

Public Document Pack

COUNCIL

A meeting of Council will be held at Council Chamber, Fenland Hall, County Road, March on MONDAY, 19 MAY 2025 at 4.00 PM and I request you to attend accordingly for transaction of the following business:

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 To elect a Chairman for the period to the next Annual Meeting and to resolve that an allowance of £4,120 plus travelling expenses be paid to the person elected.
- 3 To elect a Vice Chairman for the period to the next Annual Meeting and to resolve that an allowance of £1,000 plus travelling expenses be paid to the person elected.
- 4 Previous Minutes (Pages 5 - 20)

To confirm and sign the minutes of 24 February 2025 and the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of 14 March 2025.

- 5 To receive any announcements from the Chairman of the Council and/or the Head of Paid Service.
- 6 Meetings of the Council 2025/26

To determine that:

1. The Annual Meeting of the Council in 2026 be held on:

Monday 18 May 2026

2. Ordinary meetings of the Council in 2025/26 be held as follows:

Monday 21 July 2025
Monday 15 September 2025
Monday 15 December 2025
Monday 23 February 2026

- 7 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.
- 8 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.
- 9 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 21 - 72)
- 10 Motion submitted by Councillor Sennitt Clough (Pages 73 - 74)

Motion submitted by Councillor Sennitt Clough regarding a flag for the Fens.

11 Motion submitted by Councillor Boden (Pages 75 - 76)

Motion submitted by Councillor Boden regarding Saxon Pit Planning Application.

12 New Procurement Strategy (Pages 77 - 96)

To consider the implementation of a New Procurement Strategy to align to the Council's Business Plan.

13 Committee Balance, Political Balance and Allocation of Seats (Pages 97 - 114)

To agree the committee structures and terms of reference for the forthcoming municipal year as well as confirming the allocation of seats to those committees and also to outside bodies in accordance with political proportionality rules and to receive notification of the appointments to committees.

14 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Appointments (Pages 115 - 122)

This report requests the Council to make appointments to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the municipal year 2025/26.

15 Resolution to Extend 6-month Rule (Pages 123 - 126)

This report requests that Council pass a resolution under s.85 of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the 1972 Act") authorising Councillor Harris' continued absence from meetings for period of 3 months from 19th May 2025.

16 Fraud Services S.113 Agreement (with confidential appendix) (Pages 127 - 132)

To recommend that Council approve a Section 113 agreement with Maldon District Council for the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) to provide Fraud Services.

The Schedule to this report comprises 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 would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as indicated."

Fenland Hall
March



Chief Executive

Friday, 9 May 2025

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"

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL



MONDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2025 - 4.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor N Meekins (Chairman), Councillor B Barber (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor C Boden, Councillor G Booth, Councillor J Carney, Councillor G Christy, Councillor J Clark, Councillor S Clark, Councillor D Cutler, Councillor Mrs M Davis, Councillor L Foice-Beard, Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor K French, Councillor A Gowler, Councillor P Hicks, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor S Imafidon, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor C Marks, Councillor A Miscandlon, Councillor J Mockett, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor Dr H Nawaz, Councillor D Patrick, Councillor M Purser, Councillor D Roy, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor E Sennitt Clough, Councillor M Summers, Councillor T Taylor, Councillor S Tierney and Councillor A Woollard

APOLOGIES: Councillor S Count, Councillor R Gerstner, Councillor G S Gill, Councillor S Harris, Councillor D Oliver and Councillor S Wallwork

C41/24 **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of 16 December 2024 were confirmed and signed.

C42/24 **CIVIC ENGAGEMENTS UPDATE.**

Councillor Meekins drew members' attention to the civic activities undertaken by himself and the Vice-Chairman in the weeks preceding full Council.

C43/24 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE.**

There were no announcements from the Chairman or Chief Executive on this occasion.

C44/24 **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.**

The Chairman stated that no written questions had been received under Procedure Rule 8.6. Councillor Booth, as Leader of the Opposition, asked the following questions under Procedure Rule 8.4:

- What is the update on Local Government Reorganisation, assuming that is why the extraordinary Council meeting has been called on 14th March? Councillor Boden advised that discussions are ongoing with the leaders and chief executives of various local authorities. He confirmed that LGO is the reason why the meeting has been called but at this stage he cannot say what the options are being put forward. However, the Council has little choice in the process, it will put forward the best possible case for Fenland residents but ultimately it will be for Government to decide, and they may ignore what is put forward.
- Why is the extraordinary meeting planned for a Friday evening and not the normal meeting time on a Monday afternoon? Councillor Booth expressed his concern that he will be unable to attend due to his work pattern saying that members plan their schedules around regular

meeting times. He also asked why the last meeting of Audit and Risk Management Committee was moved at short notice. Councillor Boden apologised to Councillor Booth for the inconvenience of these changes. Careful consideration had been given to the best date to hold an extraordinary meeting given the constraint of having to make a submission to Government by a specific date in March, hence a Friday was deemed most practical as it clashed least with other meetings. In future, he will do his utmost to ensure that dates are not changed but sometimes it is unavoidable. Audit and Risk Management Committee had been moved on that occasion due to availability of the external auditors. Councillor Booth thanked Councillor Boden for his response and for giving assurances about future meetings. He added for the record that he believes four tiers of local government are unnecessary and reorganisation is badly needed in Cambridgeshire.

C45/24 **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 Procure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 as follows:

- Councillor Nawaz stated he had made several presentations to the Leader along with a 632-name petition, regarding the Station Road recreation ground in Whittlesey. He asked if Councillor Boden could support the wishes of residents to save the facility. Councillor Boden replied that last year Cabinet had considered this piece of land surplus to requirements and its disposal a potential means to finance the substantial and costly works needed to improve the Manor Leisure Centre. However, now that Government have announced this authority will not exist in three years' time, the Council's approach to the financing of capital projects has changed. He thanked Councillor Nawaz for his work on this, but he can confirm that the Station Road recreation ground will not be sold by Fenland District Council.
- Councillor Patrick said he is aware that MVV are starting work regarding the Wisbech incinerator which will include compulsory purchase orders, some of which will include FDC land. He would like to know if this authority has received any CPOs from MVV. Councillor Benney responded there had been no approaches at this time.
- Councillor Tierney spoke of escalating and frequent anti-social behaviour occurring in Wisbech. A group of young men on electric scooters are terrorising and intimidating business owners and customers and engaging in vandalism for the sake of causing trouble. He said that the police have been called on many occasions and whilst he is sure they are doing all they can, much of which may be going on behind the scenes that people are unaware of, both he and Wisbech residents are very unhappy that nobody seems to be dealing with this serious issue. Town centres are struggling to survive, and there cannot exist a situation where people are being scared away, and business owners cannot afford to keep replacing their smashed windows. Councillor Tierney also expressed his concern that before too long people will take the law into their own hands. He would therefore request that the Leader have officers write to the police to demand intervention as a serious priority and to invite a senior member of the police to visit the Council to answer questions about their approach. Furthermore, he would like officers to bring a paper to Cabinet to look at options regarding this prolific behaviour, which may ultimately help some people from going down a road from which they cannot escape. Councillor Boden agreed that the situation is disgraceful, saying the police are relied upon to keep order and it is disappointing that this situation has not been nipped in the bud. He will ask the Chief Executive to write to the police to ask them to provide an urgent response to this matter. Public safety is vital, and this behaviour cannot and must not be allowed to continue.
- Councillor Purser said he understands there are plans to close the Sixth Form at Neale Wade and asked if the Council could provide any assistance to prevent this. Councillor Boden responded that it is not a function of this authority to deal with education provision, but he is concerned with the issue of how to ensure the skills levels of local children and adults are improved, particularly as historically Fenland's skills levels are among the worst in the country.

Although regrettably there is little that this Council can do to prevent the closure, he notes that the MP is undertaking a campaign to persuade the relevant authority to make the change on this.

- Councillor Hoy expressed her concern that the new community diagnostic centre in Wisbech seems not to be in use. It is not available for booking, GPs are not referring patients there, and the MRI scanner has been removed. Wisbech residents are having to go to Ely, Peterborough or Kings Lynn for routine appointments. It is a waste of money to have built a brand-new building and then not use it. Councillor Hoy asked if the Care Quality Commission could be invited to the next Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting to discuss this. Councillor Boden responded that whilst health care is not the direct responsibility of this Council, it does have a role to play in promoting local health, and he was astonished to hear of this story. Fenland in general, and particularly Wisbech, is an area of significant health underachievement and there is more health deprivation here than the rest of the county. The community diagnostic centre should be there to make it easier for residents to get tested and receive quick and effective treatment to help improve these health inequalities. The ICB claim they are taking action to reduce health inequalities but their actions in not giving patients the chance to use this facility, or returning the MRI scanner, are the opposite so it is essential they are made aware of this Council's grave concern regarding this. It is not for him to say who should be invited to the Overview & Scrutiny Panel meetings but the Chairman, Councillor Mrs Davis, will have heard this. The situation is disgraceful, and he will ask the Chief Executive to write to the ICB to express their joint concern about the situation and would welcome it if the O&S panel decide it appropriate to invite the ICB to attend a meeting to discuss the diagnostic centre. If the diagnostic centre remains massively underused, the next step will be to close it, so it is essential to make as big a fuss about this as possible.
- Councillor Taylor said the farmers and related industries mental health programme, valued at £10m a year, has been withdrawn by Government. He asked if there is anyone within the Council who can deal with agricultural and industrial mental health issues. Councillor Boden responded that he is not aware of anyone employed by Fenland District Council qualified to do that, but it is an important and relevant question given the increasing pressures on the agricultural community. Again, he will ask the Chief Executive to raise this issue with the ICB, but as it is also a matter for County Council as a public health matter, Councillor Boden said he will personally seek to have the matter included on the agenda of a forthcoming meeting of the County Council's Health Committee.
- Councillor Hicks said he sympathised with Councillor Tierney's earlier comments regarding the youths in Wisbech as there have also been issues in March. Some months ago, he met with police community officers who explained how they work to a set procedure using a traffic light system, so whilst they are aware of the situations in Wisbech and March, it can take time to see results. Councillor Mrs Davis commented that there is also the option to invite the police to attend an Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting to which portfolio holders can be invited.
- Councillor Booth thanked Councillor Mrs Laws for her update on the local plan but there are no deadlines for the next stage. He would like to know when engagement with members and the second public consultation will take place. Councillor Mrs Laws responded that in light of the new NPPF, and now due to local government reorganisation, a review is ongoing and there will be an update at the Council meeting in May.

C46/24 **BUSINESS PLAN 2025/26**

Members considered the Final Business Plan 2025/26 report presented by Councillor Tierney.

Councillor Tierney advised Fenland has always been a financially sensible council with strong leadership and has provided good services whilst freezing FDC's portion of council tax. Unfortunately, due to local government reorganisation, this Council may potentially be amalgamated with authorities that have not been so financially prudent. It is therefore imperative that Fenland residents, who have funded this Council, get a legacy for the future, hence the Business Plan has been changed to include the Fenland Inspire! Project.

Councillor Boden agreed that the key part of the Plan has changed because it is necessary to consider the best interests of local people whilst FDC still exists. As a second-tier authority this Council gets to spend money on pleasant things such as leisure services and leisure centres, but most local government expenditure is on children's and adult social services, as well as SEND provision, all currently delivered by county council. All upper tier authorities are already under immense pressure in those three areas. Following reorganisation, FDC will become part of a unitary authority and the priority will be on those services to the detriment of everything else. The danger is that a new unitary authority will not want to spend money on improving leisure centres so they will just close them. This is why the Fenland Inspire! Project has come about, as an insurance policy so that the new unitary authority has modernised facilities secured for Fenland residents for the long-term. The Business Plan has therefore been changed to emphasise what needs to be done now so residents have decent facilities for decades to come.

Councillor Booth said he had previously raised at Overview & Scrutiny a lack of emphasis on rural areas in the Plan, and he would have expected to have seen details of the consultation responses but accepts that the landscape will change dramatically over the next few years.

In summing up, Councillor Tierney commented that he believes local government reorganisation will lead to a loss of localism and the ability to try unusual things such as free parking will disappear. However, if Fenland Inspire! can be delivered for the people of Fenland as a legacy for the future, members can say they did everything they could.

Proposed by Councillor Tierney, seconded by Councillor Boden and AGREED to approve the Business Plan 2025/26.

C47/24 CORPORATE BUDGET 2025/26

Members considered the Corporate Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden thanked officers within the Finance Team for their work in this most difficult budget process, particularly given the news about local government reorganisation. As a result, the figures produced are vastly different to those set out in December because the Council now faces a fundamental change. Many projects that the Council would once have aspired to undertake gradually when they could have been afforded, have now been incorporated into the new Fenland Inspire! Project. Without this project all these opportunities will be lost because they will not happen under a new unitary authority, and furthermore some of the things that currently exist, such as the leisure centres, will be lost if no action is taken now. Much of the money put forward for inclusion in the project is for leisure facilities, specifically the four leisure centres. It is essential to ensure they are in the best possible condition physically and financially to protect their existence when they are taken over by the new authority. Fenland Inspire! is therefore a massive commitment and Councillor Boden proceeded to run through the list of proposed projects. He thanked members and portfolio holders who had provided him with a list of suggestions of what could be included, particularly Councillor Sennitt Clough who put forward a list of arts and culture schemes and Councillor Hay who lobbied strongly for a swimming pool in Chatteris.

Councillor Sennitt Clough thanked Councillor Boden for taking forward members' suggestions.

Councillor Tierney said this is a sensible and prudent response given the situation the Council is in. He has always argued that it is up to the Council to take difficult decisions and not pass them onto the public, it is an idea that all members share. Residents are already taxed enough and this is good news.

Councillor Nawaz said he was grateful to hear that the Station Road recreation ground has been spared and thanked the residents of Whittlesey who generated the petition and spread the message. He asked if more provision could be made for children's play equipment in local parks as open spaces are needed for physical and mental well-being.

Councillor Booth stated that he supports the proposals and is glad to hear that there will be a review of playground equipment, having asked for this back in 2019. Along with other rural areas, Murrow is in dire need for an upgrade and time is now of the essence. His concern is the Medium-Term financial forecast and future years deficits and would like assurances that these will be dealt with considering this Council still has three years of existence and it is a legal requirement to have a balanced budget.

Councillor Miscandlon said he supports the project; this is future proofing and will benefit all the residents of Fenland.

Councillor Boden thanked members for their comments and agreed the value of play areas in rural areas, noting that towns do tend to have more facilities. He added that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy shows the challenge ahead, but he would be disappointed if the outturn does not show a better figure.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Miscandlon and AGREED that:

- (i) the General Fund revenue budget for 2025/26 as set out in Section 9 of the report and Appendix A be approved.**
- (ii) the Medium-Term Financial Strategy as outlined in the report and Appendix B be adopted.**
- (iii) the Capital Programme and funding statement as set out in Appendix D be approved.**
- (iv) the adoption of the additional Business Rates Relief measures as detailed in Section 7 using Discretionary Relief Powers be approved.**
- (v) the expenses detailed in Section 12 be approved to be treated as general expenses for 2025/26.**
- (vi) the Port Health levy for 2025/26 be set out as shown in Section 13.**
- (vii) the current working age Council Tax Support Scheme be adopted with effect from 1 April 2025 as set out in Section 15, with appropriate changes to the prescribed pensioner scheme as determined by regulations.**
- (viii) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (including amending the MRP calculation to be based on the 'Annuity method' from 2024/25 onwards), Treasury Investment Strategy, Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2025/26 and Capital Strategy 2025/26 as set out in Section 16 and Appendix E be approved.**
- (ix) the Band D Council Tax level for Fenland District Council services for 2025/26 be set at £254.79, no change on the current year.**

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 impose an obligation on Local Authorities (after 25 February 2014) to record all votes on decisions on budget and council tax, with this in mind Members voted on this item as follows:

In favour of the proposal: Councillors Barber, Benney, Boden, Booth, Carney, Christy, J Clark, S Clark, Cutler, Mrs Davis, Foice-Beard, Mrs J French, K French, Gowler, Hicks, Hoy, Humphrey, Imafidon, Mrs Laws, Marks, Meekins, Miscandlon, Mockett, Murphy, Nawaz, Patrick, Purser, Roy, Seaton, Sennitt Clough, Summers, Taylor, Tierney, Woollard

Against the proposal: None

Abstentions: None

C48/24 COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION 2025/26

Members considered the Council Tax Resolution 2025/26 report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden pointed out that there will need to be a unification of council tax levels across the new unitary authority. It is a matter of great gratitude that officers have not needed to raise council tax over the last eight years.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED the resolution set out in the report for the Council Tax requirement to be approved.

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 impose an obligation on Local Authorities (after 25 February 2014) to record all votes on decisions on budget and council tax, with this in mind Members voted on this item as follows:

In favour of the proposal: Councillors Barber, Benney, Boden, Booth, Carney, Christy, J Clark, S Clark, Cutler, Mrs Davis, Foice-Beard, Mrs J French, K French, Gowler, Hicks, Hoy, Humphrey, Imafidon, Mrs Laws, Marks, Meekins, Miscandlon, Mockett, Murphy, Nawaz, Patrick, Purser, Roy, Seaton, Sennitt Clough, Summers, Taylor, Tierney, Woollard

Against the proposal: None

Abstentions: None

(Councillor Sennitt Clough declared an interest in this item by virtue that her husband has a visiting forces exemption for council tax but she will remain open minded).

(Councillor Nawaz advised he has tenanted properties in Peterborough where there may be issues with tenants, but he personally does not owe any council tax).

C49/24 FENLAND WASTE STRATEGY

Members considered the Fenland Waste Strategy report proposed by Councillor Tierney.

Proposed by Councillor Tierney, seconded by Councillor Murphy and Council AGREED to:

- **approve Fenland's updated Waste Service Standards as set out in appendix 1 of the report,**
- **approve the updated TEEP statement as set out in appendix 2 in line with Simpler Recycling and Environment Act 2021 requirements,**
- **approve the suggested amendment to the waste strategy as set out in appendix 4 to allow for the required weekly food waste collections to commence from 30 March 2026, and**
- **note the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership are working on an update to the current area-based waste strategy approved by Council in 2008. This will be**

presented for member consideration later in 2025.

C50/24 SENIOR MANAGER PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Members considered the Senior Manager Pay Policy report presented by Councillor Boden.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Nawaz and AGREED to adopt the Senior Managers Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25.

C51/24 ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION - HMO'S IN WISBECH (WITH CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX)

Members considered the Article 4 Direction – HMOs in Wisbech report presented by Councillor Mrs Laws.

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

- Councillor Booth voiced his concern about the unintended consequence for the rest of Fenland. He questioned why the Article 4 Direction was written only for Wisbech rather than the entire district as the problem would likely spread.
- Councillor Tierney said members should represent the views of the people who vote for them and the behaviour in some HMOs is something that he is regularly approached about. Whilst many HMOs are run very well, there are problematic ones. Until now, anybody could open an HMO housing up to six unrelated people without planning permission so this will provide an additional check and balance to ensure everything is done properly to prevent problems for neighbours.
- Councillor Nawaz commented that there is more to it than social issues, there are also safety measures involved. For example, properly licensed premises will follow legal requirements regarding fire safety and HMO operators will have to fulfil conditions to maintain the comfort and safety of their tenants and for this reason he supports this.
- Councillor Hoy referred to Councillor Booth's comment and said this is not something that can be brought in across the whole district because it needs to be evidence based and there is no evidence currently that this is a problem elsewhere. In response to comments about behaviours, she said this is not about combating antisocial behaviour as there are already powers to deal with this. This is solely a planning matter to stop smaller properties being used to house additional people inappropriately where planning permission is not currently required. Wisbech is saturated with HMOs, and this is a good proposal to contain the number available. Councillor Hoy added that she often finds an element of snobbery regarding HMOs which is unfair and unjustified as generally they are an affordable and respectable way for single people to live, however there is sometimes an element of justification because there are those that do cause problems and some streets are almost entirely made up of HMOs and this needs to stop.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Laws, seconded by Councillor Hoy and AGREED to:

- **Approve the making of a direction under article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) having non-immediate effect for Wisbech Town apart from the excluded areas (the excluded areas being Wisbech Riverside and Wisbech South wards) withdrawing the permitted development right to change use from a dwelling house (Class C3) to a small HMO (Class C4) use as set out in Schedule 1.**
- **Approve the making of a direction under article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) having immediate effect for the area of Wisbech Riverside and Wisbech South wards withdrawing the permitted development right to change use from a dwelling house (Class C3) to a small HMO (Class C4) use as set out in Schedule 2.**

- **Delegate the implementation of the consultation process and final approval of the Immediate and Non-Immediate Article 4 Directions to the Corporate Director & Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Licensing and the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Flooding**
- **Endorse of the production of additional guidance on to ensure that the planning policy approach for assessing planning applications from Class C3 to C4 is clearly set out.**

5.56 pm

Chairman

COUNCIL

FRIDAY, 14 MARCH 2025 - 5.30 PM



PRESENT: Councillor N Meekins (Chairman), Councillor B Barber (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor C Boden, Councillor G Christy, Councillor J Clark, Councillor S Clark, Councillor S Count, Councillor D Cutler, Councillor Mrs M Davis, Councillor L Foice-Beard, Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor G S Gill, Councillor A Hay, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor S Imafidon, Councillor C Marks, Councillor A Miscandlon, Councillor Dr H Nawaz, Councillor D Oliver, Councillor D Patrick, Councillor B Rackley, Councillor D Roy, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor E Sennitt Clough, Councillor T Taylor, Councillor S Tierney, Councillor S Wallwork and Councillor A Woollard

APOLOGIES: Councillor G Booth, Councillor J Carney, Councillor D Connor, Councillor K French, Councillor R Gerstner, Councillor A Gowler, Councillor P Hicks, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor M Purser and Councillor M Summers

Councillor Meekins announced with sadness the passing Bernard Keane who had been a Fenland District Councillor for March East from May 1999 until 2015. During that time, he served as Chairman from 2007 to 2009 and also contributed to the work of various committees to include Licencing, Planning, and Overview & Scrutiny. He was also a founding member of the Golden Age Team.

The Council offered their sincere condolences to Bernard's friends and loved ones and a minute's silence was held to commemorate his life.

C53/24 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION - DRAFT PROPOSALS

Councillor Meekins announced that to have a full debate on this important item, he proposed that the standing orders be modified to allow members to speak on each of the questions contained in Appendix 1 of the report as well as have an opportunity to make a general point. Councillor Boden seconded the proposal which was agreed by Members.

Councillor Boden proceeded to present the Local Government Reorganisation – Draft Proposal report which was seconded by Councillor Mrs French.

Members responded to each question in turn as follows:

Question 1

Should FDC initially express our concern and opposition to the manner and timing of this Local Government reform process, whilst recognising the right of Central Government to impose this and whilst also confirming our eagerness to participate fully in the process and to co-operate fully with other local councils so as to get the best possible outcome for local residents?

- Councillor Boden said he thinks it is not improper for the Council to express concern about how quickly it is being done and will not end up with the best outcome. Government is in charge and has the democratic right to impose what they want. LGO is long overdue, but this is not the way of doing it. In 1972, the contrast of all the work that went into that is stark. It is appropriate to

say we are not happy, but it is vitally important to cooperate and go along with the process otherwise we will have no voice or say at all. We may come up with the same solution and Government may still ignore that so in participation we do not guarantee that we get a voice but if we do not, we guarantee that we will not get a voice. Members must try and be as constructive as possible in getting the best outcome for Fenland.

