial premises in the district.

## **7 IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 Legal Implications**

- 7.1.1 There are no specific legal issues engaged by the recommendations contained in this Report.

### **7.2 Financial Implications**

- 7.2.1 The incentive provided by the DBRP–CDS discount will lead to increased business rate revenues flowing into the Council.
- 7.2.2 Revenue Implications – The awarding of DBRP–CDS will not have an impact on business rates receipts as no business rates are currently being paid. However, the business rates base will grow through the creation of more commercial property in the District.
- 7.2.3 If the DBRP–CDS policy is not adopted it is possible that a number of commercial sites will not be developed, and no business rates received by the Council.
- 7.2.4 The DBRP–CDS Assessment Panel includes both the Corporate Director (Finance) & S151 Officer and the confirmatory oversight of the Leader & Finance Portfolio Holder, who will be able to monitor the number of applications and uptake.
- 7.2.5 Capital Implications – There are no capital finance implications because of the adoption of the DBRP–CDS policy.

### **8.3 Equality Implications**

- 8.3.1 DBRP–CDS has been assessed to ensure equality of access, etc.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted



This page is intentionally left blank