- Councillor Tierney said he is in support of this except that it is too nice. He would much rather be tougher, we are not eager, we have to do this because we are forced to. This is a terrible thing to be doing for this area, there will be far less ability to change what a giant council can do for local people, taking away all the things that FDC does, such as free parking and council tax freezes. He would like to express this in every piece of literature put to Government.
- Councillor Hoy reiterated the same, we should not be eager to do this, we will end up in a very terrible situation particularly if we go with Peterborough, do we want their rough sleepers and problems with drugs and alcohol? FDC has much cheaper properties, we are going to only make up a very small portion. The Council works very well, the officers do exceptionally well, we will lose some of those, it is very sad. We must accept it, but we should not say we are eager.
- Councillor Nawaz said there are good and bad things about this. Devolution of the health and social services but how far devolved are they, we are losing the local touch. He knows every street in his ward and many local people and what their issues and concerns are. His principal concern is that an assembly of 100 members representing 500k to 1 million people cannot be categorised as devolution. As for the make-up of the unitary, it is being floated that possibly Peterborough will combine with Huntingdon and Fenland but there are differences in their identities. The issues and concerns that Cllr Hoy has alluded to, and he shares Councillor Boden's concern that given the rushed implementation of this, we are not going to be able to reflect and think carefully of the possible consequences and we will not end up with the best possible solution either, these are his reservations but we will fully cooperate and he supports that we participate in order that our voice is heard robustly and effectively.

Question 2

Does Full Council see any exceptional circumstances to justify the splitting of any existing district council area in Cambridgeshire between two or more new unitary authorities?

- Councillor Boden said when Government set up this process they said they did not want any existing district council to be split between 2 or more different unitary authorities. The reason – the disaggregation of the Council would be really complicated, when you split a council into pieces all the assets, liabilities, contracts need to be split, and it is a very complex and drawn-out process. When this happened in Northants it took the best part of three years to work it out. Government has said they would much rather that we use existing district councils as the building blocks on the existing boundaries unless there are exceptional circumstances. This request asks can we see any and we could argue about what should/should not be included. Given the extent of this he cannot see the justification of us saying, for example put Chatteris in one local authority and the rest of the area in another. He sees the unity of Fenland as being appropriate as is the case with the other authorities as well. Cambs City is surrounded by South Cambs, and it makes sense to just combine the two. In this process it would cause unnecessary additional burden and would achieve little. He believes the answer should therefore be no.
- Councillor Miscandlon voiced his agreement, splitting up an area into two or three other areas would be totally detrimental. North Northants had three years of difficult negotiations to try and get it sorted. We do not want that. The answer should be no.

Question 3

Does Full Council oppose, in principle, the creation of a single new Unitary Authority covering the whole of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough area, on the grounds that this would be too large an area for residents to consider such a unitary authority to be "local"?

- Councillor Boden said if one reads the information put out by central Government, the idea that our local unitary authority would cover the whole of Peterborough and Cambs, there are some difficulties in that there is already a combined authority, and Government can change it any time it wishes. The idea of one authority covering the whole area would be consistent with what the Government has put out. That would be a desperately bad position, two major cities acting as polar opposites with a population of over 900k. There is nothing local about that. Considering the amount of representation Fenland would have, we would be very lucky to get 10 councillors out of 100. It is important that we send a message to government in case they have the idea that bigger is better, if you do it arithmetically, yes, the greater the economies of scale but there needs to be a balance between that and local representation.
- Councillor Count said apart from supporting Councillor Boden's comments, he believes this falls short of the Government's intentions, we cannot have a Combined Authority of one so unless there is an intention to have additional areas outside its current authority, it cannot be.
- Councillor Hay agreed with Councillor Boden's words, saying one unitary for a whole area with a population of 900k+ is just too unwieldy, we would never get anything done for the rural areas. She is worried with 500k.
- Councillor Mrs Davis said she support the statements by everyone who has already spoken, her concern is the villages, the market towns may get some grace, one unitary trust, the villages would lose out, two might give us a little more chance.
- Councillor Taylor said he does not know what this one trick party is up to, we are a rural area, we know this system inside out; to put us with Peterborough and Cambridgeshire would be a disaster, they are trying to pile everything into one to get rid of their own financial ploy – making themselves look better. We do not know about city life and city life does not know about us. No to two big cities in our system.
- Councillor Marks said we have seen what the CPCA has done recently in Manea, we have just lost our bus service, it is dictatorship from afar and this should not be allowed to happen.

Question 4

Does Full Council oppose, in principle, the creation of a single new Unitary Authority covering the whole of the area of the current Cambridgeshire County Council, on the grounds that this would be too large an area for residents to consider such a unitary authority to be "local"?

- Councillor Boden said mathematically we would be satisfying Government by having the two unitary authorities in the area. However, one of the stated objectives is to ensure that smaller unitaries with financial difficulties are absorbed into larger areas. This proposal would not satisfy that, but the county council network previously advocated for the abolishment of the districts and the counties to take over. We have experience of what it is like to be ruled by Cambridgeshire City councillors; look at the roads. Cambridge and the surrounding area are growth areas and that would be the focus which would be disastrous for Fenland. Going along with the County Council network idea should not apply here in Cambridgeshire.
- Councillor Count said earlier on Councillor Nawaz talked about the identity of an area, the identity of Cambridgeshire is not coherent at all. He was the Leader at one time and the difference between outcomes, health, affluence, identity of north and south is huge. We are trying to get coherent throughout – it has been difficult, when Leader he understood the differences and tried to deal with them as best as he could. In the last few years, there is a simple misunderstanding of these differences, and we have to bow to them, it is the lack of identity the larger we become. A single Cambridgeshire unitary will not work here. He is sad to see the direction we are going but the good news will be if we are no longer ruled by Cambridgeshire.
- Councillor Nawaz said going back to his first contribution to question 1, this is losing localism times seven. There are seven authorities all with their own characteristics and need be that health, education, employment, or transport. We have areas of deprivation, north of Wisbech, mid Fenland, all this will be drowned in one massive organisation ruled by the majority party who may not represent the specific needs of Fenland. We might as well be ruled directly from Westminster; it is sad to see the concept of localism being drowned out by an authoritarian

approach.

Question 5

Does Full Council accept that, given the need to provide upper and lower-tier responsibilities in a financially sustainable manner, the new unitary authority which includes Fenland would need to have a population of at least the Government's stated 500,000 lower limit, if not higher?

- Councillor Boden said he will have some difficulty trying to justify why we should have a local authority with a population of 500k. This is what they want to see although they have said informally that they would have smaller in special circumstances. He knows from discussions with various members of this council, far from moving in the direction we are being forced in, they would like to go backwards to urban and rural district councils, so away from a larger authority, but this is not the way we are allowed to go. We must accept we are going into a unitary authority. There are some high spending, high-cost responsibilities that the county council has e.g. ASC, CSC and SEND. Some of these costs are demand-led so they cannot be predicted or controlled they just have to be absorbed; you need a large council tax/financial base to do this sustainably. As an example, looking after just one child for social care where that child has a high level of need you can be talking in figures of £1m+ per year. Over £30k per week for the needs of that child and these requirements can suddenly land on a local authority because a family moves from one place to another and the authority must meet that immediately. You need financial resilience which can only be met in two ways; very rich areas or larger areas to spread the load and that is what this figure represents. If we are to be in a unitary, we will need that degree of size to absorb the massive pressures and when we get the budget for the new unitary, up to 80% will be taken up in those areas - not even considering highways or what this council does now. To sustain this, they will need the size to absorb the pressures, so this is why the 500k+ figure is appropriate for Fenland. A smaller number will be unsustainable so the answer should be yes.
- Councillor Tierney said people do not realise that regardless of who is in charge, things like highways get crowded out by the huge cost of the social areas, that challenge is always there. If people are frustrated now about the roads, this will get worse, those massive costs will crowd out everything. Bins, streetlights, parks, cutting of grass, festivals, all sorts of things that are done now by this Council, a new council will have these crowded out by these high costs and the Government does not want to address this. This will become a problem for the gigantic new council. These will be looked on as days fondly remembered. He hates 500k but it is needed to work.

Question 6

Does Full Council accept that the Government's specific and national priority growth agenda for the South of the County could potentially justify Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils, with a population of around 313,000, arguing that exceptional circumstances exist which may justify those areas (with or without the area of East Cambridgeshire District Council) forming a unitary authority with a population of fewer than 500,000?

- Councillor Boden said he had just explained why 500k is a minimum figure but one of the exceptions is a large amount of wealth and growth and in Cambs City and South Cambs there are both. Government has indicated they are expecting much more development there in terms of housing, infrastructure jobs etc. The whole area has a population of just over 900k, two to one therefore does not work for 500k+ so it is in our interest as well as Cambs and South Cambs that we recognise they are a special case, an area of the highest growth in the country. So, if there are to be exceptional circumstances justifying fewer than 500k, he cannot think of a more appropriate place. That would then leave the rest of the area to form a unitary authority of sufficient size. We should bear this in mind. Many discussions have taken place between CEOs and Leaders, and this has been on Chatham House rules so he cannot comment on what others are saying but if we do say that Cambs City and South Cambs are special then he thinks this will help us in Fenland.

- Councillor Count said that Councillor Boden articulated very well that this might be a special case. In terms of identity, when you look at Cambs City, this is the centre surrounded on all four sides, it is completely encircled. Anyone in South Cambs looks to Cambs City as their city. They do not look in two directions, their outcomes match very nicely so there is a special case for what is already established as the GCP area with or without East Cambs. You could still go under 500k and maintain a reasonably sized authority. Sustainability – size and finances. Anyone who can afford £50m to do up their Guildhall must have a certain amount of resources or charge £30 per day to park. The Government is very keen to put more homes there so it will be at that 500k mark very quickly.

Question 7

Does Full Council favour an initial unitary council size of around 100 members (subject to reduction at the end of the first term of office) with wards or divisions formed from the existing County Council divisions in Cambridgeshire and the existing City Council wards in Peterborough?

- Councillor Boden advised that what happens with local government reorganisation and a lot of districts in the new unitary, is that it is chaotic and difficult to keep control, especially in that first term of office with a lot of learning, reorganisation and recalibration required to form an authority that works. It is usual to start with a larger number of councillors to meet the amount of work needed and then during the first term of office, boundaries will be reviewed and a reduction made in the number of councillors. For example, Buckinghamshire became a unitary with 147 councillors and now after 4-5 years of existence, the number of members has been reduced to 97. Similarly, Durham as a unitary authority started with 126 councillors and the number has since reduced to 98. It is necessary to have a larger number to begin with to meet the exceptional demands of knitting a new authority together, which is a complicated process. It is not inappropriate to start with a figure of around 100 councillors, not in the long-term but in terms of dealing with upper tier responsibilities. We are also talking about authorities which are much larger than our districts, and how too few councillors would cope with the casework. Just because FDC will not exist does not mean that the service requirements will stop, they will continue, and there needs to be enough councillors to cope with that.
- Councillor Count said there are presently some 330 members at districts, county and Peterborough level, not including parish or town councils. With a limit of 100, looking at 200 councillors is a reduction of 130. It is a good start, but it needs and will go further. He agrees with the concept of 100 but would want to raise the difficulties of basing it on the divisions and wards. When places like Bucks changed, to maintain the level of degree of parity, you are met with the simple choice of one, two, or three councillors per division. The same will apply here, however much we start off with there is no capacity within the Boundary Commission to assess this for the whole country. He suggests it may be that when people look at the numbers it will be better to look at wards, but it is a question we need to think about a bit more. The Government has set out proposals, the latest guidance being numbers to come between 30 and 100. 30 for 500k? If you hit anywhere near the higher number, you must give a detailed explanation, putting forward the proposals of a transitional arrangement is important, there are things that the district and county do which are very different, with a lower number so much corporate knowledge will be lost. On behalf of Fenland residents, we need to be at the higher number. He would support this but would like Cabinet to consider how it is divided up later.
- Councillor Nawaz said he would agree, but additionally there are differences between Peterborough City Council and the rural areas in Fenland, or rural areas in general. Currently for example the South Whittlesey division stands over 13 miles whereas for Peterborough it may be less than 3 miles with the same number of residents. On top of that the number of councillors will have additional work to do, for example the so-called devolution and reorganisation of health services, the Government are in the mood to do away with the current NHS England model. How will that be delivered? Through local councils. If so, councils will be expected to have a part in delivering and monitoring health, social care and education. The same number of councillors to do additional work will need to be considered as well as the logistical issue of the areas that need to be covered. He would therefore argue for more than

100 but around 100 would be a good start.

Question 8

Does Full Council agree, until there is a firmer idea as to the boundaries of any new unitary authorities, and until the creation of the finance officers' financial model based on 2024/25 budget data for all seven principal authorities, that it would be premature to indicate to Government the level of potential savings (if any) that this Local Government Review process may produce?

- Councillor Boden stated that one of the things which the minister has asked us to do for 21st March is to indicate how much money FDC might save by making these changes. One thing that is certain is it will cost a lot to make the changes. In theory it is possible to make some reductions, but they may not be as large as imagined because the economies of scale will not work here for the main areas of expense: ASC, CSC, SEND. If we are talking about two upper tier authorities with upper tier responsibilities, there will be no savings out of that. Look at Surrey and Essex potentially being split into three, so that will cost more based purely on economies of scale. It would be rash to go back to say we will save £20m per year as there is no justification for saying that but, having said that, the LA officers are putting together a template to look to see what savings are possible and we should wait until November before we say anything about that.
- Councillor Count said anyone who thinks there will be any money saved must live in cloud cuckoo land. Massive change, a change of premises and structures, it costs millions. Doing it to all organisations at the same time and combining them into a giant organisation means we will not see any savings, we will have costs forever and we will be paying for it for years. Look at when the County moved to New Shire Hall, the problems have gone and on. You can do some good things but whatever you do is never going to be enough. Some officers in some authorities will come up with things that looks like savings, but it will not happen.
- Councillor Christy said this is the question that underpins this exercise, the whole misconception about savings. We have already heard about all our differences; savings are achieved through synergies. To make this work we need another layer of management not less and it will cost millions to make this happen. He would support that we are not able to put this forward.
- Councillor Count said he has seen some confidential figures but when you look at the cost of splitting things up and how you can get that back, he struggles in Cambridgeshire. We have a sense of questions here to feedback to Cabinet. Yes, he thinks we should hold off giving figures, but we should give a clear message that we are underfunded. It will not save us; we should take this opportunity to request more money. It will cost millions, well over £10m, that must be met from existing budgets, but the Government are not giving support for that. What if we cannot, we are already terribly underfunded, and this will make our situation worse. He would ask that Cabinet also say provide us with more money to cope.

Members were invited to provide final remarks.

- Councillor John Clark stated he would like to declare an interest in that he receives £6,000 paid expenses from this Council and this affects him because effectively he is voting for losing his job. There are other members on district and county earning more than £40,000 and he is surprised that no one has declared an interest. There is already some unitary as we have members on town/county/district and combined authority councils. We have one councillor making several decisions on various councils. There is an understanding that this is going to happen, but we have to get the best deal we can, there is no choice, and this could have happened under a conservative government also. There will be a lot of work to do, hours were spent putting together the combined authority and Councillor Count will be able to say how much work he put into the CPCA. Councillor Clark continued that he does have concerns; the Leader sits on a town council, he is here as the Leader, he is on Cambs, he is on the CPCA, and a London Council and hopes he is able to find the time to give this enough attention for Fenland. Furthermore, staff attrition is a real concern, in any reorganisation you tend to lose

your best staff first. Over the next three years, although staff will be TUPE'd it will be an uncomfortable position for them, it will be difficult to manage and get the best out of them. He would hope that the Chief Executive is able to manage this and look after his staff. In respect of council tax harmonisation, that could benefit Fenland for a little while. Fenland Council tax is high compared to East Cambs. If there is a harmonisation, Fenland could have a few years grace so might not pay as much. A BBC report mentioned that draft responses were received from six different leaders stating they were considering different scenarios, but they are waiting for a response from Fenland. He does not know if the Cabinet meeting following this meeting will decide that or if we are running our own race.

- Councillor Hoy said she could not leave unchallenged Councillor Clark's comment about Fenland's council tax being high. That is a Band D, which in Fenland there are few of so that is an unfair comparison. When Councillor Clark was the Leader, he increased council tax every year. Regarding his comment about pay and the Leader being on a number of authorities, he too was a member of several authorities except for March Town Council, which was an unpaid post.
- Councillor Boden summed up that, whilst we may be willing, the word 'eagerness' is inappropriate. When looking at the size of a council and how many members will be required, the comments made by Councillor Count are particularly relevant, particularly in terms of corporate knowledge. Councillor Boden added that he fears that some of the comments made today are correct and many savings will turn out to be illusory or far less than anticipated and that can be reflected in the Council's response. Regarding the comment made by Councillor John Clark, he was correct to point out the effect on staff, not just in Fenland but in the dozens of councils that will be involved in this process over the next three years as their livelihoods and futures are unexpectedly up in the air. The Chief Executive is more than well aware of this issue and is taking the appropriate steps to deal with this issue. Regarding council tax harmonisation, Fenland has a very low council tax base, but harmonisation is not in the amount of council tax paid, but the amounts paid for different bands. Fenland's Band D is higher because of our low base but it can take years to achieve harmonisation; it took seven years for Suffolk. He does not want Fenland residents to be paying more than others. He stressed that he would be able to take the time to deal with this but even with pressures on local government reorganisation, this council has been able to push through the Fenland Inspire! projects to safeguard a legacy for its residents and will continue to have facilities that they will expect and require once Fenland District Council ceases to exist.

Council AGREED to share the draft minutes of the debate with Cabinet for their consideration in determining Fenland District Council's initial response to Government.

6.45 pm

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank



Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

**May 2025
(For performance in January, February
and March 2025)**

Cabinet Members

| | | |
|--|--|--|
|  <p>Cllr Chris Boden Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Finance</p> | | |
|  <p>Cllr Ian Benney Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth & Skills</p> | |  <p>Cllr Jan French Deputy Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Revenues & Benefits and Civil Parking Enforcement</p> |
| | |  <p>Cllr Sam Hoy Portfolio Holder for Housing & Licensing</p> |
|  <p>Cllr Dee Laws Portfolio Holder for Planning & Flooding</p> | |  <p>Cllr Alex Miscandlon Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Internal Drainage Boards</p> |
| | |  <p>Cllr Peter Murphy Portfolio Holder for Refuse & Cleansing, Parks & Open Spaces</p> |
|  <p>Cllr Chris Seaton Portfolio Holder for Transport, Heritage & Culture</p> | |  <p>Cllr Steve Tierney Portfolio Holder for Communications, Transformation, Climate Change & Strategic Refuse</p> |
| | |  <p>Cllr Susan Wallwork Portfolio Holder for Community, Health, Environmental Health, CCTV, Community Safety & Military Covenant</p> |

Communities

Projects from Business Plan:

Support Vulnerable Members of Our Community

ARP updates (Cllr French)

ARP continue to work to identify and prevent fraud leading to an increase in Council Tax income in the following areas:

- Local Council Tax Support
- Single Person Discount
- Council Tax
- Non-Domestic Rates.

The ongoing review of Single Person Discounts continues to provide positive outcomes. The ARP team continue to work with the largest Social Housing provider in the Authority to tackle Right to Buy and subletting abuse.

The team continue to seek opportunities to identify dwellings and businesses not registered or having had an undeclared change in use, leading to increased charges, including possible retrospective charges.

The Fraud teams work, also jointly funded by the County Councils, identified over £3.8 Million in fraud and error last year, an increase on the previous year. This is due to the further resource funded by Cambridgeshire County Council and has allowed ARP to expand proactive fraud and error identification.

We have now completed the Annual Billing process, which has continued to offer PDF attachment e-bills.

In terms of the end of year performance for 2024-25, all performance indicators have ended on target despite a challenging year dealing with the to the ongoing rollout of Universal Credit.

Supporting residents to manage the effects of the costs of living (Cllr Boden)

Our customer facing teams provide support to residents struggling with cost-of-living issues in many ways:

- Issuing food vouchers
- Advising on additional benefits they can claim
- Signposting to other partners who can support
- Assisting with on-line Universal Credit (UC) applications
- Working closely with our ARP colleagues we signpost to avenues where discretionary benefits might assist
- We work with a huge range of partners who can also provide additional support, and we will link our customers into these channels
- Our Early Help Hub (operating within our My Fenland customer facing team) to provide an additional channel of support to residents who may be ready to return to the work

environment, having has a protracted spell of ill-health has provided support to 265 customers since June 2024.

- Our Work Well Hub (also operating within our My Fenland customer facing team) was launched in October 2024 has provided support to 181 customers since its launch at the end of last year. The aim of Work Well is to support people with health conditions and disabled people to start, stay or thrive in work, offering a range of support including:
 - A personal assessment of an individual's needs to understand 'what matters to you' and what support might work best for their circumstances.
 - Personalised, goal-based plans to address physical health, mental wellbeing, and social needs to help individuals to thrive in and/or return work.
 - Connect people with local and community-based work and health support services
 - Support for employers to understand their employee's needs and advice on how to provide workplace adjustments that support individuals to thrive at work.

Homelessness (Cllr Hoy)

In 2024/25 the Housing Options team has successfully addressed the housing issues for 247 households where we assessed they were owed a duty to either remain in their own home or found alternative accommodation within either a 56 day prevention period or 56 day relief period. This is broken down to 141 at the prevention stage and 106 at the relief stage.

Prevention means the household has accommodation but are threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days. Here we usually attempt to keep the household in their current accommodation.

Relief means they have left that accommodation. Therefore, there is a need to source some alternative accommodation. This is usually the point at which a household would go into temporary accommodation as they are homeless.

Number of households seeking advice (homeless presentations) for this period were 2002. The figure last year was 2201. This represents a decrease of 9% and a change in an upward trend from the last 2 years. (21/22 – 1973, 22/23 -2093, 23/24 - 2203)

Housing advice has been given to 1346 households where no duties were owed by the Council. This means that following a housing needs assessment, and any interventions, there was no need to issue a formal homeless decision.

In 2024/25 we accepted 184 prevention duties and 342 relief duties with 108 households being owed a main housing duty (the latter means the Council could not resolve the housing issues presented by the household in either the prevention stage nor the relief stage and we now have a legal duty to find permanent accommodation and must accommodate them until so).

The best outcome is to resolve the housing issue for as many households as possible within the prevention stage as this keeps them in their current accommodation. The second-best outcome is finding alternative accommodation for the household within the relief stage prior to having to make a main housing duty decision. The latter means that we sometimes need to make an adverse decision for the household such as not being in priority need or that they are intentionally homeless. If a household is owed a main housing duty, then the Council must

accommodate the household until we are able to end the duty (usually by an offer of accommodation).

This context is important as it not only demonstrates our commitment to preventative work and that we are keeping people in their home but that we are able to get involved in a household's homelessness situation early. Our prevention success rate in 2024/25 is 77% (the number of households prevented at this stage [141] divided by the number of prevention duties owed [184]). Last year this was 52% (142/271).

We are trying our utmost to bring this successful prevention work into resolving more households' issues at the relief stage. Our relief success rate in 2024/25 is 31%. (the number of households prevented at this stage [106] divided by the number of relief duties owed [342]). Last year this 32% (115/356).

Performance has improved this year and positively impacted our reported performance indicator metric, which is;

"The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing Options work for the year"
= 47% (247 preventions divided by 526 households where duties were owed)

Reducing Rough Sleeping (Cllr Hoy)

In the financial year 2024-2025, the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) project supported a total of 81 clients. Of these 81 individuals, we have successfully supported 34 into stable move on accommodation which includes projects such as Housing First; Supported living routes such as Ferry Project or Amicus, in to private rented accommodation, or reconnected with family and friends. Due to the increase in complexity, 25 clients had an alternative outcome. This includes prison, hospital, or loss of contact. We continue to support 22 clients under RSI, of which, 14 continue to sleep rough.

Moving into the next financial year, the focus from the RSI team and its partners is to continue to support our most vulnerable clients move off of the streets and in to suitable and sustainable accommodation. We will continue to liaise with MHCLG to create new ideas and solutions for our target priority group. This group of rough sleepers are our most entrenched and vulnerable service users. Alongside MHCLG, we will also liaise with partners such as Changing Futures, Housing First and the Ferry Project to come up with creative ideas to bring this client group into services.

For those who we have lost contact with and who remain on the periphery of rough sleeping, it is our aim to encourage these clients to re-engage with support services to prevent them from returning to the streets. Homelessness prevention remains a priority for the RSI team and its partners.

| | EU | UK |
|------------------|----|----|
| Positive Move On | 17 | 17 |
| Outcome Ongoing | 8 | 14 |
| Other Outcome | 10 | 15 |

Housing Enforcement Policy & Empty Homes (Cllr Hoy)

Year end 2024/25:

| Town | HMOs investigated | Other Homes investigated |
|------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Wisbech | 30 | 112 |
| March | 6 | 43 |
| Chatteris | 9 | 14 |
| Whittlesey | 2 | 25 |
| Villages | 4 | 41 |

Total homes investigated is 286.

VILLAGE BREAKDOWN

Benwick = 1
 Coates = 1
 Coldham = 0
 Christchurch = 2
 Doddington = 2
 Eastrea = 1
 Elm = 4
 Fridaybridge = 2
 Foul Anchor = 0
 Gorefield = 5
 Guyhirn = 3
 Leverington = 4
 Manea = 2
 Murrow = 1
 Newton = 1
 Parson Drove = 1
 Stonea = 0
 Throckenholt = 0
 Thorney Toll = 2
 Tydd = 3
 Turves = 0
 Wimblington = 2
 Wisbech St Mary = 4

| No.s of Notices Served April - December 31st 2024 | S.11 Improvement Notice * | S.12 Improvement Notice ** | Notice of Intent *** | Final Civil Penalty Notice **** | EIC R ***** | MEE S ***** | EPC ***** | Prohibition Orders |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| April | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| May | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| June | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| July | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Aug | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Sept | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Oct | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Nov | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Dec | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Jan | 4 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Feb | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mar | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 14 | 13 | 10 | 6 | 21 | 9 | 9 | 5 |

* Notices served in relation to Category 1 (serious) hazards identified during inspection

**Notices served in relation to Category 2 hazards identified during inspection

***Notice issuing intent to serve a civil penalty fine due to a breach of legislation & can be reviewed by Assistant Director upon appeal if a request is submitted by the landlord.

****Final Civil Penalty fine issued after review by Assistant Director- (landlord can only make a further appeal to the First Tier Tribunal)

***** EICR- Requirement for Landlord to comply with Electrical Installation Regulations- Final Number of fines issued after internal review

***** MEES- Requirement for Landlord to comply with Minimum Energy Performance Regulations- Final Number of fines issued after internal review

***** EPC- Requirement for Landlord to comply with Energy Performance Certification Regulations- Number of fines issued after internal review

In summary, since the new approach to enforcement was implemented in September 2019, out of the 148 Enforcement Notices served:

- 122 have been paid in full.
- The remaining debts will continue to be registered as a Local Land Charge on the title deeds until they are paid, or the property is sold, at which stage the debt will be recovered.

Of the 71 Final Civil Penalty Notices served:

- 40 have been paid in full,
- 10 are subject to payment arrangements,
- 0 are subject to formal court action,
- 3 are with the High Court Bailiff,
- 4 are proposed to be written off as not recoverable
- 9 are subject to an ongoing appeal.
- 5 subject to early enforcement
- Of the 18 fines issued due to EPC breaches, 15 have been paid. (total £3,000)
- Of the 28 Final CPN's served for breaches of Electrical Safety Regulations (totalling £138,021) 12 have been paid in full (£31,461.50) with the remaining debts subject to

formal enforcement action

- Of the 12 Penalty Notices served for breaches of Minimum Energy Efficiency Regulations, totalling £34,500, £19,500 has been paid with the remaining debts subject to formal enforcement action

Empty Homes

Represents the total number of properties brought back into use through officer involvement.
From 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

| | LTE 6-11MTHS | LTEP 12MTHS + |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Total Officer involvement | 18 | 46 |
| Total for the period | 1.4.24 – 31.3.25 | 64 |

Golden Age & Supporting older people (Cllr Wallwork)

The last Golden Age Fair took place in Friday Bridge on Monday 10 February 2025 with 34 partners and over 140 older people in attendance. The following organisations provided vital information, advice and guidance; Alright Mate, Neighbourhood Watch, Cambridgeshire County Council Armed Forces Covenant Officer, Careline, APS Associates, PeoplePlus, HowAreYou Fenland, Clarion Housing, Read Easy, Cambs Fire and Rescue, Fenland Volunteer Centre, Wisbech Rotary, TECS, Camsight, Cambridgeshire Libraries, March Armed Forces Veterans Hub, AgeUK, Wisbech PCN Social Prescriber, CCVS, SunNetwork, The Bobby Scheme, Healthy You, Wisbech Lions, Cambridgeshire ACRE, Active Fenland, PECT, March Model Railway, Citizens Advice Bureau, CPFT, Orchard Activities, Community Safety, Care Microenterprises, WEA.

Our next event will be held on Friday 20 June 2025 at the Manor Leisure Centre in Whittlesey as part of the Big Bash weeklong celebrations.

During the last financial year, our other events have included our large Christmas event in Wisbech, Eastrea and Tydd St Giles with a combined yearly total reaching 528 attendees over our four events. This is testament to the Golden Age brand that it is still relevant and supported well by our communities and continue to bring valuable resources to our communities across Fenland. During the summer months we continued our 'stay hydrated' campaign with handy Golden Age water bottles and as winter approached, we focused our efforts on our pilot Golden Age Christmas appeal. Over 200 shoe boxes were filled with items and information after Fenland residents were invited to donate gifts at drop off points in Fenland libraries and Tesco stores in Wisbech and March. School pupils also made and wrote in cards to be handed out at the event. The Christmas appeal was prompted by a comment from one visitor last year that the small wrapped giveaway gift would likely be her only present. This year's appeal has received overwhelming support and feedback from those that attended and external stakeholders that attended the event.

We're already planning exciting events for 2025/2026 which can be found in the coming months on our website www.fenland.gov.uk/goldenage

Promote Health & Wellbeing for all

Leisure & Freedom Updates (Cllr Miscandlon)

Overall recovery post-Covid continues for the 4 leisure centres although performance individually for the sites varies widely.

Swimming lessons (LTS (Learn to Swim)) continues to thrive especially at the Manor with the centre taking advantage of the closure of some Peterborough based pools. Shortage of swim coaches, which had affected the ability to deliver more lessons, has been successfully addressed and the centre is showing a 43% increase on previous year in numbers attending. Lessons at Hudson LC remain steady with a small increase but George Campbell lost some ground with the extensive repairs over January and February which caused a lengthy and unpredicted closure early in the year. The closure was well managed, customers were kept up to date with progress. Now re-opened to positive public acclaim, the GC pool is seeking to regather its audience and catch up some of the lost ground.

Fitness Memberships again vary with Manor and Hudson LC experiencing small growth over the period (5%) but George Campbell again experiencing a decline in numbers (22%). The closure of the pool and recent growth in other fitness facilities in the town is partly responsible for the decline but the absence of a permanent manager has also had a detrimental effect. This situation has now been resolved and the centre has now acquired an excellent candidate (commenced April 2nd) whose primary objective will be to bring the centres performance back up to planned levels.

Group exercise at all sites is showing healthy growth, in particular at Hudson LC, despite an ongoing problem associated with the temporary loss of one exercise studio as a result of water ingress under the flooring.

The leisure centres remain in a period of major maintenance and repair as part of condition survey work. Each of these projects has an ongoing impact on the centre be that management, public or performance and the centre staff are to be congratulated on their resilience at this time. Some of the works currently in progress or recently completed include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • CHP (Combined Heating & Power) - Manor LC | - Due May |
| • Car park extension resurface- Manor LC | - Completed March |
| • Pool covers - Manor LC | - Completed April |
| • Heat Exchanger - Manor LC | - Due May |
| • Sewerage pumping station - Manor LC | - Due May |
| • Pool Skimmer – GC, causing early in 2025 | - Completed late February |
| • Leaking roof – GC | - Roof replacement project in the early scoping stages |
| • Internal redevelopment | - Linked into the roofing project as a larger improvement and condition survey project |
| • Sports Hall Heating pumps – Hudson | - Completed April |
| • Disabled lift to sports hall and gym - Hudson LC | - May 2025 |

- LED replacements lighting - Hudson LC
 - Pool lighting - Hudson LC and GC
 - Solar PV increased capacity - all pool centres
- Underway and completing May
 - Completed December / January
 - Finally commencing in May

Promotion and marketing

The centres now have 42,000 downloads of their app, each of whom receive regular marketing updates. Bookings for classes remain the most popular hit on the app.

Promotions continue with recent successes relating to 12 months for the price of 9 (Fitness membership), half-price months and no joining-fee.

Leisure – general

FDC has successfully applied for a grant of £25,000 from Sport England to support the development of strategies for a Playing Pitches and Build (Sports and Leisure) Facilities.

These documents will replace the current 2016 strategies and are important to support sports facilities, including FDC for our leisure centres, in applying for funding as the strategies will highlight need for provision within the District.

Active Fenland (Cllr Miscandlon)

Projects: **Wellbeing | Healthy You | Pathways**

The Active Fenland team continues to deliver impactful community health initiatives across the district. Below is a summary of activity and outcomes across three key programmes:

Wellbeing (Concluded Project – Continuing Impact)

- New funding to support the wellbeing project until October 2025
- The Integrated Care System (i.e. NHS) funded Wellbeing project has formally concluded, with all but two programmes continuing under new funding.
- The last Tea Dance in March 2025 held at the Braza Club March, drew 50 attendees, reflecting sustained local interest.
- Two new walking groups have launched:
 - Whittlesey Gentle Walk – a slow-paced, accessible walk.
 - March New Parents Walk – designed to support postnatal wellbeing and peer connection.
- An end-of-project infographic summarising monitoring and evaluation outcomes has been completed and circulated.

Healthy You Project - funded by County Council Public Health

- Currently running 12 active sessions, with a new family evening session launched and a Wellbeing Walk for Parents starting in May.
- Couch to 5K relaunched with two new blocks, attracting 15 New participants in Wisbech this week.
- Healthy Eating drop-in in Wisbech over Easter went well, while a smaller turnout than planned, it marked a valuable trial of new engagement methods, with fruit donated by Tesco's community team.
- Tennis Festival to take place in May at Sir Harry Smith School, coordinated by School Games Organisers to involve multiple schools across Fenland.
- Community-led sports clothing collection initiative, run jointly with a local social prescriber, has supported children and families with essential kit during sessions and events.
- Participated in the Peckover Forest Fun Day (Child & Family Centre) and a major

Careers Event (368 students, 12 schools), both used to distribute timetables and promote summer activities.

Integrated Care System Pathways Project

- Pre-Fit & Strength & Balance sessions in Whittlesey, March, and Wisbech remain popular; Doddington's participation is improving with new joiners.
- Cardiac Rehab classes in March and Whittlesey have seen 15 new referrals since the programme launched; ongoing visits to Phase 3 in Wisbech continue to strengthen handover and uptake.
- Diabetes Support Programme relaunches in April with potential collaboration with DESMOND for education-to-activity continuity.
- Older Adults: Additional Strength and Balance class at Doddington did not continue due to low uptake; alternative sites are under review.
- Promotional presence at the Wisbech Job Centre and Golden Age Fayre continues to help generate awareness and referrals.

Participation Figures

| | Feb | March |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|
| No. of NEW participants | 22 | 64 |
| Participants per month | 1,305 | 1,307 |
| No. of sessions (incl. walks) | 161 | 142 |

Help Hub (Workwell)

Our website page has had 192 views during March with 28 Self Referrals being received. With a year to date (YTD) of 345 views with 108 referrals, 31.3% of page views result in a self-referral being submitted. [WorkWell Fenland - Fenland District Council](#)

Since launch, we have a total of 220 participants on this externally funded scheme against a YTD target of 190 (100%). This means that despite our delayed start date we have not only managed to reach our 2024/25 target we have exceeded it by 30 (16%).

We have received positive feedback from participants which include:

- "My coach gets me!, They listen are patient and not pushy, just what I need"
- "I look forward to speaking to my coach, they are kind, and the support is better than I had before"

Health & Wellbeing Update (Cllr Wallwork)

The North and South Fenland Integrated Neighbourhood Boards continue to meet quarterly. The partnership shares a set of key priorities, and the meetings focus on updating this close working and ensuring a focus on community needs.

In February, a refresh of local priorities was undertaken with smoking cessation being removed from the Wisbech board's agenda due to the excellent work ongoing in partnership between commissioned services from Healthy You and also through health service links.

Isolation, mental health support and increased activity levels remain on both the north and south board's agendas.

More information about the boards can be found here: [Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care System | CPICS Website](#)

Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture & Heritage

Working with partners to promote Fenland through Culture & Heritage (Cllr Seaton)

Fenland Culture Fund – Grants totalling over £55,000 have been awarded from the second round of the Fenland Culture Fund, boosting arts, culture and heritage opportunities across the district. A total of 35 applicants were successfully awarded up to £2000 each for a range of projects happening right across the district. The Fenland Culture Fund is managed by Fenland District Council and made possible this year thanks to joint funding from Arts Council England and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The second round of the fund was even bigger than the first, with over £20,000 more funding available. It also offered an expanded scope, with capital funding to support local creatives and improve cultural spaces, in addition to revenue funding to help deliver arts projects and activities.

Fenland Culture Partnership – The communications and marketing sub-group of the Fenland Culture Partnership held two more free high-quality, professional training workshops. The sessions are open to anyone working or volunteering in the arts, culture and heritage sectors in Fenland. The second was in January 2025 and was held by Arts Council England's Digital Culture Network and focused on Email Marketing and social media and the third was online facilitated by Baker Richards focusing on Practical Strategies for data and ticketing.

Fenland Poet Laureate – The Fenland Poet Laureate Award 2025 closed for entries in January and we received 71 entries across the two age categories. The shortlist was created by members of the Fenland District Council, Culture Arts and Heritage Executive Advisory Committee, and the final judging was shared by Cllr Elisabeth Sennitt Clough and the 2024 winner Hannah Teasdale. We held the awards ceremony at March Town Hall on Friday 21st March, and Felix Dawson was crowned 2025 Fenland Poet Laureate, and Isla Jackson the winner of the Young Fenland Poet Laureate category. It was an evening of celebration for all the poets shortlisted, and everyone received a copy of the anthology and trophies for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in each category.

Supporting groups to hold public events (Cllr Murphy)

There have been no events throughout the period of January to March. However, there has been planning for St George's Festival which took place on Sunday 27th April. The volunteer committee worked in partnership with Market Place Arts, who are investing in the region of £15,000 of resource, to deliver a series of workshops leading up to an impressive community parade involving 15ft puppets, as part of this year's fayre. A full programme of arts demonstrations on March Market Place has been planned as part of the arts focus too.

The event took place back in the town centre, utilising the newly refurbished Broad Street but, due to the success and growth of the fayre it will extend as far as West End Park, March

Library and St Peter's Church. Many community partners including 20Twenty Productions, March Town Council, March Society, March Museum and Cambridgeshire Libraries are involved in bringing this event together following many months of planning.

Looking ahead to the Four Seasons events taking place later in the year, Chatteris Festival will take place on 28 and 29 June, Whittlesey Festival Sunday 14 September, March Christmas Market Sunday 7 December and Wisbech Christmas Fayre Sunday 14 December. So lots to look forward to in the coming year.

Pride In Fenland Awards (Cllr Wallwork)

The Pride in Fenland awards are underway with nominations being received before the award ceremony on the 25 June at Wisbech St Mary Sports and Community Centre.

5 Market Place Wisbech – Fire Damaged Building (Cllrs Laws & Seaton)

Planning permission was granted earlier this year for the internal demolition of the building and protection of the façade. Since then, further details, required by the permission, have been agreed between the Council and the Owner. The Council are in close contact with the owner who has suggested they are seeking to implement the planning permission and complete these works in a timely manner.

Key PIs:

| Key PI | Description | Baseline | Target 2024/25 | Cumulative Performance | Variance (RAG) |
|--------|---|-----------|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| ARP1 | Days taken: new claims and changes for Council Tax Support | 9.52 days | 9.00 days | 9.4 | |
| ARP2 | Days taken: new claims and changes for Housing Benefit | 7.37 days | 8.00 days | 8.36 | |
| CELP1 | Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues | 294 | 250 | 286 | |
| CELP2 | The proportion (%) of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing options work | 45% | 53% | 47% | |
| CELP3 | Number of empty properties brought back into use | 86 | 50 | 64 | |
| CELP4 | Number of Active Fenland sessions delivered and total attendance per year | 621 | 600 | 1463 | |
| CELP5 | Satisfaction with our leisure centres (Net Promoter Score) | 47 | 38 | Awaiting Freedom Leisure feedback | |
| CELP6 | Value of Arts, Culture and Creativity Grants achieved in Fenland | £199,000 | £201,000 | In excess of £450,000 | |

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

| Comments |
|----------|
| |
| |

Environment

Projects from Business Plan:

Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

Diverting waste from landfill (Cllr Murphy)

During this past year, the teams have collected more than 39,000 tonnes of domestic and commercial waste from our customers. Given the property growth in the past 12 months, it is surprising to see the total waste collected reducing. The Residual Waste (green bin waste) has increased slightly (267 tonnes 1% increase), but the good quality blue bin Dry Recycling waste collected has reduced by 6% (567 tonnes). There have also been 505 tonnes less Garden Waste collected because of differing growing seasons.

| Collected Waste Tonnages (Quarters 1-4) | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | % Change |
|---|---------|---------|----------|
| Overall tonnage | 39,997 | 39,192 | -2% |
| Residual Tonnage (green bins) | 23,418 | 23,685 | +1% |
| Dry Recycling Tonnage Actual (blue bins) | 8,459 | 7,892 | -6% |
| Compost Tonnage Actual (brown bins) | 8,120 | 7,615 | -6% |
| Dry Recycling & Compost Tonnage Total (blue and brown bins) | 16,579 | 15,507 | -6% |

| | | |
|--|-------|-----|
| Collected Waste – | | |
| Percentage Recycling (blue bins to green bins) | 26.5% | 25% |
| Percentage Recycling (blue and brown bins to green bins) | 41.5% | 40% |

Customers are producing very similar amounts of residual waste, which is good news against the background of property growth that Fenland has experienced.

Unfortunately, the amount of good quality recycling has reduced when compared to the same period last year. This is somewhat the trend seen nationally with reduced packaging material weights, but for Fenland is also in part due to changes in the sampling methodology required by material recovery facilities and increasing levels of materials in blue bins not suitable for recycling.

These changes have resulted in increased levels of rejected materials at the sorting facility. During 2023/24, 824 tonnes of recycling collected in blue bins was classified as unsuitable for recycling, during 2024/25 it was 1,407 tonnes, an increase of 583 tonnes.

To protect the quality of recycling materials collected, the collection teams rejected 6,708 blue bins in the year. The majority of these customers are written to with information about how to get their recycling correct. Alongside the checks upon collections, supervisors performed inspections of 3,739 bins with properties receiving information directly from them encouraging best use of recycling bins. Of the 3,739 bins inspected, 5% contained incorrect materials (88).

By diverting this waste from landfill the Council has generated £470,500 of income from the

County Council in recycling credits against their cost of landfill. From April this material also attracts Extender Producer Responsibility payments, which are initially forecast by Defra to be in the region of £1 million for Fenland.

As a result, we will continue to support our customers to maximise their recycling efforts and to treat their waste as a resource to generate income and reduce overall costs.

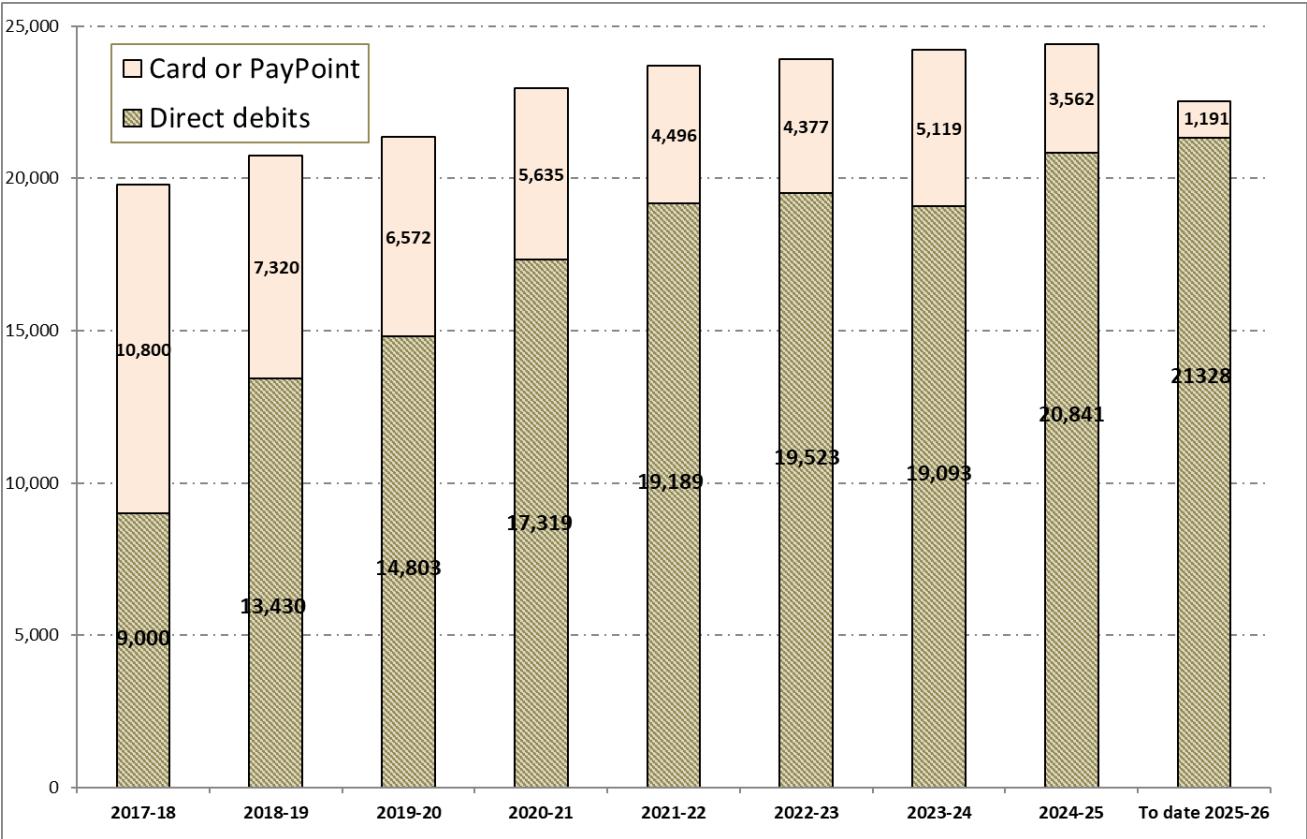
Garden Waste Collection (Cllr Murphy)

Last year, the service finished with 24,403 subscriptions, 85% direct debits and a total of £1,112,914 income to cover the costs of providing the garden waste service.

So far for the 2025/26 season we have 22,519 subscriptions in place, with 95% direct debits, already generating an income of £1,002,000 towards the 2025/26 service. This year we have had just over 200 customers make use of cash payments via PayPoint at local post offices and shops.

As usual for the time of year, we still have customers signing up by card and direct debit as the growing season commences.

Garden Waste Subscriptions by Year and Payment Type (2017-2025)



Delivering clean streets and public spaces (Cllr Murphy)

The cleansing team works 7 days a week, 364 days a year to keep Fenland’s streets and public open spaces clean.

This past year the team have received 1,651 requests from the public to resolve environmental issues, such as litter, broken glass, flytipping, drug related litter or similar. 87% (1,441) of these were attended and dealt with the same or next working day.

The scheduled cleansing and Rapid Response service, with support from Fenland's active local volunteers, including Street Pride groups, deliver clean streets and public open spaces in Fenland. The standard of cleanliness is monitored by Street Scene officers using Keep Britain Tidy surveying methodology across a range of land use types and all wards. Since April, officers have completed 1,022 surveys for litter and street sweeping and found 1,009 to be of a suitable standard (98.7%).

Working with key stakeholders to deliver an effective waste partnership and update the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Waste Strategy (Cllr Tierney)

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership has commenced the drafting of a revised waste strategy ready for initial review and member consideration this summer. The review was delayed awaiting clarification of Simpler Recycling, the Deposit Return Scheme and Extended Producer Responsibility. Now that Defra have provided a timetable for these, work on the strategy has commenced with a first draft expected in April, the final draft of which will form a Council report in the early Autumn.

Deliver a competitive trade waste service (Cllr Murphy)

The Council's commercial waste service offers residual, recycling and food waste collections for small to medium sized enterprises across Fenland via wheeled bins and sacks.

The service has 612 customers at present generating just over £506,000 of income during the past year. The team have collected a total of 1,025 tonnes of commercial waste, of which 213 tonnes was recycling or food waste.

Work with partners and the community on projects to improve the environment and streetscene

Tackling fly-tipping, illegal parking, dog fouling, littering and ASB (Cllr Murphy) –

Total number of fly tips during this time. Wisbech rural villages have been the most affected across the district.

| Month | Total | Chatteris | March | Whittlesey | Wisbech | Villages |
|----------|-------|-----------|-------|------------|---------|----------|
| January | 167 | 7 | 22 | 26 | 56 | 56 |
| February | 124 | 4 | 19 | 9 | 49 | 43 |
| March | 134 | 5 | 16 | 20 | 47 | 46 |

The Street Scene Team aim to be as proactive as they can and aim to attend fly tipped sites to look for evidence and bring those responsible to account. Some of our proactive work is included below:

3 people have been issued with a fixed penalty notice for breaching their householder's duty of care when waste linked back to them was found dumped in Wisbech and Chatteris. 1 of these has now been paid.

1 person has been issued with a fixed penalty for littering after an officer witnessed them discard their waste on the floor. This has since been paid.

4 Formal Interview Under Cautions have been carried out. All were questioned in connection with waste fund dumped.

2 people have been issued with a formal written warning for fly tipping where we had insufficient evidence to pursue but believed them to be responsible for waste dumped in March.

Additional enforcement work is taking place on March Marketplace to raise awareness of the parking order following the recent improvement works. Sadly, we have had to issue **3 parking fines** to cars who were found to be parking illegally.

The team have received **a total of 69 reported abandoned vehicles. All were investigated with 3 being removed by our contractor** due to being a danger to the highway.

A special project, which took place in the month of March and focussed on a fly tipping hot spot in South Brink Wisbech, saw the removal of 15 tonnes of waste plus the installation of a soil bund to stop further issues. This was a grant funded project.

Maintain parks and open spaces through grounds maintenance contractor (Cllr Murphy)
FDC's contractor, Tivoli, has had a good start to the grass cutting season with all works on track and rounds being completed in a timely manner.

FDC is extending the Tivoli contract by 1 year and work to implement this from November 2025 are under way.

Support community groups including Street Pride, In Bloom, Green Dog Walkers and Friends of groups (Cllr Murphy)

Between January and March 2025 our volunteer groups undertook more than 120 events, despite cold, wet weather conditions. During this time, we pushed our sustainability message, looking to provide economic, social and environmental support to Fenland via volunteering and community engagement.

Environmental Sustainability:

- Coordinated and supported numerous environmental projects initiated by Street Pride, In Bloom, and Friends Of groups, including wildflower planting, community woodland enhancements, and recycled planter installations (ongoing Jan-Mar).
- Facilitated the creation of a new pollinator and community garden project in March, involving land clearance (Phase 1 completed on 28th March 2025) and planning for public planting sessions.
- Promoted and planned biodiversity initiatives, such as 'BioBlitz May', encouraging

volunteers and the public to record local flora and fauna. Conducted a tester session in Westend Park, March and initiated similar activities within the volunteer groups.

- FDC supported litter-picking activities across multiple groups, covering most of the Fenland District.
- Facilitated the use of recycled materials, such as wood chippings provided by FDC/Thalia for paths (used by Friends of Wisbech General Cemetery in February).
- Our volunteers supported habitat improvements including the installation of bat and bird boxes (Friends of Wisbech General Cemetery) and managing woodlands (Gault Wood, March) for wildlife.
- Initiated planning and sought volunteers (from Jan onwards) for promoting the upcoming food waste recycling scheme (due April 2026).
- Engaged children and adults (14th February 2025) in imagining future environmental projects for March at the Imaginarium event (Heart of March).

Social Sustainability:

- FDC organised and facilitated networking events for Street Pride volunteers:
 - In-person Street Pride Network event focused on project ideas on Wednesday 29 January 2025.
 - Online network meeting (Thursday 27 February 2025).
 - Online network meeting (Thursday 27 March 2025).
- Actively promoted volunteer recruitment (ongoing), including successful recruitment from the groups themselves via local magazines and social media.
- Supported volunteer groups in developing strategic plans (Whittlesey Feb/Mar), mission statements, and overcoming challenges like committee formation (Leverington in February).
- Encouraged and supported inter-group collaboration and resource sharing to strengthen smaller groups (observed in March newsletter).
- Facilitated engagement between volunteer groups and local schools/youth groups (e.g., Tydd St Giles, Murrow, Benwick, Parson Drove).
- Developed and initiated a new volunteering strategy focused on project-based public events, with the March Library Garden Project (Phase 1 completed 28th March 2025) as the first example. The aim is to engage the public with the environment and reduce the commitment barriers to volunteering.
- Supported community engagement events run by volunteer groups, such as guided walks (Friends of Wisbech General Cemetery Jan/Feb), recruitment mornings (Benwick 22 March 2025), and fun days (Waterlees Easter Fun Day planned for March).
- Promoted the importance of social aspects within groups, such as post-activity gatherings (many groups are going strength to strength by promoting the social benefits of volunteering).
- Built networks with various community organisations and stakeholders to support and strengthen our environmental volunteer initiatives.
- Initiated planning for the annual Fenland Street Pride Garden Party (planned for Sunday 20 July 2025), opening award nominations in March.
- Provided guidance and support regarding communications during pre-election periods (advice issued Feb for period 25 March - 1 May 2025) and addressed volunteer concerns regarding Local Government Reorganisation (discussed Mar).

Economic Sustainability:

- Championed the Street Pride model (ongoing) as cost-effective for delivering

environmental and community benefits.

- Supported groups in planning potentially resource-intensive projects like new storage buildings (Whittlesey Street Pride) and exploring sustainable alternatives to costly practices like hanging baskets (Whittlesey query in March).
- Facilitated access to resources, such as recycled woodchip from council contractors (used by FoWGC before Feb) and community hub facilities (REMO Jan).
- Explored options (discussion Feb) for groups to obtain specific insurance for activities, potentially offset by grants, enabling wider environmental action while managing risk.
- Supported fundraising and community project initiatives like recycling sales (Morrow idea Jan) and community gardens potentially supplying community fridges (Benwick query in Mar).
- Investigated ways to reduce costs for groups, such as finding free social spaces (Tydd St Giles query Feb, Doddington query Mar).

Working with town councils and the community to provide local markets and market town events (including Four Seasons events) (Cllr Murphy)

Please see the update [here](#).

Deliver the Council's carbon reduction and climate adaption plan (Cllr Tierney)

Net Zero Village Fund

In December 2024, the Council received £90,000 from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority through the Net Zero Village Fund.

Throughout January to March, the Council received 6 applications and 4 of these have now been awarded their application fund amount which varied between £10,000 and £25,000. The planned schemes include solar panels and battery storage units, a green roof and a low energy lighting scheme.

The remaining 2 schemes continue to be developed into full applications.

Wider publicity regarding these projects will be announced following the pre-election period.

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

No further progress has been made on the implementation of civil parking enforcement (CPE) since the estimated cost of the works (last calculated in November 2023) highlighted a significant shortfall in funding in the region of £500,000.

This figure would likely have now increased due to additional sign and line corrective works being required since the estimated costs was based on a survey undertaken in 2022.

A further CPE update paper with estimated project costs is scheduled to go to Cabinet in June.

Street Lighting (Cllr French)

A total of sixty-three streetlight faults were reported and have been attended to during the months of January, February and March 2025 by Fenlands streetlight maintenance contractor.

Twenty-nine of the reported faults related to District Council streetlights during this period.

An overview of the fault attendance can be seen below. These figures exclude any capital-programmed replacement or upgrade works undertaken by the Councils streetlight contractor.

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Fenland DC - | 29 Fault Reports |
| Clarion - | 4 Fault Reports |
| Parishes - | 30 Fault Reports |

Electrical and structural testing works associated with Council owned or managed streetlights was undertaken between September and February. Some additional testing works was commissioned in March, and a number of streetlights also require a return visit to site due to vegetational overgrowth preventing access.

This has delayed the receipt of the testing data which will be collated and analysed by the Engineering Team prior to sharing with third party asset owners. Details of streetlights that are known to have failed the structural test have already been shared with the relevant asset owners and communications are ongoing in relation to asset removal or replacement.

Capital Streetlight Replacement Works

The Engineering Team will analyse the structural and electrical testing data once all of the data has been received to determine the next phase of capital streetlight replacement or upgrade works.

FDC Car Park Maintenance (Cllr French)

All FDC car park inspections are undertaken 6 monthly and scheduled in April and October each year. The next asset inspections for FDC's car parks are due to take place in April and any associated defects shall be quantified and actioned. The detailed inspection information is used to inform minor improvement, and maintenance works for the Councils public car parks.

Car Park gully cleansing works were undertaken in February and March.

Whilst some early cold spells were encountered during the Winter months, the overall number of grit runs undertaken throughout the gritting season was relatively low compared to the year before. Winter gritting is undertaken based on a every other run basis for weather alerts and in total 15 grit runs were made during the Winter months.

Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime & antisocial behaviour and promoting social cohesion

Community Safety Partnership updates (Cllr Wallwork)

- Joint work with Police in respect of youth related nuisance and drug activity at a residential property which is causing alarm to another resident.
- Supported Police with patrols and engagements across Fenland during Business and Retail Crime week. Visiting ensuring shops and local businesses to help reduce

shoplifting and associated crimes. During these patrols, three shops were identified selling illegal vapes and cigarettes.

- In partnership with police, County Council and education, a Joint Enterprise project has been delivered over an extended period. The project is aimed at working with young people identified at risk of becoming involved in knife crime, educating them about the implications of joint enterprise, with regard to the impact of prosecutions and sentencing of those who participate in group related crimes. Over this extended period, six sessions have been delivered at three of our secondary academies and planning is ongoing for the fourth.
- Community Safety attended the Golden Age Fair at Friday Bridge with advice and signposting for a range of services. Residents took away the Little Book of Scams and FDC information on how report ASB and other community concerns.
- Chatteris King Edwards Community Safety Event: 30 people attended this event and engaged with Community Safety and partners which included Cambs Fire & Rescue, Police, and the County Council Community Team. Support/advice/guidance was provided on a range of issues, including ASB streetlighting, cost of living, scams and fire safety.
- The latest CSP Newsletter has been published, [Community Safety Partnership Newsletter - Edition 18](#)
- Front line professionals and volunteers who operate in Fenland attended online training organised by Community Safety and delivered by Cambridgeshire Constabulary's Modern Slavery and Trafficking Sergeant. This training covered:
 - Improving awareness of exploitation in Fenland.
 - Identifying types of exploitation.
 - Reporting and referral pathways.

Fenland Diverse Communities Forum updates on delivering the Community Cohesion Action Plan (Cllr Wallwork)

On Thursday 6 March, the Queen Mary Centre in Wisbech was transformed into a prestigious fashion show venue complete with catwalk! Ticket holders and invited guests enjoyed complimentary drinks and canapes when they arrived. This was followed by a speech by CEO Keith Smith about Ferry Project and its work with those experiencing homelessness in our community, as Ferry Project marked the end of their year of celebrating to mark the charity's 25th Anniversary. Then the Linda Ekins Academy of Dramatic Arts (LEADA) drama group, performed a short drama that told the story of a homeless person finding the help and support they needed from Ferry Project, which enabled them to move from homelessness to independent living.

After this, the fashion show began. With 20 models from the local community taking part, each model had selected items of donated clothing from Wisbech Donations Hub to include as part of their outfits. Each model took to the catwalk wearing three different outfits and wowed the 160 strong audience with their glamour, style and confidence.

The Wisbech Donations Hub is based at the Queen Mary Centre and operates in a similar way to the Foodbank, where individuals can be referred to the service. The Donations Hub provides household items for people in need who are unable to afford the essentials required to set up a home such as pots and pans, pillows, blankets, beds, cookers, lamps, towels, toiletries, clothing and even food. Donations of items in a good condition can be brought to the Queen Mary Centre on weekdays during working hours.

A total of £2,500 was raised from the event with money raised going towards helping the homeless in the Fenland area through the work of the Ferry Project by being split between the Donations Hub and the Hardship Fund that can be directly accessed by homeless clients for things such as training, transport or medical prescriptions.

Keith Smith said “What a wonderful evening Thursday was. It was a pleasure to work with all the volunteers and models to raise funds to help homeless people and to highlight the Donations Hub. I am grateful to everyone who gave their time and money to make the evening such a success.

The Donations Hub helps homeless people as they set up their new home, supplying them with household goods, furniture and clothes for free. The Hub is entering a new era with a new partnership with the Kings Church who will be taking over the management of the Hub and looking to expand its work.”

Community Safety Grant Agreement updates (Cllr Wallwork)

- Supported reports of Quad Bikes impacting a rural location. Driven at speed through hedgerows, damaging crops and disturbing wildlife and along footpaths. Community Safety met with the March police team to discuss these issues, and this is now included in their patrol activity along with them sharing information with Rural Crime Action Team and Traffic Departments. The customer was also made aware of the benefit of reporting incidents to police when happening and other evidential opportunities that could help FDC/Police to identify those responsible.
- The Speedwatch coordinator for the County is engaging in community safety engagement events to promote Speedwatch in Fenland.
- To find out more about Speedwatch and register interest in setting up a Speedwatch group, email: Speedwatch (Cambs) speedwatch@cambs.police.uk
- Wisbech Town Centre ASB – following the concerns raised at last full council in February, the Council has been working with the police who confirmed the following for the month of March:
 1. Ongoing investigation
 - a. Male charged and remanded with ABH and recalled to prison (pending Crown Court sentencing)
 - b. Two others arrested and bailed.
 - c. Several children identified have been interviewed at the police station with parents.
 - d. Referrals to the Youth Justice Service.
 - e. Ongoing liaison with social care / education / housing in relation to relevant children – part of the Youth Escalation Scheme (‘YES’) which we introduced following similar issues last year.
 - f. Visited each of the affected businesses, provided reassurance and details of plans going forward.
 - g. Work progressing towards partial/closure orders for anti-social behaviour linked to residential properties.
 - h. Community Protection Notices / Warnings progressing for those children where age permits. (16 years and over)
 - i. Increased targeted patrols.
 - j. Review of initial response to the disorder.

2. Communications

- a. Some significant improvements have been made on this issue following similar events last year. It was clear that local politicians were not fully sighted on all the improvements and process changes we have made since last year – this led to a review of how we communicate (both ways).
- b. Look to create a regular comms piece to show details around crime performance and positive police stories (as well as, where possible, something akin to testimonials from victims who are willing to allow this) which will enable politicians to understand and accurately represent the work that the police do in communities when asked. We have seen a reduction across all crime types in the city centre in Wisbech because of the work that we have put in place since last year.
- c. Early identification of issues which may cause problems with community confidence (which may attract national attention or ‘political’) are not consistently identified at an early stage.

3. Regular meetings

- a. The Police and councillors will have more regular meetings to share updates and concerns.

4. Support for causes more widely

- a. Recognition that policing is not the answer to complex social problems and deprivation. The politicians asked to be told where there are issues with partners and other agencies not helping or adequately dealing with issues in their remits which cause failure or other demand on policing so they can lobby independently of policing for system-wide or process change and allow us to remain neutral (and not critical of partners).

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

Reporting period: 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025

The CCTV Shared Service continues to play a critical role in enhancing community safety, supporting local priorities, and providing vital operational support across Fenland’s four market towns.

Community Safety and Incident Response

Between April 2024 and March 2025, the CCTV service responded to 1,225 incidents, marking an increase of 115 incidents from the previous year. These responses supported frontline services across a wide range of community safety concerns, including:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Criminal damage
- Violent crime
- Illegal drug use
- Possession of weapons
- Theft and acquisitive crime

Direct outcomes included 200 arrests made by Cambridgeshire Police as a result of real-time CCTV detection, evidence gathering, and live support from the control room—an increase of

48 arrests from the previous year.

This reflects the growing importance of CCTV as both a reactive enforcement support tool and a proactive deterrent, strengthening the Council's response to crime and disorder.

Proactive Monitoring and Prevention

In addition to its responsive duties, the service has expanded its proactive surveillance programme, with operators completing 5,406 proactive patrols across town centres and known hotspots. This represents a 25% increase on the 4,308 patrols conducted in the previous year. The increased visibility and vigilance have enabled early identification and intervention, helping to:

- Deter potential offending
- Reassure the public
- Support business crime reduction partnerships
- Identify environmental crime and safeguarding concerns

Out-of-Hours Emergency Support

The CCTV service also acts as the Council's out-of-hours contact centre, providing 24/7 telephone support across a range of key council services. Between April 2024 and March 2025, the team handled 437 emergency calls, covering:

- Homelessness triage and emergency accommodation
- Stray and lost dogs
- Dangerous structures and buildings
- Urgent cleansing or environmental incidents

This underlines the multi-functional value of the service in supporting frontline response, not only for crime, but also for public protection and service continuity outside normal working hours.

System Resilience

To support long-term system resilience, a new maintenance contract commenced on 3rd January 2025, secured through a joint procurement process. This ensures a robust programme of planned preventative maintenance and rapid response to CCTV faults—maximising system uptime, image quality, and public reassurance.

Key Performance Summary

| Area | Total | Year-on-Year Change |
|----------------------------------|-------|---------------------|
| Total incidents responded to | 1,225 | +115 |
| Police arrests supported by CCTV | 200 | +48 |
| Proactive patrols completed | 5,406 | +1,098 |

Street Drinking Update (Cllr Wallwork)

Community Safety continue to have close links with the Neighbourhood Police Team at Wisbech and conduct joint patrols with them. The overall picture does appear to be improved.

Where street drinking has been identified, there hasn't been witnessed any associated nuisance behaviour and community reports are low.

Monthly monitoring of police calls for service, CCTV monitoring data and community reports to FDC continues. This information is collated and shared with partners.

Key PIs:

| Key PI | Description | Baseline | Target 22/23 | Cumulative Performance | Variance (RAG) |
|--------|--|----------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|
| CELP7 | Rapid or Village Response requests actioned the same or next day | 93% | 90% | 87% | |
| CELP8 | % of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards | 97% | 93% | 99% | |
| CELP9 | % of collected household waste – Blue Bin recycling (1 month in arrears) | 26.6% | 28% | 25% | |
| CELP10 | Customer satisfaction with refuse and recycling services | 93.6% | 90% | 97% | |
| CELP11 | Customer satisfaction with our garden waste service | 89.8% | 85% | 97% | |
| CELP12 | Number of Street Pride and Friends Of community environmental events supported | 255 | 204 | 214 | |
| CELP13 | % of businesses who said they were supported and treated fairly | 100% | 95% | 100% | |
| CELP14 | % of those asked who are satisfied with events | 97% | 90% | 97% | |

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

| Comments |
|----------|
| |

Economy

Projects from Business Plan:

Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses

Attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities (Cllr Benney)

Several inward investment enquiries are live including the consolidation of a business currently operating outside of Fenland to move its operation into Fenland.

Officers attended Driving Growth for the UK: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Pivotal Role in March at the Novotel Hotel in Cambridge. Over 150 businesses attended the event and several contacts were made that have resulted in/will result in visits to Fenland to look at business growth opportunities.

Preparations are well under way to promote Fenlands investment and business opportunities at UKREiiF being held in Leeds in May. Several pre-booked appointments held at the event have been made with potential inward investors, developers and funders. The representative attending on the Council's behalf and has also been invited onto the panel at the event discussing "Fens Reservoir: Leveraging investment in vital infrastructure into a community asset".

Promote business premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and Light Industrial Units (Cllr Benney)

The Estates team remain actively engaged with tenants of all sites. Overall occupancy across the investment estate remains high at 94.1%

All industrial units are fully occupied.

Boathouse occupancy has dropped to 87.3%. This is a short-term situation as we are currently seeing a number of tenants relocate between units to adjust to their capacity needs. Underlying occupancy is 98.1% reflecting one vacant unit.

South Fens Business Centre (SFBC) has increased to 67.9% as a result of a significant letting to Age UK on a long-term agreement. This letting was only possible as a result of the agreed relaxation in rents.

A small number of the industrial tenants continue to report difficult trading conditions putting a strain on their ability to continue in business. Officers remain in active dialogue with these companies to ascertain if we can assist with the short-term financial strain whilst also conscious of the need to protect the financial position of the council

Skills Update (Cllr Benney)

A representative from the Council was invited to sit on the panel at the Attracting and Retaining Fenland's Talent through the Power of Partnerships event held at March Golf.

The Economic Growth Team attend meetings and engage with a number of groups related to skills including the Fenland Early Help Hub, Connect to Work and Work Well which can help employers support members of their workforce who may be facing issues that are a barrier to work.

The team also represent Fenland on skills provider group meeting, ensuring the needs of employers are understood by the providers.

Environmental Health inspection and business support programme (Cllr Wallwork)

The Food Safety service follow the requirement of the Food Law Code of Practice – the categories A to E in the below table indicate frequency of interventions. These categories are determined by risk to food safety (it is possible for a business to move up or down the scale as they improve food hygiene practices, or present different risks in the food produced):

| Category | Minimum intervention frequency |
|----------|---|
| A | At least every 6 months |
| B | At least every 12 months |
| C | At least every 18 months |
| D | At least every 24 months |
| E | A programme of Alternative Enforcement Strategies or intervention every 3 years |

Throughout January, February and March, 79 businesses received an inspection and were awarded a score using the food hygiene rating scheme, where applicable.

8 businesses were subject to Alternative Enforcement strategy (this is used for low risk – category E - businesses to enable the council to focus attention to those premises which present the greatest risk to consumer safety or who are failing to meet their statutory obligations).

The purpose of the food hygiene rating is to allow consumers to make informed choices about the places where they eat or shop for food and, through these choices, encourage businesses to improve their hygiene standards. All food ratings are periodically uploaded to the FSA website which publishes the ratings at <https://ratings.food.gov.uk/>. All premises that receive a score will also receive a window sticker to display the rating. It is not a legal requirement in England to display a hygiene rating.

Some premises may be excluded from the scheme or their rating may not be published for sensitivity purposes, however they are still rated in accordance with the standard. We support businesses who receive Food Hygiene Rating 5 by monthly publishing their trading names on our social media pages.

In January, February and March, Food Hygiene Ratings were awarded as follows:

- 66 businesses received a 5
- 9 businesses received a 4
- 3 businesses received a 3
- 1 business received a 2

- 0 businesses received a 1
- 0 business received a 0

The lower scoring businesses have received follow up support and revisits. Businesses that were subject to Alternative Enforcement Strategy do not receive a new food hygiene rating.

In January, February and March we received 4 applications for a food hygiene rating rescore visit. An opportunity to request a re-visit when improvements have been made in order to be re-assessed for a 'new' rating is one of the 3 safeguards to ensure that the Food Hygiene Rating scheme is fair to businesses, alongside a right to appeal and a right to reply. The re-score visit is unannounced and must take place within 3 months of the application being made by paying a fee via our website.

We also received 41 support requests, ranging from new business enquiries to foreign body and food poisoning complaints or issuing a food export certificate.

Support requests often include additional, unforeseen work, for example the Food Standards Agency asked local authorities to contact all care homes and hospitals in our District as a precaution due to certain desserts containing small levels of Listeria. We contacted 28 of these health care settings and 7 of them confirmed they had these desserts at their site and withdrew the products from their offer.

As the Port Health Authority, the Council also has responsibility for monitoring the classification of shellfish beds around the mouth of the River Nene. Eastern Inshore Fishery Conservation Authority (IFCA) collect the samples, and the Centre for Environment Fishery and Aquaculture Sciences (CEFAS) examine the samples and report on the results. In light of the recent vessel collision in the North Sea, IFCA carried out beach surveys and found plastic contamination that was varying in composition and numbers. IFCA also carried out additional shellfish sampling to ascertain background levels. Fishermen were advised to take extra care to undertake visual inspections to minimise the risk of plastic pellets presence.

Recently we also participated in a national sampling study focusing on raw shell eggs and both unpasteurised and pasteurised milk cheese at retail sale in order to ascertain their microbiological safety and quality. We collected 6 samples from shops located in March and all the results came back from the laboratory as satisfactory. Next we will be involved in a study designed determine the microbiological safety and quality of ready to eat dried fruit, nuts and seeds from retail and distributor/supplier premises and to identify any association between microbiological quality and packaging, country of origin and other relevant information gathered. Dried fruit, nuts and seeds are popular snacks which are generally seen as healthy options but have all been associated with outbreaks of illness in recent years.

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration

Planning updates (including progress on the Local Plan) (Cllr Laws)

The final vacancy within the Development Management Team has been recruited to, and the candidate is currently working their notices. The vacant role of Team Leader within the

Enforcement Team has been successfully recruited to. Alongside this a two year role to deal with some of the large planning applications has been successfully recruited to. This role is temporary in nature and will be funded through income from Planning Performance Agreements and also the Planning Fees for these large planning applications. The service is still staffed by 4.no agency staff to cover these various vacancies and large workloads. The Service has made significant strides in to reducing the backlog generated over the extended period of vacancies and has also undertaken an internal review to improve process and procedures.

Whilst the scheme of delegation, which decides which planning applications are determined by committee as opposed to officers, has been amended the number of items needing to go to Planning Committee is still significant and the level of delegation is still significantly below the Government guidance of 90%. Fenland District Council had the 5th lowest level of delegation across the Country in 2024. This continues to put pressure on the ability for Officer's to meet the statutory deadlines for planning applications. This is particularly relevant for the smaller and less controversial planning applications. The resulting impact is also of lengthy meeting agendas, or additional meetings, and the associated significant impact on those engaged in delivery.

The Planning Policy team are continuing to work on the development of a new Local Plan alongside other statutory duties. The Council submitted an Expression of Interest earlier in the year to Government regarding additional funding to help progress our Regulation 18 Local Plan. Fenland District Council has subsequently been allocated £227,962.50. This funding can assist in the delivery of the technical evidence updates that are required.

Planning Policy are also currently leading on a number of NSIPs which are requiring an increasing level of engagement and interaction from the team. The Planning Policy team are keen to undertake further engagement with Elected Members to better understand current place priorities and help ensure that emerging policies deliver good growth for Fenland.

Delivery of new homes (including affordable homes) (Cllr Laws & Cllr Hoy)

The totals of affordable housing for the last financial year ended slightly higher than the last report, ending at 240 homes, though final verification still being undertaken. This is very similar to the previous year total.

Section 106 units totalling over 200 units are anticipated to be completed in the next 12 months, with others also highly likely, therefore the forecast is that we will result in similar number of new affordable home completions to the last 2 years.

Whilst viability has often presented a problem in the district, we have seen a recent lift in developments in Fenland coming forwards as 100% affordable, with 6 of these aiming to start construction in the coming financial year and totalling over 400 affordable units.

Whilst these homes will not be completed in the next financial year, we are likely to see completions in the following couple of years and should the S106 units continue the recent trend, then we anticipate looking forward to a significant lift in the total affordable units completed in 2026/7 and 2027/8 and beyond.

With pressure being felt on the housing register for 1 bed units and feedback from the Leader

and the Portfolio Holder for Housing, a focus has been placed on securing as many 1 bed units within new application as viability allows. This has resulted in pipeline developments now providing over 200 x 1 bed units, with circa 50 of these to be under construction in the coming 12 months.

External funding bid and major projects updates (Cllr Boden)

(Long-Term Plan for Towns) Wisbech Plan for Neighbourhoods, Wisbech (Cllr Hoy, Cllr Tierney, Cllr Wallwork)

Fenland District Council, in partnership with the Wisbech Town Board, are in a positive position in relation to the Long-Term Plans for Towns programme.

The Board have successfully drafted the Regeneration Plan, and have begun prioritisation of projects for the 4-year investment plan with the next meeting scheduled for the 12 May. The Town Board will be able to submit this work as soon as FDC have approved the plans at Cabinet and Government announce the submission window.

Following the most recent budget, it was confirmed that the £20m funding is secured. There have been some minor changes to the programme, namely the change to being branded the Plan for Neighbourhoods but in principle, the scheme remains largely unaffected.

Since the last report, FDC have received a further £200,000 in revenue capacity funding to support any bid/application process.

FDC officers have also confirmed all governance information to CLG as required.

Further updates will follow in subsequent Portfolio holder reports.

Accommodation Review (Cllr Boden)

At the FDC Cabinet meeting held on 24 March 2025, Cabinet members decided to pause the council's Accommodation Review, pending the ongoing Local Government Reorganisation.

Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund (Cllr Benney)

The three-year SPF and REPF grants programmes have now completed and evaluation reports are being completed. Initial assessments show that the programmes have delivered significant benefits for the Fenland economy including:

- £1m+ of grant support provided
- £1.95m+ of additional private sector investment
- 79 businesses receiving grant support
- 125 new Fenland jobs created
- 11 new businesses started
- 16 farm businesses supported including 9 diversification projects

From the CPCA SPF and REPF Team, "a big congratulations to FDC for fully completing their UKSPF programme – an excellent achievement!"

A full evaluation report will be provided over the summer.

Transitional funding has now been secured for 2025-26 of SPF £297k and REPF £130k.

March Future High Street Fund (Cllr Seaton & Cllr French)

The March Future Highstreets Fund Project continues to make significant strides in its objective to regenerate and revitalise the town centre of March. This initiative, supported by the UK Government's Future High Streets Fund, aims to create a vibrant, sustainable, and attractive town centre for the benefit of local residents, businesses, and visitors.

Key Achievements and Progress

The project has made significant progress in a number of key areas, and the following highlights demonstrate the positive impact being achieved:

Broad Street Capital Regeneration Scheme

The completion of the Broad Street regeneration scheme represents a major milestone in the programme. Delivered in partnership with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), this project has transformed the appearance and functionality of the area. The scheme included improvements to the streetscape, better pedestrian facilities, enhanced green spaces, and upgraded lighting. Feedback from the public and key partners has been overwhelmingly positive, with many noting the improved aesthetic appeal and increased footfall in the area.

To note, the scheme has now been nominated for a national **CIHT Creating Better Places Award**. FDC will find out the outcome of the award on the on 4 June 2025.

There is minor work close to the bridge still outstanding that is anticipated to be completed in the first week in May.

Completion of the Marketplace Regeneration

The regeneration of the Marketplace, which forms a central focal point of March's high street, has also been successfully completed. The improvements to this space have enhanced its appeal as a community hub, with better seating areas, more greenery, and improved pedestrian walkways. The current seating has not weathered well, and will be replaced during May.

Barclays Building – Demolition Planning

Planning for the demolition of the premises to make way for a development site is ongoing and it is hoped that the demolition of the property will be able to begin in late spring/early summer.

Shopfront Grants and Local Business Support

The shopfront grants scheme is ongoing, with 30 expressions of interest (EOIs) received from local businesses keen to upgrade their premises. FDC officers are currently considering 6 formal full applications.

March Toilet Block – Tendering Process

The successful tender process has been concluded for the construction of the new toilet block in March. The successful bidder Probus will aim to start on work as soon as possible subject to final agreement of design elements with the Middle Level Commission. Due to technical

issues, this consent process has taken longer than hoped. However, work between both parties continues to ensure the project is delivered as planned

Next Steps and Future Developments

The project team, in collaboration with the Member Steering Group, is actively exploring opportunities to maximize the remaining underspend, with a focus on enhancing the infrastructure and accessibility of the town centre. Key planned initiatives include:

Gray's Lane Resurfacing and Crossing Improvements

A full resurfacing of Gray's Lane has been completed.

City Road Car Park Expansion

The creation of additional car parking has now been completed.

March Gateway Physical Regeneration

March gateway (outside Iceland) works are now underway with programmed completion for the end of May 2025.

New Fountain Centrepiece

Plans are currently being drawn up for the installation of a new ornamental centrepiece for the Fountain in Broad Street. Officers will work internally with Planning and Conservation to progress this work. This will be the final element of the works and is programmed for completion at the end of 2025.

This will then bring to a close all remaining capital works within the FHSF scheme.

11-12 High Street, Wisbech (Cllr Boden, Cllr Hoy & Cllr Tierney)

The revised design for the project has been received together with a proposal from local architects / construction specialists with knowledge of the site to deliver the project through to RIBA Stage 6.

24 High Street, Wisbech (Cllr Seaton, Cllr Hoy & Cllr Tierney)

24 High Street construction continues with the building almost completed. The expected construction completion date is now 21 May 2025. However, handover to the Council will take place around 21 June, as connections to the water supply and sewerage require a closure of the High Street.

Once handed over there will be a formal event where elected Members will have the opportunity to see the building. Whilst it is compact, the change to the streetscape on Wisbech Highstreet is significant, with the "missing tooth" of 24 High Street finally filled with a building that will provide housing opportunities for local people, as well as a small commercial unit.

The Elms, Chatteris (Cllr Boden, Cllr Benney, Cllr Tierney)

Planning application has been submitted and is being assessed.

Nene Waterfront Development (Cllr Boden, Cllr Benney, Cllr Tierney)

Planning application being submitted in May for an Extra Care scheme at Plot 5.

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 Benney)

Whilst work continues in respect of the final sites identified in the first tranche of disposals, work has now begun in relation to the second tranche of sales as approved by members in December. The first stage is to prioritise the sites to identify which can be progressed and also which have the potential to generate the most significant capital receipts for the Council

To date Phase 1 sales and overage payments have resulted in an income of £468,950.

Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements**Promotion of sustainable road, rail and concessionary travel initiatives (Cllr Seaton)**Whittlesea Station

The Outline Business Case (OBC) is continuing to progress. The procurement phase will complete shortly, and contractors will then commence all the design and feasibility work along with surveys to provide data that will support the business case. This project will consider the station access, platform lengthening and a pedestrian bridge along with additional car parking.

By way of background, CPCA approved up to £3 million pounds for Whittlesea Station from April 2024 to end of March 2027. Further details about the Whittlesea Station funding are available here [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com/Document.ashx)

Engagement with CPCA and CCC on delivery of major road and rail infrastructure projects (Cllr Seaton) – WOLocal Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP)**There is no specific update on this project.**

The LTCP sets out the forward transport strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is an essential document to help secure funding for local transport improvements. It can be viewed from the link below.

[CMIS > Meetings](#)

Wisbech Access Strategy**There is no specific update on this project.**

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

a range of transport projects in Wisbech that aim to address transport issues within the town and to help support the delivery of the scale of growth in the Fenland Local Plan. The latest information 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. A copy of the main accompanying paper for the meetings mentioned above can be found from the following link:
<https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1529/Committee/62/Default.aspx>

There has been delays relating to land acquisition and ongoing discussions around related issues such as probate. This work is now expected to complete in the summer of 2025. The next step for these 3 projects is to secure funding for their construction.

March Area Transport Study – Main schemes

There is no specific update for this project. Work is ongoing to progress the individual projects as set out below.

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 following are currently being progressed following approval by the CPCA to draw down an additional £7million pounds for spend between 2024 and 2026 in July 2024. These schemes are continuing to progress on time and on budget.

- A141 / Twenty Foot Road Signals scheme delivery
- High Street / St Peter's Road Traffic Signal Improvements scheme delivery
- Development of a full business case and detailed design work for Northern Industrial Link Road (NILR)

The link below provides further details of the July 2024 meeting.

[Agenda for Transport and Infrastructure Committee on Monday, 22nd July, 2024, 1.00 pm](#)

Additional delivery funding is required for the A141 / Peas Hill Roundabout Upgrade (52m ICD), including the creation of an all-movement signalised junction at the A141 / Hostmoor Avenue Junction.

March to Wisbech Railway Line

There is no specific update for this project. An update is expected at the CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee in November 2024.

This is a CPCA funded project with study work being taken forward by CPCA.

In November 2024, CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee reviewed the latest Options Assessment Report. Despite the consideration of several scheme options (e.g. heavy rail and light rail) the case for the improvements was challenging with low benefit cost ratios on the

schemes. There was collective disappointment amongst the CPCA Committee members but also an agreement to explore other connections such as links to the proposed Anglian Water Fens Reservoir project near Chatteris. Wider connectivity benefits should also be part of ongoing discussion. There was also support for interim measures such as additional bus services. The Committee agreed that an additional paper will be presented to them with possible next steps in Spring/Summer 2025.

A link to the papers and information from the November 2024 CPCA meeting with the relevant reports and papers can be found from the link below:

[Agenda for Transport and Infrastructure Committee on Monday, 4th November, 2024, 10.00 am](#)

A47

In May 2023 National Highways released a series of documents and a consultation to support the Roads Investment Strategy 3 process covering the period 2025 – 2030. There are several references to A47 within the East of England regional report. The outcome of the consultation will feed into the RIS3 decision making by Government. The documents can be viewed from the following link: <https://routestrategies.nationalhighways.co.uk/>

As part of RIS2 National Highways are working on a series of Pipeline scheme undertaking feasibility and other technical work to support decisions for RIS3. One of these projects is A47 Elm High Road roundabout. They are also considering this roundabout alongside Weasenham Lane/Ramnoth Road. The outcome of the work will go forward to Government as part of their decision making for RIS3. In late 2024, Government announced that RIS3 decisions would be postponed by 12 months for early 2026.

Whittlesey Relief Road Project SOBC

The Whittlesey Relief Road Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) project is being managed by Fenland District Council with funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) market towns programme. The project commenced in March 2023 with a paper approved by FDC Cabinet for the Governance arrangements and procurement of a contractor to deliver the project. Please see the link to the Cabinet paper for further details.

[Cabinet Paper March 2023 - Whittlesey Relief Rd V2 6.2.2023 updated 02.03.23.pdf \(fenland.gov.uk\)](#)

The project is now being finalised and is just to complete shortly. It is expected that the final report will be discussed at FDC Cabinet in May 2025 to consider its contents and next steps.

Work with CPCA to influence housing and infrastructure funding to stimulate housing development and economic growth (Cllr Boden) – DH/AG

The Council continues to work collaboratively with the CPCA and constituent Councils of the CPCA to submit a Local Growth Plan by the summer of 2025. This will link to the Comprehensive Spending Review and the emerging National Industrial Strategy. The plan will be for 10 years up to 2035.

Key PIs:

| Key PI | Description | Baseline | Target 21/22 | Cumulative Performance | Variance (RAG) |
|--------|---|----------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|
| CELP15 | % of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks | 92.5% | 70% | 91% | |
| CELP16 | % of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks | 68% | 70% | 85% | |
| CELP17 | % of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks | 85.75% | 80% | 91% | |
| EGA1 | % occupancy of our business estates | 94.2% | 95% | 94.1% | |
| MS1 | % occupancy of Wisbech Yacht Harbour | 95% | 97% | 85% | |

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

| Comments |
|----------|
| |
| |
| |

Quality Organisation

Projects from Business Plan:

Excellent Customer Service

Customer Service Excellence accreditation (Cllr Tierney)

Our last annual assessment took place on 13th June 2025.

Supporting vulnerable customers with complex queries (Cllr Wallwork)

Please see updates on [Homelessness](#), [Rough Sleepers](#) and [Community Safety](#)

Elections Update (Cllr Boden)

By-Elections 27 February 2025

On Thursday 27 February 2025, the Council successfully delivered two By-Elections as follows:

Slade Lode South Ward of Chatteris Town Council following the resignation of Ken Perrin. There was one polling station located at Quaker Way Residents Community Room. The overall turnout was 16% and Joanne Fuller-Gray was duly elected.

East Ward of March Town Council following the resignation of Stuart Harris. There were two polling stations located at St Peters Church and Morton Avenue Residents Community Room. The overall turnout was 17% and Rob Skoulding was duly elected.

3C's Update (Cllr Tierney)

| January – March 2024 | Total received | On time | % On time |
|----------------------|----------------|---------|-----------|
| Correspondence | | | |
| | 42 | 38 | 90% |
| Stage 1 | | | |
| CELP | 46 | 34 | 78% |
| GI | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| PRCS | 13 | 13 | 100% |
| Stage 2 | | | |

| | | | |
|----------------|----|---|------|
| CELP | 11 | 6 | 54% |
| GI | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| PRCS | 1 | 1 | 100% |
| Stage 3 | | | |
| CELP | 4 | 2 | 50% |
| GI | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| PRCS | 0 | 0 | N/A |

Governance, Financial Control & Risk Management

Finance and internal audit updates (Cllr Boden)

The detailed budget report and associated papers were approved by Full Council in February 2025.

Internal Audit

The last audit reviews within the 2024/25 Audit Plan are being completed for the year. These are Creditors, Procurement, ARP Enforcement, Declarations of Interest, and Payroll. Draft Reports have been issued for Procurement and Creditors and Final Reports issued for Contract Monitoring (Leisure Contract) (9 agreed actions), Performance Management (11 agreed actions) and Taxi Licensing (7 agreed actions). In addition, audits are being finalised for the fundamental areas of Housing Benefits, Council Tax and NNDR by the ARP.

The Audit Plan for 2025/26 is being prepared for formal approval by ARMC at its May meeting. Overdue audit actions continue to be reported to Management Team for overview and action, before onward reporting to ARMC. The status in February 2025 was 27 overdue audit actions (from 2021/22 through to 2024/25).

Data protection updates (Cllr Boden)

There have been no reportable breaches of the UK GDPR during the period to which this briefing relates. However there have been 9 recorded breaches by ARP (5), My Fenland (2) and Environmental Health (2) requiring no further action. These breaches were all human error that resulted in information being sent to the wrong person.

In the same period, there has been 1 data subject access request.

Transformation Project updates (Cllr Boden & Cllr Tierney)

In Summary the Transformation Team have achieved the following key achievements

- Devised and delivered the TA2 programme including a service prioritisation matrix to enable the objective prioritisation of service reviews, ensuring the services with the potential highest efficiency gains are prioritised
- Devised and implemented a transparent Transformation Tracker ensuring the outputs and outcomes of the team are realised and shared organisationally therefore promoting a culture of continuous improvement and holding Managers to account for delivery.
- Contributed £241k of cashable savings in addition to the £1m savings achieved as a result of the TA1 agenda, in addition to saving more than 5,700 officer hours across the Planning Team, Markets and events, Cemeteries, Licensing, My Fenland, Workshop and Fleet in addition to Environmental Services and identifying and reducing in excess of 20 based service risks
- Identified a further potential £295k of savings which have not been agreed for implementation at this time, albeit can be revisited at any time.
- All Team Members have successfully achieved a project management qualification therefore providing the organisation with expert project management capacity and capability.

Public Service Reform updates (Cllr Boden)

On 16 December 2024, the Government published the [English Devolution White Paper](#), setting out its plans to reform local government across England.

The government expects all two-tier areas, and existing smaller or failing unitaries, to develop proposals for reorganisation. The new unitary authorities will focus on delivering services, with the intention to serve populations of more than or equal to 500,000 residents, although lower for exceptional circumstances, to achieve efficiencies.

The white paper suggests legislation will be introduced where necessary to ensure effective reorganisation can take place.

On the 5 February 2025, we received [a letter](#) from the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon, to formally invite us, and all Cambridgeshire councils, to work together to develop a proposal or set of proposals for LGR. The letter asked the leaders of all seven councils to submit their initial plans by 21 March 2025, with a view to full proposals being submitted by 28 November 2025.

On 14 March 2025, an [extraordinary FDC Full Council meeting](#) was held to discuss LGR and the Council's initial response. Following the meeting, the Leader of Fenland District Council, Cllr Chris Boden, wrote a letter to Government outlining Fenland District Council's position. This was submitted on 21 March 2025.

A separate letter, from the leaders of the other six councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council) was also submitted to Government on 21 March 2025.

FDC decided to submit its own letter to Government at this early stage of the LGR process to provide a little more specific information. FDC remains fully committed to working in close collaboration with the other six Cambridgeshire and Peterborough councils as LGR progresses.

We are now awaiting a response from Government to these letters.

Communication, Consultation and Engagement

News update:

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in January = 9. We also created an additional 1 news articles we published on our website.

Highlights include:

- Council launches public consultation on draft Budget and Business Plan amid significant financial challenges
- Free and low-cost exercise and wellbeing classes in Fenland in January 2025
- Consultation launched on Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
- Conviction for woman whose rubbish was dumped in the countryside
- Free welcoming event for older people
- New scheme supports employers to retain staff and reduce sickness
- Fenland leisure centres welcome £114,300 energy upgrade

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in February = 9. We also created an additional 1 news articles we published on our website.

Highlights include:

- New home for Wisbech funfair confirmed following consultation
- Progress in council's bid to improve Wisbech Market Place
- Grants Available to Help Cut Fuel Costs and Keep Homes Warm
- Latest Meet the Manager event coming to Manea on 6 March
- Council pushing forward with plan to redevelop another Wisbech High Street building
- Plans for multi-million-pound leisure centre improvements move forward, as the George Campbell Leisure Centre swimming pool reopens
- Council seeks public views on new HMO planning control to tackle overconcentration concerns

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in March = 12. We also created an additional 1 news articles we published on our website.

Highlights include:

- Fenland District Council leader issues letter on Local Government Reorganisation
- More than 100 Fenland people struggling to work due to their health are already getting support through new scheme
- Excitement as St George's Fayre makes a return to the heart of March town centre
- Free event in March offers tips on reducing living costs
- Community input sought on exciting March country park project
- Owner of eyesore property fined after council prosecutionFelix Dawson crowned 2025 Fenland Poet Laureate
- Work starts on Fenland's first BMX pump track in March
- Fly-tipping hotspot cleared of lorry loads of waste

All press releases are distributed to relevant press and media organisations, appear as a web article on the news pages of the [Fenland District Council website](#) and on our social media channels [Facebook](#) and [X](#).

Monthly update on FDC social media sites:

The number of social media updates added to the FDC X, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts:

January:

X = 110

Facebook = 96

LinkedIn = 40

February:

X = 121

Facebook = 106

LinkedIn = 40

March:

X = 124

Facebook = 116

LinkedIn = 44

We currently have 8,524 followers on Facebook, 8,631 followers on twitter and 2,015 on LinkedIn.

Consultation Summary:

- Draft Budget & Business Plan – 2 January to 2 February 2025
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report – 9 January to 25 February 2025
- Air Quality Management Areas (Wisbech) – 27 January to 2 March 2025
- HMO planning control – 26 February to 21 March 2025
- March Country Park Project – 10 March to 24 March 2025

Business Plan 2025-26

The Business Plan 2025-26 sets out the priorities we aim to deliver over the next 12 months. These priorities have been developed to address the most important needs of our communities and set a framework for how we will work towards our ambitions for the area and achieve our goal of creating a thriving place to live and visit.

Its structure outlines our key Corporate Priorities, Communities, Environment and Economy. A fourth priority, Quality Organisation, sits alongside everything we do. It aims to ensure that the Council runs effectively, transparently and sustainably.

Each corporate priority is underpinned by a series of performance indicators, which are used to track progress, measure success, and identify areas for improvement. All performance indicators are reported to all elected Members at our Council meetings.

Against this backdrop of Local Government Reform, we have a strong ambition to deliver a series of exciting capital investment projects across Fenland over the next three years. Under the banner of Fenland Inspire!, these projects will focus on enhancing our much-loved sport, leisure, and open space facilities, as well as preserving and celebrating the district's rich heritage and built environment.

These investments reflect our commitment to improving quality of life for our residents and ensuring that Fenland remains an attractive and vibrant place to live, work, and visit. The Business Plan was approved at Cabinet and Council on 24th February 2025.

Asset Management and Commercialisation

Using assets to maximise income opportunities and financial opportunities (Cllr Benney)

Please see section regarding [new businesses, jobs and opportunities](#) earlier in the report.

Commercial & Investment Strategy (Cllr Boden)

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 2025, £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 16th March 2021 and 3 December 2021 respectively. Further utilisation of this facility was used to fund the development of the two sites now owned by Fenland Future Ltd in line with the agreed Business Plan.

The Commercial Investment in Wisbech has delivered a rental income of £230k every year since acquisition in March 2021 and continues to be on track for 2024/25. 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.

The most recent updates on the work of the Investment Board were presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 24 March 2025. The annual report on Investment Board activity was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee held on 21 October 2024.

Fenland Future Limited (Cllr Boden, Cllr Benney & Cllr Tierney)

Please see updates on [The Elms](#) and [Nene Waterfront](#) section above.

Workforce Development

Workforce skills and training (Cllr Boden)

We have a strong commitment to the ongoing learning and development of our staff. We believe that if we are to continue to deliver excellent services to our customers, our staff must be well trained.

We have an extensive learning and development offer for our workforce, which involves opportunities for formal and informal training; we have a range of learning resources available to all staff, which includes a new e-learning platform with a wider range of courses and development opportunities as well as coaching, shadowing, secondments, in-house training workshops delivered by our own in-house experts; as well as more formal courses, training and apprenticeships.

Staff value the learning and development opportunities that are offered at FDC and are able to indicate the difference that training makes to them and their team.

However, it is important that we continually review our learning and development offer to ensure it is fit for purpose and as accessible as possible.

We believe that talent exists in all our staff and that it needs to be encouraged and nurtured. Every manager with staff responsibility manages talent through the following activities:

- Performance management
- Coaching and development
- Springboard (appraisal) discussion and regular 121's, which include a discussion about the learning needs and aspirations for each member of staff
- Recruitment

Talent management and succession planning ensures ongoing organisational capacity and capability for the future and enables transformation; and at a time when more is demanded of less, it becomes increasingly important.

Supporting and empowering staff (Cllr Boden)

We are committed to supporting and empowering our workforce, and we have a range of support that our staff can access, from an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). This provides a free and confidential service for staff, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week,

365 days a year and is accessible by phone, email and online.

The EAP is designed to help with a wide range of work, family, and personal issues. It provides practical information, fact sheets and packs, resource information on support services in the local area and even short-term face to face or telephonic counselling if required.

It is supported by a comprehensive EAP website offering extensive resources including articles, interactive tools, regular online seminars, confidential 24/7 support, self-help workbooks, Podcasts, blogs, videos, and articles on a range of topics, Debt advice, Debt Management, Domestic Abuse support, Wellbeing portal & App, Trauma programme and Exercise and Fitness advice.

Alongside this we provide additional support via our team of Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA), our Occupational Health Advisor, a range of family friendly policies and procedures, a comprehensive (cost neutral) employee benefits platform.

We also provide individual support via our HR team, service managers, our Management and Trade Union and Staff Partnership (MTSP) reps.

This year we have started surveying our staff via “pulse” surveys via our new HR/Payroll system app to obtain more immediate feedback.

Enforcement

All enforcement policies updates (Cllr French (CPE), Cllr Laws (Planning), Cllr Murphy (Streetscene) & Cllr Wallwork Environmental Health))

The Food Standards Agency is currently undertaking a review of the level of qualification required to complete food safety business support inspections and carry out any enforcement actions. Currently officers must hold a formal degree in environmental health or a higher food safety competency certificate for certain lower level inspection related activity.

Health & Safety

Maintaining Health & Safety Systems to comply with legislation and Health & Safety Action Plan updates (Cllr Boden)

A key part of the function of Corporate Health and Safety is the provision of policies, codes of practice (COPs) and guidance to provide managers and employees with the necessary support to meet their health and safety obligations.

The Council has a programme of ongoing review and implementation to support effective health and safety management.

Health and safety training needs are identified in several ways including springboards, regular

one to ones, team meetings and through the Council's Health and Safety Panel.

A corporate health and safety matrix has been developed during the reporting year which is now available on the health and safety intranet pages.

Work continues to drive forward improvements in health and safety management where required, with ongoing progress to deliver our objectives as set out in the health and safety action plan.

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 \(cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk\)](https://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 | 19.03.25 | https://democracy.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&MId=149&Ver=4 |
| Audit & Governance Committee | 21.02.24 | https://democracy.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=156&Ver=4 |
| Overview & Scrutiny Committee | 12.03.24 | Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 12th March, 2025, 10.00 am |
| Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee | 26.02.25 | Agenda for Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee on Wednesday, 26th February, 2025, 10.00 am |
| Skills & Employment Committee | 24.02.25 | Agenda for Skills and Employment Committee on Monday, 24th February, 2025, 10.00 am |
| Employment & Skills Board | 11.02.25 | Agenda for Employment and Skills Board on Tuesday, 11th February, 2025, 10.00 am |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|---|
| Transport & Infrastructure Committee | 05.03.25 | Agenda for Transport and Infrastructure Committee on Wednesday, 5th March, 2025, 10.00 am |
| Investment Committee | 10.03.25 | Agenda for Investment Committee on Monday, 10th March, 2025, 2.00 pm |
| Business Board | 31.03.25 | https://democracy.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MIId=143&Ver=4 |

Forthcoming CPCA meetings include:

| CPCA COMMITTEE | DATE OF MEETING | LINK |
|---|------------------------|--|
| AGM - Combined Authority Board | 04.06.25 | Agenda for Combined Authority Board on Wednesday, 4th June, 2025, 10.00 am |
| Combined Authority Board | 04.06.25 | Agenda for Combined Authority Board on Wednesday, 4th June, 2025, 11.00 am |
| Audit & Governance Committee | 19.06.25 | Agenda for Audit and Governance Committee on Thursday, 19th June, 2025, 10.00 am |
| Overview & Scrutiny Committee | 24.06.25 | Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 24th June, 2025, 10.00 am |
| Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee | 18.06.25 | Agenda for Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee on Wednesday, 18th June, 2025, 11.00 am |
| Skills & Employment Committee | 16.06.25 | Agenda for Skills and Employment Committee on Monday, 16th June, 2025, 11.00 am |
| Transport & Infrastructure Committee | 25.06.25 | Agenda for Transport and Infrastructure Committee on Wednesday, 25th June, 2025, 11.00 am |
| Investment Committee | 23.06.25 | Agenda for Investment Committee on Monday, 23rd June, 2025, 10.00 am |
| Business Board | 14.07.25 | Agenda for Business Board on Monday, 14th July, 2025, 2.30 pm |

Key PIs:

| Key PI | Description | Target 2024/25 | Cumulative Target | Cumulative Performance | Variance (RAG) |
|--------|---|----------------|-------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| PRC1 | % of customer queries processed at the first point of contact | 99% | 85% | 92.45% | |
| PRC2 | % of customers satisfied with our service (measured annually in February) | 97.94% | - | 96.66% | |
| PRC3 | % of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds | 43.96% | 46.5% | 57.54% | |
| PRC4 | % of contact centre calls handled | 83.46% | 80% | 87.42% | |
| ARP3 | In year % of Council Tax collected | 100% | - | 99.67% | |
| ARP4 | Council Tax net collection fund receipts | £73,595,060 | - | £73,350,882 | |
| ARP5 | In year % of NNDR collected | 96.57% | - | 95.70% | |
| ARP6 | NNDR net collection fund receipts | £24,409,318 | - | £29,467,704 | |
| HR2 | % of staff that feel proud to work for FDC | 85% | - | 86% | |

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

| Comments |
|----------|
| |
| |
| |

This page is intentionally left blank

Motion submitted by Councillor Elisabeth Sennitt Clough

A Flag for the Fens

The Fens is an area of significant historical and cultural value, and there is clear and growing public support for the creation of a specific sub-regional flag for the Fens. This motion seeks to harness that enthusiasm by beginning a structured and inclusive process towards the creation of a symbol that reflects and celebrates the identity of the Fens and its residents.

Full Council hereby instructs the Culture, Arts & Heritage Committee at its next meeting to initiate work on establishing a competition to design a flag representing the Fens and its residents.

Given Fenland's central geographical role within Fenland, it is proposed that FDC undertakes the administrative responsibilities associated with organising the competition. However, in recognition of the fact that the flag will represent the wider Fens area, beyond the Fenland administrative boundary, the judging panel should include representatives from across the broader region, to include a member of the Flag Institute.

As we move towards the potential creation of unitary authorities, a process that will result in shifts in administrative boundaries, the development of a sub-regional flag will play a valuable role in promoting the shared cultural identity and cohesion across the Fens, regardless of future local government boundaries.

This page is intentionally left blank

Motion submitted by Councillor Chris Boden

Saxon Pit Planning Application

Full Council notes that the planning consultation period at Cambridgeshire County Council for the latest proposed expansion of operations at Saxon Pit, under planning reference CCC-24-091-VAR, runs until the end of this month.

Residents are faced with increased operations, increased dust emissions, increased noise, longer working hours and a significant increase in Heavy Goods Vehicle movements to and from the site.

Full Council asks that the Chief Executive, on behalf of the Council, forwards this motion to County Council Planning to state our opposition to the proposals on the grounds listed in the previous paragraph, and that, if permission were to be granted, that sufficient conditions should be attached to the permission to safeguard residential amenity for local residents as far as is possible. Members would welcome a robust and independently controlled monitoring system to be specified as a part of the EA permit, to be installed as part of a monitoring strategy for dust, noise, air quality, hours of working and extra Heavy Goods Vehicle movements.

Full Council also asks that Environmental Health evaluate the potential additional risks associated with noise, pollution, dust generation, hours of working and extra Heavy Goods Vehicle movements impact on air quality, to provide a technical submission to County Planning for this application to (a) reduce the aforementioned effects which would otherwise be experienced by residents through appropriate planning conditions and (b) to request a robust monitoring strategy to be agreed which the operator would effectively monitor and publish dust, pollution and noise levels emanating from the site of this planning proposal.

This page is intentionally left blank

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Agenda Item No: | 12 |  |
| Committee: | Full Council | |
| Date: | 19 May 2025 | |
| Report Title: | New Procurement Strategy | |

COVER SHEET

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the implementation of a New Procurement Strategy to align to the Council's Business Plan.
- 1.2 Procurement is the process of acquiring goods, works and services, covering both acquisitions from third parties and from in-house providers. The process spans the whole cycle from identification of needs, through to the end of a services contract or the end of a useful life of an asset

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Excluding salary related costs and other costs which have no procurement requirements (e.g. business rates, internal drainage board levies etc.), in 2023/24 the Council spent over £8.8 million with third party suppliers and contractors on revenue activities. In addition, the Council spent around £15.8 million on capital projects. Procurement therefore has a significant role in ensuring that the Council obtains best value for money from its expenditure.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Council agrees to implement the draft Procurement Strategy at Appendix A with effect from 19th May 2025.

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Wards Affected | All |
| Forward Plan Reference | N/A |
| Portfolio Holder(s) | Cllr Boden – Leader of the Council |
| Report Originator(s) | Shaun Beales – Purchasing & Procurement Manager Amy Brown – Assistant Corporate Director |
| Contact Officer(s) | Shuan Beales – Purchasing & Procurement Manager sbeales@fenland.gov.uk Amy Brown – Assistant Corporate Director amybrown@fenland.gov.uk |
| Background Papers | |

1 Introduction and Context

1.1 This Procurement Strategy (the Strategy) is not a procurement manual, nor is it a set of purchasing procedures or a policy document. It is a roadmap to manage the procurement function, setting out a framework to contribute to the achievement of the Council's overall strategic business objectives. The detailed procedures for letting contracts, and ensuring compliance with policy and legislative requirements, are set out in the Council's Code of Procurement, which complements this document. The Code of Procurement was approved by Full Council on 30th September 2024 and can be found via the following link: [Report and appendices.pdf](#).

1.2 The Council aims to implement the following guiding principles in its procurement strategy activities:

- Consider the impact of all major procurements on the achievement of the strategic priorities of the Council.
- Continue to promote procurement opportunities to the local economy and to assist businesses and employment within Fenland, wherever practicable.
- Apply the principles of Best Value, fairness, openness and transparency to all activities.
- Ensure that all procurement activity is efficient and seeks and obtains value for money for the Council.
- Maximise mutual advantage and continuous improvement in relations with suppliers.
- Consider the potential for innovation, the management and balance of risk, and the opportunity for new or alternative methods of service delivery. This includes considering options for Partnering, Shared Services, Outsourcing and in-house provision.
- Work with others including strategic partners, public sector agencies and consortia to maximise purchasing power and harness knowledge and the economies of scale.
- Incorporate sustainability, equality, diversity, quality, social responsibility and safety as important criteria in the provision of all services procured.
- Operate within the framework determined by the laws of England and Wales and those outlined within the Council's own Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.
- Preserve the highest standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity in all dealings. Comply with transparency legislation in regard to publishing its procurement and spend activities.
- Utilise competition as a means of achieving economy, efficiency and effectiveness, wherever appropriate, and seek to ensure that this

contributes to the competitiveness of suppliers, contractors and service providers.

- Ensure that procurement activity is customer focused, involving internal consultation and involvement to support service objectives. Feedback will be sought, and customer satisfaction measured as a means of improving performance.
- Consult end Service Users, where appropriate, to ensure that the service meets their needs, especially where decisions directly affect their lives.
- Explore collaborative procurement opportunities both internally and regionally.

1.3 To support the Council's Business Plan the Procurement Strategy mirrors the Council's corporate priorities and underpins them with procurement key themes as below: Each priority and key theme are explained in Appendix A.

- **Communities** – Underpinning Key Theme – **Social Value**
- **Environment** – Underpinning Key Theme – **Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Strategy**
- **Economy** – Underpinning Key Theme – **Support to Local Businesses and SME's**
- **Quality Organisation** – Underpinning Key Theme – **Good Governance**
- **Transformation** - Underpinning Key Theme – **Transformational Programme**
- **Fenland Inspire** – Underpinning Key Theme – **All of above**

1.4 In regard to the Fenland Inspire! project, over the next three years, the Council will have the opportunity to impact its local economic growth through its capital spend programme.

1.5 The Council will need to have due regard to the National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS). The NPPS places a statutory obligation on contracting authorities to have regard to its policy priorities and determine how procurements can contribute to the delivery of these wider policy objectives. Cabinet Office guidance has set out what this means in practice. This means that a contracting authority must consider whether the procurement can contribute to achieving one or more of the policy objectives stated in the NPPS in a manner that is appropriate, proportionate and relevant; and take steps to address this where possible.

1.6 While contracting authorities have a duty to consider whether and how to address the (NPPS) policies, there is no absolute obligation to do so. There may be cases where the priorities are irrelevant to a specific procurement, or it would be disproportionate to introduce measures to address them. This

decision not to address one or more of the policies will be procurement specific as will the means by which any policies to be considered are incorporated into a procurement. The Fenland Procurement Strategy documents our thinking on what principles we will aim to implement into our procurement activities when and where appropriate.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Full Council adopt the New Procurement Strategy to provide a roadmap to help the Council deliver its priorities. It is **NOT** designed to reduce or impede the Council's ability to react to unexpected and urgent requirements. It is designed to help meet Members' ambitions in regard to the Council's Business Plan. The underpinning themes are a positive contribution in meeting its business needs and the needs of the local residents of Fenland.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 There are no formal consultation requirements connected with the proposed changes however feedback has been sought from key stakeholders to include group Leaders and officer colleagues.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Alternative options in the context of this Report include:
- (a) Not having a Procurement Strategy. This has been ruled out as an option due to the importance of the Council's Business Plan and delivery objectives. A Procurement Strategy is required to support the Business Plan priorities and objectives, to demonstrate the Council's procurement principles and to demonstrate value for money across all its activities.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Legal Implications

- 5.2 The Council, as a contracting authority, is required to comply with current public procurement legislation. Although this does not mandate having a Procurement Strategy it is recommended that the Council's thinking is documented to show where it may align and differ from the National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS).

5.3 Financial Implications

- 5.4 There are no specific financial implications connected with the proposed revisions to the Code of Procurement.

5.5 **Equality Implications**

5.6 There are no specific equality implications connected with the proposed revisions to the Code of Procurement.

6 Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Procurement Strategy.



Procurement Strategy

2025-2028

Table of Contents

Introduction

Guiding Principles

Central Government Priorities

National Procurement Policy Statement

Procurement Policy Notes

Procurement Team Statement

Council's Business Plan (Corporate Priorities)

The Underpinning Procurement Priorities (Key Themes)

Code of Procurement

Summary

Introduction

Fenland District Council (the **Council**) defines procurement as, “the acquisition of works, services, and goods, which meet the customers’ and service users’ needs, whilst ensuring value for money throughout the life of the product, including disposal”.

This Procurement Strategy (the **Strategy**) is not a procurement manual, nor is it a set of purchasing procedures or a policy document. It is a roadmap to manage the procurement function, setting out a framework to contribute to the achievement of the Council’s overall strategic business objectives. The detailed procedures for letting contracts, and ensuring compliance with policy and legislative requirements, are set out in the Council’s Code of Procurement, which complements this document. The current Code of Procurement can be found on the Council’s Intranet www.fenland.gov.uk/procurement.

Excluding salary related costs and other costs which have no procurement requirements (e.g. business rates, internal drainage board levies etc.), in 2023/24 the Council spent over £8.8 million with third party suppliers and contractors on revenue activities. In addition, the Council spent around £15.8 million on capital projects. Procurement therefore has a significant role in ensuring that the Council obtains best value for money from its expenditure.

Procurement is the process of acquiring goods, works and services, covering both acquisitions from third parties and from in-house providers. The process spans the whole cycle from identification of needs, through to the end of a services contract or the end of a useful life of an asset.

The Strategy recognises that different models and approaches will be required for the very different and divergent services that the Council has responsibility for.

This Strategy sets out additional considerations, connecting with the Council’s overall strategies and objectives, and how procurements, where appropriate, can be tailored to assist the Council in better fulfilling those strategies and achieving those objectives.

Guiding Principles

The Council aims to implement the following guiding principles in its procurement strategy activities:

- Consider the impact of all major procurements on the achievement of the strategic priorities of the Council.
- Continue to promote procurement opportunities to the local economy and to assist businesses and employment within Fenland, wherever practicable.
- Apply the principles of Best Value, fairness, openness and transparency to all activities.
- Ensure that all procurement activity is efficient and seeks and obtains value for money for the Council.
- Maximise mutual advantage and continuous improvement in relations with suppliers.
- Consider the potential for innovation, the management and balance of risk, and the opportunity for new or alternative methods of service delivery. This includes considering options for Partnering, Shared Services, Outsourcing and in-house provision.
- Work with others including strategic partners, public sector agencies and consortia to maximise purchasing power and harness knowledge and the economies of scale.
- Incorporate sustainability, equality, diversity, quality, social responsibility and safety as important criteria in the provision of all services procured.
- Operate within the framework determined by the laws of England and Wales and those outlined within the Council's own Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.
- Preserve the highest standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity in all dealings. Comply with transparency legislation in regard to publishing its procurement and spend activities.

- Utilise competition as a means of achieving economy, efficiency and effectiveness, wherever appropriate, and seek to ensure that this contributes to the competitiveness of suppliers, contractors and service providers.
- Ensure that procurement activity is customer focused, involving internal consultation and involvement to support service objectives. Feedback will be sought, and customer satisfaction measured as a means of improving performance.
- Consult end Service Users, where appropriate, to ensure that the service meets their needs, especially where decisions directly affect their lives.
- Explore collaborative procurement opportunities both internally and regionally.

Central Government Priorities, Legislation and the National Procurement Policy Statement.

The Government's transforming public procurement and the Procurement Act 2023 went live on 24th February 2025. The legislation aims to improve the way public procurement is regulated in order to:

- Create a simpler and more flexible, commercial system that better meets our country's needs while remaining compliant with our international obligations.
- Open up public procurement to new entrants such as small businesses and social enterprises so that they can compete for and win more public contracts.
- Embed transparency throughout the commercial lifecycle so that the spending of taxpayers' money can be properly scrutinised.

The National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS).

The NPPS is a statutory statement which allows the Government to set and communicate the wider policy objectives to which it expects public procurement to contribute. This might include, for example, objectives to increase skills or jobs in a certain industry or area, or to align with the pledge to achieve net zero by 2050. In 2021/2022 public procurement made up about a third of public sector spending; it can therefore have a large impact on the achievement of these wider objectives.

The NPPS places a statutory obligation on contracting authorities to have regard to its policy priorities and determine how procurements can contribute to the delivery of these wider policy objectives. Cabinet Office guidance has set out what this means in practice. This means that a contracting authority must consider whether the procurement can contribute to achieving one or more of the policy objectives stated in the NPPS in a manner that is appropriate, proportionate and relevant; and take steps

to address this where possible. This could include, for example, changes to the way the procurement is structured or the process is carried out, the specification of the goods, services or works to be purchased, or the award criteria which will determine the most advantageous tender.

While contracting authorities have a duty to consider whether and how to address the policies, there is no absolute obligation to do so. There may be cases where the priorities are irrelevant to a specific procurement, or it would be disproportionate to introduce measures to address them. This decision not to address one or more of the policies will be procurement specific as will the means by which any policies to be considered are incorporated into a procurement.

As the Act places a statutory duty on contracting authorities to have regard to the NPPS, contracting authorities should document their thinking on which NPPS policies an individual procurement can contribute to and how this will be addressed, as well as note why any disregarded policies are irrelevant or inappropriate or would be disproportionate to consider.

Procurement Policy Notes (PPN's)

Procurement Policy Notes (PPNs) and supporting guidance are used to communicate new policies to be applied to public procurement activities and to support practical implementation. They are issued by the Cabinet Office and are mainly for central government departments, executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies (called in scope bodies).

Fenland District Council is in the main exempt from PPN's as we are out of scope. However, statements such as the following are included:

Other public sector contracting authorities are encouraged to consider applying the best practice set out in the PPN and guidance, as appropriate, where they do not have equivalent measures in place. They should do so, in accordance with the relevant instructions in each case and in light of any relevant legal obligations which may apply.

Therefore, as part of the council's procurement strategy officers will consider the merits of each PPN issued to determine if it is good practice to implement but does not detrimentally effect the day to day operations of the council both in resource and monetary requirements. Some PPN's may require member involvement, examples could be the use of British Steel for procurements, the minimum social value weighting to be applied in procurements and encouraging suppliers to sign the Armed Forces Covenant to declare their support the Armed Forces community. These are all examples of PPN's issued in 2025.

The Procurement Team Statement

In conjunction with the government transformation program, our Strategy relies on continuous and sustained development by the corporate procurement function that will; -

- Better achieve our Business Plan priorities and enhance the Council's key aims and priorities.
- Deliver consistently high-quality services that meet users' needs, with a range of partners from other sectors including partnering, shared services, outsourcing and in-house provision.
- Provide savings and better value for money, thereby improving the cost effectiveness of the Council.
- Be sustainable for the community and benefit local citizens.
- Support the delivery of the new Act and regulations made under it.
- Enable the Council to manage and assess risks in the marketplace.
- Promote and drive continued savings through efficient procurement to assist the Council in meeting its financial objectives over the medium term.
- Raise awareness of the Council's procurement rules and training officers on all aspects of procurement and contract management practices.
- Ensure legislative compliance.
- Prepare and engage with future partner authorities under the Local Government Reorganisation.

Council's Business Plan (corporate Priorities)

The Council's Corporate Business Plan 2025-2026 [can be viewed at:](#)

The Council has four corporate priorities with deliverables summarised as:

1. Communities

- Support vulnerable members of our community.
- Promote health and wellbeing for all.
- Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting social cohesion.
- Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture and Heritage

2. Environment

- Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service.
- Work with partners and the community on projects that improve the environment and street scene.
- Supporting volunteer Street Pride groups and other environmental volunteers, organisations and partners.
- Deliver the council's carbon reduction and climate adaptation plan including meeting all climate change targets which are legally required by the UK Government.

3. Economy

- Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses.
- Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration.
- Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements.

4. Quality Organisation

- Set relevant and robust performance targets to ensure the effective delivery of Business Plan priorities.
- Maintain our Customer Service Excellence accreditation to ensure we continue to deliver the most effective service to our communities.
- Help residents to self-serve and access our services digitally to allow us to provide greater support for vulnerable customers and complex queries.
- Maintain robust and effective financial standards, internal controls and organisational management.
- Comply with data protection and General Data Protection Regulation requirements.
- Appropriately consult with residents about our service and proposals as outlined in our Consultation Strategy.
- Ensure our asset base is sustainable, suitable and fully utilised to maximise income opportunities and financial efficiencies.
- Deliver our adopted Capital Programme in line with our Corporate Asset Management Plan to maintain the integrity and safety of our assets.
- Work jointly with public, private and third sector partners to improve access to our services, including from co-located facilities.
- Continue with our Commercial Investment Strategy to make informed decisions about the purchase and management of property assets through Fenland Future Limited.

- Meet our Public Sector Equality duty by complying with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998 through our core service delivery and publication of a statutory Annual Equality Report.
- Equip our workforce with the right skills to effectively deliver our priorities.
- Support and empower our staff to make effective decisions.
- Use a fair and proportionate approach to improve living, working and environmental standards as set out in our Enforcement Policies.
- Support businesses to ensure compliance with a wide range of regulatory requirements.
- Maintain effective Health and Safety systems to comply with relevant legislation and local requirements.
- Deliver all aspects of the Council's Health and Safety action plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our workforce, partners and wider community.

5. Transformation. Cross cutting priority 5.

- In addition to our 4 corporate priorities, we also have a fifth cross cutting priority, Transformation.
- This encompasses our ongoing transformation work to improve efficiency and customer experience, drive positive change, and ensure the Council is fit for the future.
- Spanning across all services within the council, the Transformation programme ties together all major 'change' initiatives that are looking to improve how the council works and delivers services.
- Services will be aligned, bringing together teams with similar processes and outcomes therefore building capacity whilst maximising ~~efficient~~efficient working practices.
- We will continue to have a commercial focus to service delivery, considering future opportunities and sustainable income streams

6. Fenland Inspire!

- In addition to our four core priorities, our Cabinet Members have selected a number of capital investment projects they are aiming to deliver across Fenland in the next three years.
- The Fenland Inspire! projects focus on enhancing our much-loved sport, leisure, and open space facilities, as well as preserving and celebrating the district's rich heritage and built environment.
- These projects are subject to scoping work and the development of outline business cases to determine their feasibility and affordability, ensuring that investment is targeted effectively and delivers the greatest benefit to local communities.

Key Supporting Procurement Themes:

Social Value

Climate Change, Carbon Reduction and Net Zero

Local Businesses and SMEs
Good Governance
Transformational Programme

Each of the corporate priorities is underpinned with the five specific procurement **key themes** to underpin delivery. One of the key objectives of procurement is supporting the delivery of these strategic priorities. The Strategy is intended to mirror and support these strategic priorities and subsequent business plans over the period of 2025-2028.

1. Communities – Underpinning key theme

Social Value

- Maximising the benefits that can be delivered by suppliers in our communities.
- Achieving social value outcomes wherever possible in our procurement activities.
- Ensure that social value is understood by officers and is embedded in appropriate contracts with successfully achieved outcomes.
- Setting social value scoring criteria in procurement exercises when appropriate.
- Tailoring our requirements so social value is not being sought at the expense of delivery, recognising cost pressures and the need that both outcomes can be successfully achieved.
- Tackling inequalities locally and more broadly through our procurement activities.
- Being vigilant in identifying modern day slavery locally and across our supply chains.

2. Environment – Underpinning key theme

Climate Change, Carbon Reduction Policy and Net Zero

The Council recognises that carrying out procurement activities in an environmentally responsible manner is an important factor and aspires, therefore, to:

- Phase out products and services that fall below minimum standards such as single use plastics.
- Build the skill sets of officers involved with procuring to understand sustainability and environmental objectives.
- Encourage sustainable procurement through positive facilitation.
- Be open to innovative solutions from suppliers.
- Comply with all relevant environmental legislation such as achieving Net Zero by 2050.
- Encourage contractors and suppliers to investigate and develop environmentally friendly procedures and products.

- Ensure that suppliers' environmental policies are considered during tender evaluations and that, where appropriate, environmental criteria are used in the award of contracts.
- Wherever possible and practicable, specify the use of environmentally friendly materials and products.
- Ensure that specifications, as appropriate, provide the facility for suppliers to provide environmentally friendly alternatives.
- Consider, pollution reduction, energy efficiency, reducing waste and recycling activities through procurement requirements.

3. Economy – Underpinning key theme – Support to Local Businesses and SMEs

The Council recognises its responsibilities to local communities and the opportunities afforded through procurement to help deliver corporate objectives, including the economic, social and environmental objectives set out in the Corporate Plan and the benefits of Council funding being recirculated into the local economy.

Local business should be able to compete for work alongside contractors from outside the area and the Council will encourage them to do this by (where appropriate):

- Ensuring that procurement procedures, including electronic business, does not disadvantage local businesses.
- Publicising changes in Government legislation on the Council's website and engaging with the local supply chain.
- Developing and publishing a 'Selling to the Council' guide as a means of clarification for suppliers and an opportunity to market the Council.
- Publishing details of forthcoming bidding opportunities and contact details for each contract on the Council's website and procurement portals linked to the government Central Digital Platform (CDP).
- Making sure that local businesses and SMEs know about Council contracts and how they can bid for them.
- Reviewing the internal procurement processes and procedures to examine methods of reducing the challenges facing local, small and medium sized enterprises when doing business with the Council.
- Including, where practicable, at least one estimate/quotation/tender from a local supplier within all procurement processes, where permitted to do so legally.
- Understanding local supplier reliance on the Council, in terms of business proportion and community impact.

- Embracing local Social Enterprises to develop and improve community resource.
- Increasing the level of contact with local business by liaison with the local Chamber of Commerce to sponsor and support 'meet the buyer' events.

4. Quality Organisation - Underpinning key theme - Good Governance

- Internal development of the Council's Financial Management System to automate the purchase to pay process.
- Increase use of electronic processing for tenders and quotations using procurement portals.
- Upskilling officers on all aspects of procurement and contract management processes.
- The extension and growth of electronic payment to suppliers via a No order No pay policy.
- Commitment to pay all suppliers within 30 days of receipt of invoice.
- Commitment to transparency by default agenda and the publishing of all procurement and spend requirements to legislation.
- Taking key decisions under the member decision making processes for procurement over £100K identified on the Council's forward plan.
- Incorporating procurement requirements in yearly team service plans.
- Ensure procurement works closely with its legal services in drafting contracts and terms and conditions
- Ensure procurement works closely with its audit services to ensure compliance with its conflicts of interest policy and procurement fraud identification.
- Work with our ICT team to ensure Cyber Security of our contracts is considered.

5. Transformation - Underpinning Theme

Transformational Programme.

- An improved customer experience where customers will be able to interact with the council via a channel and time that is convenient to them.
- The ability for customers to self serve via a suite of online processes or gain the personal support they need on more complex issues.
- Be flexible and forward thinking reflecting the diversity of our workforce and services we provide and enabling us to continue to be resilient and adapt to changing circumstances.
- Interdependencies between services will be maximised to improve outcomes for local people.
- Our building layout, usage and ways of working will encourage closer working with partners to further enhance service delivery for local residents.
- We will continue to attract, recruit and retain skilled staff enabling us to continue to deliver excellent services to our local residents.
- We will have a motivated, committed, productive workforce ensuring colleagues have the necessary tools, equipment, training, and ongoing support to fulfil their role.
- Services will be aligned, bringing together teams with similar processes and outcomes therefore building capacity whilst maximising efficient working practices.
- We will continue to have a commercial focus to service delivery, considering future opportunities and sustainable income streams.
- Work with the procurement team to identify cost efficiencies, new methods of contracting such as shared services, outsourcing, in-house, partnerships and joint commissioning.

6. Fenland Inspire! - Underpinning Themes

All key themes.

- All underpinning themes including due regard to the National Procurement Policy Statement are to be incorporated where appropriate into the Fenland Inspire Projects.
- Particular emphasis should be given by The Council in recognising its responsibilities to local communities and the opportunities afforded through procurement to help deliver corporate objectives, including the economic, social and environmental objectives set out in the Corporate Plan and the benefits of Council funding being recirculated into the local economy.
- Over the next three years the Council will have the opportunity to impact local economic growth through its capital spend programme which could be in excess of £40M pounds.

Code of Procurement


The Code of Procurement defines the regulatory and legal framework for procurement by the Council. The Code should be read in the context of this Strategy.

The Code states that all procurements must:

- Realise value for money (**VFM**) by achieving the best combination of highest quality of outcome and minimum whole life costs.
- Achieve the highest standards of integrity.
- Ensure fair and equal treatment of contractors, providers and suppliers.
- Operate transparently, subject to any requirement for confidentiality.
- Be in accordance with advice from the Procurement Team, Legal and Governance Team and as directed by the Monitoring Officer.
- Comply with all legal requirements, the Council's policies, including the Rules of Procedure and Code of Financial Management.

Summary

In summary, this Strategy is not exhaustive and is a roadmap to help the Council deliver its priorities. It is **NOT** designed to reduce or impede the Council's ability to react to unexpected and urgent requirements. It is designed to help meet Members' ambitions in regard to the Council's Business Plan. The underpinning themes are a positive contribution in meeting its business needs and the needs of the local residents of Fenland.

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| Agenda Item No.: | 13 |  |
| Committee: | Council | |
| Date: | 19 May 2025 | |
| Report Title: | Committee Balance, Political Balance and Allocation of Seats | |

COVER SHEET

1. Purpose/Summary

1.1. The purpose of this Report is to agree the committee structures and terms of reference for the forthcoming municipal year as well as confirming the allocation of seats to those committees and also to outside bodies in accordance with political proportionality rules and to receive notification of the appointments to committees.

2. Key Issues

2.1. The Constitution provides under Rule 1, paragraph 1.2 that at the Annual Meeting, Council will:

- 2.1.1. determine which committees and panels should be established for the ensuing municipal year;
- 2.1.2. agree the terms of reference for those committees/panels as outlined in the Constitution;
- 2.1.3. allocate the seats and position of the Chairman and Vice Chairman to Political Groups in accordance with political proportionality rules where appropriate in respect of committees, panels and outside bodies;
- 2.1.4. receive notification and to appoint Councillors to the allocated seats on each committee and panel and to serve as Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

2.2. In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, seats are proportionately allocated to political groups (paragraphs 15 and 16) however, it is possible to agree a variation to those arrangements provided that there is no dissenting vote (paragraph 17). Where there is dissent, the strict legal position must be adhered to. Political Groups are allocated seats proportionate to their size.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that Council:

- 3.1. Approves the Committees and Panels set out at Appendix A for the 2025/26 municipal year;
- 3.2. Agrees the terms of reference set out at Part 3 of the Council's Constitution in relation to the committees and panels referred to at paragraph 3.1 above with the amendments detailed at Appendix B;
- 3.3. Agrees the politically proportionate allocation of seats to Committees and Panels as set out in Appendix C; and
- 3.4. Agrees the allocation of seats and position of Chairman and Vice Chairman also as set out in Appendix C;
- 3.5. Agrees the appointments to seats allocated in accordance with paragraph 3.4 above (Appendix C) including any co-opted or non-members;
- 3.6. Agrees the list of Outside Bodies as set out at Appendix D for 2025/26;
- 3.7. Agrees the politically proportionate allocation of seats to Outside Bodies all as set out in Appendix D;
- 3.8. Notes that the distribution of seats amongst Outside Bodies, to achieve overall political proportionality based on the allocations approved at paragraph 3.7 above and the subsequent appointments to those seats will be discussed between Group Leaders and presented for approval at the next meeting of Cabinet on 16th June 2025.

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Wards Affected | All |
| Forward Plan Reference | N/A |
| Portfolio Holder(s) | Cllr Chris Boden – Leader of the Council |
| Report Originator(s) | Carol Pilson – Corporate Director Amy Brown – Assistant Director |
| Contact Officer(s) | Paul Medd – Chief Executive Email: paulmedd@fenland.gov.uk Carol Pilson – Corporate Director Email: cpilson@fenland.gov.uk Amy Brown – Assistant Director Email: amybrown@fenland.gov.uk |
| Background Papers | Fenland District Council's Constitution |

REPORT

1. BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 1.1 For each municipal year, Council must agree the Committees and Panels which are to be established together with their terms of reference. On establishing the Committees and Panels, in accordance with the rules relating to Political Proportionality the seats on each committee and panel together with the position of Chairman and Vice Chairman are then allocated to Political Parties. Council also receives notification of the appointments to these Committees and is required to confirm allocations to Outside Bodies based again on political proportionality.

2. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

- 2.1 The Constitution provides that the Council considers the establishment and terms of reference of committees at its Annual Meeting. This must be determined before seats can be allocated to committees in accordance with the political proportionality rules.
- 2.2 The Committees and Panels of Fenland District Council are as identified in Appendix A and their terms or reference are as set out at Part 3 of the Constitution together with the proposed changes shown at Appendix B.

3 ALLOCATION OF SEATS

3.1 Political Proportionality

- 3.1.1 The Constitution provides that the Council's allocation of seats and positions of Chairman and Vice Chairman are subject to political balance arrangements where appropriate.
- 3.1.2 The rules relating to political proportionality in relation to membership of committees are set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the supporting regulations.
- 3.1.3 For the purposes of the Act, the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 specify that a political group must consist of two or more members who have signed a declaration to that effect.

- 3.1.4 Where one or more groups exist the relative proportions of the groups should be used in allocating seats on committees/outside bodies. Any elected members who are not part of a group are not automatically allocated seats on committees unless any remain unallocated after political groups have been given their proportionate allocation. This is the basis upon which the calculations comprised within this report have been made.

3.2 Outside Bodies

- 3.2.1 Also, in accordance with legislative requirements, local and national convention, allocations to seats on outside bodies are to the majority group where there are 2 or fewer seats available but in all other cases politically proportionate percentages are applied to recognised groups or, where alternative arrangements are agreed, such other nominees as may be appropriate. The list of Outside Bodies and the allocation of seats in is as set out at Appendix D and have again been calculated in accordance with the ordinary provisions of the 1989 Act.
- 3.2.2 Confirmation of membership to the Outside Bodies will be undertaken at the first meeting of Cabinet on 16th June 2025.

4 COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

- 4.1 The Constitution provides that Council agrees the appointments to the seats allocated at paragraph 3.1 above.
- 4.2 The terms of reference of the Conduct Committee also provide for the appointment of up to 2 co-opted members and Independent Persons.
- 4.3 The proposed allocations for the forthcoming municipal year are as set out at Appendix C together with the positions of Chairman and Vice Chairman.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The proposals set out in the Appendices to this Report will be formulated in consultation with relevant Group Leaders.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The proposals set out in this Report reflect legal and constitutional requirements.

7 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Legal Implications

- 7.1.1 The proposals set out in this report meet with the Council's legal and constitutional obligations.

7.2 Financial Implications

- 7.2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

8 Equality Implications

- 8.1.1 There are no specific equality implications associated with these proposals.

9 APPENDICES

- 9.1.1 Appendix A: Proposed Committees and Panels for 2025/26
- 9.1.2 Appendix B: Proposed Constitutional Amendments
- 9.1.2 Appendix C: Proposed Allocation of and Appointments to seats on Committees and Panels.
- 9.1.4 Appendix D: Allocation of Seats on Outside Bodies

APPENDIX A - PROPOSED COMMITTEES AND PANELS FOR 2025/26

| Committee | Allocation of Seats |
|---|---|
| Overview & Scrutiny Panel | 13 substantive seats with 6 substitute members. |
| Planning Committee | <p>7 substantive seats with each political group able to allocate a number of substitutes commensurate with their substantive allocation up to a maximum of 4.</p> <p>No more than 2 Cabinet Members.</p> |
| Licensing Committee (Licensing Act 2003) | <p>13 substantive seats with 6 substitute members.</p> <p>The same Members to be appointed for the Licensing Act 2003 Committee and the Non Licensing Act 2003 Committee.</p> |
| Audit & Risk Management Committee | <p>7 substantive seats comprised of:</p> <p>No more than 2 members of Cabinet and not to include the portfolio holder responsible for finance;</p> <p>5 substitute members.</p> |
| Employment Committee | 7 substantive seats and 5 substitute members. |
| Conduct Committee | <p>7 substantive seats and 5 substitute members.</p> <p>2 members of Town and Parish Councils, an Independent and Deputy Independent Person.</p> |
| Appointments Panel | 7 substantive and 5 substitute members. |

APPENDIX B - PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Part 3, Responsibilities for Functions, Definitions of Memberships to be amended as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <p>Licensing Committee</p> | <p>Up to 13 members of the Council.</p> <p>Power is given to the committee to appoint panels of 3 to determine individual cases (such committees not to be comprised of ward or neighbouring ward councillors).</p> <p>Six additional substitute members to be appointed.</p> <p>A new member appointed to the Licensing Committee must not take part in or vote on any decision made by Licensing Committee until they have attended at least one internal and one external training session on Licensing related topics.</p> <p>Existing members of Licensing Committee who take part in or vote on any decision made by Licensing Committee (or a panel) should attend at least one internal and one external training session on Licensing related topics during each municipal year. Failure to complete the training will be brought to the attention of the group leader prior to reappointment at annual council. Any new member undertaking initial training will meet their annual requirement.</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt any member who fails to comply with the annual training provision will not by itself render a decision unlawful. Further, Executive Members appointed to a Licensing Committee or panel will act in their capacity as an ordinary elected member, not as a member of the Executive.</p> |
|----------------------------|---|

APPENDIX C – PROPOSED ALLOCATION OF AND APPOINTMENTS TO SEATS ON COMMITTEES AND PANELS – 2025/26

| FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL – OVERALL PROPORTIONALITY | | |
|---|-----------|---------------|
| Conservative | 35 | 83.33% |
| FIA | 7 | 16.66% |
| Ungrouped | 1 | N/A |

There are 86 committee seats overall which applying the above percentages results in the following allocations:

| Conservative | FIA | Ungrouped | Total |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Entitlement: 71.66 | Entitlement: 14.32 | N/A | 86 |
| Allocation: 72 | Allocation: 14 | | |

| Committee/ Panel | Group | No. | Substantive Nominee | Substitute |
|--|--------------|-----|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Overview & Scrutiny 13 substantive 6 substitute | Conservative | 10 | Maureen Davis (C) | |
| | | | Elisabeth Sennitt Cough (VC) | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | FIA | 3 | | |
| | Ungrouped | 0 | N/A | N/A |
| | | | | |
| Planning Committee 7 substantive 5 substitute | Conservative | 6 | David Connor (C) | |
| | | | Charlie Marks (VC) | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | FIA | 1 | | |
| | Ungrouped | 0 | N/A | N/A |
| Licensing Committee 13 substantive 6 substitute | Conservative | 11 | David Oliver (C) | |
| | | | Peter Murphy (VC) | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | FIA | 2 | | |
| | Unaligned | 0 | N/A | N/A |
| Audit and Management Committee 7 substantive 5 substitute | Conservative | 6 | Kim French (C) | |
| | | | Ian Benney (VC) | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | FIA | 1 | | |
| | Unaligned | 0 | N/A | N/A |

| Committee/ Panel | Group | No. | Substantive Nominee | Substitute |
|--|---|-----|-------------------------------------|--|
| Employment Committee 7 substantive 5 substitute | Conservative | 6 | Gary Christy (C) | |
| | | | Haq Nawaz (VC) | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | FIA | 1 | | |
| | Unaligned | 0 | N/A | N/A |
| Conduct Committee 7 substantive 5 substitute | Conservative | 6 | Peter Murphy (C) | |
| | | | Brenda Barber (VC) | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | FIA | 1 | | |
| | Unaligned | 0 | N/A | N/A |
| | Independent and Deputy Independent Person | | Stuart Webster | <i>Vacant – Recruitment to be run.</i> |
| | Town and Parish Members | | Martin Field and Jason Ablewhite | |
| Appointments Panel 7 substantive 5 substitute | Conservative | 6 | Chris Boden (C) | |
| | | | Jan French (VC) | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | FIA | 1 | | |
| | Unaligned | 0 | N/A | N/A |
| Culture Arts & Heritage Executive Advisory Committee 7 substantive 5 substitute | Conservative | 6 | Elisabeth Sennitt Clough (C) | |
| | | | Brenda Barber (VC) | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | FIA | 1 | | |
| | Ungrouped | 0 | N/A | N/A |
| Rural and Farming Executive Advisory Committee 7 substantive 5 substitute | Conservative | 6 | Tim Taylor (C) | |
| | | | Jan French (VC) | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | FIA | 1 | | |
| | Ungrouped | 0 | N/A | N/A |

| Committee/ Panel | Group | No. | Substantive Nominee | Substitute |
|--|--------------|-----|---------------------|------------|
| Project Review Executive Advisory Committee 11 substantive 6 substitute | Conservative | 9 | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | FIA | 2 | | |
| | | | | |
| | Unaligned | 0 | N/A | N/A |

The Leader will also make the following appointments to Cabinet:

| Portfolio Holder | Portfolio Description |
|----------------------------|---|
| Councillor Chris Boden | Leader and Portfolio holder for Finance Governance, Business Rates and CPCA |
| Councillor Jan French | Deputy Leader and Portfolio holder ARP, Parking Decriminalisation, Parks & Open Spaces and Car Parks |
| Councillor Sam Hoy | Portfolio Holder for Housing (not enforcement), Licensing (not enforcement), Wisbech Town Board, CPCA (sub) and Culture |
| Councillor Steve Tierney | Portfolio Holder for Decarbonisation, Communications, ICT, Refuse Collection, Recycling, Streetsweeping, Street Bins and Dog Bins |
| Councillor Susan Wallwork | Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Military Covenant, Policing, Emergency Planning, Cemeteries, Travellers Site Pitch, Street Pride, Street naming & numbering, Safety Advisory Group, Freedom Leisure. |
| Councillor Dee Laws | Portfolio Holder for Planning, Flooding, IDBs and Building Control |
| Councillor Sidney Imafidon | Portfolio Holder for Heritage (except Wisbech High Street Inspire! Projects), Assets, FFL, Environmental |

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| | Services*, Business Premises: Health & Safety and Food Safety |
| Councillor Chris Seaton | Portfolio Holder for Wisbech High Street projects and all other Inspire! Projects (Except Leisure Centres), Funfairs and Markets |
| Councillor Steve Count | Portfolio Holder for the Four Inspire! Leisure Centre projects, FFL, Economic Growth and Land Charges |
| Councillor Gary Christy | Portfolio Holder for Transport (Not Car Parks), Enforcement for Housing, for Licensing & for Environmental Health, Port, SHA and Yacht Harbour. |

*Environmental Services = pests, high hedges, drains, toilets, boat moorings, sewage treatment works, lost& stray dogs, complaints about noise, smoke, light, dust and other pollution.

APPENDIX D - ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The same percentages for the purpose of the calculations have been applied as set out in Appendix C and create the following results:

| Conservative | FIA | Ungrouped | Total |
|---|---|------------------|--------------|
| Entitlement: 113 Allocation: 118 | Entitlement: 23 Allocation: 18 | N/A | 136 |

Based on the above, provided the overall entitlement is agreed by Full Council, the recommendations make provision for Group Leaders to negotiate the reallocation of seats before appointments are finally confirmed and agreed at the next Cabinet meeting in June.

As the proposals reflect the ordinary application of the 1989 Act (as opposed to the Alternative Arrangements agreed by Full Council last year), the ungrouped member would lose their 1 seat on the Hundred of Wisbech IDB which automatically becomes a vacant FIA (as reflected in the Table below). Furthermore, the overall agreed allocation of seats for 2023/24 resulted in the conservative group gaining 5 seats. The data presented in the Table represents the current position (save in respect of the amendments in relation to the ungrouped seat) and remain open for discussion/negotiation between the Leaders as appropriate.

| Outside Body | Representation Required | Proportionality | Substantive Nominee | Substitute |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Anglia Revenue Partnership | 1 substantive 2 substitutes | Conservative | | |
| Benwick Internal Drainage Board (IDB) | 4 | 3 Conservative 1 FIA | | N/A |
| Cambridgeshire Horizons Board | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| Cambridgeshire Military Community Covenant Board | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel | 1 substantive 1 substitute | Conservative | | |
| Chatteris Community Centre Association | 2 | 2 Conservative | | N/A |
| College of West Anglia Governing Body | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| Community Learning and Skills Partnership | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| Curf and Wimblington Combined IDB | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| Feldale IDB | 7 | 6 Conservative 1 FIA | | N/A |
| Fenland Association of Community Transport | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| Fenland Diverse Communities Forum | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| Fenland Health and Care Forum | Open meeting | | Any members can attend | |
| Fenland Tension Monitoring Group | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| Fenland Transport and Access Partnership | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| Hanson, Fletton Brickworks Industry | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| Health Committee | 1 substantive 1 substitute | Conservative | | |

| Outside Body | Representation Required | Proportionality | Substantive Nominee | Substitute |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Hundred of Wisbech IDB | 15 | 12 Conservative 3 FIA | | N/A |
| Kings Lynn IDB | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| LGA/ LGA Rural Commission/ LGA Urban Commission | 1 substantive 1 substitute | Conservative | | |
| Manea and Welney Drainage Commissioners | 3 | 2 Conservative 1 FIA | | N/A |
| March Area Transport Study | 2 | 2 Conservative | | N/A |
| March West and White Fen Internal Drainage Board | 6 | 5 Conservative 1 FIA | | N/A |
| March East IDB | 11 | 9 Conservative 2 FIA | | N/A |
| March Education Foundation | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| March Fifth District Drainage Commissioners | 8 | 7 Conservative 1 FIA | | N/A |
| March Sixth District Drainage Commissioners | 4 | 3 Conservative 1 FIA | | N/A |
| March Third IDB | 5 | 4 Conservative 1 FIA | | N/A |
| Middle Level Commissioners | 3 | 2 Conservative 1 FIA | | N/A |
| Needham and Laddus IDB | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| Nightlayer IDB | 10 | 8 Conservative 2 FIA | | N/A |
| North Level District IDB | 7 | 6 Conservative 1 FIA | | N/A |
| Wisbech Community Development Trust (Oasis Village Centre) | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| Ransonmoor District Drainage Commissioners | 2 | 2 Conservative | | N/A |

| Outside Body | Representation Required | Proportionality | Substantive Nominee | Substitute |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| RECAP | 1 substantive 1 substitute | Conservative | | |
| Rural Cambs CAB | 3 | 2 Conservative 1 FIA | | N/A |
| Safer Fenland Partnership | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| The Combined Authority Board | 1 substantive 1 substitute | Conservative | Cllr Chris Boden | Cllr Sam Hoy |
| The Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee | 2 substantive 2 substitutes | 2 Conservative | | |
| The Combined Authority Audit and Governance Committee | 1 substantive 1 substitute | Conservative | | |
| The Combined Authority HR Committee | 1 substantive 1 substitute | Conservative | | |
| The Combined Authority Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee | 1 substantive 1 substitute | Conservative | | |
| The Combined Authority Transport and Infrastructure Committee | 1 substantive 1 substitute | Conservative | | |
| The Combined Authority Employment and Skills Committee | 1 substantive 1 substitute | Conservative | | |
| Investment Committee | 1 substantive 1 substitute | | | |
| Upwell IDB | 2 | | | N/A |
| Waldersey IDB | 2 | 2 Conservative | | N/A |
| Warboys, Somersham and Pidley IDB | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |

| Outside Body | Representation Required | Proportionality | Substantive Nominee | Substitute |
|---|---|------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Whittlesey & District IDB | 5 | 4 Conservative 1 FIA | | N/A |
| Wisbech Access Strategy Member Steering Group | 2 | 2 Conservative | | N/A |
| Young People March | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| Water Resources East (WRE) Strategic Advisory Group | 1 | Conservative | | N/A |
| TOTAL | 136 substantive 15 substitutions | 118 Conservative 18 FIA | | |

This page is intentionally left blank

| | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Agenda Item No: | 14 |  |
| Committee: | Full Council | |
| Date: | 19 May 2025 | |
| Report Title: | Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Appointments | |

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 This report requests the Council to make appointments to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the municipal year 2025/26.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 In accordance with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Order 2017, each Constituent Council must appoint one of its elected members and a substitute member to the Combined Authority Board. This is usually the Leader of the Council.
- 2.2 The Council is also asked to make appointments to the Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit and Governance Committee in line with political proportionality across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- 2.3 The Leader is responsible for making appointments to the following thematic committees; Environment and Sustainable Communities, Skills and Employment, Transport and Infrastructure and Investment.

3 Recommendations

Members are requested to:

- 3.1 Make the following appointments/nominations to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the municipal year 2025/26:
- 3.1.1 appoint the Leader of Council to act as the Council's appointee to the Combined Authority and one substitute member as set out at Appendix 3;
- 3.1.2 nominate two members to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from the Conservative Party, and two substitute members from the same political party as those appointed as set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.1.3 nominate one member from the Conservative Party to the Audit and Governance Committee and one substitute member from the same political party as set out in Appendix 3.
- 3.2 Note the Leader's nominated appointments to the Thematic Committees as set out at Appendix 3 and highlighted in green.
- 3.3 Delegates authority to the Chief Executive to make any amendments to the appointments to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee in consultation with the Political Group Leaders as required between now and the next Annual Meeting of Council.

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Wards Affected | All |
| Forward Plan Reference | N/A |
| Portfolio Holder(s) | Councillor Boden, Leader of the Council |
| Report Originator(s) | Paul Medd – Chief Executive – paulmedd@fenland.gov.uk Peter Catchpole - Corporate Director with responsibility for Governance - PeterCatchpole@fenland.gov.uk Amy Brown - Assistant Director & Deputy Monitoring Officer – amybrown@fenland.gov.uk Carol Pilson – Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer cpilson@fenland.gov.uk |
| Contact Officer(s) | Elaine Cooper, - Team Leader for Elections, Land Charges and Member Services – ecooper@fenland.gov.uk |
| Background Papers | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Order 2017 |

4 COMBINED AUTHORITY BOARD APPOINTMENTS

- 4.1 In accordance with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Order 2017, each Constituent Council must appoint one of its elected members and a substitute member to the Combined Authority. Each Council made these appointments at its respective Council meeting in May 2017 for the 2017/18 municipal year and is requested to do so for each subsequent municipal year. The Council is now asked to appoint members and substitute members for the municipal year 2025/26.

5 OTHER APPOINTMENTS

5.1 Non-Executive Committees

- 5.1.1 The Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2016 requires the Combined Authority to establish an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and an Audit Committee. The Order sets out the rules for membership. The membership of the Overview and Scrutiny and the Audit Committees as a whole should reflect so far as reasonably practicable the balance of political parties of the constituent councils when taken together. The balance is based on membership of political parties, not political groups, on constituent councils across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- 5.1.2 On 1 May 2025, there were elections at Cambridgeshire County Council as well as East Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge City Council and Peterborough City Council. The Combined Authority has reviewed the political balance on constituent councils and has requested constituent councils to make the following appointments to these committees.

5.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 5.2.1 The Combined Authority agreed that to ensure an equitable representation across each constituent authority, two members from each council should be appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee representing a total membership of fourteen members.
- 5.2.2 The implications of applying political proportionality to a fourteen member Overview and Scrutiny Committee are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 5.2.3 The Council is required to nominate two members from the Conservative Party to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2025/26 based on the political balance set out in Appendix 1.

5.3 Audit and Governance Committee

- 5.3.1 The Combined Authority agreed to establish an Audit and Governance Committee consisting of seven constituent members: one member from each constituent council.
- 5.3.2 The implications of applying political proportionality to a seven member Audit and Governance Committee are detailed in Appendix 2. The Council is required to nominate one member from the Conservative Party to sit on the Audit and Governance Committee for the municipal year 2025/26 based on the political balance set out in Appendix 2.

5.4 SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

- 5.4.1 The Combined Authority has agreed that substitute members should be appointed for each position on the Audit and Governance Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Any substitute members should come from the same party as the Member they are substituting for to maintain political balance.
- 5.4.2 For the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, if constituent councils have appointed members from the same political parties, those Councils might only wish to appoint one substitute rather than two. The quorum set down in legislation is two thirds of the total membership. Therefore, it is preferable to appoint two members in case both members are absent from a meeting and need to substitute.

5.5 THEMATIC COMMITTEES

- 5.5.1 The appointment of one member and a substitute to the thematic Committees is a decision for the Leader. The Council is therefore asked to note the proposed appointments to the Environment and Sustainable Communities, Skills and Employment, Transport and Infrastructure and Investment Committee for the municipal year 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 3 to this Report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 All appointments and nominations made by constituent councils will be reported to the Combined Authority's annual meeting on 4 June 2025.
- 6.2 The political balance calculations in the Appendices are based on up to date statistics given by constituent councils and take account of the outcome of the local elections that took place on the 1 May 2025. However, there may be last minute changes in the lead up to constituent councils' annual meetings and Combined Authority's annual meeting on 4 June 2025.
- 6.3 If there are consequential changes to the overall political balance, the Combined Authority may need to review the membership and the allocation of seats to political parties on the above committees. The Monitoring Officer will advise constituent councils if any subsequent changes have been necessary, and whether any changes need to be made to their nominations. It is recommended that the Chief Executive is given delegated authority to make in-year changes to committee appointments throughout the municipal year.

7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 There are no viable alternative options as the proposals set out in this report reflect the legal requirements associated with the function of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Financial Implications

- 8.1.1 In accordance with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Order 2017, no remuneration is to be payable by the Combined Authority to its members.

8.2 Legal Implications

- 8.2.1 These are set out in the report. The Combined Authorities (Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Access to Information and Audit Committees) Order 2016 requires a combined authority to ensure that the members of the committee taken as a whole reflect so far as reasonably practicable the balance of political parties for the time being prevailing among members of the constituent councils when taken together.

8.3 Equalities Implications

- 8.3.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

9 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Committee political balance calculations.

Appendix 2 – Audit and Governance Committee political balance calculations.

Appendix 3 – Combined Authority Appointments

Accessible versions of the appendices are available on request from Democratic.Services@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk.

10 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 10.1 None applicable.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Fourteen
POLITICAL BALANCE ACROSS THE COUNTY as at 2 May 2025

| | Total | Liberal Democrat | % of total | Conservative | % of total | Labour | % of total | Green Party | % of total | Peterborough First | % of total | Reform | % of total | Total not counted | Total Counted | Entitlement |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------------|------------|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY | 2 | 31 | 52.5 | 10 | 16.9 | 5 | 8.5 | 3 | 5.1 | 0 | 0.0 | 10.0 | 16.9 | 2 | 59 | 2 Lib Dem |
| CAMBRIDGE CITY | 2 | 12 | 28.6 | 1 | 2.4 | 24 | 57.1 | 5 | 11.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0 | 42 | 1 Lab, 1 Green |
| EAST CAMBS. | 2 | 0 | 0.0 | 14 | 100.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 14 | 14 | 2 Con |
| FENLAND | 2 | 2 | 5.4 | 35 | 94.6 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6 | 37 | 2 Con |
| HUNTINGDONSHIRE | 2 | 11 | 31.4 | 19 | 54.3 | 4 | 11.4 | 1 | 2.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 17 | 35 | 1 Con, 1 Lib Dem |
| PETERBOROUGH | 2 | 8 | 14.8 | 11 | 20.4 | 17 | 31.5 | 5 | 9.3 | 13 | 24.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6 | 54 | 1 Lab, 1 Peterborough First |
| SOUTH CAMBS. | 2 | 35 | 81.4 | 8 | 18.6 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2 | 43 | 2 Liberal Democrat |
| TOTAL | 14 | 99 | | 98 | | 50 | | 14 | | 13 | | 10.0 | | 47 | 284 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| POLITICAL BALANCE % | | 34.86 | | 34.51 | | 17.61 | | 4.93 | | 4.58 | | 3.52 | | | | |
| Seat allocation | | 5 | | 5 | | 2 | | 1 | | 1 | | 0 | | | 14 | |
| Committee seat allocation | 14 | 4.88 | | 4.83 | | 2.46 | | 0.69 | | 0.64 | | 0.49 | | | | |

Audit and Governance Committee of Seven
POLITICAL BALANCE ACROSS THE COUNTY as at 2 May 2025

| | Total | Liberal Democrat | % of total | Conservative | % of total | Labour | % of total | Green Party | % of total | Peterborough First | % of total | Reform | % of total | Total not counted | Total Counted | Entitlement |
|---------------------------|----------|------------------|------------|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY | 1 | 31 | 52.5 | 10 | 16.9 | 5 | 8.5 | 3 | 5.1 | 0 | 0.0 | 10.0 | 16.9 | 2 | 59 | 1 Liberal Democrat |
| CAMBRIDGE CITY | 1 | 12 | 28.6 | 1 | 2.4 | 24 | 57.1 | 5 | 11.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0 | 42 | 1 Labour |
| EAST CAMBS. | 1 | 0 | 0.0 | 14 | 100.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 14 | 14 | 1 Conservative |
| FENLAND | 1 | 2 | 5.4 | 35 | 94.6 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6 | 37 | 1 Conservative |
| HUNTINGDONSHIRE | 1 | 11 | 31.4 | 19 | 54.3 | 4 | 11.4 | 1 | 2.9 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 17 | 35 | 1 Liberal Democrat |
| PETERBOROUGH | 1 | 8 | 14.8 | 11 | 20.4 | 17 | 31.5 | 5 | 9.3 | 13 | 24.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6 | 54 | 1 Conservative |
| SOUTH CAMBS. | 1 | 35 | 81.4 | 8 | 18.6 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2 | 43 | 1 Liberal Democrat |
| TOTAL | 7 | 99 | | 98 | | 50 | | 14 | | 13 | | 10.0 | | 47 | 284 | |
| POLITICAL BALANCE % | | 34.86 | | 34.51 | | 17.61 | | 4.93 | | 4.58 | | 3.52 | | | | |
| Seat allocation | | 2 | +1 | 2 | +1 | 1 | | 0 | | 0 | | | | 0 | 6 | |
| Committee seat allocation | 7 | 2.44 | | 2.42 | | 1.23 | | 0.35 | | 0.32 | | 0.25 | | 0 | | |

APPENDIX 3 – COMBINED AUTHORITY APPOINTMENTS

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| | CPCA Board |
| | Non-Executive Committees |
| | Thematic Committees |

| Committee | Proportionality | Name of FDC Nominee |
|--|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Combined Authority Board | Conservative | Cllr Boden |
| Combined Authority Board Substitute | Conservative | Cllr Hoy |
| CPCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee | Conservative | |
| CPCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee | Conservative | |
| CPCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee Substitute | Conservative | |
| CPCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee Substitute | Conservative | |
| CPCA Audit and Governance Committee | Conservative | |
| CPCA Audit and Governance Committee Substitute | Conservative | |
| Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee | Conservative | |
| Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee Substitute | Conservative | |
| Skills and Employment Committee | Conservative | |
| Skills and Employment Committee Substitute | Conservative | |
| Transport and Infrastructure Committee | Conservative | |
| Transport and Infrastructure Committee Substitute | Conservative | |
| Investment Committee | Conservative | |
| Investment Committee Substitute | Conservative | |

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Agenda Item No: | 15 |  |
| Committee: | Full Council | |
| Date: | 19th May 2025 | |
| Report Title: | Resolution to extend 6-month rule – Section 85 Local Government Act 1972 | |

COVER SHEET

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 This report requests that Council pass a resolution under s.85 of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the 1972 Act”) authorising Councillor Harris’ continued absence from meetings for period of 3 months from 19th May 2025.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 specifies that ‘if a member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance (“the 6 month requirement”) to attend any meeting of the authority, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority’.
- 2.2 Councillor Harris last attended a relevant meeting on 16th December 2024 and must therefore attend a further meeting prior to 15th June 2025. However, due to an unexpected change in personal circumstances, it is anticipated that it will not be possible for Councillor Harris to attend a further relevant meeting within the required timeframe. Consequently, without a resolution under s.85 of the Local Government Act 1972, the 6-month requirement will come into force with effect from 16th June 2025 and automatically disqualify Councillor Harris as a District Councillor.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That, in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, Council approves Councillor Harris’ non-attendance at meetings for a period of 3 months commencing on 19th May 2025 and ceasing on 19th August 2025 unless a further resolution is passed.

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Wards Affected | All |
| Forward Plan Reference | N/A |
| Portfolio Holder(s) | Cllr Boden – Leader of the Council |
| Report Originator(s) | Carol Pilson - Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer cpilson@fenland.gov.uk Amy Brown – Head of Legal and Governance amybrown@fenland.gov.uk |
| Contact Officer(s) | Elaine Cooper, Team Leader, Elections, Land Charges and Member Services |
| Background Papers | Local Government Act 1972 |

1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Councillor Harris last attended a meeting of Council on 16th December 2024. He must attend another relevant meeting prior to 16th June 2025 to avoid automatic disqualification as a District Councillor. However, due to a unexpected change in Councillor Harris' circumstances, it is envisaged that it will not be possible for him to attend a meeting within that timescale. This Report therefore requests Council to consider whether to exercise their discretion under s.85 of the Local Government Act 1972 in relation to Councillor Harris.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Councillor Harris last attended a relevant meeting on 16th December 2024 and therefore must attend another relevant meeting prior to 16th June 2025.
- 2.2 Councillor Harris has suffered the bereavement of 2 close family members within the 2 weeks preceding the compilation of this report on 7th May 2025. Consequently, Councillor Harris has various arrangements to make and will need time to grieve his losses.
- 2.3 The only meetings that Councillor Harris could currently attend prior to 16th June 2025 are on 12th and 19th May 2025 which is considered too soon based on the unexpected circumstances he now finds himself in.
- 2.4 Only Full Council can pass a Resolution under s.85 of the Local Government Act 1972, if a resolution is not therefore passed at the 12th May 2025 meeting, Councillor Harris will automatically be disqualified as a District Councillor.
- 2.5 Passing the resolution would not of course prevent Councillor Harris from returning to meetings at any time should he feel able to do so.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 There are no formal consultation requirements connected with the proposed changes however feedback has been sought from key stakeholders to include group Leaders and officer colleagues.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The only alternative option available to Council is for the resolution not to be passed. This would result in the automatic disqualification of Councillor Harris should he remain unable to attend a relevant meeting prior to the expiry of the 6-month period. There are only 2 meetings that he could attend both of which are in the next 2 weeks which in the circumstances would be extremely difficult if not impossible for him.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Legal Implications

- 5.2 The legal implications are as set out in this Report.


5.3 Financial Implications

- 5.4 There are no specific financial implications connected with the recommendation.

5.5 Equality Implications

- 5.6 There are no specific equality implications connected with the recommendation.

This page is intentionally left blank

| | | |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Agenda Item No: | 16 |  |
| Committee: | Council | |
| Date: | 19th May 2025 | |
| Report Title: | Partnership working through a Section 113 agreement | |

The Schedule to this Report comprises **EXEMPT INFORMATION** which is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 To recommend that Council approve a Section 113 agreement with Maldon District Council for the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) to provide Fraud Services.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Each partner Council of the ARP is required to approve their Council entering into Section 113 agreements.
- 2.2 In June 2024, the ARP Joint Committee gave their approval for ARP to commence discussions and negotiations with Maldon in respect of provision of Fraud and Enforcement Services.
- 2.3 These negotiations are now concluded, and the Section 113 agreement is ready to be ratified by each partner Council.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet recommend the Council approve a Section 113 agreement to enable ARP Officers to provide Fraud Services to Maldon District Council.

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Wards Affected | All |
| Forward Plan Reference | N/A |
| Portfolio Holder(s) | Cllr Jan French – Portfolio Holder for Revenues & Benefits, CPE |
| Report Originator(s) | Lorraine King- Head of Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) Email: Lorraine.King@angliarevenues.gov.uk |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Contact Officer(s) | <p>Lorraine King- Head of Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) Email: Lorraine.King@angliarevenues.gov.uk</p> <p>Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director and Section 151 Officer Email: pcatchpole@fenland.gov.uk</p> <p>Sam Anthony – Head of HR/OD and Customer Service Email: santhony@fenland.gov.uk</p> |
| Background Papers | None |

Report:

1 Reasons for Exemption

- 1.1 The Schedule to this Report is NOT FOR PUBLICATION in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in that it contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of Fenland District Council, Maldon District Council and the other constituent authorities of the Anglia Revenues Partnership which is of a commercially sensitive nature. The public interest test has been applied to the information contained within the exempt Schedule and it is considered that the need to retain the information as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

2 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 2.1 ARP provides statutory Revenues and Benefits services to the five partners, including fraud services.
- 2.2 Following the strategic review in December 2023, the agreed approach to Partnership working was to focus on provision of Fraud and Enforcement services and concentrate ARP resource on provision of core services, striving for continuous improvement for the current 5 Partners. Benefits of this approach include creating greater resilience and will generate further efficiencies to meet ARP's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 2.3 ARP retained a fraud and compliance team to prevent and detect fraud when Housing Benefit fraud transferred to the DWP in 2015; at that time, most Councils ceased to provide a full fraud service.
- 2.4 Maldon District Council, in Essex, has approached ARP with a view to providing fraud services.
- 2.5 In June 2024 Joint Committee gave approval for ARP to commence discussions and negotiations with Maldon District Council in respect of provision of Fraud Services.

2.6 These negotiations are now concluded, and the Section 113 agreement is ready to be ratified by each partner Council.

2.7 Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables Local Authorities to enter into an agreement as follows

“a local authority may enter into an agreement with another local authority for the placing at the disposal of the latter for the purposes of their functions, on such terms as may be provided by the agreement, of the services of officers employed by the former, but shall not enter into any such agreement with respect to any officer without consulting him.”

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Maldon District Council have asked ARP to provide, and will fund, fraud services.

3.2 Maldon will be paying a fee which will cover the costs involved in providing the service.

3.3 A negotiated Section 113 agreement to provide fraud services will enable partnership working without the need for Maldon District Council to become members of the Partnership, and in the future may lead to other partnership opportunities.

3.4 Arrangements to share staff and access to systems will be coordinated, and will be in line with all Data Protection requirements

3.5 In addition, providing a fraud service to Maldon District Council will add social value that, in turn, may lead to similar approaches and opportunities in the Essex area.

3.6 The provision of fraud services provides the added value of additional resource resilience allowing for cover of annual leave, sickness and peaks and troughs in workload.

4 CONSULTATION

4.1 The ARP Joint Committee and Operational Improvement Board were fully consulted on this proposal.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 One alternative option was considered, which was to do nothing. Given the reasons outlined in section 3, this was discounted by the Joint Committee.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Legal Implications

- 6.1.1 Section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables a Local Authority to enter into an agreement as follows:

“a local authority may enter into an agreement with another local authority for the placing at the disposal of the latter for the purposes of their functions, on such terms as may be provided by the agreement, of the services of officers employed by the former, but shall not enter into any such agreement with respect to any officer without consulting him.”

6.2 Financial Implications

Maldon will be paying a fee which will cover the costs involved in providing the service.

6.3 Equality Implications

None

7 SCHEDULES

EXEMPT Schedule 1 – Additional Information

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

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank