

AGENDA

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 20 JANUARY 2025

10.00 AM

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

Committee Officer: Helen Moore
Tel: 01354 622424
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- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Previous Minutes (Pages 3 - 12)

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of 2 December 2024.
- 3 To report additional items for consideration which the Chairman deems urgent by virtue of the special circumstances to be now specified.
- 4 Members to declare any interests under the Local Code of Conduct in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting.
- 5 Update on previous actions (Pages 13 - 20)

To receive an update on the previous meeting's Action Plan.
- 6 Review of Fees and Charges 2025/26 (Pages 21 - 48)

To review the Council's Fees and Charges for 2025/26, in line with the Budget Strategy considered by Cabinet on 16 December 2024.
- 7 Draft Business Plan 2025/26 (Pages 49 - 66)

To comment on Draft Business Plan 2025-26.

- 8 Revised General Fund Budget and Capital Programme 2024/25; Draft General Fund Budget Estimates 2025/26 and Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025/26 to 2029/30; Capital Programmes 2025/26-2027/28 (Pages 67 - 102)

To consider and make any appropriate recommendations to Cabinet on the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy, Draft General Fund Budget 2025/26 and Draft Capital Programme 2025-2028 for consultation.

- 9 Future Work Programme (Pages 103 - 104)

To consider the Draft Work Programme for Overview & Scrutiny Panel 2025

- 10 Items which the Chairman has under item 3 deemed urgent.

Friday, 10 January 2025

Members: Councillor Mrs M Davis (Chairman), Councillor E Sennitt Clough (Vice-Chairman), Councillor B Barber, Councillor G Booth, Councillor J Carney, Councillor L Foice-Beard, Councillor A Gowler, Councillor A Hay, Councillor P Hicks, Councillor S Imafidon, Councillor Dr H Nawaz, Councillor D Roy and Councillor A Woollard

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2024 - 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs M Davis (Chairman), Councillor E Sennitt Clough (Vice-Chairman), Councillor B Barber, Councillor G Booth, Councillor J Carney, Councillor L Foice-Beard, Councillor A Hay, Councillor P Hicks, Councillor Dr H Nawaz and Councillor D Roy.

APOLOGIES: Councillor S Imafidon and Councillor A Woollard.

Also in attendance: Councillor Boden, Councillor Murphy and Councillor Wallwork.

Officers in attendance: Peter Catchpole (Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer), Carol Pilson (Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer), Amy Brown (Assistant Director), Dan Horn (Assistant Director), Garry Edwards (Engineering Manager), Phil Hughes (Head of Leisure Services/SRO March Future High Street Project), Mark Mathews (Head of Environmental Services), Annabel Tighe (Head of Environmental Health and Compliance Manager) and Helen Moore (Member Services and Governance Officer)

OSC20/23 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 21 October 2024 were confirmed and signed.

OSC21/23 ANGLIAN WATER

The Chairman welcomed Grant Tuffs, Regional Engagement Manager, Natasha Kenny, Head of Quality Regulation and Enforcement, and Lucy Hodge, Water Recycling Network Manager, from Anglian Water (AW) to the meeting.

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

- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated in the Ofwat 2023/24 report, the overall categorisation of AW was 'lagging behind' even the widely criticised Thames Water was considered 'average' and she found it shocking that AW were one of only three water companies to be 'lagging behind'. She asked what is AW doing about this? Grant Tuffs responded, as stated in the presentation, AW accept that the performance in certain areas is not as good as it should be, and a 10-billion-pound proposed investment plan is in place to tackle some of those issues and the Performance Commitment Plan in the presentation outlines all those details which include climate change impacts. He continued the underperformance was justified and the 38-million-pound fine was a rebate which has been paid back to the customers which means next year customers will see a reduction in their water bills. Grant Tuffs stated that leakage has been reduced by 40% since the company was privatised and they are now industry leaders, there will be more money spent in the next cycle on smart meters to be able to find more leaks in customers properties and the aim is for every customer to have a smart meter fitted in their home by 2030, which will show a continuous flow in properties that can help identify leaks which can be fixed via the customer which is just one example of AW making some positive changes to increase the leakage performance. He added the Per Capita Consumption was another issue shown in the presentation, AW are one of the lowest in the industry, customers in Fenland are good at saving water mainly though the fact that the Fenland area is drought prone with a fragile infrastructure and water supply, there is a supply and demand approach in place to be able to supply enough water to people but in

return AW ask people to use less of what is provided to save water and be more water efficient in their homes. Grant Tuffs explained that the water industry averages around 133 litres per day and is predicted to reach 159 litres by year 2025 with there being a 20-million-pound planned investment into water efficiency by 2030 to reduce further leakages and another 130-million-pound investment into the smart meter scheme. Natasha Kenny stated to support the Per Capita Consumption, AW are also seeking new innovative ways of being able to reduce water usage within the region, one example AW are working with the Environment Agency on enabling new regulations to allow some customers where it is appropriate and safe to use the final effluent from the water recycling centres, so where AW discharge effluent into the receiving water courses that water is clean enough to be discharged into the river and there may be opportunities for AW to use that within the industry where it is safe to do so instead of the industry using clean potable water, for example the local golf courses around the region could use the effluent water to water their greens instead of using the clean portable water. She added that AW are working with the Environment Agency to free up some opportunities to enable that to be used.

- Councillor Hicks asked if it rains would the effluent water not run into the dykes and enter back into the water system again? Natasha Kenny agreed that this was correct and stated that it currently gets discharged into the water chains so regardless of whether it is coming straight out of the works and going straight into the river, it has got set limits and conditions it has to comply with, those set limits and conditions would also apply if AW are looking to discharge it into land so, therefore, the environment would still be protected.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough made the point that when Grant Tuffs was speaking his voice dropped and she could not hear the reason why it was harder for AW to reach their targets than other water companies and asked him to explain this again. Grant Tuffs responded the example he gave was the leakage levels in which AW have the lowest levels in the UK so that the targets given are harder to reach, with other companies lagging with their previous leakage performance, so AW have historically been very good at targeting leakage and have invested over the decades in water resilience and leakages repairs and to improve the target AW are looking to invest satellite imagery and in meters in households plus other initiatives. He stated that the Cambridgeshire area is very different compared to other areas and this can prove challenging when looking at the geography and population being served and these are the facts that have to be taken into consideration when comparing AW with other companies in different areas. Councillor Sennitt Clough stated she would like to understand why it has taken so long to get to this point of finding all this technology, for example this satellite imagery as leaks are not a new thing for water companies. Grant Tuffs responded that AW have had to find the right way to spend bill payers money and prioritise the best way to deliver the best outcome for the customer, leakage is a top priority but so is environment protection and flooding pollution and AW have to make choices as to where to spend customers money as there is not the ability to increase water bills too much in this current cost of living crisis. Natasha Kenny added there is a lot of new technology coming out and AW are seeking ways in which to find out what technology is right for AW to use within the networks, when new technology is adopted there is a period of learning which involves millions of lines of data and all of that data needs to be validated in order to make it valuable and to ensure that there is the right expertise in place before this new technology can be adopted and used to deliver improvements to the service AW provides. Lucy Hodge provided an example stating that there are 22 thousand new monitors in the sewer networks with alarms that alert engineers if there is a blockage or a potential leakage problem and, for this to work effectively, the monitor has to assess the normal level of flow through the sewer first then once this is in place it works from the algorithms which can flag any potential problems and her team can act accordingly but the technology takes time to learn.
- Councillor Booth stated he would like to understand more about how the finances are managed especially concerning the 7-billion-pound debt AW have and the fact that 24% of bill payers money is going towards servicing this debt plus 12.6 billion taken out in dividends for the shareholders, asking is the priority customers or shareholders? Grant Tuffs responded the financial model works in a way that the shareholder and private investors

invest their money first which equals 10-million-pounds which is money invested in the long term and then returns are paid back through dividends and the assets of the projects. He stressed that AW shareholders are investing for the long term, and they always put the customer first. Councillor Booth acknowledged that the finances are a balancing act but there is still the case of the 7-billion-pound debt since privatisation which does raise questions about the service provided.

- Councillor Sennett Clough commented the Ofwat reports states that AW 'show concerning underperformance on WRMP delivery for a third consecutive year' and failure to 'meet the performance commitment level for four consecutive years. She asked why has there been under performance for three consecutive years regarding the company's Water Resources Management Plan and four years in regard to pollution incidents commitment levels? Grant Tufts responded the company's Water Resources Management Plan was affected by many factors in the last few years with Covid increasing the per cap consumption point because more people were at home using more water which affected the performance, then there were the severe weather storms in 2022 which increased leakage and the war in Ukraine affected the supply chain to get pipes across to build the water pipeline as quickly as originally planned, but all of those issues are being addressed in the new plan mentioned in the presentation. Natasha Kenny commented there is a Pollution Incident Reduction Plan in place, which has identified several areas in which AW want to focus on improvements. She continued this system has been in place for a while and AW recognise that improvements need to be delivered as the company is currently sitting at a 2-star rating on the environmental performance assessment, there are several area of improvement which are being addressed such as targeting maintenance and resilience programmes, bolstering detection in each catchment area and looking at pressure devices and the potential for a mains burst. Natasha Kenny stated that AW are proactively monitoring across the catchment areas and making informed decisions, plus delivering operational control standards and ensuring they are fit for today's standard, alongside this AW are looking to improve the operational excellence making sure all of the people who deal with and look at pollution across the catchment area have got the right skills to make sure they can problem solve or escalate if there are any issues. She added in reference to the 100-million-pounds shown in the presentation that the investors are reinvesting into the pollution focus, 32 million of that is about focusing on health interventions and asset improvements, 17 million on improving system capacity, 22 million on improving rising mains, 22 million on blockage prevention and 7 million on improving capability and insight across the teams.
- Councillor Hicks stated he understands AW are doing well with leakage now. Grant Tufts responded that AW are leading in the industry on leakage detection and repair but there is always more to be done. Councillor Hicks continued the reason he asked is because recently there was a water leak in March Town and from reporting it to getting it repaired took two months in total, why did this take so long? Grant Tufts stated that any job which comes in is prioritised on urgency and then a team is deployed accordingly. Councillor Hicks stated that the leak in March Town was a big leak and now there is a second leak which has been reported, will this take as long? Grant Tufts indicated he will investigate.
- Councillor Nawaz stated it was interesting to hear that money is being invested yet the same problems keep occurring year after year concerning dead fish, fats, leakages etc. He continued considering AW are aware of this is there a case for regular servicing of these networks on an annual basis in the interest of prevention and he would also like to understand more about the nutrients within sewage. Natasha Kenny responded when using the nutrients within sewage the process works where AW are issued a discharge permit from the Environment Agency and those conditions in the permit drives how the incoming sewage is treated, and the water recycling centre will be built for investing in delivering those targets before the discharges are released into the environment. She stated there are 2 ways the sewage leaves the treatment site, one stream is the final effluent which discharges to the water course and those limits within the permit will determine the standards expected to protect the ecology of the receiving water course, within that discharge there may be a small amount of nutrients which get lost to the river but there is

potential for those nutrients within the discharge to be used if that final effluent were to be discharged onto land to irrigate golf courses, which means that the golf club owners would not need to use fertilizers as there is natural nutrients within them. Natasha Kenny continued the other stream that comes off the sewage treatment process is the sludge and the sludge is taken away to one of the sludge treatment centres, it is heated up for a set period of time to remove the pathogens and the harmful bacteria within it, that sludge is then dried out into a biosolid and then that biosolid will be transferred under license to agricultural land and used as a biological nutrient product on land, which is permitted by the Environment Agency. Councillor Nawaz commented that it does contain lots of valuable nutrients but it does also contain lots of toxic chemicals so how can the public be sure that all toxins have been filtered out? Natasha Kenny responded AW act as a regulator for any upstream non-domestic discharges into the catchment area, there are a list of hazardous substances that are published on the Environment Agency website and AW have a duty to comply with any of the standards set out in relation to those hazardous substances so if it known there is a high risk trader that wants to connect into the sewage network AW will carry out an assessment under the trade effluent scientific team to determine, using models, how much of the treatment process will remove those harmful contaminants and, if the treatment process cannot remove those harmful contaminants then AW will make sure that when permission is given to that trader to discharge into the sewer network they are issued with a trade effluence consent under the rules of the Water Industry Act which will have set conditions within that permit so those harmful chemicals are not discharged into the catchment area which allows AW to know that what is discharged into the rivers or within the biosolids does not contain harmful levels of any contaminants. She added that these sites are monitored regularly and if they do not comply with the regulations AW will prosecute. Councillor Nawaz asked how many traders have AW prosecuted? Natasha Kenny replied one trader was taken to court last year and they were prosecuted and fined. Councillor Nawaz asked in view of what has been talked about at this meeting what steps will be taken to prevent leakages with toxic substances in them including contagion into the waterworks? Natasha Kenny replied AW will continue to take their role seriously as a regulator under the Water Industry Act and AW will make sure there are surveillance systems and good regulation in place to performance manage traders to prevent harmful chemicals entering into the system and that traders are performing in line with their trades.

- Councillor Nawaz stated it was mentioned that AW are not a statutory consultee in individual cases or in larger developments, how can the local planning department help assist in regulating illegal connections? Grant Tuffs responded AW planning team do work closely with local planning officers and make requests for conditions to be put on planning applications.
- Councillor Booth stated a few years ago O&S raised the concerns around low pressure in the rural villages, particularly to the South and West of Wisbech, following that meeting there was evidence of some pipe replacement work, but in the presentation, there was no evidence of this work continuing in the future for investment in new pipework within the surrounding villages. Grant Tuffs responded the scheme which was recently completed this year in Friday Bridge has reduced the calls about low pressure in the area, all systems are monitored all of the time and any changes in pressure will flag up on the radar and if an investment is needed in that area then AW have the ability within the next business plan to divert funds to target any possible areas around pressure over the next five years. Councillor Booth asked for evidence of the business plan once it is finalised.
- Councillor Carney asked what the relationship was like between AW and Highways because in his experience there have been times when a problem has been reported to AW and they have said it is Highways responsibility and vice versa and he would like to understand how this can be rectified. Lucy Hodge stated that this is something which is being investigated as part of AW multi-agency groups, meetings have been set up and Highways are attending every month, AW and Highways have attended site visits together and have picked up on several points in their particular areas to act on.

- Councillor Hay stated that in the report it says that AW have submitted a storm overflow action plan to DEFRA to ensure that they are not discharging more than 10 times a year. She added that this is said to occur during high rainfall and due to the age of the sewers, and also the type of sewers, namely the combined sewers that take both sewage and rain water, the aim is to get this down to 10 times or less a year and asked what is the average discharge at this present time and how many of these combined sewers are in the district and she would also like to know what plans do AW have to replace these types of sewers? Natasha Kenny responded Fenland have 18 storm overflows within the catchment and currently for 2024 the average spill per storm overflow is 29, the raw data is still being collected and verified so this is a draft figure of 29 as an average. She stated that over the next five-year investment period AW are looking at the best way in which to reduce spills by looking at alternative storage systems with the resilience to retain that 10 spills target. Councillor Hay asked if there was a report of a spillage would AW replace the pipes with an updated system? Natasha Kenny replied yes that would be possible providing the funds were available as some of the money is for maintenance and some is for enhancement, which does include storm overflows.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked if phosphorus was the cause of the EA category 1 incident in September where almost 1000 fish and other wildlife died? Natasha Kenny responded that this case was not to do with phosphorus and the reason AW are investing in reducing phosphorus across the Anglian region is because when phosphorus is discharged to water courses it encourages alga growth in the rivers and that alga growth can cause oxygen depletion within the rivers and that makes it difficult for invertebrates and other wildlife to thrive in that type of environment so, therefore, the removal of phosphorus will enable AW to deliver an environmental enhancement e.g. it will reduce the amount of alga growth in rivers which will enhance the ecology in the rivers. Grant Tuffs stated that, regarding the incident in September, AW are one of several that discharge into that water course and the investigation is still ongoing.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked if the incident last year in Whittlesey was due to the algae? Natasha Kenny responded when phosphorus is discharged into the water it has a long-term impact and is a gradual issue, but when there is a pollution event that can cause immediate low oxygen levels or high ammonia levels, which has an immediate impact on the wildlife.

Members noted the information provided and agreed that further questions will be sent to Anglian Water for answering after the meeting and added to the action plan.

OSC22/23 PROGRESS OF CORPORATE PRIORITY - ENVIRONMENT

Members considered the Progress of Corporate Priority – Environment.

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

- Councillor Roy stated that in the report it mentions that FDC approved 154 properties for energy related grants and he would like to know if any of that success has been measured or if there has been any feedback from information collated from recipients of those grants and if the financial outcomes or reductions in carbon footprint were achieved? Annabel Tighe responded one of the big projects is the home upgrade grant funding from Central Government and the project works through a partnership which is led by Cambridgeshire City Council on behalf of all the District and local authorities. She stated that 154 properties have been allocated for the opportunity for the funding, they have not all accepted to go ahead but the key performance measure is using the energy performance certificate which is a recognised method of what the efficiency of the property is currently and what improvement could be made, and those are graded from A to G so there would need to be an improvement in terms of the work put in place. Annabel Tighe continued, in terms of the written feedback to the questions asked previously, there is a survey that is completed with residents but because that data is held by the City Council this is not available but for future reports the feedback can be included.

- Councillor Roy stated that residents often express their frustration about the inappropriate use of FDC operated car parks, there is a trend where the car parks because they are free are being used by people who have got bus passes which results in reduced car parking spaces. He asked what are the current plans for FDC car parks and how use can be regulated? Garry Edwards responded the Council has been looking over the last few years to introduce Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) which would allow regulation of car parks both off-street and the on-street areas, but due to the shortage in funding for introducing CPE that is currently on hold and the only other choice would be to introduce a district wide off-street parking policy order which would allow more enforcement for all of the sites. He stated that currently the Council has 28 parking facilities, 21 of those are public car parks and 7 are associated with Council public buildings, but only 6 of the car parks have off-street parking place orders on them which makes it difficult to enforce some of those overstaying or vehicles being used for the motor trade etc. being stored in the car parks. Garry Edwards continued the reason why there has not been a district wide order is because investigations are in place to look at CPE, and this is something the Council needs to decide if it wants to introduce in the future. Councillor Roy stated that the loss of income by not having CPE given that the communities across the whole of Fenland have grown maybe outweigh the reasons for not having this in place. He asked are there any timelines or is it on the agenda for review and how long after the off-street parking will this come into play? Garry Edwards stated to his knowledge there is no proposal to introduce car park charging, if the Council was to introduce CPE there would be no income generated through pay parking it would only be through prosecution of fixed penalty notices, generally speaking those CPEs do not run with a profit unless there is pay parking which means they would run at a deficit in the absence of paid parking. He stated that if the Council does not introduce CPE and decides to go along the off-street parking route across the district, then the Council could prosecute offenders through fix penalty notices or by using a penalty charge notice system but the more enforcement that is carried out the more resources will be needed.
- Councillor Barber asked while CPE is on hold are there any plans for restricting parking in the local car parks with the view to time and if that is in the plan how would it be enforced? Garry Edwards responded as mentioned there are very few parking place orders on the car parks locally and the ones that do have off-street parking place orders have the maximum stay period which is 24 hours this then becomes difficult to enforce for overstaying because what constitutes the start and the end of one 24-hour period. He stated that CPE is very different to a off-street parking place order, and if the Council determines not to move forward with the CPE because of the shortage of funding which it faces presently, the only way that an off-street parking place order can be used across the district would be to agree to designate which car parks are short or long stay and each car park would then have a new maximum stay period which would be determined by members.
- Councillor Nawaz asked for clarification on the statement in the presentation around landfill waste credits. Mark Mathews responded recycling credits are a legal requirement for the County Council (CC) in a two-tier authority, for every tonne of material that is processed for recycling CC provided a recycling credit which is currently £58 and the 1.5 million pounds shown in the presentation is the offset costs, if that material were to have all gone to landfill that is how much it would have cost the CC.
- Councillor Nawaz asked for clarification concerning fly tipping in Wisbech and the rampant problem shown in the presentation figures and asked why there no extra CCTV cameras in place? Councillor Murphy responded there is always a need for more CCTV cameras in the area, but it is a challenge to fix cameras in place as there is a large amount of theft of these cameras especially in the more rural areas. He stated that the fly tipping in Wisbech shows as a larger issue within the figures because Wisbech is the biggest town out of the four main towns in the district and covers a larger rural area. Councillor Nawaz suggested the Council investigate this in more detail to define a cause so that a solution could be found. Councillor Murphy agreed that this is something that could be achieved.

- Councillor Barber asked what is the main cause of the issues in relation to recycling bins being rejected? Councillor Murphy responded a lot of the rejections are to do with the wrong items being put into the recycling bins and in the past sticker were added to bins that were not emptied with the reason why and although this did work it was very time consuming, but the Council are looking to bring this back in next year as a reminder of what recycling needs to go into the blue bin etc. Councillor Barber stated that in her ward people are keen to recycle but feels there is not enough information reminding the public to wash their tins out etc. Councillor Murphy stated that the Council have tried a variety of ways to get the message across and if members had any ideas, he would welcome the feedback.
- Councillor Booth stated he would like to understand why FDC are performing poorly compared to its peers in Cambridgeshire regarding the recycling rate and what is the overall plan to improve this? Councillor Murphy stated that the figures shown in the presentation and the figures published from DEFRA are compiled in a different way. Councillor Booth stated he understands that DEFRA set the standard for all councils to report, so it is comparing all councils against one another and the report clearly shows that FDC are doing poorly against other peers in Cambridgeshire. He made the point that the report shows that Cambridge has a disposal of 48% whereas Fenland has a disposal of 37% and it appears that Fenland are dragging down the recycling figures and he would like to understand what improvements FDC are going to make to improve this situation. Mark Mathews agreed it is the data and how it is analysed, when looking at this from a county perspective accepting RECAP includes Peterborough as well but when looking at the County Council figures the Fenland customers do recycle their household waste well with a rate of above 50%. He stated that the other thing to bear in mind is there is a correlation between demographics and recycling performance so to compare FDC with some of the other districts within Cambridgeshire is unreasonable but he did agree there was more that could be done. Mark Mathews added after the last task and finish group the figures were looked at in detail and the resolution of that was that the Council would wait to see what the now called 'simpler recycling guidance' would put forward because this is a recycling rate of residual waste where organics are included and it is not a reasonable measure across the whole of the country because the services are different, one of the biggest impacts is that when the Council compares itself to East Cambs they offer a free garden waste collection and their residual waste is collected on a weekly basis which makes it unreasonable to compare. He stated that when looking at the figures in the report shown today the 45% recycling rate is a simple comparison of what the customer puts in the blue bin and what is put in the residual bin and this is the behaviour that the Council wants to focus on which is why the figures were produced, the DEFRA figures also include fly tipping, litter, and street sweeping which as a local council cannot be directly influenced and taint that figure so to have an actual balance of behaviour to change as a performance measure that can be reported in real time is reflected in the performance indicator. Mark Mathews continued as a recommendation the Council are waiting to see what the new Government figures are and if carbon and energy are included or something that moves away from weight because as the manufacturers start to change and reduce packaging this can have a direct impact on the recycling rate but to sum up with the growth in planning the residual waste has gone down and the recycling rate has stayed the same and with the implementation of food waste this will create a new platform for people to engage. Councillor Booth stated he took the comments on board and as a committee recommend that a plan is developed to improve recycling rates once the guidance has been published.
- Councillor Hicks stated there is an income which is generated through subscriptions to the brown bin, where does the income in relation to the garden waste subscription end up within the Council, is it ring fenced and what happens if there are any extras or any short falls? Councillor Murphy responded the income generated through the garden waste subscription does not run at a profit because it is unable to with the way it has been set up. He added that the Finance Team look at the running cost and the only reason subscriptions are increased is to cover the cost-of-living increases like petrol, wages and maintenance with no profit made, this year it will be in a deficit which is why the yearly subscription payment has

been increased.

- Councillor Hicks asked what the plans are regarding all the extra houses being built and due to be built in the future within the Fens? Councillor Murphy stated this is being assessed all the time, each time a new set of houses are being built the Council carry out a round control to see how the bin rounds can be managed more effectively or if a new round needs to be added.
- Councillor Mrs Davis stated in the report that waste is now being sorted and processed for onward sale to Biffa's Edmonton plant. She would like to know what the carbon footprint of transporting waste over a distance such as this, and how does that compare to the environmental impact of simply not recycling in this way and is there a better way to do it? Mark Mathews responded the Council are in the initial phase of the contract with the Biffa plant as they won the tender and the Council will benefit as it is in partnership with all of the authorities across Peterborough as this was a joint tender and procurement that the County Council ran for FDC so that it could deliver best value for money. He stated that when looking at the recycling and the carbon impact the bigger picture has to be taken into account as the MRF is only the first step as this is where the materials are sorted into their constituent parts they then go onwards across England to then be processed into something that can be returned back into whatever recycling system is appropriate, and it is important that the customer continues to separate their waste because there is a huge amount of energy in that waste, their textiles and eventually their food waste as plans are in place to implement that.
- Councillor Booth asked about the Community Safety Partnership and the action plan as there is no reference to road safety and speeding and this appears to have dropped off the radar and he requested it be put back in as this is a big issue for residents. He also went on to say he felt that community engagement could be happening at the big events that are held across the rural villages throughout the year as there will be a captive audience rather than arranging small coffee mornings that attract around 10 villagers. Councillor Wallwork agreed with Councillor Booth and added, if the committee are invited, they will attend plus she will ask the committee to flag up the events across the year and put some plans in place to attend.
- Councillor Barber asked if there were somewhere the Street Pride groups could find out the actual days the verges are being cut in their area? Councillor Murphy responded unfortunately this cannot be planned as other elements can interfere with the process like road works or the weather, there is a list, but it changes day by day. Councillor Barber responded when Street Pride are out litter picking after the grass verges have been cut some plastics are shredded and hard to pick up which is why it would be convenient to know before hand so the verge can be cleared before it is cut. Councillor Booth added that some parishes do verge cutting on behalf of the County Council which are carried out by local contractors, and he suggested talking to Parish Councils to see if this is undertaken by them then from there liaise with the contractor.

Members noted the progress against the Environment priorities.

OSC23/23 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN AND THE COUNCIL CORPORATE 3CS

Members considered the Local Government Ombudsman and the Council Corporate 3Cs Annual Review Complaints.

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

- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated given the excellent record that has been described how can the Council avoid becoming complacent? Councillor Boden responded all the officers concerned are always vigilant and it is not merely a matter of dealing with complaints it is also a matter of learning from the complaints, as the Council continues to have a process of learning going on then the Council knows the system is working as it is meant to work, with it being closely monitored by the Head of Human Resources, so nothing is taken for

granted.

- Councillor Barber stated a noteworthy number of complaints are in relation to FDC staff. She asked what the nature of those complaints might be and what is the process for investigating these complaints? Councillor Boden responded there are several reasons why customers may complain about members of staff, but any complaint which is made about a named staff member is triaged by the HR team then it follows the 3C's process. He stated that where it is appropriate an HR business partner will provide support to the responding manager, but this is dependent on the nature of the complaint and ensuring that staff are supported throughout the process and that any investigation is thorough and personal details are never shared with customers as part of the response, however, feedback is always provided. Councillor Boden made the point that complaints vary in nature and further analysis has been carried out and there were no obvious patterns or trends in the complaints which name a particular member of staff. He continued it is worthy of note where complaints have been made about planning, housing, refuse, cleansing, council tax and benefits even if it is against a specific named member of staff, it tends to be about the outcome rather than about the performance of that individual. Councillor Boden stated that there is a plan to increase the frequency of customer service training for all staff and managers and they are encouraged to share their in-service complaints, anonymized so that their team get greater awareness, and they capture lessons learnt to improve customer service.
- Councillor Hicks asked if it was true that the figures shown are never entirely accurate? Councillor Boden responded figures like these can never be completely accurate and there is subjectivity about how something can be categorised, some cases are over reported and in some cases there is under reporting in terms of numbers, however, the work is undertaken meticulously and conscientiously and whilst it has some degree of subjectivity the numbers are created on a like by like basis year on year and there has been no change in procedure about the way in which the numbers are recorded which provides a good indication of the direction of travel.
- Councillor Booth suggested that the category of staff complaints should be recategorized once the investigation has been completed because it sounded like it is more against policy and process as opposed to the individual, this would then lead to a better trend analysis. He continued he would like to raise a point around the reporting of the complaints as there seems to be fewer complaints regarding elections in a year where voter ID was introduced and there was a lot of people complaining about it in the polling stations so how can the Council ensure it is not under reporting to be able to do a true trend analysis? Councillor Boden stated that he agreed with Councillor Booth's recommendation, and this would be investigated for next year along with a change of methodology explaining how this affects the figures so that there is still a means of comparing like for like. He continued concerning the second point, the complaints that are recorded all start within the 3C's system and if individuals are not being encouraged to use this system, which is the best way to get their complaints fully investigated, it will look like it is under reported in this report. Councillor Booth responded he felt the point was regarding overall complaints, if staff are not reporting verbal complaints then these are not being captured in the report and the report will show evidence of fewer complaints which does not then lend itself to a true trend analysis.
- Councillor Hicks made the point would it not be beneficial to show both reports to the public to compare the figures with last year's figures and to help as a stepping stone towards the new methodology of calculating the figures. David Wright responded some of the verbal complaints are logged as service requests and are dealt with immediately by the team where possible and would not make it into the 3C's system. He stated that the Election complaints will show up on this year's report and not the one shown in the presentation. David Wright agreed this is an area that needs to be addressed, and percentage changes are studied but there is no reason why using the figures available cannot be added to a summary from the previous year. Councillor Boden added that whatever is reported next year it will be made clear what the numbers would have been under the old system and what they will be under the new system to make it easy to see what the comparison is and

what the change is because whenever there is a change of process there can be a suspicion that the numbers are being fiddled, this will give full disclosure so no accusations can be made against the Council. Councillor Booth agreed with what had been put forward.

- Councillor Nawaz stated it was nice to see the number of compliments has increased by 22.5% and felt this committee should note, acknowledge and commend these results. Councillor Mrs Davis responded she would make sure his comments are passed on.

Members noted the information provided.

OSC24/23 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members consider and noted the Future Work Programme, making the following comments.

- Councillor Booth suggested that the Fees and Charges should come first on the agenda then the draft Business Plan as this has an impact on the draft budget.
- Councillor Booth suggested that the meeting on the 29 April be moved to either a month before or after the elections because councillors will be coming into purdah as half of the Cabinet are also County Council members and will not be able to attend the meeting. Councillor Davis responded this is being investigated and if it is held it would be at the Boat House.
- Councillor Booth asked for calendar dates for after May so that plans can be put in place.

12.30 pm

Chairman

REF	Date Requested	Question	Target Date
COMPLETED ACTONS			
	02/12/24	<p>Anglian Water Questions:</p> <p>Cllr Hicks asked about leakage repair timescales, and I couldn't remember the exact example he raised. I've checked our system and can see a recently completed leak repair on Fleetwood Close, March, but were there any other specific examples / locations that I can look into?</p> <p>Cllr Carney raised a concern about Highways liaison, so again, would you be able to provide some specific examples so our local operations team can investigate.</p> <p>1. As water companies represent part of the national infrastructure, they are vulnerable to cyber-attacks. What is Anglian Water doing to safeguard its IT networks? Is key data managed on up-to-date software, for instance? How often do IT upgrades take place?</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>Cyber Security is one of our "principle risks" – this means that it is actively overseen and scrutinised by both executive and non-executive directors and forms a regular part of our audit programme.</p> <p>Anglian Water forms part of what the Government calls the "Critical National Infrastructure" as such we receive direct support from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) to understand the factors that affect our cyber security and to assist us in operating in ways that maximise our ability to protect our services, assets, data and of course people. The government through NCSC and our regulators (specifically the Drinking Water Inspectorate) publish requirements that we must adhere to that describe a framework for how cyber security should operate. We work with them to operate within that framework and to drive continual improvement.</p> <p>We have an in-house team of experienced and well qualified professionals whose sole purpose is cyber security. They use internationally recognised best practices to understand our current level of cyber security maturity and to continually work to improve it through the delivery of our own Cyber Security strategy. These activities focus on Governance, Identification, Detection, Protection, Respond and Recovery to ensure that we consider all aspects of security.</p> <p>All our IT services are designed to be "Secure by design" and through the life of our technology services we actively monitor systems for potential vulnerabilities (weaknesses that attackers can exploit) using specialist tools and for</p>	12/12/24

our most critical services we utilise “ethical hackers” to test the integrity of our security controls. In addition, all Anglian Water staff receive mandatory training on Cyber Security.

2. In the Ofwat 2023/24 report, the overall categorisation for Anglian Water was 'lagging behind.' Even the widely criticised Thames Water was considered 'average.' I find it shocking that AW were one of only three water companies to be 'lagging behind'. What are AW doing about this? Report source: <https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/WCPR-23-24.pdf>

Response:

We know that our performance needs to improve in some areas, and with the arrival of our new CEO this summer, we are focused on a dedicated programme to accelerate these results.

The Ofwat report looks at performance from 2023/24. Since then, the measures we've put in place mean that performance is already improving, but we acknowledge we still need to go further.

Direct comparison across the industry is difficult because Performance Commitment Levels (PCL) differ between companies. Underperformance against a PCL doesn't necessarily indicate absolute underperformance at an industry level. It does not necessarily mean performance is deteriorating either.

For example, despite leading the industry in tackling leakage, because we missed our stretching target we are classed as 'lagging' and this contributes to our underperformance payments.

For 2023/24, the balance of our performance across all these areas meant that we incur an underperformance payment of £38.1 million, which will ultimately be reflected in customer bills for 2025/26.

We are working with Ofwat to ensure the measures for the next five years are appropriate and drive the right outcomes for customers, stakeholders and the environment.

We have just submitted to Ofwat a Service Commitment Plan which provides context into why our performance fell short and our plans to address challenges. The plan explains each area of performance, the root causes of any underperformance, the actions we're taking and where we have made improvements. The plan is available on our website - <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/corporate/strategies-and-plans/service-commitment-plan/>

3. Also, in the report, Ofwat states that AW 'show concerning underperformance on WRMP delivery for a third consecutive year' (p.17) and a failure to 'meet the performance commitment level for four consecutive years' (p.25). Why has there been underperformance for three consecutive years with regard to the company's Water Resources Management Plan and for four years in regard to pollution incidents commitment levels?

Response:

The Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP)

The WRMP has been affected by factors, including the Covid pandemic, which increased per capita consumption, the severe weather in 2022, which increased leakage, and the war in Ukraine, which caused supply chain issues and a resulting delay in the delivery of our strategic pipeline. These issues have been addressed in our WRMP24, draft Business Plan and subsequent updates.

The southern section of our strategic pipeline (including the section through the Fenland district) will be completed by November 2027, at which point our supply demand balance will be sufficient to enable us to reduce abstraction from sensitive groundwaters, as well as ensuring our supply system is resilient to a 1 in 200-year drought. We continue to work on

reducing demand with the rollout of smart meters, helping customers avoid unintended consumption related to leaks in their properties, as well as by reducing leakage on our network, which is already at industry leading levels.

Pollutions

We acknowledge that our pollutions performance has not been to the standard we or customers expect.

In 2023/24 alone, we invested nearly half a billion pounds in reducing pollution and spills, utilising new technologies and instilling new ways of working to lay the foundations to improve our performance.

We are disappointed and frustrated that our performance isn't moving fast enough. But we are realistic that there are no quick fixes. While we are moving forward with urgency and putting significant amounts of resources behind turning around our performance, we know the time it will take to yield results.

In 2023/24, we had the wettest winter on record. As a result, in 2023, we processed 25% more flow into our Water Recycling Centres, and our pumping stations were operating for double the amount of time, in comparison to 2022. Despite operating to maximum capacity and as designed, our sewerage network and pumping stations were inundated by hydraulic overload - where there is more water than there are places to store it - placing upward pressure on pollution and flooding performance. A small number of our sites were entirely submerged and temporarily inoperable, even in locations with flood defences.

In response, we declared a company-wide incident and deployed our comprehensive plan, using a J-Cell military planning method. Despite this, our overall performance did not meet the levels we aspire to.

After hydraulic overload, blockages were the second biggest contributor to pollution. We clear over 40,000 blockages every single year, caused by wrongly flushed items, including a build-up of fats, oils and greases. This equates to one blockage every five minutes – of which 80% are avoidable.

While no spill to the environment is acceptable and we are disappointed to be off target, our lead measures are showing improvements, demonstrating that the investment and action taken in line with our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan are paying off. For example, we had 13% less pollution compared to 2021, another year impacted by wet weather.

To go further and faster, our shareholders have invested an extra £100 million to tackle pollution and spills. This investment is targeting risk reduction activities. We expect to see the risk reduction benefits come to fruition at the end of 2025. Our investments cover five key areas:

- £32 million on asset health interventions for pumping stations and Water Recycling Centres
- £17 million on system capacity including infiltration investigations and lining in key locations, plus investing in new tankers and jetters
- £22million on improving rising mains including a 104% increase in pressure monitors, implementing satellite technology, rehabilitating high-risk rising mains and surveying more than 6,500 locations with air valve surveys
- £22 million on blockage prevention including 8,000 additional sewer monitors, a programme of rehabilitation and risk reduction for more than 2,600 manholes and a supersized CCTV survey, cleanse and rehabilitation programme for more than 250km of pipes.
-

£7 million on improving capability and insight across our teams, with new roles created. This new investment is in line with the five core areas that we continue to implement actions in line with our Pollution Incident Reduction Plan, which include:

- Enhancing the assets we have, assessing where improvements can be made and rolling out targeted maintenance and resilience programmes to ensure the entire asset base is reliable.
- Bolstering blockage detection to identify potential problems before they happen.
- Ensuring the proactive monitoring we have embedded as business as usual is delivering maximum value; helping us to make informed decisions, alongside implementing new monitoring technologies to further support our efforts.
- Delivering consistent operational control standards and procedures, to ensure we remain focused on robust continuous improvement.
- Improving operational excellence, identifying areas we can improve and making changes as a result.

These core areas are supported by our zero pollutions mindset, which we are embedding right across the business.

4. Ofwat say that 'AW are also a long way from meeting their 2024-25 target' for pollution incidents (p.25). Last year, Cllr Gerstner asked Natasha Kenny from AW about pollution incidents: 'AW remained a two-star company; 33 sewerage pollution incidents per 10,000 km, AW caused 255 incidents in 2022. This included 11 serious incidents. More than half of all the serious pollution incidents nationally were from AW and Thames Water assets. AW was the worst-performing water company for self-reporting of all the pollution incident' (Cllr Gerstner, 2023, source Ofwat and BBC article).'

To which, Natasha and then her colleague Grant Tuffs responded: 'AW is not in a place it would like to be regarding the environmental assessment, the plan is to improve and do a better job, the number of pollutions AW had last year is not were the company wants to be, there are new processes and improvements in place to better this area and AW have looked at other water companies to benchmark themselves to improve performance and best practice within the region. Grant Tuffs continued, "the figures are the figures, and the company takes this on board but there is a lot more positives to take away and improve on.'

Despite their confidence, there have been further pollution incidents, including a fine brought about by the EA, and another EA category one incident, which took place in Sept in Whittlesey, where close to a 1000 fish died. As such, what are Anglian Water doing to prevent such pollution incidents, as year on year, this cannot continue? When will AW mee their pollution incidents performance commitment levels?

Response:

Please see the answer to question 3 above for details of the actions we are taking in relation to pollution. With regards to the incident at Stanground, we have given our findings to the Environment Agency (EA) for it to consider as part of its ongoing investigation. The EA will also be continuing to investigate the other outfalls which discharge in the area, but which aren't owned by Anglian Water. We await details of the EA's findings, and it would

not be appropriate for us to comment further or speculate ahead of this.
We share people's concerns about this distressing event and our teams worked hard alongside the EA to help the river to recover by deploying specialist aeration equipment.

5. Have there been discussions with Ofwat to monitor Anglian Water more closely?

Response:

As part of the Price Review 2024 process, (the water industry business plan consultation) Ofwat has evolved its monitoring framework for companies, including setting new requirements on companies called Price Control Deliverables. These will essentially monitor more closely the delivery of specific projects within companies' business plans and will require companies to return money to customers if projects aren't delivered. This is part of an overall evolution of how Ofwat intends to monitor the performance of companies in the next business plan period. These new monitoring arrangements and performance metrics will be confirmed when we receive the final determination on our next five-year business plan from Ofwat on 19th December.

Following the election, the Government has introduced the Water (Special Measures) Bill to Parliament. This Bill gives Ofwat and the EA more powers to monitor and penalise water companies where there are breaches of their duties.

The Government has established the water industry commission, chaired by Sir Jon Cunliffe, which will carry out a review of how the water industry is regulated in the long term. This review will launch a call for evidence in the new year and is due to report back to Government by the middle of 2025. This review is likely to shape how the industry is regulated in future. We are already engaged with the commission, providing answers to questions submitted to the water companies.

6. What is the most frequent cause of pollution incidents?

Response:

Hydraulic overload has been the most frequent cause of pollution incidents this year, whilst blockages are the second biggest contributor.

7. How do you remove detergents and other contaminants from the water supply and what percentage of our drinking water is made up of such substances? Is the position the same nationally or are there regional variations. What are the precise figures for Fenland and how does this compare to the national position?

Response:

Raw water (water abstracted from aquifers or rivers/reservoirs) will vary across our supply area. Some sources will need minimal filtration and treatment while others need more complex processes including Granular Activated Carbon filters or running the water through fine membranes to remove certain contaminants. There are several stages of sampling and online monitoring to verify the performance of the treatment processes. Sites will have automatic shutdowns if at any stage the water is not being treated correctly which could pose a risk to the water quality leaving the site. Further verification sampling is carried out as the water leaves the treatment works, downstream assets (e.g. water towers) and at customer taps.

All our water supply is delivered by following the drinking water quality standards published by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI); The Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016 . All water companies across England and

Wales have the same legislation. These regulations cover the maximum levels of any contaminant that is permitted to be in a water supply. As part of the same regulations there are minimum sampling requirements that all water companies must follow to prove the quality of the water, these sample results are sent to the DWI. There is also a mechanism for reporting any breaches of permitted levels to both the DWI and local authorities. Summary details of all water companies sampling performance is published by the DWI in their annual report.

Our overall water quality standards, including Fenland, compare favourably with the national position. Precise details of the water quality results in any specific area can be found on our website: <https://waterquality.anglianwater.com/map.aspx> This lists all the parameters sampled as part of the regulations, the permitted legal levels, the max /min results and the number of failures.

For water recycling, the Environment Agency issues Environmental Permits for our discharges from water recycling centres. As a result, we control trade effluent to ensure that we are fully compliant and our staff, contractors, operations and the environment are protected.

Anyone proposing to discharge trade effluent to the public foul sewer needs prior written consent from us. Our staff have a legal right of access under the Water Industry Act 1991 to carry out monitoring and enforcement activities.

8. In the report it says that Anglian Water have submitted a storm overflow action plan to Defra to ensure that they are not discharging more than 10 times a year. That's still too many. This is said to occur during high rainfall and due to the age of the sewers. I would like to know how many sewers of this type there are in our region, as opposed to the ones where the surface water is separate to the sewage. What plan have Anglian Water got to replace these types of sewer?

Response:

We have permits to operate all our storm overflows and these are issued by the Environment Agency.

We've been investing in dealing with storm overflows for many years, prioritising that investment to where it will have the most benefit to the environment.

From 2025, we have proposed a further £1bn investment will go directly into reducing storm overflow spills, by creating new storage and ways to prevent surface water from entering the sewer network, installing additional monitoring and increasing the capacity of our treatment sites to deal with more rainfall as a result of unpredictable weather.

We aim to reduce discharges from storm overflows by 17% in the next five years, in line with the Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan.

There are 18 storm overflows in Fenland. All of these are fitted with an Event Duration Monitor (EDM) which measure the number of spills at each storm overflow point and the number of hours an overflow discharged for.

The data from our EDMs enables us to be as open and transparent as possible and feeds into our interactive, real-time map, which went live in April 2024. Our map shows where our storm overflow monitors are located, how often they spill and the length of time they have been spilling. <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/environment/storm-overflows/storm-overflow-map/>

Water UK has also published a new searchable online platform outlining all water company plans to reduce the impact of storm overflows between now and 2050: <https://www.water.org.uk/overflows-plan>

Examples of proposed investment in Fenland during 2025-2030 (subject to approval by Ofwat), include:

o

£1,270,000 at March Dartford Road/Elliott Road SSO to reduce spills to 10 per year by 2050 by installing Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

o

£479,000 to reduce storm overflows to 10 per year by 2050 at March Wisbech Norwood Road - Smart Networks and new screening

9. In terms of tackling pollution, the report states that work has started but that you know you must do better. I would like to know what the work has already taken place and how you propose to improve on it in our area?

Response:

Please see the answer to question 3 above for details of the actions we are taking in relation to pollutions.

Under the Dynamic Sewer Visualisation programme, we have installed 676 monitors to date in the postcode areas covered by Fenland and are planning to install around 890 more. These enable us to monitor sewer levels and identify and any problems and blockages quickly.

We're also keen to encourage customers to protect their pipes from blockages and to continue to raise awareness about the importance of only flushing the 3 p's – pee, poo and (toilet) paper to keep our sewers clear. We are, therefore, launching a new campaign – 'Just bin it' to encourage customers to protect their pipes from blockages. The campaign is being launched across our region. We would appreciate any help the Council can provide in highlighting the importance of this and in promoting the 'Just bin it' message.

<https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/services/wastewater-treatment/down-plugholes-and-toilets/>

We have also established a Multi-Agency Group which covers the Cambridgeshire North area, including Manea, Coates and March, to work with other agencies to enhance preparedness, response, and recovery efforts related to prolonged wet weather periods that can result in hydraulic overload.

10. Sewage is still being trucked away from Wimblington and Doddington, what has been done to alleviate this and what further works are planned to tackle this issue?

Response:


Tankering, in terms of removing sludge from Water Recycling Centres (WRC) is a routine operation and part of normal business as usual. We do, however, sometimes have to temporarily increase tankering if there are any specific issues at a site.

Doddington WRC currently has some increased tankering whilst we make improvements to improve flows at the site. This work is due to be completed this month (December).

Doddington Cooks Green Pumping Station has historically had to be tankered when it became overwhelmed during wet weather. We have, however, fitted a larger pump to help reduce the number of times the station is overwhelmed. We have made adjustments to how the balance tank is controlled at Doddington Eastmoor Lane Pumping Station which has reduced the need for tankering.

Sites in the Wimblington catchment do not currently have any issues which would increase tankering, apart from routine tankers to remove sludge.

ONGOING ACTIONS			
.		None at present	
.			
WATCHING BRIEF ITEMS			
		None at present	

Agenda Item No:	6	
Committee:	Overview & Scrutiny Panel	
Date:	20 January 2025	
Report Title:	Review of Fees and Charges 2025/26	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

To review the Council's Fees and Charges for 2025/26, in line with the Budget Strategy considered by Cabinet on 16 December 2024.

2 Key issues

- At a separate agenda item, the draft Budget report for 2025/26 highlights the significant financial challenges the Council faces over the medium term and the scale of savings required.
- The current and forecast economic climate dictates that the Council's charges have to remain sympathetic to local people's ability to pay, whilst at the same time maximising income to the Council.
- Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation at September 2024 was 1.7% and currently stands at 2.6% (November 2024), reducing slightly over the last twelve months from a rate of 3.9% (November 2023). As many of the Council's contractual arrangements use the September CPI for increases, this has been reflected, where appropriate in the proposals for increases in 2025/26.
- The Council is experiencing significant inflationary pressures relating to staff costs, energy and fuel costs, contract costs and supplies which are increasing at a higher rate than the prevailing CPI rate. Consequently, the majority of charges where we have discretion to amend are proposed to increase by between 2% - 10% depending on the type of charge.
- The proposed fees and charges for 2025/26 are attached at Appendix A.
- The proposals would, at current usage levels, generate further income from fees and charges of an estimated £177,610. No increase in fees and charges (apart from Planning Fees and Garden Waste charges) had been included in the draft budget report so this amount would reduce the current estimated shortfall for 2025/26.
- The estimated additional income assumes current usage/activity levels are maintained for 2025/26. Any reduction in the level of increases proposed or reduced usage/activity levels will reduce the estimated additional income.
- Consequently, alongside the proposed increases, the emphasis is also on maintaining or increasing usage/activity levels in order to maximise income.

3 Recommendations

- Members are asked to consider the proposals contained in this report and at Appendix A and to recommend to Cabinet the Fees and Charges to be included in the final budget proposals for 2025/26.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Boden, Leader and Portfolio Holder, Finance
Report Originator(s)	Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
Contact Officer(s)	Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
Background Paper(s)	Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy and General Fund Budget 2025/26.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy and General Fund Budget 2025/26 considered by Cabinet on 16 December 2024 highlighted the significant challenges the Council faces over the medium term. Further details are contained in the draft budget report at a separate agenda item.
- 1.2 When reviewing the current level of fees and charges, officers have been mindful of the following principles:
- (i) The current economic climate and the consequential impact on residents and businesses;
 - (ii) CPI Inflation at September 2024 was 1.7% and currently stands at 2.6% (November 2024), a slight reduction over the last twelve months (3.9% in November 2023);
 - (iii) The need to remain competitive and maintain/increase activity levels;
 - (iv) Flexibility in the charging regime to encourage increased usage and to assist with meeting Corporate Priorities;
 - (v) The need to maximise income levels to assist with funding the Medium Term Financial Forecasts.
- 1.3 The Council is experiencing significant inflationary pressures relating to staff costs, energy and fuel costs, contract costs and supplies which are increasing at a higher rate than the prevailing CPI rate. Consequently, the majority of charges where we have discretion to amend are proposed to increase by between 2% - 10% depending on the type of charge.
- 1.4 The proposals would, at current usage levels, generate further income from fees and charges of an estimated £177,610. No increase in fees and charges (apart from Planning Fees and Garden Waste charges) had been included in the draft budget report so this amount would reduce the current estimated shortfall for 2025/26.

2 PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The proposed fees and charges for 2025/26, together with comparisons with current charges, percentage increase and financial impact are detailed at Appendix A.
- 2.2 Many of the fees and charges are non-vatable and are shown in Appendix A as either exempt(e), non-business(n) or zero-rated(z). All other charges are standard rated and shown inclusive of VAT, with the exception of the charges for South Fens Enterprise Centre, South Fens Business Centre, The Boathouse and Sutton Bridge Moorings, which are shown excluding VAT.
- 2.3 Some of the fees and charges are set centrally by government and other bodies and apply to all local authorities. These are included in Appendix A and cover the following:
- Licensing Fees issued under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005.
 - Electoral Registration.
 - Environmental Health – Process Authorisation Fees and Ship Sanitation Certificates.
 - Planning Fees – annual increases by CPI as determined by government.
- There is no discretion in the setting of these fees.

- 2.4 Planning Fees are determined by government and following significant increases with effect from 6 December 2023, (Major Development application fees increased by 35% and by 25% for all other applications), from 1 April 2025, planning application fees will be subject to an annual indexation, capped at 10%.
- 2.5 The estimated financial impact of these increases has been included within the draft budget 2025-26 report at a separate agenda item.
- 2.6 Taking into account the principles detailed in 1.2 above, all Service Teams have assessed their charges for 2025-26 and their proposals are detailed in Appendix A.
- 2.7 Detailed service proposals are contained in the following sections together with some commentary explaining the rationale for the proposed charges for 2025/26. The following sections are in the same order as detailed in Appendix A.

3 GROWTH & INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

3.1 Wisbech Port – Statutory Harbour Dues (Wisbech & Sutton Bridge - Harbour & Light Dues, Conservancy Dues, Pilotage Dues and Additional Charges), Wharfage Dues (Wisbech only), Yacht Harbour (Wisbech only)

Statutory Dues

- Members will be aware that this Council is the Statutory Harbour Authority for the River Nene from Wisbech to the Bar Flat Buoy in The Wash. The Council is allowed to set charges to recover costs over a period of time, a principle re-iterated by the Department for Transport who have previously emphasised that there should not be any 'substantial or continuing subsidy from a local authority's general funds to its port'.
- These costs should be recovered from the charges levied on ships visiting Wisbech and Sutton Bridge using the Harbour Authority/Pilotage service. However, as a result of a continuing significant downturn in the number of ships visiting Port Sutton Bridge (and to a lesser extent Wisbech) over the past few years, the income received falls significantly short of the costs to provide this service.
- Currently, a review of the Port operations is ongoing in order to identify sustainable options over the medium and long-term. This will include a re-assessment of the costs of providing the service together with a charging policy which seeks to recover costs from the lower number of ships visiting the Port. Without a significant reduction in costs and/or a significant increase in shipping numbers, this will inevitably lead to a substantial increase in charges.
- As an interim measure, pending the outcome of the review and to continue to reduce the deficit in operating these services, it is proposed to increase the Statutory Dues by 10% (this follows a 25% increase in 2024/25).
- Members will receive further reports on the future strategy and direction of the Port operations in due course.

Commercial Fees

- As with the Statutory Fees above, the income from Commercial Fees (mainly Wharfage Dues at Wisbech) falls significantly short of the costs of providing these services.
- These services will also form part of the current review of Port operations. Based on the limited number of ships visiting Wisbech, the fees for the commercial operation would need to increase substantially in order to recover costs.
- Pending the outcome of the review and to continue to reduce the deficit in operating this service, it is proposed to increase the Commercial Dues by 10% (this follows a 25% increase in 2024/25).

- Additional charges at Wisbech Port are currently set at a level to recover costs and in order to keep pace with increased costs, these charges are proposed to increase by around 5%.
- Based on the estimated number of ships visiting Wisbech and Port Sutton Bridge in 2025/26, the proposed 10% increase in Statutory and Commercial Dues would generate around an additional £45,300 income. However, this is entirely dependent on achieving the estimated ship numbers visiting the Port. Consequently, this additional income is far from certain and should be treated with caution.

Yacht Harbour and Ancillary Charges

- As with the Statutory and Commercial Fees above, the income from mooring fees at the Yacht Harbour falls short of the costs of providing these services.
- It is important to note however that the moorings and ancillary services provided by the Council at the Yacht Harbour are discretionary services and do not have the same legislative requirements associated with the Statutory and Commercial operations at the Port. The principle of setting charges to cover costs (based on estimated occupancy levels) is however the same.
- These services are currently the subject of a detailed review by the Council's Transformation Team and the proposed charges result from their interim recommendations. The review also recommended that the fees for 2025-26 be set in advance to ensure all the appropriate communication to berth holders and invoicing for the new year can be completed so there is no delay in receiving income due. Yacht Harbour charges are increasing by around CPI and these have already been approved via a Portfolio Holder/Officer decision notice published on 3 January 2025.
- Following the completion of the Sutton Bridge moorings, the Council has entered into an agreement with Lincolnshire County Council, who own the moorings, to manage them on their behalf. This includes the collection of berthing rates.

3.2 Mini-Factories, Venture Court, South Fens Enterprise Centre, South Fens Business Centre and The Boathouse

- Rents have been reviewed in light of current occupancy rates and market comparisons. Following the changes agreed for 2024/25 (which removed the maximum rent ranges and also the minimum rent charge at South Fens Business Centre) it is proposed to increase the minimum rent charges by around 15% for the Mini-Factories, by around 18% for the South Fens Enterprise Centre and by around 1.5% for The Boathouse, with the minimum rent charge at Venture Court remaining the same. These proposals are considered to be appropriate for the local market. Actual rents are negotiable above the minimum charge per square foot/metre.
- The proposed rents would apply to new tenants and following rent reviews for existing tenants. Consequently, any estimate of additional income generated from these changes should be treated with caution.
- There has been a significant impact on room hire income over the past few years resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. It is also proposed not to increase these for 2025/26 as these are set at a level to recover costs.

4 COMMUNITIES, ENVIRONMENT, LEISURE & PLANNING SERVICES

4.1 Environment Charges

- Generally, charges set at the discretion of the Council have been increased by around CPI.
- Process Authorisation Fees and Ship Sanitation Certificates are increased annually in line with DEFRA and the Association of Port Health Authorities recommended charges which have yet to be received.

4.2 Cemeteries Service

- The Council provides a burial service in 6 cemeteries across the District, whilst maintaining another 15 closed cemeteries. FDC works hard to make sure that the cemeteries are well kept places to visit. In order to deliver what visitors to the cemeteries expect, we work together with our contractor, Tivoli Group, to ensure that high standards are maintained.
- There are a variety of percentage increases in fees proposed and this is to ensure the fees reflect the cost of providing (direct contractor costs are expected to increase) and investing in the service (new Bereavement software is being procured to manage the service more effectively) and the limited size of the cemeteries themselves. The proposed fees remain comparable with neighbouring authorities.
- To increase transparency, a new line has been added for Public Health Funerals where it is proposed to continue to recover our reasonable costs.

4.3 Commercial and Chargeable Household Waste Services

- The commercial waste services are subject to competition from the private sector. However, the service continues to be subject to higher than CPI cost increases, particularly in relation to staff costs, waste disposal costs, recycling sorting and treatment costs and fleet costs. Consequently, all charges have increased with some by up to around 20%. The proposed charges are still considered to be competitive.
- The Bulky Household Waste collection charge has been rationalised in recent years to make the charges more transparent and easier to calculate for customers, thereby supporting the approach to reduce the appeal of illegal collection services. For 2025/26 the minimum fee is proposed to increase to £37.50 (for up to 5 items) with a proposed increase in each item above 5 to £7.50. This is to reflect the continued increases in service costs.
- With effect from April 2017, the Council has been operating a chargeable garden waste service. Full details of the scheme and charges are contained in various reports to Members throughout the last seven years. As the charges for 2025/26 have already been set (annual subscription if paid by direct debit increased to £47 and if paid by debit card/cash, to increase to £59), the estimated financial impact of the scheme has been included in the draft budget 2025/26.

4.4 Markets and Fairs

- It is proposed that charges increase by around CPI.

4.5 Leisure Services

- Members will be aware that from 4 December 2018 new management arrangements are in place at the Council's Leisure Centres. The setting of charges at the leisure centres (with a few minor exceptions) are now the responsibility of Freedom Leisure, the management contractor.

4.6 Travellers Sites

- The Council operates and manages 5 sites comprising 64 pitches, situated in Wisbech, Wisbech St. Mary, Murrow, Parson Drove and Chatteris, on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council (who owns them). Site rents (including water charges) are proposed to increase by 2.7% in order to continue to cover costs and provide the necessary services and improvements to the sites. Any surpluses generated from these rents are re-invested in the sites in accordance with the management arrangements agreed with Cambridgeshire County Council.

4.7 Homeless Persons Accommodation

- The council is reviewing support requirements for residents at Creek Road hostel.
The rationale is the creation of a new service that delivers an in-house support and management service to provide hands on support for clients who are homeless and residing within the 7 units at 372-374 Creek Road March. The work helps reduce the risk of repeat cycle of homelessness when the client is rehoused. A new post has been created to do this work.
- The additional support is to be funded by the introduction of a housing support management service charge which is shown within the separated out eligible service charge. At the same time service charges have been reviewed and are proposed to be increased to fully recover the costs of the additional services that tenants receive at the hostel. The rent is proposed to be increased to the local housing authority (LHA) rate in the Broad Rental Market Area.
- The charges now include for Rent, Eligible Service Charge (for reclaimable Housing Benefit Subsidy) and an Ineligible Service Charge (not reclaimable from Housing Benefit Subsidy). As a result of the above changes to the service, Rent and Service Charges have increased substantially.
- No increases in rents of the temporary accommodation properties (leased from Clarion) are being proposed as this would adversely affect the amount of housing benefit subsidy the Council would receive.
- As the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) properties are owned by the Council, Broad Rental Market Area rents are charged for these properties as there is no impact on housing benefit subsidy for those tenants in receipt of housing benefit. No rent increases are proposed for these properties in line with the government proposals to freeze Local Housing Allowance rates in 2025.
- Members will be aware that the Council is currently in the process of identifying further properties to purchase to help reduce the significant cost of providing temporary accommodation (eg. Bed & Breakfast) for homeless persons.

4.8 Planning Fees

- Planning Fees are determined by government and following significant increases with effect from 6 December 2023, (Major Development application fees increased by 35% and by 25% for all other applications), from 1 April 2025, planning application fees will be subject to an annual indexation, capped at 10%.
- Ancillary charges are proposed to increase by between 4% - 11% but very limited income is generated from these.

4.9 Licensing

- Licensing Fees issued under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 are set by government and no increases are proposed for 2025/26.
- Following a review of officer time to complete tasks associated with Animal Welfare Licensing, the majority of fees for 2025/26 are proposed to increase above CPI but now better reflect the cost of providing this service.
- Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Licences charges for 2025/26 are proposed to generally increase by CPI. The exception is for Vehicle Licences where it is proposed to align the new and renewal charges for Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles. Overall, the proposed charges still do not recover the costs of providing the service.
- Should Cabinet at their meeting on 27 January 2025, recommend increasing the charges as detailed in Appendix A, it will be necessary to conduct a 28 day consultation on the proposed charges for 2025/26. Only when the consultation has successfully concluded can any changes be implemented.

5 RESOURCES & CUSTOMER SERVICES

5.1 Land Charges

- From September 2022, Full Residential or Commercial Searches as well as an LLC1 only search became the responsibility of HM Land Registry and consequently we no longer need to set a charge for these searches.
- This Council will continue to provide replies to CON 29 residential and commercial enquiries as well as additional questions. It is proposed that FDC's element of these charges are increased by between 10% - 17% for 2025/26 to better reflect the cost of providing this service.
- Some of the fees contain an element set by Cambridgeshire County Council and they are proposing increases of between 10% - 17% for 2025/26 as detailed in the attached schedule.

6 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

- 6.1 The proposals in sections 3-5 above and Appendix A would, at current usage levels, generate further net income from fees and charges of an estimated £177,610. No increase in fees and charges had been included in the draft budget report (apart from Planning Fees and Garden Waste charges) so this amount would reduce the current estimated shortfall for 2025/26. The estimated additional income assumes current usage/activity levels are maintained for 2025/26. Any reduction in the level of increases proposed or reduced usage/activity levels will reduce the estimated additional income.
- 6.2 Of this additional income, around £45,300 is a result of the 10% increase in Port Dues which is entirely dependent on achieving the estimated ship numbers visiting the Port. Consequently, this additional income is far from certain and should be treated with caution.
- 6.3 In addition, the proposed significant increases in Cemeteries and Commercial Waste charges would generate additional income of around £43,880 and £28,950 respectively. This is based on current usage/activity levels being maintained for 2025/26 which is far from certain.
- 6.4 The total estimated fees and charges which will be included in the final budget report for 2025/26, will take into account both the agreed level of fees together with the latest estimated usage/activity levels which may well be different than those assumed in the draft budget report.

Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
1. Licences and Certificates				
a. Unfit Food Certificates				
(i) - per hour inclusive of travelling expenses	100.00 (n)	102.00 (n)	2.0%	
(ii) - minimum charge	53.00 (n)	54.00 (n)	1.9%	
b. Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) Re-scoring food businesses upon request (fee set to recover cost)	138.00	140.00	1.4%	
c. Export Certificates per hour inclusive of travel	100.00 (n)	102.00 (n)	2.0%	
d. Acupuncture/Cosmetic piercing/Electrolysis/Semi-permanent skin colouring				
(i) - Licence fee	188.00 (n)	192.00 (n)	2.1%	
(ii) - renewal/transfer/variation	53.00 (n)	54.00 (n)	1.9%	
e. Detained Food - Recovery of commercial storage costs and officer time	Cost Recovery	Cost Recovery		
f. Copy licence or certificate	12.25 (n)	12.50 (n)	2.0%	
2. Stray Dogs				
Return of Stray Dog - includes statutory fee of £25.00	82.00 (n)	84.00 (n)	2.4%	
plus kennelling fee - per day or part thereof	25.00 (n)	25.50 (n)	2.0%	
plus administration fee - per dog	18.00	18.50	2.8%	
3. Training Courses				
a. FDC Refresher, COSHH; Risk Assessment; Manual Handling or price on application	46.50 (e)	47.50 (e)	2.2%	
b. FDC regulatory business support pack (hourly rate - coaching plus travel) or price on application	100.00 (e)	102.00 (e)	2.0%	
c. Safer Food Better Business Training Pack	29.00 (e)	30.00 (e)	3.4%	
4. Process Authorisation Fees Set by DEFRA				Tbc
a. Application fees				
Standard	1,650.00 (n)	1,650.00 (n)	0.0%	
Additional fee for operating without a permit	1,188.00 (n)	1,188.00 (n)	0.0%	
Petrol Vapour Recovery I, Small Waste Oil Burner and Dry Cleaners Reduced Fee Activities	155.00 (n)	155.00 (n)	0.0%	
Petrol Vapour Recovery I and II combined	257.00 (n)	257.00 (n)	0.0%	
Other Reduced Fee Activities	362.00 (n)	362.00 (n)	0.0%	
Reduced fee activities: Additional fee for operating without a permit	71.00 (n)	71.00 (n)	0.0%	
Standard Mobile Plant for the 1st & 2nd applications	1,650.00 (n)	1,650.00 (n)	0.0%	
for the 3rd to 7th applications	985.00 (n)	985.00 (n)	0.0%	
for the 8th and subsequent applications	498.00 (n)	498.00 (n)	0.0%	
Where an application for any of the above is for a combined Part B and waste application, add an extra £297 to the above amounts				
b. Annual Subsistence Charge				
Standard Process (Low)	£772 (+£104)* (n)	£772 (+£104)* (n)	0.0%	
Standard process Medium	£1161 (+156)* (n)	£1161 (+156)* (n)	0.0%	
Standard process High	£1747 (+207)* (n)	£1747 (+207)* (n)	0.0%	
Reduced fee activities Low/Med/High	£79 / £158 / £237 (n)	£79 / £158 / £237 (n)	0.0%	
PVR I & II combined	£113 / £226 / £341 (n)	£113 / £226 / £341 (n)	0.0%	
Other Reduced Fee Activities Low/Med/High	£228 / £365 / £548 (n)	£228 / £365 / £548 (n)	0.0%	
Standard Mobile Plant 1st & 2nd permits Low/Med/High	£626 / £1034 / £1551 (n)	£626 / £1034 / £1551 (n)	0.0%	
for the 3rd to 7th permits Low/Med/High	£385 / £617 / £924 (n)	£385 / £617 / £924 (n)	0.0%	
8th and subsequent permits Low/Med/High	£198 / £314 / £473 (n)	£198 / £314 / £473 (n)	0.0%	
Late payment Fee	£52 (n)	£52 (n)	0.0%	
* the additional amounts in brackets must be charged where a permit is for a combined Part B and waste installation				
Where a Part B installation is subject to reporting under the E-PRTR Regulation, add an extra £99 to the above amounts				
c. Transfer and Surrender				
Standard process transfer	169.00 (n)	169.00 (n)	0.0%	
Standard process partial transfer	497.00 (n)	497.00 (n)	0.0%	
New operator at low risk reduced fee activity (extra one-off subsistence charge - see Art 15(2) of charging scheme)	78.00 (n)	78.00 (n)	0.0%	
Surrender: all Part B activities	0.00 (n)	0.00 (n)	0.0%	
Reduced fee activities: transfer	0.00 (n)	0.00 (n)	0.0%	
Reduced fee activities: partial transfer	53.00 (n)	53.00 (n)	0.0%	
Transfer authorising a reduced fee	47.00	47.00 (n)	0.0%	
d. Temporary transfer for mobiles				
First transfer	53.00 (n)	53.00 (n)	0.0%	
Repeat following enforcement or warning	53.00 (n)	53.00 (n)	0.0%	
e. Substantial change				
Standard process	1,050.00 (n)	1,050.00 (n)	0.0%	
Standard process where the substantial change results in a new PPC activity	1,650.00 (n)	1,650.00 (n)	0.0%	
Reduced fee activities	102.00 (n)	102.00 (n)	0.0%	
5. Food Premises				
Copy register entries: Subject to charging policy under Freedom Of Information Act				
6. Ship Sanitation Certificates Set by Association of Port Health Authorities				Tbc
Per Vessel (Gross Tonnage)				
Up to 1,000	125.00 (n)	125.00 (n)	0.0% *	
1,001 - 3,000	170.00 (n)	170.00 (n)	0.0% *	
3,001 - 10,000	250.00 (n)	250.00 (n)	0.0% *	
10,001 - 20,000	325.00 (n)	325.00 (n)	0.0% *	
20,001 - 30,000	415.00 (n)	415.00 (n)	0.0% *	
Over 30,000	480.00 (n)	480.00 (n)	0.0% *	
Vessel capacity between 50 & 1,000 persons	480.00 (n)	480.00 (n)	0.0% *	
Vessel capacity over 1,000 persons	820.00 (n)	820.00 (n)	0.0% *	
Extensions	95.00 (n)	95.00 (n)	0.0% *	
* Increases as per the Association of Port Health Authorities Recommended Charges.				
7. Private Water Supply Regulations 2009 Currently set in line with guidance.				
a Risk Assessment (each assessment) - recover costs	max £500 (n)	max £500 (n)	0.0%	
b Sampling (each visit) - recover costs	max £100 (n)	max £100 (n)	0.0%	
c Investigation (each investigation) - recover costs	max £100 (n)	max £100 (n)	0.0%	
d Granting an authorisation (each authorisation) - recover costs	max £100 (n)	max £100 (n)	0.0%	
e Analysing a sample				
taken under Regulation 10 - recover costs	max £25 (n)	max £25 (n)	0.0%	
taken during check monitoring - recover costs	max £100 (n)	max £100 (n)	0.0%	
taken during audit monitoring - recover costs	max £500 (n)	max £500 (n)	0.0%	
8. Contaminated Land Enquiries				
Contaminated land enquiries for information beyond the scope of Environmental Information Regulations - minimum 2 hrs officer time	200.00 (n)	204.00 (n)	2.0%	

Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
9. Burial Grounds				£43,880
For the purpose of the Cemetery Fees, a 'Resident' is defined as a person who at the time of death was a resident of the Fenland District OR a former resident who left the Fenland District within two years prior to the date of death to live in a residential nursing or care home.				
The fee for the interment and purchase of the Exclusive Right of Burial will at all times be based upon the residency of the deceased.				
a. Interment Fee for Residents (Including Memorial Safety Inspection Fee)				
Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holiday)				
(i) a still-born or child up to 12 years (Childrens Section)	0.00 (n)	0.00 (n)		
(ii) any person (Lawn Area)	1,250.00 (n)	1,495.00 (n)	19.6%	
(iii) any person (Traditional Area)	1,390.00 (n)	1,600.00 (n)	15.1%	
(iv) for the interment of single casket of cremated remains	380.00 (n)	480.00 (n)	26.3%	
(v) for the interment of additional cremated remains at the same time as (iii) to (v) above	75.00 (n)	100.00 (n)	33.3%	
b. Interment Fee for Non-Resident				
100% added to fees set out in a.				
c. Exclusive Rights of Burial in an Earthen Grave for Residents				
6 ft. x 3 ft. Childrens Plot	115.00 (n)	120.00 (n)	4.3%	
9 ft. x 4 ft. Adult Plot (Lawn Area)	990.00 (n)	1,225.00 (n)	23.7%	
9 ft. x 4 ft. Adult Plot (Traditional Area)	1,280.00 (n)	1,495.00 (n)	16.8%	
Cremated remains, size 2ft x 2ft	395.00 (n)	495.00 (n)	25.3%	
Note 1(a) : If ground conditions allow; two standard coffins may be placed in a single grave space				
Note 1(b) : If ground conditions do not allow two standard coffins to be placed in a single grave space then a second grave space will be required at the above rate				
Note 2 : American style caskets require one grave space per casket				
d. Exclusive Rights of Burial in an Earthen Grave for Non Residents				
100% added to fees set out in c.				
e. Premium Plots - Exclusive Rights of Burial in an Earthen Grave for Residents				
100% added to fees set out in c.				
f. Premium Plots - Exclusive Rights of Burial in an Earthen Grave for Non-Residents				
100% added to fees set out in e.				
g. Transfer of Ownership of Exclusive Rights				
Transfer of Ownership (Interment of ER Holder)	50.00 (n)	60.00 (n)	20.0%	
Transfer of Ownership	95.00 (n)	110.00 (n)	15.8%	
h. Choosing Plot for Exclusive Rights of Burial				
Visiting cemetery with cemetery staff to choose plot	85.00	100.00	17.6%	
i. Exhumation of Coffin - minimum charge	POA	POA		
j. Exhumation of Cremated remains - minimum charge	POA	POA		
k. Monuments, Gravestones, Tablets and Monumental Inscription				
For the right to erect or place on a grave or vault, in respect of which an exclusive right of burial has been granted:				
Additional added Inscription	115.00 (n)	130.00 (n)	13.0%	
Single Memorial headstone not exceeding 3 ft. in height - Child Section	180.00 (n)	200.00 (n)	11.1%	
Single Memorial headstone not exceeding 3 ft. in height on single plinth - Adult Lawn Section	260.00 (n)	300.00 (n)	15.4%	
Single Memorial headstone not exceeding 3 ft. in height on double plinth - Adult Lawn Section	390.00 (n)	450.00 (n)	15.4%	
Double Memorial headstone not exceeding 3 ft. in height on double plinth - Adult Lawn Section	465.00 (n)	500.00 (n)	7.5%	
Kerb Set &/or Flatstone Child Plot 6 ft x 3 ft (Traditional Area)	165.00 (n)	170.00 (n)	3.0%	
Kerb Set &/or Flatstone Adults Plot (Single Traditional Area)	430.00 (n)	495.00 (n)	15.1%	
Kerb Set &/or Flatstone Adult Plot (Double Traditional Area)	800.00 (n)	1,000.00 (n)	25.0%	
Single Vase - Not exceeding 10" in diameter and 8" in height	100.00 (n)	125.00 (n)	25.0%	
Single Tablet - 18" x 18" with or without Vase on any single grave or cremation plot	275.00 (n)	315.00 (n)	14.5%	
Double Tablet - 42" x 18" with or without Vase on any double grave or cremation plot	350.00 (n)	405.00 (n)	15.7%	
Note A vase without any inscription requires no exclusive rights				
l. Burial Information				
Interment information & historical records - up to 5 names/graves	60.00 (n)	75.00 (n)	25.0%	
Interment information & historical records (accompanied) - up to 2 hrs	90.00 (n)	100.00 (n)	11.1%	
m. Cemetery Keys				
Provision of cemetery gate keys	20.00 (n)	25.00 (n)	25.0%	
Refunds for cemetery gate keys will be provided on production <u>and</u> original receipt.				
n. Short Notice Fee Internment arrangements required with less than 2 working days	115.00 (n)	250.00 (n)	117.4%	
o. Public Health Funerals Reasonable cost recovery		Reasonable Cost Recovery		

Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
10. Commercial and Chargeable Household Waste (Standard Prices Per Collection)*				£28,950
a. General Waste (Commercial)				
Sacks - per sack or equivalent for 25 to 99 sacks (min 25)	2.50 (n)	2.60 (n)	4.0%	
per sack or equivalent for 100 or more sacks in a single transaction	2.35 (n)	2.45 (n)	4.3%	
Wheeled Bins - 240 litre 20kgs maximum contents weight**	8.25 (n)	8.50 (n)	3.0%	
360 litre 30kgs maximum contents weight**	9.00 (n)	9.30 (n)	3.3%	
660 litre 55kgs maximum contents weight**	12.90 (n)	13.20 (n)	2.3%	
1,100 litre 90kgs maximum contents weight**	17.80 (n)	18.30 (n)	2.8%	
b. Mixed Dry Recycling (Commercial)				
Sacks - (Purple) per sack or equivalent for 25 to 99 sacks (min 25)	1.95 (n)	2.20 (n)	12.8%	
per sack or equivalent for 100 or more sacks in a single transaction	1.85 (n)	2.00 (n)	8.1%	
Wheeled Bins - 240 litre	4.20 (n)	5.00 (n)	19.0%	
360 litre	5.15 (n)	6.15 (n)	19.4%	
660 litre	6.95 (n)	8.25 (n)	18.7%	
1,100 litre	9.20 (n)	11.00 (n)	19.6%	
Note: only 240 litre and 660 litre used for glass bottles				
c. General Waste from Charity Shops and Schools***				
Tags - (Green) per tag or equivalent (min 100 including equivalent number of black sacks)	1.70 (n)	1.80 (n)	5.9%	
Wheeled Bins 240 litre 20kgs maximum contents weight**	5.60 (n)	5.90 (n)	5.4%	
360 litre 30kgs maximum contents weight**	6.00 (n)	6.30 (n)	5.0%	
660 litre 55kgs maximum contents weight**	8.50 (n)	8.90 (n)	4.7%	
1,100 litre 90kgs maximum contents weight**	11.65 (n)	12.20 (n)	4.7%	
d. Mixed Dry Recycling from Charity Shops and Schools***				
Wheeled Bins 660 or 1100 litre (customer choice)	5.65 (n)	5.95 (n)	5.3%	
e. General Waste (Excess Weight/Side Waste Charge) per part or whole 5kg over 'maximum contents weight'	1.25 (n)	1.30 (n)	4.0%	
f. Clinical Waste from domestic households****				
Sacks/Sharps Boxes - per collection visit charge (note : collection service only, sacks and/or sharps boxes are not provided)	12.00 (n)	12.00 (n)	0.0%	
g. Chargeable Garden Waste Service				
Wheeled Bin***** - 240 litre Annual Subscription Fee if paid by Annual Direct Debit in advance	44.00 (n)	(price for 2025/26 already set) 47.00 (n)	6.8%	
Wheeled Bin***** - 240 litre Annual Subscription Fee if paid by Card or Cash	55.00 (n)	59.00 (n)	7.3%	
h. Supplies				
Clear or Black Sacks - box of 200	24.00 (n)	25.00 (n)	4.2%	
Sacks (includes delivery) - Clear Food (150 per pack)	20.00 (n)	21.00 (n)	5.0%	
i. Commercial Food Waste Collections				
Two Wheeled Bins - Each 120-240 litres collected	7.00 (n)	7.30 (n)	4.3%	
j. Food Waste from Charity Shops and Schools***				
Two Wheeled Bins - Each 120-240 litres collected	5.15 (n)	5.35 (n)	3.9%	
k. Monthly rental of wheeled bins (applies only to low frequency collections; < 1/wk)	5.00 (n)	5.20 (n)	4.0%	
* Introductory offers, multiple service and low weight reductions may be applied by Head of Service				
** Bins exceeding this weight will be charged additional weight charge as per (e.)				
*** Applies to businesses and organisations recognised within the Council's Chargeable Household Waste Policy				
**** Fee waived where it will cause financial hardship at discretion of Director				
***** Includes sack service where provided due to collection restrictions				
11. Bulky Household Waste				£7,350
Transportation of up to a maximum of 5 items per visit including fridges (minimum charge)	35.00 (n)	37.50 (n)	7.1%	
(i) Each household item above 5 items including fridges	7.00 (n)	7.50 (n)	7.1%	
Corporate Director has discretion to waive charge in cases of severe hardship				
12. Domestic Bin Provision				£700
Provision of New, Additional and Replacement 240Ltr Bin Green, Brown or Blue				
a. Supply of one unit 240 litre	35.00 (n)	36.00 (n)	2.9%	
b. Supply 2 x 240lt wheeled bins on same delivery	58.00 (n)	60.00 (n)	3.4%	
c. Supply 3 x 240lt wheeled bins on same delivery (including to individual new or renovated property)	80.00 (n)	82.00 (n)	2.5%	
d. Supply 1 x 600lt or 1100lt domestic wheeled bin to new multiple occupancy property	240.00 (n)	245.00 (n)	2.1%	
13. Graffiti Removal Service				
Domestic Premises and Charities				
a. Graffiti treatment or removal first occasion per annum (cost of materials)	17.50	18.00	2.9%	
b. Graffiti treatment or removal subsequent occasions (cost of materials & labour)	65.00	70.00	7.7%	
Commercial Premises				
c. Graffiti treatment or removal (per hour)	65.00	70.00	7.7%	
14. Public Conveniences				
a. Sale of RADAR keys	5.00 (z)	5.00 (z)	0.0%	
b. Toilet entrance fee (where facilities allow for charging)	0.20 (n)	0.20 (n)	0.0%	

Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
15. Markets Licensees - Full Charge a. March (per 3m x 3m space) 13.80 (e) b. Chatteris (per 3m x 3m space) 13.80 (e) c. Whittlesey (per 3m x 3m space) 10.60 (e) Discount given for bankers order payments 6.50% Casual Traders Additional seasonal premium will be added to all casual fees (Seasonal Premium 1 Sept to 31 December) a. March (per 3m x 3m space) 1.15 (e) b. Chatteris (per 3m x 3m space) 1.20 (e) c. Whittlesey (per 3m x 3m space) 4.3% Markets - Non Market Days Trading on Chatteris Market Place on Non - Market Days (Tuesdays only) - Licensees (per 3m x 3m space) 18.70 (e) - Casual (per 3m x 3m space) 19.00 (e) 15.50 (e) 15.80 (e) 1.9% Markets - Non Market Days Trading on Chatteris Market Place on Non - Market Days (Tuesdays only) - Licensees (per 3m x 3m space) 10.85 (e) - Casual (per 3m x 3m space) 11.00 (e) 15.50 (e) 15.50 (e) 1.4% 0.0% Note:- For all markets extra space is sold pro-rata to the above charges Charity Stall at March on Saturdays (no stall provided on other days or markets) free				£230
16. Fairs a. Chatteris - Summer 660 (e) b. March - Statute 2,930 (e) - Spring 1,440 (e) c. Whittlesey - Summer 460 (e) - Autumn 470 (e) - Spring 470 (e) d. Wisbech - Statute 4,210 (e) - Mart 9,020 (e)		670 (e) 3,000 (e) 1,480 (e) 470 (e) 470 (e) 470 (e) 4,300 (e) 9,200 (e)	1.5% 2.4% 2.8% 2.2% 2.2% 2.2% 2.1% 2.0%	£420
17. "Four Seasons Events" Charges for the events in Wisbech, Whittlesey, Chatteris & March are to be agreed in consultation with the partners				
18. Hire Permits FDC Licenced Premises a. Events for each full single day, with up to 499 people attending at any one time, with or without a licensable activity. weekdays & Saturdays 88.00 Sundays & bank holidays 147.00 b. Events for each full single day, with 500 & 4,999 people attending at any one time, with or without a licensable activity. weekdays & Saturdays 250.00 Sundays & bank holidays 304.00 c. Events for each full single day, with over 5,000 people attending at any one time, with or without a licensable activity. weekdays & Saturdays on application Sundays & bank holidays on application d. Any Commercial Events on application		90.00 150.00 255.00 310.00 on application on application on application	2.3% 2.0% 2.0% 2.0% 	

Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
19. Travellers Sites - in consultation with Cambs CC	53 wks	52 wks		£8,240
a. Newbridge Lane, Wisbech - per pitch per week	96.95 (e)	99.55 (e)	2.7%	
b. Turf Fen, Murrow - per pitch per week	96.95 (e)	99.55 (e)	2.7%	
c. Seadyke Bank, Murrow - per pitch per week	96.95 (e)	99.55 (e)	2.7%	
d. Fenland Way, Chatteris - per pitch per week	96.95 (e)	99.55 (e)	2.7%	
e. Sandbank, Wisbech St Mary - per pitch per week	96.95 (e)	99.55 (e)	2.7%	
2024/25 Breakdown : Rent £87.20; Water £9.75 (direct recharge) per week				
2025/26 Breakdown : Rent £89.55; Water £10 (direct recharge) per week				
20. Homeless Persons	53 wks	52 wks		£33,000
Creek Road, Hostel				
Units 1 & 2 Daily Rent	9.51 (n)	12.44 (n)	30.8%	
Units 1 & 2 Daily Eligible Service Charge Previously included in Rent		12.19 (n)		
Units 1 & 2 Daily Ineligible Service Charge	1.01 (n)	1.99 (n)	97.0%	
Units 3,4,5 & 6 Daily Rent	8.14 (n)	12.44 (n)	52.8%	
Units 3,4,5 & 6 Daily Eligible Service Charge Previously included in Rent		8.23 (n)		
Units 3,4,5 & 6 Daily Ineligible Service Charge	0.83 (n)	1.14 (n)	37.3%	
Unit 7 Daily Rent	17.67 (n)	20.74 (n)	17.4%	
Unit 7 Daily Eligible Service Charge Previously included in Rent		16.28 (n)		
Unit 7 Daily Ineligible Service Charge	2.60 (n)	6.42 (n)	146.9%	
Temporary Accommodation				
44 Russell Avenue March	241.64 (n)	241.64 (n)	0.0%	
Leased from Clarion				
77 West Street, Chatteris	121.45 (n)	121.45 (n)	0.0%	
58 Burcroft Road, Wisbech	116.90 (n)	116.90 (n)	0.0%	
32 Magazine Close, Wisbech	127.80 (n)	127.80 (n)	0.0%	
2 Hawthorne Avenue, Wisbech	123.95 (n)	123.95 (n)	0.0%	
15 Victoria Place, Wisbech	105.40 (n)	105.40 (n)	0.0%	
3 West Street, Wisbech	113.80 (n)	113.80 (n)	0.0%	
19 Duke Street, Wisbech	105.40 (n)	105.40 (n)	0.0%	
26 Burnfield Estate, Chatteris	123.95 (n)	123.95 (n)	0.0%	
51 Peyton Avenue, March	123.95 (n)	123.95 (n)	0.0%	
130 Badgeney Road, March	103.84 (n)	103.84 (n)	0.0%	
165 Badgeney Road, March	123.58 (n)	123.58 (n)	0.0%	
8 Doddington Road, Benwick	123.58 (n)	123.58 (n)	0.0%	
12 Chapel Gardens, Benwick	103.84 (n)	103.84 (n)	0.0%	
24 Acacia Avenue, Wisbech	103.84 (n)	103.84 (n)	0.0%	
6 Albert Court, Wisbech	103.84 (n)	103.84 (n)	0.0%	
LAHF Properties				
2 Bed Property (Peterborough area)	161.10 (n)	161.10 (n)	0.0%	
3 Bed Property (Peterborough area)	186.41 (n)	186.41 (n)	0.0%	
4 + Bed Property (Peterborough area)	241.64 (n)	241.64 (n)	0.0%	
3 Bed Property (Wisbech area)	178.36 (n)	178.36 (n)	0.0%	
	+ Estate Charge Where Applicable	+ Estate Charge Where Applicable		
21. CCTV				
Viewing Footage - per hour	63.80	63.80	0.0%	
subject to a minimum charge of	127.35	127.35	0.0%	
External Harddrives - to be supplied to FDC				
per CD	4.90	4.90	0.0%	
per DVD	11.35	11.35	0.0%	
per Video print	1.70	1.70	0.0%	
22. Development Services				
a. Building Control Fees - The Council part of the CNC Building Control Partnership. Fees are set by CNC consistent across all authorities in the partnership.				
b. Planning Fees - these are currently statutory fees. Planning fees will increase annually on 1st April by CPI from the preceding September. For April 2025 this will be 1.7%.	See our website or contact the Planning Team for details.			
c. Planning - Pre-application enquiry fees. These fees were increased from 1st November 2024.	See our website or contact the Planning Team for details.			
d. Planning - Administration Fee for return of invalid applications				
Major applications	60.00	63.00	5.0%	
Minor applications	25.00	26.00	4.0%	
e. Planning - Charge per schedule on a Section 106/Unilateral Agreement where FDC is the identified responsible body	500.00	520.00	4.0%	
f. Process applications to Custom and Self Build Housing Register	35.00	37.00	5.7%	
g. Provision of Documents and Information				
(i) Local Plan (Full)	49.45	53.00	7.2%	
Local Plan (Interim Statement)	16.50	18.00	9.1%	
Town Extract	8.30	9.00	8.4%	
Village Extract	8.30	9.00	8.4%	
(ii) Copy of Planning Decision Notice (per A4 sheet)	0.45	0.50	11.1%	
(iii) Conservation Area Appraisals	16.50	17.50	6.1%	
(iv) Development Briefs	16.50	17.50	6.1%	
(v) Supplementary Planning Guidance, examples are Shop Fronts, Signs and Adverts	16.50	17.50	6.1%	
(vi) 6 x map extracts, planning/building regulation applications	16.50	17.50	6.1%	
(vii) Full Plan CD for Planning	42.00	45.00	7.1%	

Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
h. Other Documents and Plans (Copies and Fax)				
(i) Search fee per 5 minutes				
A4	0.45	0.50	11.1%	
A3	0.45	0.50	11.1%	
(ii) Plan prints				
A0	1.50	1.60	6.7%	
A1	0.85	0.90	5.9%	
(iii) Plan negatives - per copy				
A0	41.00	44.00	7.3%	
A1	20.00	22.00	10.0%	
i. Invoicing Charge	12.50	13.50	8.0%	
j. Provision of Planning and Engineering Information				
Decision notices & completion certificate				
(i) Building Regulations reference number provided	16.40	17.40	6.1%	
(ii) Building Regulations reference number NOT provided	74.20	79.00	6.5%	
Letter of Comfort	49.20	52.00	5.7%	
k. Completion of Questionnaires/Surveys for Commercial Bodies	49.50	52.00	5.1%	
l. Recovery of officer time in relation to the carrying out of Statutory functions for Enforcement action and works commissioned by the Council and the monitoring pursuant to the Building Act 1984	hourly rate x time	hourly rate x time		

Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
23. Licensing				
a. Part 5 Gambling Act 2005				
Small Society - Initial Registration	40.00 (n)	40.00 (n)	0.0%	
Small Society - Annual Renewal	20.00 (n)	20.00 (n)	0.0%	
b. Gambling Act 2005 - Permits and Registrations				
New Application				
Gaming Machines notification for up to 2 machines	50.00 (n)	50.00 (n)	0.0%	
Gaming Machines initial fee for more than 2 machines	150.00 (n)	150.00 (n)	0.0%	
Club Gambling Permit	200.00 (n)	200.00 (n)	0.0%	
Club Machine Permit	200.00 (n)	200.00 (n)	0.0%	
Prize Gaming Permit	300.00 (n)	300.00 (n)	0.0%	
Unlicensed Family Entertainment Centre	300.00 (n)	300.00 (n)	0.0%	
Annual Fee				
Gaming Machines initial fee for more than 2 machines	50.00 (n)	50.00 (n)	0.0%	
Club Gambling Permit	50.00 (n)	50.00 (n)	0.0%	
Club Machine Permit	50.00 (n)	50.00 (n)	0.0%	
Renewal Application				
Club Gambling Permit	200.00 (n)	200.00 (n)	0.0%	
Club Machine Permit	200.00 (n)	200.00 (n)	0.0%	
Prize Gaming Permit	300.00 (n)	300.00 (n)	0.0%	
Unlicensed Family Entertainment Centre	300.00 (n)	300.00 (n)	0.0%	
Transitional Application				
Gaming Machines initial fee for more than 2 machines	100.00 (n)	100.00 (n)	0.0%	
Club Gambling Permit	100.00 (n)	100.00 (n)	0.0%	
Club Machine Permit	100.00 (n)	100.00 (n)	0.0%	
Prize Gaming Permit	100.00 (n)	100.00 (n)	0.0%	
Unlicensed Family Entertainment Centre	100.00 (n)	100.00 (n)	0.0%	
Variation Application				
Gaming Machines initial fee for more than 2 machines	100.00 (n)	100.00 (n)	0.0%	
Club Gambling Permit	100.00 (n)	100.00 (n)	0.0%	
Club Machine Permit	100.00 (n)	100.00 (n)	0.0%	
Variation Application				
Transfer Application	25.00 (n)	25.00 (n)	0.0%	
Club Fast track for gaming or gaming machine				
Club Gambling Permit	100.00 (n)	100.00 (n)	0.0%	
Club Machine Permit	100.00 (n)	100.00 (n)	0.0%	
Change of Name				
Gaming Machines initial fee for more than 2 machines	25.00 (n)	25.00 (n)	0.0%	
Prize Gaming Permit	25.00 (n)	25.00 (n)	0.0%	
Unlicensed Family Entertainment Centre	25.00 (n)	25.00 (n)	0.0%	
Copy of Permit				
Gaming Machines initial fee for more than 2 machines	15.00 (n)	15.00 (n)	0.0%	
Club Gambling Permit	15.00 (n)	15.00 (n)	0.0%	
Club Machine Permit	15.00 (n)	15.00 (n)	0.0%	
Prize Gaming Permit	15.00 (n)	15.00 (n)	0.0%	
Unlicensed Family Entertainment Centre	15.00 (n)	15.00 (n)	0.0%	
c. Gambling Act 2005				
Application fee in respect of provisional statement premises				
Bingo premises licence	1,200.00 (n)	1,200.00 (n)	0.0%	
Adult gaming centre premises licence	1,200.00 (n)	1,200.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (track) licence	950.00 (n)	950.00 (n)	0.0%	
Family entertainment centre premises licence	950.00 (n)	950.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (other) licence	1,200.00 (n)	1,200.00 (n)	0.0%	
Application fee in respect of other premises				
Bingo premises licence	3,500.00 (n)	3,500.00 (n)	0.0%	
Adult gaming centre premises licence	2,000.00 (n)	2,000.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (track) licence	2,500.00 (n)	2,500.00 (n)	0.0%	
Family entertainment centre premises licence	2,000.00 (n)	2,000.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (other) licence	3,000.00 (n)	3,000.00 (n)	0.0%	
Annual fee				
Bingo premises licence	1,000.00 (n)	1,000.00 (n)	0.0%	
Adult gaming centre premises licence	1,000.00 (n)	1,000.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (track) licence	750.00 (n)	750.00 (n)	0.0%	
Family entertainment centre premises licence	750.00 (n)	750.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (other) licence	600.00 (n)	600.00 (n)	0.0%	
Copy of Licence				
Bingo premises licence	25.00 (n)	25.00 (n)	0.0%	
Adult gaming centre premises licence	25.00 (n)	25.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (track) licence	25.00 (n)	25.00 (n)	0.0%	
Family entertainment centre premises licence	25.00 (n)	25.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (other) licence	25.00 (n)	25.00 (n)	0.0%	
Notification of Change				
Bingo premises licence	50.00 (n)	50.00 (n)	0.0%	
Adult gaming centre premises licence	50.00 (n)	50.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (track) licence	50.00 (n)	50.00 (n)	0.0%	
Family entertainment centre premises licence	50.00 (n)	50.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (other) licence	50.00 (n)	50.00 (n)	0.0%	
Application to vary licence				
Bingo premises licence	1,750.00 (n)	1,750.00 (n)	0.0%	
Adult gaming centre premises licence	1,000.00 (n)	1,000.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (track) licence	1,250.00 (n)	1,250.00 (n)	0.0%	
Family entertainment centre premises licence	1,000.00 (n)	1,000.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (other) licence	1,500.00 (n)	1,500.00 (n)	0.0%	
Application to transfer a licence				
Bingo premises licence	1,200.00 (n)	1,200.00 (n)	0.0%	
Adult gaming centre premises licence	1,200.00 (n)	1,200.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (track) licence	950.00 (n)	950.00 (n)	0.0%	
Family entertainment centre premises licence	950.00 (n)	950.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (other) licence	1,200.00 (n)	1,200.00 (n)	0.0%	

Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
Application for reinstatement of a licence				
Bingo premises licence	1,200.00 (n)	1,200.00 (n)	0.0%	
Adult gaming centre premises licence	1,200.00 (n)	1,200.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (track) licence	950.00 (n)	950.00 (n)	0.0%	
Family entertainment centre premises licence	950.00 (n)	950.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (other) licence	1,200.00 (n)	1,200.00 (n)	0.0%	
Application for provisional statement				
Bingo premises licence	3,500.00 (n)	3,500.00 (n)	0.0%	
Adult gaming centre premises licence	2,000.00 (n)	2,000.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (track) licence	2,500.00 (n)	2,500.00 (n)	0.0%	
Family entertainment centre premises licence	2,000.00 (n)	2,000.00 (n)	0.0%	
Betting premises (other) licence	3,000.00 (n)	3,000.00 (n)	0.0%	
d. Sex Establishments				
Initial Application and Annual Renewal	3,200.00 (n)	3,200.00 (n)	0.0%	
Variations to existing licences (10% of application/renewal fee)	320.00 (n)	320.00 (n)	0.0%	
Transfer of existing licence to another person (10% of fee)	320.00 (n)	320.00 (n)	0.0%	
Holders of an existing licence (50% initial fee) for a second licence	1,600.00 (n)	1,600.00 (n)	0.0%	
e. Scrap Metal Licence				
Site Licence	411.00 (n)	418.00 (n)	1.7%	
Collectors Licence	128.00 (n)	131.00 (n)	2.3%	
Scrap Metal - variation of a site licence	25.00 (n)	26.00 (n)	4.0%	
Scrap Metal - to make changes to persons involved in a licence	25.00 (n)	26.00 (n)	4.0%	
f. Hypnotism Act Licence Based on cost recovery of officer time	80.00 (n)	82.00 (n)	2.5%	
24. Animal Licencing Fees are set on a cost recovery basis.				£1,040
a. Application fee	80.00 (n)	83.00 (n)	3.8%	
b. Pre Application Advice (per Hour)	50.00 (n)	53.60 (n)	7.2%	
c. Inspection Fee or Re-rating Inspection Fee				
Hiring Out Horses				
Animal Boarding Establishments	171.00 (n)	181.00 (n)	5.8%	
Up to 10 Animals	98.00 (n)	103.00 (n)	5.1%	
11-30 Animals	122.00 (n)	129.00 (n)	5.7%	
31-60 Animals	146.00 (n)	155.00 (n)	6.2%	
61-99 Animals	171.00 (n)	181.00 (n)	5.8%	
100+ Animals	195.00 (n)	206.00 (n)	5.6%	
Dog Breeders	123.00 (n)	130.00 (n)	5.7%	
d. Licence Fee 1 Year	228.00 (n)	230.00 (n)	0.9%	
Licence Fee 2 Years	243.00 (n)	250.00 (n)	2.9%	
Licence Fee 3 Years	259.00 (n)	280.00 (n)	8.1%	
e. Selling Animals as Pets				
Application fee	80.00 (n)	83.00 (n)	3.8%	
Inspection Fee or Rerating Inspection Fee	123.00 (n)	130.00 (n)	5.7%	
Licence Fee 1,2 or 3 years (for selling of animals as pets only)	228.00 (n)	230.00 (n)	0.9%	
f. Exhibiting Animals Application	74.00 (n)	83.00 (n)	12.2%	
Exhibiting Animals Licence Fee 3 Years	259.00 (n)	280.00 (n)	8.1%	
g. Dangerous Wild Animals Act	£195 + vet fees (n)	£386 + vet fees (n)		
h. Zoos - New Application (plus additional charge for DEFRA/Nominated Inspectors)	390.00 (n)	496.00 (n)	27.2%	
Zoos - Renewal Application (plus additional charge for DEFRA/Nominated Inspectors)	390.00 (n)	496.00 (n)	27.2%	
Zoos- Special Inspection (plus additional charge for DEFRA/Nominated Inspectors)	293.00 (n)	393.00 (n)	34.1%	
Zoos - Periodic Inspection (plus additional charge for DEFRA/Nominated Inspectors)	390.00 (n)	496.00 (n)	27.2%	
i. Copy of Licence (including change of details not requiring an inspection)	13.00 (n)	13.30 (n)	2.3%	
Note. Where there is more than one licensable activity carried out at the Premises/Establishment then only one Application Fee shall apply for all the licensable activities and the full Inspection Fee and Licence Fee shall apply for each activity. Upon submission of your application please include the Application fee and Inspection fee, the Licence fee will be payable after the officer has been and inspected your premises				

Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
25. Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Licences				
Drivers Licence				
a. Hackney Carriage Licence (new)	123.00 (n)	123.00 (n)	0.0%	
b. Hackney Carriage 3 year Licence (new)	253.00 (n)	253.00 (n)	0.0%	
c. Hackney Carriage Licence (renewal)	97.00 (n)	97.00 (n)	0.0%	
d. Hackney Carriage 3 year Licence (renewal)	227.00 (n)	227.00 (n)	0.0%	
e. Private Hire Licence (new)	123.00 (n)	123.00 (n)	0.0%	
f. Private Hire 3 year Licence (new)	253.00 (n)	253.00 (n)	0.0%	
g. Private Hire Licence (renewal)	97.00 (n)	97.00 (n)	0.0%	
h. Private Hire 3 year Licence (renewal)	227.00 (n)	227.00 (n)	0.0%	
i. Safeguarding/Disability Awareness Training	80.00 (n)	80.00 (n)	0.0%	
j. Driver knowledge tests	65.00 (n)	65.00 (n)	0.0%	
Vehicle Licence				
a. Hackney Carriage Licence (new)	159.00 (n)	159.00 (n)	0.0%	
b. Hackney Carriage Licence (renewals)	159.00 (n)	159.00 (n)	0.0%	
c. Private Hire Licence (new)	141.00 (n)	141.00 (n)	0.0%	
d. Private Hire Licence (renewals)	141.00 (n)	141.00 (n)	0.0%	
e. transfer of plate to another vehicle	47.00 (n)	47.00 (n)	0.0%	
Private Hire Operators				
a. Initial issue / renewal (up to 3 cars)	92.00 (n)	92.00 (n)	0.0%	
b. 5 year Initial issue / renewal (up to 3 cars)	271.00 (n)	271.00 (n)	0.0%	
c. Initial issue / annual renewal (up to 10 cars)	165.00 (n)	165.00 (n)	0.0%	
d. 5 year Initial issue / annual renewal (up to 10 cars)	432.00 (n)	432.00 (n)	0.0%	
e. Initial issue / annual renewal (up to 20 cars)	234.00 (n)	234.00 (n)	0.0%	
f. 5 year Initial issue / annual renewal (up to 20 cars)	588.00 (n)	588.00 (n)	0.0%	
g. Initial issue / annual renewal (20 + cars)	318.00 (n)	318.00 (n)	0.0%	
h. 5 year Initial issue / annual renewal (20 + cars)	760.00 (n)	760.00 (n)	0.0%	
Others				
a. new / broken / lost vehicle plate	47.00 (n)	47.00 (n)	0.0%	
b. damaged/lost driver's I.D. card	35.00 (n)	35.00 (n)	0.0%	
c. Notification of changes (i.e. address etc.)	11.20 (n)	11.20 (n)	0.0%	

Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
26. Licensing Act 2003				
a. Premises Licences & Club Certificates - Initial Fee				
Band A	100.00 (n)	100.00 (n)	0.0%	
Band B	190.00 (n)	190.00 (n)	0.0%	
Band C	315.00 (n)	315.00 (n)	0.0%	
Band D	450.00 (n)	450.00 (n)	0.0%	
Band E	635.00 (n)	635.00 (n)	0.0%	
b. Premises Licences Variation Fee				
Band A	100.00 (n)	100.00 (n)	0.0%	
Band B	190.00 (n)	190.00 (n)	0.0%	
Band C	315.00 (n)	315.00 (n)	0.0%	
Band D	450.00 (n)	450.00 (n)	0.0%	
Band E	635.00 (n)	635.00 (n)	0.0%	
c. Premises Licences & Club Certificate - Annual anniversary fee				
Band A	70.00 (n)	70.00 (n)	0.0%	
Band B	180.00 (n)	180.00 (n)	0.0%	
Band C	295.00 (n)	295.00 (n)	0.0%	
Band D	320.00 (n)	320.00 (n)	0.0%	
Band E	350.00 (n)	350.00 (n)	0.0%	
d. Theft/loss etc of Club Certificate or Summary	10.50 (n)	10.50 (n)	0.0%	
e. Notification of Change of name or alteration of rules of Club	10.50 (n)	10.50 (n)	0.0%	
f. Change of relevant registered address of Club	10.50 (n)	10.50 (n)	0.0%	
g. Application to vary Community premises licence to include alternative licence condition	23.00 (n)	23.00 (n)	0.0%	
h. Personal Licences	37.00 (n)	37.00 (n)	0.0%	
i. Theft/Loss etc of Personal Licence	10.50 (n)	10.50 (n)	0.0%	
j. Temporary Event Notice	21.00 (n)	21.00 (n)	0.0%	
k. Theft/Loss etc of Temporary Event Notice	10.50 (n)	10.50 (n)	0.0%	
l. Transfers	23.00 (n)	23.00 (n)	0.0%	
m. Notification of Interest	21.00 (n)	21.00 (n)	0.0%	
n. Notification of Change of Licensee's details	10.50 (n)	10.50 (n)	0.0%	
o. Application for Copy of Licence	10.50 (n)	10.50 (n)	0.0%	
p. Provisional Statement	315.00 (n)	315.00 (n)	0.0%	
q. Interim Authority Notice	23.00 (n)	23.00 (n)	0.0%	
r. Minor Variation	89.00 (n)	89.00 (n)	0.0%	
s. Variation of DPS	23.00 (n)	23.00 (n)	0.0%	
t. Pre Application Advice - Check and submit service (Approx 1 hour officer time)	43.00 (n)	43.00 (n)	0.0%	
u. Pre Application Advice - Consultation with RA's and submit	150.00 (n)	150.00 (n)	0.0%	
27. Street Trading				
New Application fee: £50 non-refundable initial consultation fee (not required if location has been previously consented);	50.00 (n)	50.00 (n)	0.0%	
Daily Street Trading Consent, all week days, including bank holidays: £12.00 per day (06:00hrs - 22:00hrs);	12.00 (n)	12.00 (n)	0.0%	
Annual Street Trading Consent, all days of the year, including all bank holidays: £542.50 per year	542.50 (n)	542.50 (n)	0.0%	
*£50.72 Monthly rate per pitch (Standing Order x 10 payments - Monthly charges include a 6.5% discount if paid by Standing Order FOR THE WHOLE YEAR (payable over 10 months 1 April - 1 January). If a licence is cancelled before the full year is completed, the discount will be cancelled and full fees will be payable for the period of the licence. There is no discount given for any cash or cheque payments made.				
28. Pavement				
Fee A - Up to maximum of 3 tables and/or 12 chairs				
New Licence for Up to 2 Years	350.00 (n)	350.00 (n)	0.0%	
Renewal Licence up to 2 years	250.00 (n)	250.00 (n)	0.0%	
Fee B - Over 3 tables and/or 12 chairs				
New Licence for Up to 2 Years	390.00 (n)	390.00 (n)	0.0%	
Renewal Licence up to 2 years	290.00 (n)	290.00 (n)	0.0%	
29. Private Sector Housing Charges				
a. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO*) New Application Fee - Per Property	750.00 (n)	750.00 (n)	0.0%	
b. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO*) Renewal Licence - Per Property	660.00 (n)	660.00 (n)	0.0%	
c. Charge for Service of Housing Act 2004 Notices - Per Notice	260.00 (n)	260.00 (n)	0.0%	
d. House Compliance Inspection (available on request) - Per Hour	65.00	65.00	0.0%	
e. Immigration House Inspection - Per Hour	78.00	78.00	0.0%	
* HMO is a property which is occupied by five or more persons, forming two or more households, who share one basic amenity (as defined by s.254 of the Housing Act 2004)				

2025/26 Fees and Charges - with effect from 1 April 2025

Service Group

Growth & Infrastructure
Communities, Environment, Leisure & Planning
Resources & Customer Services

Note :

The charges are inclusive of standard rate VAT (except for charges for South Fens Enterprise Centre, South Fens Business Centre and The Boathouse, which are shown excluding VAT) unless they are shown as:

- Exempt (e).
- Non-Business (n)
- Zero Rated (z).

Note : standard rate VAT applicable:	from 04.01.11	20%
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Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
PORT OF WISBECH AUTHORITY (NENE PORTS) FEES & CHARGES				
1. <u>Harbour and Light Dues</u>				£11,420
a. To Wisbech - per G.T.	0.764 (z)	0.840 (z)	10.0%	
b. To Sutton Bridge - per G.T.	0.563 (z)	0.619 (z)	10.0%	
Oil Spill Prevention Charge - per ship per visit	28.62 (z)	31.48 (z)	10.0%	
2. <u>Conservancy Dues</u>				£9,100
a. To Wisbech - per G.T.	0.571 (z)	0.628 (z)	10.0%	
b. To Sutton Bridge - per G.T.	0.503 (z)	0.553 (z)	10.0%	
3. <u>Wharfage Dues (Wisbech Only)</u>				£7,060
(i) Steel & Iron products - per tonne	0.768 (z)	0.845 (z)	10.0%	
(ii) Timber (Deals, battens, boards etc) - per cu.m.	0.785 (z)	0.864 (z)	10.0%	
(iii) Timber (Plywood, hardboard etc) - per cu.m.	0.994 (z)	1.093 (z)	10.0%	
(iv) Grain, Animal Feeds - per tonne	0.726 (z)	0.799 (z)	10.0%	
(v) Fertilisers, Sand, Salt - per tonne	0.886 (z)	0.975 (z)	10.0%	
(vi) Aggregates - per tonne	0.886 (z)	0.975 (z)	10.0%	
(vii) Bricks - per tonne	0.768 (z)	0.845 (z)	10.0%	
(viii) Scrap Metal - per tonne	1.229 (z)	1.352 (z)	10.0%	
(ix) RDF Bales - per tonne	1.112 (z)	1.223 (z)	10.0%	
(x) ISPS Charge - per ship per visit	51.55 (z)	56.705 (z)	10.0%	
4. <u>Mandatory Waste Fee (Wisbech only)</u>				
Contribution towards disposal of ships' waste and garbage disposal, in accordance with MARPOL regulations - per ship per visit	110.00	121.00	10.0%	
5. <u>Pilotage and Boarding & Landing Dues</u>				£17,720
a For a vessel to Wisbech - total for inward and outward - per G.T.				
(i) 1000 or below (Minimum - Lump Sum)	1,140.51 (z)	1,254.56 (z)	10.0%	
(ii) exceeding 1000	1.141 (z)	1.255 (z)	10.0%	
b For a vessel to Sutton Bridge - total for inward and outward - per G.T.				
(i) 1000 or below (Minimum - Lump Sum)	941.77 (z)	1,035.94 (z)	10.0%	
(ii) exceeding 1000	0.944 (z)	1.038 (z)	10.0%	
<u>Additional Charges</u> (excluding any charges imposed by terminal operators or agents in respect of attendance at ships by boatmen / ropemen or other personnel)				£4,520
c Detention If a pilot is detained on board or taken to another port as a result of extreme weather or other unavoidable causes: a charge per hour of up to a maximum of The ship will also be liable for any public transportation costs of the pilot's return to port of boarding and subsistence charges during this time.	172.10 (z) 2,580.95 (z)	180.70 (z) 2,710.00 (z)	5.0% 5.0%	
d 'Dead Ship' For <i>force Majeure</i> pilotage of a vessel without the use of main engine/s, the compulsory pilotage rate is as per 4(a) and 4(b) plus 100%.				
e Harbour Services Vessel movements in harbour area including mooring and unmooring and moving berth, Draft Surveys, a flat rate charge of	172.10 (z)	180.70 (z)	5.0%	
f Attendance For pilotage subsequently not required for a tide or failure to make ETA/ETD or vessel does not arrive as advised, a flat rate of For inward passage cancelled following attendance, a further flat rate charge for boarding service of 1 hour pilot boat at per hour	172.10 (z) 481.65 (z)	180.70 (z) 505.75 (z)	5.0% 5.0%	
g Pilot Exemption Certificate Application (Processing fee) For a Master of any vessel over 20m working in the harbour jurisdiction without a pilot must apply for a PEC, subject to approval from the Harbour	370.00	388.50	5.0%	
h Pilot Exemption Fee 25% of Full Pilotage (per day)				
i Dredging/Bed Levelling (Charge per Hour) Minimum of 3 hours, plus mobilisation (see below) Tariff rates for Dredging/Bed Levelling apply only within the port areas of Wisbech and Sutton Bridge. Others by negotiation.	519.25	545.25	5.0%	
j Towing (Charge per Hour) Minimum of 2 hours within the confines of the harbour areas,				

Description of Charge		2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
plus mobilisation/cancellation time (see below)		519.25 (z)	545.25 (z)	5.0%	
Minimum of 4 hours for a stern tow from seaward to Sutton Bridge, plus mobilisation time (see below)		519.25 (z)	545.25 (z)	5.0%	
k	Mobilisation/Cancellation fee Time (Charge per Hour)				
Charge for passage to place towing vessel on station, with a Minimum of 1 hour.		224.85 (z)	236.10 (z)	5.0%	
No charge will apply if cancelled 4 hrs before HW					
l	Surveying				
Per day or part thereof, hire of equipment		224.70	235.90	5.0%	
Per hour, for processing results		121.05	127.10	5.0%	
Cancellation fee of 40% of completed works					
m	Harbour vessel's workboat hire (Charge per hour)				
Per hour, Minimum 4 hours, small boat hire Orca WB1		331.75	348.35	5.0%	
Per hour, minimum 4 hours, small workboat hire Nene Surveyor		373.80	392.50	5.0%	
Per hour, minimum 4 hours, pilot boat hire Nene Pilot, Fenland Pilot		481.65	505.75	5.0%	
Per hour, minimum 4 hours, Fenlander Tug		519.25	545.25	5.0%	
Charges for i and l above, if during weekends or between 18:00 and 06:00 on any week day shall be +50%					
Tariff rates for surveying apply only within the port areas of Wisbech and Sutton Bridge. Others by negotiation.					
n	Marine Works Application				
Processing Fee (minimum)		329.65	346.15	5.0%	
o	Duty Officer Call Out Charge				
Out of hours (per hour) - 1600 - 0800		121.05	127.10	5.0%	
p	Marine Works Superintendence - per hour				
(minimum 1 hour)		121.05	127.10	5.0%	
q	Pilot Ordering				
All Pilots must be ordered 12 hours before HW, a late notice charge will be applied for each pilot ordered after this time					
Pilots ordered between 12 - 4 hours before HW, a late notice charge		456.85	479.70	5.0%	
No Pilots to be ordered after 4 hours before HW					
r	Harbour Master Superintendence - per hour				
(minimum 1 hour)		159.15	167.10	5.0%	
s	Local Notice to Mariners				
A charge will apply where the Harbour Authority has to raise a Local Notice to Mariners (LNTM) on behalf of third parties, of		216.05	226.85	5.0%	
Small Commercial Vessels - Non Resident.					
<u>Mooring on Authority's Pontoons at Sutton Bridge or Wisbech</u>					
Per metre LOA per 24 hours or part there of		7.70	8.10	5.2%	
Per metre per 7 days		33.40	35.10	5.1%	
Small Commercial Vessels - Resident/Non Resident					
Harbour & Light Dues & Conservancy Charge per vessel per visit.		28.05 (z)	29.45 (z)	5.0%	
Fuel Transfer Charge or Permission to fuel from tanker or across Authority's property.					
Per vessel per bunker and subject to 24 hours notice and Harbour Master's permission.		52.45	55.05	5.0%	
NB for purposes of this tariff addendum, Small Commercial Vessels are deemed those certified under the MCA Small Commercial Code of Practice and/or 24 metres LOA or below.					

Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
Conditions of Use				
This tariff should be read in conjunction with the Wisbech Yacht Harbour Terms and Conditions of Use and the Berthing Licence.				
1 All contracts are subject to availability and all fees payable in advance.				
2 Cancelled contracts will attract a cancellation fee of 15% of the total contract value.				
3 An administration fee of 10% may be applied to all non-contract charges which are invoiced against any vessel which leaves the Yacht Harbour before settlement of an account.				
4 Berthing charges include Port of Wisbech harbour dues, portable water for filling tanks and access to Yacht Harbour facilities. NB Visiting craft are not guaranteed an alongside berth and depending on availability may be required to raft up.				
5 Multi-hulled vessels may be subject to a surcharge of 1.5 times actual rate.				
6 Commercial vessels, (those not designed and/or used for leisure purposes), may be subject to a surcharge of actual costs as a result of charges levied by Local or Statutory authorities.				
7 LOA, (length overall), is the maximum length of any vessel and includes overhangs (push pits, pull pits, bowsprits, davits, etc)				
Administration charge for visiting vessels leaving without paying dues in full	38.75	39.75	2.6%	£600
Administration charge for each debtor account referred for collection	142.70	146.00	2.3%	
Administration charge for change in billing method after berthing application is accepted or extension to contract period or agreed period in Crab Marsh Boat Yard per month between 1st April and 31st March	38.75	39.75	2.6%	
c Ancillary Charges				
All yard services apply from 08:30 to 16:30 Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays. Otherwise charges are plus 100%.				
Any emergency weekend lifting plus 100%				
(i) Boat lifting - Up to 15m LOA or 20 tonnes				
Lift Out				
To yard, including shoring up using boat cradle/stands. Per metre	23.15	23.50	1.5%	
Minimum Charge	155.10	158.25	2.0%	
Yard charge applies for non-contract rate at Non-Contract (Visitor) Berthing Rates				
Relaunch/Lift onto Trailer				
Per metre.	23.15	23.50	1.5%	
Minimum Charge	155.10	158.25	2.0%	
(ii) Vessels over 15m LOA and /or 20 tonnes to 55 tonnes plus 30%.				
Lift Out				
To yard, including shoring up using boat cradle/stands. Per metre	32.10	32.75	2.0%	
Marine Service waiting charge per hour per person	50.50	51.50	2.0%	
Relaunch/Lift onto Trailer				
Per metre.	32.10	32.75	2.0%	
Yard charge applies for non-contract rate at Non-Contract (Visitor) Berthing Rates				
(iii) Lift out				
Hold in Slings (subject to availability). Per metre, per 30 minutes	11.40	11.75	3.1%	
Return to water				
Hire of Yacht harbour Cradles (subject to availability)				
per annum / pro rata per cradle	133.30	136.00	2.0%	
Hire of electric pressure washer (subject to availability). Per use.	43.20	43.50	0.7%	
Hire of petrol pressure washer (subject to availability). Per day. Plus Fuel.	92.80	93.00	0.2%	
Hire of petrol pressure washer (subject to availability). Per week. Plus Fuel.	185.65	186.00	0.2%	
(iv) Boom Crane Lifting . Max 3 tonnes.				
Engine lift , per engine, per hour or part.	92.80	94.50	1.8%	
Comercial Engine Lift	POA	POA		
Small boat lift . Per metre each way.	19.75	20.00	1.3%	
Minimum charge each way.	61.10	65.00	6.4%	

Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
(v) Other Services				
Marine Services Labour (min 2 hours) For any additional work per hour, including the following:- Cleaning boat yard if left untidy. Boat movement by yard staff (plus Harbour vessel's workboat hire) Mast stepping/unstepping. Pressure wash by yard.	59.90	60.00	0.2%	
Mast Storage. Per mast up to 12m vessel LOA. Single payment . Over 12m vessel LOA. Single payment.	66.35 92.80	67.75 94.75	2.1% 2.1%	
Boat Trailer or Cradle Storage (subject to availability of space). p/a	94.60	96.50	2.0%	
Miscellaneous Storage Ancilliary per sq mtr, per annum, subject to availability and permission	52.85	53.75	1.7%	
Marina pump out. Per use, subject to availability.	19.40	20.00	3.1%	
Non boatyard temporary hard standing. Subject to availability. Charges as per non contract berthing rates.				
Hire of forklift and operator. Up to 2.8 tonne lifts. First half hour or part.	92.80	94.50	1.8%	
Per additional hour	58.15	60.00	3.2%	
Electricity By prepaid card from Harbour Office Gate Access Card - Yacht Harbour Fuel Pump Dispensing Key - Yacht Harbour	17.60 23.50	18.00 24.00	2.3% 2.1%	
Tradesmen's Licence. Annual working permit. Tradesmen to work in boatyard, yacht harbour or slipway. Subject to insurance and Harbour Master's approval.	146.85	149.50	1.8%	
Crab Marsh Work Shop Premium under cover boat storage - (short term per month)	197.40	199.00	0.8%	

Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
7. Sewage Disposal				
Properties not connected to mains sewer				
Private dwellings				
Service charge (per annum)				
Standing charge (per annum)				
Charges to Roddons as per the Transfer Agreement				
March Sanitation Point				
Boat Pump-Out tokens per token	15.85	16.50	4.1%	
Sanitation Point Keys	6.00	6.30	5.0%	
8. Mini Factories				
Rents negotiable within:				
Boleness Road/New Drove/Prospect Way/Longhill				
a. the minimum - per square foot and;	6.50 (e)	7.50 (e)	15.4%	
* b. the maximum - per square foot <i>No upper limit wef 01.04.24</i>				
c. the minimum - per square metre and;	69.97 (e)	80.73 (e)	15.4%	
* d. the maximum - per square metre <i>No upper limit wef 01.04.24</i>				
Venture Court				
a. the minimum - per square foot and;	7.20 (e)	7.20 (e)	0.0%	
* b. the maximum - per square foot <i>No upper limit wef 01.04.24</i>				
c. the minimum - per square metre and;	77.50 (e)	77.50 (e)	0.0%	
* d. the maximum - per square metre <i>No upper limit wef 01.04.24</i>				
South Fens Enterprise Centre charges shown net of VAT				
a. the minimum - per square foot and;	7.20	8.50	18.1%	
* b. the maximum - per square foot <i>No upper limit wef 01.04.24</i>				
c. the minimum - per square metre and;	77.50	91.49	18.1%	
* d. the maximum - per square metre <i>No upper limit wef 01.04.24</i>				
It should be noted that VAT is applicable on rental income at Venture House, Venture Court & South Fens Enterprise Park Includes charges for acceptable trade refuse collection and disposal, insurance, water rates (where applicable), and site maintenance.				
* to be applied when market forces dictate				

Description of Charge		2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
9. South Fens Business Centre, Chatteris charges shown net of VAT					
a. the minimum - per square foot and; * b. the maximum - per square foot		No upper or lower limit with effect from 01.04.24			
c. the minimum - per square metre and; * d. the maximum - per square metre		No upper or lower limit with effect from 01.04.24			
e. Catering					
Tea and coffee per head		2.70	1.50	-44.4%	
Orange Juice per jug		3.60	3.60	0.0%	
** f. Weekday room charges (Mon-Fri 8.30-1700)					
<i>External rate - per hour</i>					
Beech		44.00	44.00	0.0%	
Oak/Apple		27.20	27.20	0.0%	
Small Meeting rooms (first hr free)		17.35	17.35	0.0%	
Large Meeting rooms (first hr free)		22.00	22.00	0.0%	
<i>External rate - per half day (Mon-Fri 8.30-12.30 or 13.00-1700)</i>					
Beech		104.15	104.15	0.0%	
Oak/Apple		76.35	76.35	0.0%	
Small Meeting rooms (first hr free)		39.35	39.35	0.0%	
Large Meeting rooms (first hr free)		53.25	53.25	0.0%	
<i>External rate - per full day</i>					
Beech		185.15	185.15	0.0%	
Oak/Apple		134.20	134.20	0.0%	
Small Meeting rooms (first hr free)		61.95	61.95	0.0%	
Large Meeting rooms (first hr free)		88.00	88.00	0.0%	
** g. Evenings/Weekend room charges					
<i>External rate - per hour</i>					
Beech		81.00	81.00	0.0%	
Oak/Apple		68.25	68.25	0.0%	
<i>External rate - per half day</i>					
Beech		215.25	215.25	0.0%	
Oak/Apple		162.00	162.00	0.0%	
<i>External rate - per full day</i>					
Beech		446.70	446.70	0.0%	
Oak/Apple		366.85	366.85	0.0%	
* to be applied when market forces dictate					
** Business Premises Tenant rates at 75% of External Rate (ie. 25% discount)					

Description of Charge		2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
10. The Boathouse, Wisbech charges shown net of VAT					
a.	the minimum - per square foot and;	19.70	20.00	1.5%	
* b.	the maximum (suites GF1 to FF38) - per square foot	<i>No upper limit effective from 01.04.24</i>			
* c.	the maximum (suites FF39 & FF40) - per square foot				
d.	the minimum - per square metre and;	212.05	215.28	1.5%	
* e.	the maximum - per square metre	<i>No upper limit effective from 01.04.24</i>			
* f.	the maximum (suites FF39 & FF40) - per square metre				
g.	Catering				
	Tea and coffee per head	2.70	1.50	-44.4%	
	Orange Juice per jug	3.60	3.60	0.0%	
** h.	Weekday room charges (Mon-Fri 8.30-1700)				
	<i>External rate - per hour</i>				
	Richard Young Large	44.00	44.00	0.0%	
	Lambton/Young 1 or 2	27.20	27.20	0.0%	
	The Gallery	24.90	24.90	0.0%	
	Meeting rooms	17.35	17.35	0.0%	
	<i>External rate - per half day (Mon-Fri 8.30-12.30 or 13.00-1700)</i>				
	Richard Young Large	104.15	104.15	0.0%	
	Lambton/Young 1 or 2	76.35	76.35	0.0%	
	The Gallery	69.35	69.35	0.0%	
	Meeting rooms	39.35	39.35	0.0%	
	<i>External rate - per full day</i>				
	Richard Young Large	185.15	185.15	0.0%	
	Lambton/Young 1 or 2	134.20	134.20	0.0%	
	The Gallery	122.65	122.65	0.0%	
	Meeting rooms	61.95	61.95	0.0%	
** i.	Evenings/Weekend room charges				
	<i>External rate - per hour</i>				
	Richard Young Large	81.00	81.00	0.0%	
	Lambton/Young 1 or 2	68.25	68.25	0.0%	
	<i>External rate - per half day</i>				
	Richard Young Large	215.25	215.25	0.0%	
	Lambton/Young 1 or 2	162.00	162.00	0.0%	
	<i>External rate - per full day</i>				
	Richard Young Large	446.70	446.70	0.0%	
	Lambton/Young 1 or 2	366.85	366.85	0.0%	
*	to be applied when market forces dictate				
**	Business Premises Tenant rates at 75% of External Rate (ie. 25% discount)				

Description of Charge	2024/25 Charge £	Proposed 2025/26 Charge £	% Increase	Estimated Additional Income £
1. Land Charges				
a. LLC1 Only	HM Land Registry	HM Land Registry	N/A	£8,600 b - k
b. CON29R Residential	159.20	175.20	10.1%	
Of which: FDC element	99.20	109.20	10.1%	
CCC element	60.00	66.00 *	10.0%	
c. CON29R Commercial	261.70	288.00	10.0%	
Of which: FDC element	201.70	222.00	10.1%	
CCC element	60.00	66.00 *	10.0%	
d. CON29O Enquiries (16, 21)	14.40	16.80 *	16.7%	
Of which: CCC element	14.40	16.80 *	16.7%	
e. CON29O Enquiries (22)	28.80	33.60 *	16.7%	
Of which: CCC element	28.80	33.60 *	16.7%	
f. Highways Additional Questions	14.40	16.80 *	16.7%	
Of which: CCC element	14.40	16.80 *	16.7%	
g. CON29O Enquiries - additional	15.42	18.00	16.7%	
h. Solicitors Own Questions	19.20	22.20	15.6%	
i. Extra Parcel of Land -each	19.20	22.20	15.6%	
j. Property History Search (Extra)	32.00	37.20	16.3%	
k. CON29 information not on Public Registers can now be requested. More information is available from the Local Land Charges Team				
* Fees as per Cambridgeshire County Council approved charges.				
2. Electoral Registration				
a. Sales of the full electoral register				
(i) Data format - basic charge	20.00 (n)	20.00 (n)	0.0%	
Data format - plus amount /1,000 entries	1.50 (n)	1.50 (n)	0.0%	
(ii) Printed format - basic charge	10.00 (n)	10.00 (n)	0.0%	
Printed format - plus amount /1,000 entries	5.00 (n)	5.00 (n)	0.0%	
b. Sales of the edited electoral register				
(i) Data format - basic charge	20.00 (n)	20.00 (n)	0.0%	
Data format - plus amount /1,000 entries	1.50 (n)	1.50 (n)	0.0%	
(ii) Printed format - basic charge	10.00 (n)	10.00 (n)	0.0%	
Printed format - plus amount /1,000 entries	5.00 (n)	5.00 (n)	0.0%	
c. Sales of the overseas electoral register				
(i) Data format - basic charge	20.00 (n)	20.00 (n)	0.0%	
Data format - plus amount /1,000 entries	1.50 (n)	1.50 (n)	0.0%	
(ii) Printed format - basic charge	10.00 (n)	10.00 (n)	0.0%	
Printed format - plus amount /1,000 entries	5.00 (n)	5.00 (n)	0.0%	
d. Monthly notices of alterations of register				
(i) Data format - basic charge	20.00 (n)	20.00 (n)	0.0%	
Data format - plus amount /1,000 entries	1.50 (n)	1.50 (n)	0.0%	
(ii) Printed format - basic charge	10.00 (n)	10.00 (n)	0.0%	
Printed format - plus amount /1,000 entries	5.00 (n)	5.00 (n)	0.0%	
e. Copying of candidates' expenses documents - per page	0.20 (n)	0.20 (n)	0.0%	
3. Democratic Services				
a. Council Summons/Planning Agendas/Cabinet Agendas	13.00	14.00	7.7%	
4. Fenland Hall, March				
a. Room Hire - per morning or afternoon session				
(i) Council Chamber	103.70 (e)	109.00 (e)	5.1%	
(ii) Other Rooms	45.70 (e)	48.00 (e)	5.0%	
(iii) Supplement for use - after 6.30pm	45.70 (e)	48.00 (e)	5.0%	
- on Saturdays and Sundays	103.70 (e)	109.00 (e)	5.1%	
- tea/coffee (minimum charge)	15.00	16.00	6.7%	
- tea/coffee (per head)	2.90	3.00	3.4%	
(iv) Hourly Rate for Meeting Room Hire	12.40	13.00	4.8%	
In respect of Parish Councils, Association of Local Councils, and approved charities, free of charge, but supplementary charges apply as appropriate				

Agenda Item No:	7	
Committee:	Overview & Scrutiny	
Date:	20 January 2025	
Report Title:	Draft Business Plan 2025-26	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 For Overview & Scrutiny to comment on Draft Business Plan 2025-26.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Our Draft Business Plan 2025-26 identifies the key challenges and opportunities for Fenland. Its structure outlines our key Corporate Priorities (Communities, Environment, Economy and Quality Organisation), and an additional cross cutting priority Transformation. This section encompasses our ongoing transformation work to improve efficiency and customer experience, drive positive change and ensure the Council is fit for the future.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Despite our financial pressures, no other principle council in the county has a better record for keeping council tax down for its residents than Fenland.
- 2.4 The public will be invited to comment on the Draft Business Plan 2025-26 between 2 January and 2 February 2025. Feedback will be incorporated into the final version of the Business Plan that will be considered by Cabinet and Council on 24 February 2025.
- 2.5 Cabinet would welcome comments on the focus of the priorities and sub priorities of the Draft Business Plan.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 For Overview and Scrutiny to make comment on the Draft Business Plan 2025-26.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	<i>[Insert Reference No. From Forward Plan. (It is a legal requirement to include key executive decisions on the forward plan for 28 days before the decision requested in this report is taken).</i>

Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Chris Boden, Leader of the Council Councillor Steve Tierney, Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Communication
Report Originator(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director Carol Pilson, Corporate Director David Wright, Head of Policy & Communications
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director Carol Pilson, Corporate Director David Wright, Head of Policy & Communications
Background Papers	Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

Report:

1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 1.1 The Draft 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.
- 1.2 Our core priorities focus on three areas: Communities, Environment and Economy. These priorities primarily focus on the statutory and wide variety of services that we provide day-to-day. A fourth priority, Quality Organisation, sits alongside everything we do. It aims to ensure that the Council runs effectively, transparently and sustainably. We invest in and support our workforce to ensure they have the skills and resources they need to work to the best of their ability.
- 1.3 Each 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. These public reports are summarised to provide end of year performance updates against our priorities in our Annual Report, which is available to download on our website.
- 1.4 We also have a fifth cross cutting priority: Transformation. This priority encompasses our ongoing transformation work to improve efficiency and customer experience, drive positive change and ensure the Council is fit for the future.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 For Cabinet to approve the Draft Business Plan 2025-26 for public consultation.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The public will be invited to comment on the Draft Business Plan 2025-26 between 2 January and 2 February 2025. Feedback will be incorporated into the final version of the Business Plan that will be considered by Cabinet and Council on 24 February 2025.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 N/A

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Legal Implications

- 6.1.1 There are no legal considerations connected with the content of this report.

5.2 Financial Implications

The Draft Business Plan 2025-26 sets out our corporate priorities we aim to deliver over the next 12 months. These are reflected in the Council budget.

5.3 Equality Implications

N/A

7 SCHEDULES

Draft Business Plan 2025-26

Fenland District Council

Business Plan 2025/26



CONTENTS

■	Introduction
■	About Fenland
■	Our Priorities
■	Transformation
■	Our priorities: Communities
■	Our priorities: Environment
■	Our priorities: Economy
■	Our priorities: Quality Organisation
■	Performance



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Fenland District Council's Business Plan for 2025/26

As Chief Executive and Leader of Fenland District Council, we are pleased to present our Business Plan for 2025/26. This plan sets out our vision for the year ahead and the priorities that will underpin everything we do over the next 12 months.

They outline how we will continue to serve our communities, protect our environment, drive our economy, and deliver a quality organisation that can meet the challenges of the future.

They focus on improving services and achieving meaningful outcomes, and they also serve as clear measures of success by which we can be held accountable.

Our Draft Budget 2025/26, which helps to shape our Business Plan, sets out how we will deliver these priorities within clear expenditure limits. It will come as no surprise that there are ongoing financial pressures on this Council and on all public services, as there are on everyone due to the increased cost of living.

But we can't let a lack of funds prevent us from doing the right thing. We have been doing more with less money for some time, and with opportunity, good governance, and renewed focus we will continue to do so.

Despite our financial pressures, no other principal council in the country has a better record for keeping council tax down for its residents than Fenland.

With a 0% increase in our portion of the council tax bill in 2024/25 and a 2% decrease in 2023/24, our members remain steadfast in balancing financial prudence with prioritising support for those who need it most.

Key plans such as our new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which will be implemented in 2025, and the further development of our Early Help Hub following its successful pilot, will be instrumental in providing timely and effective support for our most vulnerable residents.

Transformation also continues to be at the heart of the Business Plan. Spanning across all services within the Council, our Transformation Agenda is all about delivering measurable improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, and resident satisfaction. A lot of work has been carried out in this area in the last two years, but there's more we want to achieve.

Of course, none of our priorities would be possible without our


valued partners and dedicated staff, and as we move into 2025/26, we thank them for their ongoing contributions and support. Together with residents and businesses, we look forward to making a meaningful difference and creating a stronger, more resilient district in the year ahead.



Paul Medd
Chief Executive



Chris Boden
Leader of the Council

 We have been doing more with less money for some time, and with opportunity, good governance, and renewed focus we will continue to do so.



ABOUT FENLAND



Fenland is renowned for its vibrant community spirit, rich heritage and picturesque land and skylscapes. Located in North Cambridgeshire, the Fenland District spans 211 square miles and is home to 102,462 residents (ONS: 2021). Over 70% of the population resides in the four market towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey, and Wisbech, while the picturesque rural areas encompass 29 villages.

- Population of 102,462 (ONS: 2021).
- Average house price of £225,000 (UK HPI June 2024), 22% less than the national average.
- Close proximity to large urban centres like Cambridge and Peterborough.
- Population growth projected to reach 118,826 by 2043, a 16% increase (ONS: 2021).

- 23% of residents (23,400 people) are aged over 64, higher than both the county and national averages (ONS: 2021).

- 135 hectares of open green spaces.

- 80th most deprived area out of 317 in the country (IMD: 2019).



OUR PRIORITIES

Our core priorities focus on three areas: 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.



Communities



Environment



Economy



Quality Organisation



TRANSFORMATION



Transformation programme and outcomes

In addition to our 4 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.

- 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

Transformation Programme

Cllr Chris Boden Finance Audit & Risk Accommodation Project	Cllr Sam Hoy Housing Options Private Sector Housing Licensing	Cllr Peter Murphy Environmental Services Park & Open Spaces
Cllr Ian Benney Property & Estates Marine Services Economic Growth	Cllr Dee Laws Planning Local Plan	Cllr Chris Seaton Transport Heritage
Cllr Jan French Benefits & Council Tax (ARP) Car Parking	Cllr Alex Miscandlon Leisure Internal Drainage Board (IDB)	Cllr Steve Tierney ICT My Fenland Policy & Communications
		Cllr Susan Wallwork Environmental Health Communities

COMMUNITIES



Support vulnerable members of our community

- Enable residents to claim the Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit they are entitled to.
- Use our housing powers to improve the condition of private rented homes.
- Use our housing powers to prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping.
- Reduce emergency accommodation use to provide better quality and more cost-effective short-term accommodation and supported homes for homeless clients.
- Use our housing powers to meet housing needs, including bringing empty homes back into use.
- Support residents to manage the effects of the cost of living.
- Encourage partners to support the delivery of the Golden Age programme and support older people.

Promote health and wellbeing for all

- Create healthier communities through activities developed and delivered by Active Fenland and Freedom Leisure.
- Work with partners to deliver the Early Help Hub, providing a 'one stop shop' of support and advice to individuals and families in their times of need.



- Work with the Integrated Care System to tackle local health and wellbeing priorities and provide information to help people make healthier choices.

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

- Manage the Fenland Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland-wide Community Cohesion Action Plan.
- Deliver the Community Safety Grant Agreement with the Police and Crime Commissioner.



Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture and Heritage

- Work with local stakeholders to support the aims of the Fenland Culture Partnership.
- Provide proportionate support and advice for community groups to hold safe and successful public events.

ENVIRONMENT



Environment priorities Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

- Work with partners, businesses, the community and volunteers to maximise the quality and quantity of recycling collected.
- Deliver an effective, self-funding Garden Waste collection service.
- Deliver clean streets and public spaces as set out in the national code of practice.
- Work with key stakeholders to deliver an effective waste partnership and update the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Strategy
- In cooperation with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership, to plan and deliver the Environment Act 2021 changes to domestic and commercial waste collection through an updated Waste Strategy.

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

- Use education, guidance and Council powers to fairly enforce environmental standards and tackle issues such as fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles, dog fouling, littering and antisocial behaviour.



- Ensure well maintained parks and open spaces by working with our grounds maintenance contractor.
- Supporting volunteer Street Pride groups and other environmental volunteers, organisations and partners.
- Work with Town Councils and the community to provide local markets and thriving market town community events.
- Deliver the council's carbon reduction and climate adaptation plan including meeting all climate change targets which are legally required by the UK Government.



ECONOMY



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

- Provide responsive business support to encourage business growth, job diversity, skills development and increased access to grants.
- Promote and develop our Business Premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and Light Industrial Estates to encourage investment, business development, job creation and skills diversification.
- Work with external stakeholders, local businesses and the Combined Authority to attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities.

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration

- Enable appropriate growth, development and infrastructure through delivering a proactive and effective Planning service.
- Work with the Combined Authority on the development of its new ten-year Local Growth Plan, to link the potential for growth in Fenland to Government priorities and the development of a national industrial strategy and unlock the potential of its key industrial sectors to power the local economy.
- Drive forward the development and delivery of new homes and commercial space by using our surplus property and land assets to



deliver sustainable economic and residential growth.

- Work with our partners to enable new affordable housing to meet housing needs.
- Identify and bid for external funding that aligns with and supports our housing, economic and growth objectives.

Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements

- Promote sustainable road, rail and concessionary transport initiatives to improve access to employment and local services.
- Engage with the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council on the feasibility and delivery of road and rail infrastructure projects.
- Work with the Combined Authority to influence how housing and infrastructure funding is used to stimulate housing development and economic growth and improve connectivity in the district.



QUALITY ORGANISATION



Performance Management (Performance Indicators)

- Set relevant and robust performance targets to ensure the effective delivery of Business Plan priorities.
- Report regularly on service performance to the Corporate Management Team, Councillors and the public.

Excellent Customer Service

- 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.

Governance, Financial Control and Risk Management

- Maintain robust and effective financial standards, internal controls and organisational management.
- Comply with data protection and General Data Protection Regulation requirements.

Consultation and Engagement

- Appropriately consult with residents about our service and proposals as outlined in our Consultation Strategy.



Asset Management and Commercialisation

- Ensure our asset base is sustainable, suitable and fully utilised to maximise income opportunities and financial efficiencies.
- Deliver our adopted Capital Programme 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.

Equalities

- Meet our Public Sector Equality duty by delivering the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act and 1998 Human Rights Act through our core service delivery and publication of a statutory Annual Equality Report.



Workforce Development

- Equip our workforce with the right skills to effectively deliver our priorities.
- Support and empower our staff to make effective decisions.

Enforcement and Compliance

- 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.

Health and Safety

- 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.

Performance

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

Communities	Performance Measures
Enable residents to claim the Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit they are entitled to.	Days taken to process new claims and changes for Council Tax Support. Days taken to process new claims and changes for Housing Benefit.
Use our housing powers to improve the condition of private rented homes.	Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues.
Use our housing powers to prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping.	The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through housing options work.
Reduce emergency accommodation use to provide better quality and more cost-effective short-term accommodation and supported homes for homeless clients.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports
Use our housing powers to meet housing needs, including bringing empty homes back into use.	Number of empty properties brought back into use.
Support residents to manage the effects of the cost of living.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Encourage a range of partners to support the delivery of the Golden Age programme and support older people.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Create healthier communities through activities developed and delivered by Active Fenland and Freedom Leisure.	Number of Active Fenland sessions delivered and total attendance per year. Customer satisfaction: Net promoter score for Freedom Leisure Centres
Work with partners to deliver the Early Help Hub, providing a 'one stop shop' of support and advice to individuals and families in their times of need.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Work with the Integrated Care System to tackle local health and well-being priorities and provide information to help people make healthier choices.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Work with local stakeholders to deliver an action plan to support the aims of the Creativity and Culture Strategy.	Value of Arts Council Grants achieved in Fenland.
Provide proportionate support and advice for community groups to hold safe and successful public events.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Manage the Fenland Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland-wide Community Cohesion Action Plan.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Deliver the Community Safety Grant Agreement with the Police and Crime Commissioner.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Environment	Performance Measures
Work with partners, businesses, the community and volunteers to maximise the quality and quantity of recycling collected.	% of household waste recycled through the blue bin service.
Deliver an effective, self-funding Garden Waste collection service.	Customer satisfaction with our Garden Waste service.
Deliver clean streets and public spaces as set out in the national code of practice.	% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards.
Work with key stakeholders to deliver an effective waste partnership and update the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Strategy.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Performance



In cooperation with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership, to plan and deliver the Environment Act 2021 changes to domestic and commercial waste collection through an updated Waste Strategy.

Use education, guidance and Council powers to fairly enforce environmental standards and tackle issues such as fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles, dog fouling, littering and antisocial behaviour.

Ensure well maintained parks and open spaces by working with our ground maintenance contractor.

Supporting volunteer Street Pride groups and other environmental volunteers, organisations and partners.

Work with Town Councils and the community to provide local markets and thriving market town community events.

Deliver the council's carbon reduction and climate adaptation plan including meeting all climate change targets which are legally required by the UK Government.

Economy

Provide responsive business support to encourage business growth, job diversity, skills development and increased access to grants.

Promote and develop our Business Premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and Light Industrial Estates to encourage investment, business development, job creation and skills diversification.

Work with external stakeholders, local businesses and the Combined Authority to attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities.

Enable appropriate growth, development and infrastructure through delivering a proactive and effective Planning service.

Work with the Combined Authority on the development of its new ten-year Local Growth Plan, to link the potential for growth in Fenland to Government priorities and the development of a national industrial strategy and unlock the potential of its key industrial sectors to power the local economy.

Drive forward the development and delivery of new homes and commercial space by using our surplus property and land assets to deliver sustainable economic and residential growth.

Work with our partners to enable new affordable housing to meet housing needs.

Identify and bid for external funding that aligns with and supports our housing, economic and growth objectives.

Promote sustainable road, rail and concessionary transport initiatives to improve access to employment and local services.

Engage with the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council on the feasibility and delivery of major road and rail infrastructure projects.

Work with the Combined Authority to influence how housing and infrastructure funding is used to stimulate housing development and economic growth in the district.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

% of Rapid or Village response requests (to action issues such as fly-tipping, dog fouling and littering) actioned the same day.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Number of Street Pride, In Bloom, Friends of Groups and Green Dog Walkers community environmental events supported.

% of those asked satisfied with community events.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Performance Measures

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

% occupancy of Business Premises estates.
% occupancy of our Wisbech Yacht Harbour.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Annual Monitoring Report.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks.
% of minor applications determined in 8 weeks.
% of other applications determined in 8 weeks.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Performance



Quality Organisation


Set relevant and robust performance targets to ensure the effective delivery of Business Plan priorities.	Corporate performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Report regularly on service performance to the Corporate Management Team, Councillors and the public.	% of Council Tax collected. Council Tax net collection fund receipts. % national non-domestic rates (NNDR) (Business Rates) collected. National non-domestic rates (NNDR) (Business Rates) net collection fund receipts.
Maintain our Customer Service Excellence accreditation to ensure we continue to deliver the most effective service to our communities.	Customer Service Excellence Report.
Help residents to self-serve and access our services digitally to allow us to provide greater support for vulnerable customers and complex queries.	% of customer queries responded at first point of contact. % of customers satisfied by our service. Contact Centre calls handled.
Maintain robust and effective financial standards, internal controls and organisational management.	Annual External Audit Report.
Comply with data protection and General Data Protection Regulation requirements.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Appropriately consult with residents about our service and proposals as outlined in our Consultation Strategy.	Consultation Strategy and Consultations reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Ensure our asset base is sustainable, suitable and fully utilised to maximise income opportunities and financial efficiencies.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Deliver our adopted Capital Programme in line with our Corporate Asset Management Plan to maintain the integrity and safety of our assets.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Work jointly with public, private and third sector partners to improve access to our services, including from co-located facilities.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Continue with our Commercial Investment Strategy to make informed decisions about the purchase and management of property assets through Fenland Future Limited.	Commercial Investment Strategy updates via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Meet our Public Sector Equality duty by delivering the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act and 1998 Human Rights Act through our core service delivery and publication of a statutory Annual Equality Report.	Annual Equality Report.
Equip our workforce with the right skills to effectively deliver our priorities.	Customer Service Excellence Accreditation.
Support and empower our staff to make effective decisions.	Bi-annual Staff survey.
Use a fair and proportionate approach to improve living, working and environmental standards as set out in our Enforcement Policies.	% of local businesses who said they were supported and treated fairly. Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Support businesses to ensure compliance with a wide range of regulatory requirements.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Maintain effective Health and Safety systems to comply with relevant legislation and local requirements.	Annual Health and Safety Report. Annual Audit and Risk Report.
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.	Annual Health and Safety Report. Annual Audit and Risk Report.

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Agenda Item No:	8	
Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny Panel	
Date:	20 January 2025	
Report Title:	Revised General Fund Budget and Capital Programme 2024/25; Draft General Fund Budget Estimates 2025/26 and Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025/26 to 2029/30; Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

To consider and make any appropriate recommendations to Cabinet on:-

- the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy, Draft General Fund Budget 2025/26 and Draft Capital Programme 2025-2028 for consultation.

2 Key issues

- The draft budget proposals for 2025/26 as considered for consultation by Cabinet on 16 December 2024 are detailed in the attached report.
- The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26 has been announced (on 18 December 2024) along with clarification of the Autumn Statement 2024 announcements. Detailed below are the main points of the provisional finance settlement and how they directly impact on this Council.

- **Core Spending Power (CSP)** for local government as whole has increased by 6.0%. Shire Districts have received the lowest average increases in CSP, only 0.32%. Our increase in CSP is 1.51%. CSP is a measure of the revenue funding available for local authority services. This includes council tax; business rates; Revenue Support Grant; New Homes Bonus; Recovery Grant, adult social care grants and other grants (including the Funding Guarantee Grant).

These government forecasts assume that every local authority will raise their council tax by the maximum permitted without a referendum.

Assumed Council Tax increases make up 55% of the increase in CSP and Council Tax is now around 56% of the total CSP. The increased reliance on increasing council tax has been a feature of the finance settlements and CSP over the past few years.

- **Council Tax Referendum limits** have been confirmed as 2.99% or £5 (on a Band D property), whichever is higher, for shire districts, but no additional flexibility. Social care authorities will be able to levy an additional 2% adult social care precept. Police & Crime Commissioners can increase their Band D by up to £14. Fire and Rescue authorities can increase their Band D by up to £5. There will be no referendum principles for Mayoral Combined Authorities or Town and Parish Councils.

- **Business Rates** adjustments are more complicated. In technical terms, the continuing impact of de-coupling the multiplier makes the settlement more difficult to understand.

Business Rates Baseline Funding Levels (BFL) will be uplifted to account for the increase in the standard multiplier. The small business multiplier will be frozen and the standard multiplier will increase by September's CPI (1.67%). This is referred to in paragraph 2.2 of the attached draft budget report which also details the continuing reliefs available in 2025/26 for eligible retail, hospitality, and leisure properties. Local authorities will be compensated for the under-indexing of the small business multiplier (the cap compensation) and for the new reliefs by S31 grant.

Although BFL's and the cap compensation grant have increased as if both business rating multipliers had increased by CPI, we will not be able to confirm the final business rates figures for 2025/26 until the NNDR1 return is completed (usually around mid-January).

Initial indications are that this Council could receive around **£19,162 additional income** than detailed in the attached report although this is far from certain.

Until the NNDR1 return is completed however, the above Business Rates figures should be treated with extreme caution.

- **Revenue Support Grant (RSG)** allocations have increased by September's CPI (1.67%) and the rolling in of two small 'New Burdens' grants relating to the Transparency Code and Electoral Integrity. The overall impact of this is **£15,684 higher** grant than included in the attached report.
- **New Homes Bonus (NHB)** payment for 2025/26 will be £592,628 for this Council, exactly the same as included in the draft budget report. The government have said yet again that 2025/26 will be the final year of the NHB although the design of a replacement is no clearer than it was when the government issued its' consultation over three years ago. Consequently, the future of the NHB and its' replacement is a considerable risk to the Medium Term Strategy from 2026/27 onwards.
- The **Services Grant** has been abolished in 2025/26 and the **Minimum Funding Guarantee Grant** (now known as the **Funding Floor**) allocations have been amended to ensure that no authority has a CSP of less than 0% in 2025/26 (2024/25 minimum increase was 4%). As our CSP is 1.51%, we have received no Funding Floor grant resulting in **£814,404 less** grant than included in the attached report.
- However, the **new Recovery Grant** (£600m nationally), allocated on the basis of 'Need' as determined by deprivation and population and 'Resource' as determined by the council tax base, has resulted in a grant allocation of **£435,149 higher** than included in the draft budget.
- There is one other allocation within the Provisional Settlement relating to **Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Grant**, resulting in an allocation of **£34,664 higher** than included in the draft budget.
- In summary and based on the analysis above, **the allocations within the provisional settlement** has provided **£309,745 less** resources compared with what was included in the draft budget report.
- In addition to the allocations within the Provisional Settlement, there have been other announcements which fall outside the settlement as follows:
 - **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Grant** – an **additional £328,628** has been allocated to FDC. This grant comes with conditions and more work is

needed to understand any further cost implications before we know what the net increase in grant will be.


- **Extended Producer Responsibility payments (pEPR)** – the Council has been notified that its pEPR payment for 2025/26 is **£958,000**. Again we need to understand any cost implications relating to this allocation. The payment for 2025/26 is guaranteed but future years payments will be more volatile as they will be based on actual figures rather than calculated estimates.
- **Employers National Insurance Contributions** – the government will be providing £515m of funding to local authorities to off-set the changes to these contributions in 2025/26. Individual allocations to Councils will not be available until the final settlement later this month but based on current information, FDC's allocation could be around **£150,000**. This is considerably less than the £280,000 additional cost to FDC of these changes.
- Taking into account the announcements both inside and outside the Provisional Settlement, results in an estimated **£1,126,883 of additional funding** compared with the draft budget (albeit there may be additional costs associated with this as mentioned above). Without the pEPR payment of £958,000, there would only be an estimated £168,883 increase in funding.
- A summary of the estimated impact of the provisional settlement is detailed in the table below. Subject to any additional costs being incurred, the additional funding would reduce the estimated shortfall in 2025/26 from £2,657,710 to £1,530,827.
- **However, until the final confirmation of the business rates income, following completion of the NNDR1 return in mid-January 2025, this should be treated with caution.** The business rates income will undoubtedly change for the final budget report.
- Whilst the provisional settlement is overall, positive for 2025/26, we still have to incorporate into the final budget report the impact of various risks highlighted in paragraph 7.15 of the attached draft budget.
- The final allocations for 2025/26 may also change following the consultation period and the publication of the Final Settlement in late January/early February 2025.
- **It is also important to reiterate that there remains an underlying structural deficit over the medium term for the Council to address.**
- The Government is committed to the Fair Funding Review (the Review of Relative Needs and Resources) to begin in 2026/27 together with a reset of accumulated business growth.
- Any changes resulting from the Fair Funding Review or resets of the Business Rates Retention system is a significant risk to FDC from 2026/27 onwards. FDC retain considerable business rates income (around £1.4m) above its Baseline Funding Level (determined in the Settlement) and for Renewable Energy (around £1.6m). These amounts are at considerable risk following any reset of the system in 2026/27.
- The attached report has not been updated with any of the above announcements. The final budget report to Cabinet and Council on 24 February 2025 will incorporate the above together with any further announcements.

Estimated Impact of Provisional Settlement		Draft Budget	Provisional		
		2025-26	Settlement	Additional (+)	
		Cabinet	2025-26	/ Less (-)	
		16.12.24	18.12.24	Funding	
1. <u>Allocations within Provisional Settlement</u>		£	£	£	
Revenue Support Grant		187,989	187,982		
Transparency Code Grant*]		8,103		
Electoral Integrity Grant*]		7,588		
		187,989	203,673	15,684	
* Rolled into RSG for 2025-26 onwards					
New Homes Bonus		592,628	592,628	0	
Funding Guarantee Grant/Funding Floor		814,404	0	-814,404	
Recovery Grant		0	435,149	435,149	
Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Grant		0	34,664	34,664	
Total Impact - excluding Business Rates adjustments		1,595,021	1,266,114	-328,907	
Business Rates Adjustments					
Retained Rates - NNDR1 Estimate		11,603,273	11,603,273 *	0	Tbc
Tariff		-7,680,607	-7,636,697	43,910	
		3,922,666	3,966,576	43,910	
Renewable Energy Rates Retained		1,588,253	1,588,253 *	0	Tbc
Business Rates Pool - FDC Share of Benefit		350,000	350,000 *	0	Tbc
Business Rates - S31 Grants due in year		2,968,071	2,976,918 *	8,847	Tbc
Business Rates Levy due in year		-707,386	-740,981 *	-33,595	Tbc
Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit		-47,526	-47,526	0	Tbc
Total Business Rates adjustments		8,074,078	8,093,240	19,162	
Total estimated impact of Provisional Settlement		9,669,099	9,359,354	-309,745 *	
2. <u>Allocations outside the Provisional Settlement</u>					
Homelessness/Rough Sleeping Grants					
Housing Prevention Grant		362,890	697,545	334,655	
Rough Sleeping (Prevention and Recovery)		384,000	377,973	-6,027	
Rough Sleeping (Accommodation)		64,159	64,159	0	
		811,049	1,139,677	328,628	
Extended Producer Responsibility Payment -pEPR		0	958,000	958,000	
Employer National Insurance Contributions Funding		0	150,000 *	150,000	Tbc
Total estimated impact of other announcements		811,049	2,247,677	1,436,628	
Total estimated impact of Provisional Settlement and other announcements		10,480,148	11,607,031	1,126,883	
Overall Budget Shortfall		2,657,710	1,530,827	-1,126,883	

3 Recommendations

- It is recommended that Members consider and make any appropriate recommendations to Cabinet on:
 - (i) the draft budget proposals for 2025/26 outlined in this report;
 - (ii) the updated capital programme.

Wards Affected	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Boden, Leader and Portfolio Holder, Finance
Report Originator(s)	Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer (S.151 Officer) Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
Background Paper(s)	Provisional Finance Settlement 2025/26 – Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG). Autumn Statement 2024 (HM Treasury) Medium Term Financial Strategy working papers. Government announcements since February 2024.

Agenda Item No:	5	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	16 December 2024	
Report Title:	Revised General Fund Budget and Capital Programme 2024/25; Draft General Fund Budget Estimates 2025/26 and Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025/26 to 2029/30; Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2027/28	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

To consider and approve:

- the revised General Fund Budget and Capital Programme for 2024/25;
- the Draft General Fund Budget Estimates 2025/26 and the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2029/30 for consultation;
- Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2027/28.

2 Key issues

- The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announcement is expected week commencing 16 December 2024. **Consequently, until the details of the Finance Settlement have been received, the figures detailed in this report should be treated as being provisional.**
- In accordance with the decision of Council at their meeting of 17 July 2023 (Minute C8/23), the cash amount of Council Tax raised has been kept at the current level for 2025/26 and over the MTFS period.
- Council Tax Referendum limits for 2025/26 will remain unchanged from 2024/25 and set at an increase of 3% or £5 whichever is the higher.
- Current forecasts for 2025/26 show a shortfall of £2.658m based on the assumptions detailed in Appendix C, before any adjustment to the level of Council Tax. The MTFS projects shortfall increases year on year, reaching £4.061m in 2029/30. Projected shortfalls in the MTFS are usual, both in FDC and in Local Government generally. They represent the challenge to be faced in future years in reaching a balanced budget position each year. The projected shortfalls are however significantly higher than previous years forecasts and represent significant challenges for the Council. Any decision this year to not increase the level of Council Tax necessarily increases the scale of that challenge.
- At this time, more detailed work is required on a number of issues which could potentially impact on these figures, both positively and negatively (as detailed in paragraph 7.15 of the report). Further information is expected over the next few weeks and this will be incorporated where possible, into the final budget report in February 2025.

- **Although there are currently many uncertainties regarding the budget for 2025/26 and the MTFS, there remains a significant structural deficit which the Council will need to address.** The ongoing Transformation 2 programme (of re-basing the establishment and underlying operation environments of the Council) will be crucial in helping to address that long-standing structural deficit.
- Any final deficits for 2024/25 and 2025/26 will have to be funded from Council reserves (current balances shown in Appendix E). At this stage, due to the many uncertainties around the potential deficits, there is no requirement to formally approve any amounts to be funded from reserves.
- An updated Capital Programme for 2024/25 and for the medium term 2025/26 - 27/28 is proposed.
- Further work is required on the potential new capital schemes identified in Appendix D(ii) and the final proposals will be considered as part of the final budget report in February 2025.

3 Recommendations

- It is recommended that:-
 - (i) the revised General Fund Budget and revised Capital Programme for 2024/25 be approved;
 - (ii) the draft budget proposals for 2025/26 outlined in this report be approved for consultation;
 - (iii) the proposed Capital Programme for 2025/26 – 2027/28 be approved.

Wards Affected	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Boden, Leader and Portfolio Holder, Finance
Report Originator(s)	Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer (S.151 Officer) Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer (S.151 Officer) Mark Saunders, Chief Accountant
Background Paper(s)	Provisional Finance settlement – Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG). Autumn Statement 2024 (HM Treasury) Medium Term Financial Strategy working papers. Government announcements since February 2024.

Report:

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report sets out the financial implications of the council's priorities described in the draft Business Plan 2025/26. Revenue budget estimates are draft at this stage and along with the draft Business Plan will be subject to public and stakeholder consultation prior to final budget and council tax setting for 2025/26 in February 2025.
- 1.2 Much of the financial information provided is necessarily based on a number of assumptions which are wholly or partly influenced by external factors. Some of these factors, such as the outcome of the Local Government Finance Settlement will not be known until after this Committee meeting. In addition, actual Business Rates income will not be finalised until the completion of the 2025/26 NNDR1 return by the deadline of the end of January 2025. Both of these could have a significant impact on the figures detailed in this report. Other issues as detailed in paragraph 7.15 of this report will also impact on the MTFS and any amendments will be reported to Cabinet and Council at the February 2025 budget setting meeting.

2 AUTUMN BUDGET 2024

- 2.1 On 30 October 2024, the Chancellor delivered her Autumn Budget confirming the Government's spending plans for 2025/26.
- 2.2 The relevant points for this Council from these announcements are as follows:

Council Tax

- Although no formal announcement in the Autumn Budget, it has been confirmed since then that the Council Tax referendum limit will be set at increases of up to 3% (or £5 whichever is the higher), together with an additional 2% increase for authorities with responsibilities for Adult Social Care (the same as for 2024/25).

Business Rates

- **Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief (RHL)** will continue in 2025/26 with the level of relief reducing to 40% (currently 75%) with a maximum of £110,000 per business. Local authorities will be compensated in the usual way through S31 grants.
- **The small business rates multiplier in 2025/26 will be frozen** (currently 49.9p which normally would increase in line with the CPI rate as at September 2024, ie.1.67%), while **the standard multiplier will be uprated by September CPI to 55.5p** (from 54.6p currently). Local authorities will be fully compensated for the decision to freeze the small business multiplier;
- From 2026/27 onwards, ministers will use their new powers over the multiplier to set **new sectoral multipliers**, with permanently lower multipliers for RHL properties. Lower multipliers for these sectors will be paid for by higher multipliers for businesses with properties with rateable values of more than £500,000;
- A discussion paper has been published on **business rates reform**. The government's manifesto committed to reforming the current business rates system. It wanted to 'replace' business rates with a tax that will 'raise the same revenue but in a fairer way'. In particular, the government wanted to 'level the playing field between the high street and online giants'. This consultation

however appears to be looking at options to reform rather than replace business rates;

- The next **business rates revaluation** is still expected in 2026. The methodology for applying a revaluation to the Business Rates Retention System (BRRS) is now relatively well-developed (albeit extremely complicated). As usual, it is expected that the revaluation will be revenue neutral for individual authorities and for the sector as a whole.

Employers National Insurance

- From April 2025, this will increase from 13.8% to 15% and the threshold at which it starts to be paid has reduced substantially, from £9,100 to £5,000. This has increased this Council's staffing costs by around £280,000 per annum.
- The government has indicated that local government will receive additional funding to compensate for this increase. We are awaiting details of the amount and distribution of this funding. It is expected that this funding will be in addition to the £1.3bn grant increase detailed below.

Core Spending Power and Other Announcements

- There will be a 3.2% real-terms increase in Core Spending Power (CSP) in 2025/26 and within this is a £1.3billion increase in grants. Although this is better than expected, it is lower than in recent years.
- Full details of the allocation of funding within CSP will be announced later this month in the 2025/26 Finance Settlement. There are still a number of issues remaining to be resolved and decisions will have to be made about the Services Grant, Core Spending Power Guarantee Grant and the New Homes Bonus.
- Within the **£1.3bn additional grant funding is a £600m increase in the Social Care Grant and a further £700m for other areas**. It is anticipated that distribution of the £700m will use a 'targeted approach' which is likely to be focussed on distributing more funding to higher-need authorities without changing the existing basis of grant distribution.
- There is an additional **£230m grant for homelessness** which is additional to the £1.3bn grant above and will be outside of CSP.
- There is an additional **£86m for Disabled Facilities Grant** and this is also outside CSP.
- **New Homes Bonus (NHB)** was not mentioned in the budget. We are expecting that NHB will continue for a further year in 2025/26 but this is yet to be confirmed. An updated position is detailed in Section 4 of this report;
- The **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** scheme is due to commence next year and local authorities will receive an estimated £1.1bn in additional income in 2025/26. The Treasury will guarantee authorities' funding streams in 2025/26 with local authorities taking the risk on any changes in income from 2026/27 onwards. We are awaiting details of how this income will be allocated (especially in two-tier areas), or the extent to which it will have to be used to fund additional costs. Income allocations are due shortly from DEFRA. An updated position is detailed at paragraph 7.3 of this report.

Local Government Funding Reform

- The Budget confirmed that the government is planning to implement funding reforms in 2025/26. There is very much a focus on directing funding towards authorities with higher needs and also taking local revenues (business rates and council tax) into account. A broader redistribution of funding through a multi-year settlement will take place from 2026/27 onwards.
- The government is also looking to simplify the wider local funding landscape, reducing the number of grants and consolidating them into the Local Government Finance Settlement, as well as moving towards a multi-year settlement so local authorities can plan more effectively.

Local Government Reorganisation

- This government is broadly continuing the previous government's policy around devolution, with a focus on increasing the powers and funding available to combined authorities. The Budget confirmed that the first integrated finance settlements for Greater Manchester and the West Midlands will be in place in 2025/26 and for other combined authorities from 2026/27.
- A white paper on English Devolution is expected later this year. It is likely to incorporate local government reorganisation ('to move to simpler structures that make sense for their local areas, with efficiency savings from council reorganisation helping to meet the needs of local people').
- Taken together with the funding reforms above, this is a huge agenda which will have profound implications for local government funding, both in terms of how funding is distributed and how the system operates.

- 2.3 Details of how the above announcements will be converted into specific funding allocations for individual local authorities will be announced as part of the provisional local government finance settlement which is expected week commencing 16 December 2024.

3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT

- 3.1 The Provisional Finance Settlement for 2025/26 is expected to be announced during the week commencing 16 December 2024. Consequently, the figures included in this report are estimates based on previous funding announcements. It is therefore, almost certain that the figures announced in the Provisional Settlement will be different from those detailed in this report. An update on any changes will be given to members as soon as they are available.

Local Government Policy Statement 2025/26

- 3.2 The Local Government Policy Statement 2025/26 was published on 28 November 2024 and provides more details on how funding will be allocated in the 2025/26 settlement although actual funding allocations will not be announced until the provisional settlement itself.
- 3.3 It is clear though, that the government will target the additional funding on the most-deprived local authorities as well as on those authorities with social care responsibilities. Shire districts will have a lower share of funding in 2025/26 than we had previously forecast. Details of the proposals for 2025/26 are as follows:
- **Targeted deprivation fund ("Recovery Grant").** £700m was announced in the 2024 Autumn Budget, and this has now been reduced to £600m. The grant will be highly targeted towards authorities with the highest levels of deprivation.

We still do not know how allocations will be calculated, but it will “go to places where, weighted by population, deprivation outweighs council tax raising ability”.

- **Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA)** will be indexed in the usual way. Revenue Support Grant will increase in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) (1.7%), and the Baseline Funding Level (BFL) will be uplifted in line with the increase in the standard business rates multiplier. Under-indexing (of the small business rates multiplier) will be funded through the cap compensation grants.
- **Council Tax Band D thresholds.** Thresholds will increase as we expected (2.99% core increase, 2% ASC Precept). Both shire districts and fire authorities will be able to increase by the higher of 2.99% or £5. Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will be able to increase their precepts by £14 (higher than the £13 which has been available to PCCs in the past two years).
- **Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG).** The methodology used to calculate MFG will be changed: the threshold will be set at 0% (rather than 4% in 2024/25), and it will “take account of council tax levels” (which we assume includes the maximum Band D increases rather than just taxbase growth). The government expects that every authority will have more resources in 2025/26 than in 2024/25 – but for some, this will only be when income from the pEPR scheme is included.
- **Services Grant.** This grant will be abolished in 2025/26 (it was £87m nationally in 2024/25).
- **New Homes Bonus (NHB).** NHB will be continued into 2025/26 but abolished in 2026/27.
- There will continue to be “**no negative RSG**”.
- In line with the previous two years, £3m will be made available for authorities impacted by **Internal Drainage Board** levies. The allocations for this funding will be announced in due course.
- **Various grants will be rolled into RSG in 2025/26** including the Electoral Integrity Programme New Burdens and Transparency Code New Burdens. The Domestic Abuse New Burdens grant will be consolidated as a new separate line in the Settlement, maintaining its existing allocation.
- The government has committed to provide support for departments and other public sector employers for **additional employer NICs costs**. This applies to those directly employed by the public sector, including local government. More information on this will be provided in the provisional Settlement. Funding will only be for the direct costs affecting local authorities and not for third-party additional NICs costs.

3.4 The statement also confirms that there will be a full package of funding reforms in 2026/27, and that this will be the start of a multi-year settlement. The funding reforms will build on “the previous government’s” Fair Funding Review, and there will also be a full business rates baseline reset. The statement is careful to note that they “will move gradually towards an updated system” and will consult on “possible transitional arrangements”. The statement “begins the process of redirecting as much funding as possible to the places that need it most”.

- 3.5 For the purposes of this report, it has been assumed that the Council's overall Settlement Funding Assessment for 2025/26 (Revenue Support Grant, Business Rates Baseline Funding and Tariff Payments) will increase by CPI (1.67%) in line with the above policy statement announcements. No increase has been assumed for the Guarantee Grant (now called the Minimum Funding Guarantee Grant) following the policy statement announcement. In addition, no allowance has been made for any potential allocations from the £600m Recovery Grant as it is not possible to estimate this at this time. The figures included in the draft budget are detailed below.

Table 1 – Settlement Funding Assessment (Core Funding) – Estimate prior to provisional settlement

	Actual 2024/25 £000	Estimate 2025/26 £000	2025/26 % Increase
Settlement Funding Assessment			
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	184	188	1.67%
Business Rates income	11,559	11,753	
Tariff Payment to government	<u>-7,554</u>	<u>-7,681</u>	
Business Rates Baseline Funding	4,005	4,072	1.67%
Services Grant and Core Spending Power Guarantee Grant – Minimum Guarantee Grant from 2025/26	814	814	0.00%

- 3.6 The provisional settlement will also detail any allocations from the additional grant funding announced in the budget and detailed in section 2 and the Policy Statement announcements detailed in paragraph 3.3 above.
- 3.7 The Medium Term forecasts detailed in Appendix B have also assumed a continuation of the policy of increasing business rates baselines by CPI inflation from 2026/27 onwards, based on current Treasury forecasts over the medium term.

4 NEW HOMES BONUS

- 4.1 The Policy Statement detailed in paragraph 3.3 above confirmed that there would be one more year of NHB in 2025/26 but would be abolished from 2026/27.
- 4.2 Actual NHB received in 2024/25 was £442k and an estimate of £593k has been included for 2025/26 (calculation based on the increase in dwelling numbers between October 2023 – October 2024).
- 4.3 The New Homes Bonus will be abolished from 2026/27. The current national total of £291m per annum allocated by way of NHB is likely to be repurposed in future spending reviews. The impact on this Council's funding could be significant. We have included £593k of funding in the MTFS from 2026/27 onwards although this will likely be included within the Settlement Funding Assessment allocations from 2026/27 and could result in a lower allocation.
- 4.4 **The lack of clarity around the future allocations of the NHB total funding is a significant risk to the MTFS.**

5 BUSINESS RATES

- 5.1 Members will be aware that the Business Rates Retention system was introduced in April 2013. Under this system, authorities would benefit if their actual Business Rates income collected in a year was higher than the baseline funding determined by government.
- 5.2 There has been real business rates growth in Fenland over the last eight years, however how this impacts on the resources available to this Council is complex, due to the rules and the operation of the current 50% Business Rates Retention system. The complexity of the system has been exacerbated by the number of business rates relief schemes and multiplier caps and freezes implemented by the government over the last few years.

Business Rates Pooling Arrangement – 2024/25 and 2025/26

- 5.3 The Council joined with the County Council, Peterborough City Council, Fire Authority, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire to become part of a pooling arrangement for business rates from 2020/21 up to and including 2023/24. Unlike the Business Rates Pilot schemes, this is not a bidding process against other pools but is part of the existing system whereby authorities can choose to apply to become a pool with the agreement of the constituent authorities.
- 5.4 The benefit of being in a pool is that authorities will not be liable to levy payments on their business rates growth, which is then shared amongst the pooled authorities by a mutually agreed method. This will be based on where the growth has originated from with an appropriate share allocated to the County Council and Fire Authority.
- 5.5 As a result of further detailed analysis of forecast business rates income, the pool members decided that the most financially beneficial arrangement for 2024/25 would be a pool without Fenland. As recompense for not being in the pool, agreement was reached with the other pool members that Fenland would be no worse off as a result of the revised pooling arrangement for 2024/25.
- 5.6 Consequently, an amount of £350k per annum has been included in 2024/25 and 2025/26 as a 'pooling' benefit. The figure for 2025/26 will be firmed up over the coming weeks as all authorities in the pool complete the annual statutory business rates estimate, the NNDR1 form, due to be returned to MHCLG by the end of January 2025. This Council's estimated share of any additional resources will then be calculated and included in the final budget report in February 2025.
- 5.7 There will be no further major changes to the rates retention system until 2026/27 at least. Consequently, assuming the proposed pooling and 'no detriment' arrangements to this Council continue, an amount of £350k per annum has been included in the MTFS as a pooling benefit to this Council.

Business Rates Reform – 2026/27 onwards

- 5.8 As stated earlier, no major changes will take place until 2026/27 at least. At that time, it is likely that the Baseline Funding Level of all Councils will be reset with all 'growth' income being taken into account nationally and redistributed in the new system. In the estimate for 2025/26 and the medium term forecasts, around £1.4m of business rates above the Council's Baseline Funding Level is being retained. Under a baseline reset, this would mean that initially the additional £1.4m business rates income would be removed and redistributed. What remains unclear, is how much of this £1.4m will be returned to the Council as part of its recalculated Baseline Funding Level.

- 5.9 In theory therefore, the Council could lose all of this additional £1.4m in the absolute worst case scenario. However, this is unlikely and would create significant volatility within future funding allocations nationally, which the government does not wish to see. There will also undoubtedly be some kind of transitional arrangements which would also limit the extent of any gains and losses in funding arising from the new system.
- 5.10 Although it is extremely difficult to exemplify the impact of this redistribution, in broad terms, if the Council were to lose 50% of its growth income then this would add a further £700k per annum from 2026/27 to the current forecast MTFS shortfalls. A 20% loss of growth income would add a further £280k per annum to the current shortfalls.
- 5.11 In addition, the current system of retaining 100% of business rates from businesses generating Renewable Energy (estimated £1.588m in 2025/26) and the benefits from current pooling arrangements (estimated £350k in 2025/26) could also be reviewed and amended.
- 5.12 At the time of writing, local government funding reforms, the implementation of Business Rates Reform and the changes to the New Homes Bonus are all major risk areas for this Council over the medium term.**

6 FORECAST OUTTURN 2024/25

- 6.1 The approved budget set by Council in February 2024, showed a balanced budget without any funding required from either the Budget Equalisation Reserve or the General Fund Balance.
- 6.2 The latest projected outturn for 2024/25 is set out at Appendix A and show the likelihood of a shortfall in the region of £536k by the end of this financial year.
- 6.3 There have been numerous significant variations during this year to date which have contributed to the projected shortfall.
- 6.4 The main additional cost variations compared with the February 2024 budget include the following:
- Increase in net additional cost of the difference between Housing Benefit paid and subsidy reclaimed from DWP of £436k. Officers are progressing a number of initiatives to increase the amount of subsidy reclaimed;
 - £303k of additional staffing costs of the Planning service due to the difficulties in recruiting and retaining employed staff and the necessity to engage contract/agency staff. The use of contract/agency staff is reducing as vacant posts become filled;
 - Net additional cost of Internal Drainage Board levies of £117k (£152k additional levies off-set by £35k additional government grant);
 - £101k cost of legal fees relating to Wisbech Incinerator (£87k paid in 2023/24 making a total cost of £188k);
 - £139k of increased costs of Council Transport (Refuse, cleansing vehicles etc) consisting of £82k additional staffing costs and £57k of additional running costs (repairs, parts etc);
 - Net additional cost of £376k for providing temporary accommodation for homeless persons. The current programme of purchasing additional properties

for temporary accommodation as detailed in the current capital programme will be beneficial in future years in reducing this cost;

- £431k lower planning fees than estimated.

6.5 To off-set these additional cost increases, there has been a number of higher income and lower cost variances including the following:

- £204k of additional homelessness prevention grant;
- £112k of lower recycling gate fees and disposal costs;
- £90k of additional income from the VAT/RTB sharing arrangement with Clarion Housing;
- £487k lower financing and MRP charges as a result of re-profiled capital spend and timing of new borrowing;
- £259k of additional business rates income from higher retained renewable energy rates and lower levy due;
- £215k of additional income across a variety of services from grants, reimbursements and contributions;

6.6 There are still many uncertainties around the potential shortfall for 2024/25 and there is no requirement at this time to formally approve an amount to be funded from reserves. At the present time, Corporate Management Team, Senior Managers and the Accountancy Team are managing and monitoring the position carefully and will continue to review spending levels to ensure where possible, the amount to be funded from reserves at the year-end is minimised.

6.7 Use of reserves to fund any potential shortfall in 2024/25 will have a consequential impact on the Council's ability to fund any shortfall in 2025/26 from reserves. Details of the Council's reserves are at Section 10 and Appendix E.

7 DRAFT BUDGET ESTIMATES 2025/26 AND MTFS

7.1 The Council's MTFS has to ensure that the commitments made in the Business Plan are funded not only in the year for which formal approval of the budget is required (2025/26) but for forecast years as well, within a reasonable level of tolerance.

7.2 The impact of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (expected to be announced during week commencing 16 December 2024) will also need to be clarified and the figures in this report make no assumptions about any potential changes to government funding.

Extended Producer Responsibility

7.3 This Council received its provisional notice of assessment of the pEPR payment due in 2025/26 on 28 November 2024. This amounted to £958,000. Whilst this payment resulting from the collection of producer fees may still change, to provide certainty to authorities, the government is guaranteeing that in 2025/26 we will receive at least this amount. For 2026/27 onwards, this amount will be adjusted to reflect actual figures.

7.4 Officers are still assessing any costs associated with our obligations to maximise the collection and recycling of packaging material and any other conditions attached to the above payment.

- 7.5 As detailed in paragraph 3.3, there will be some significant funding changes announced as part of the Finance Settlement and at this stage it is not possible to determine the net impact of these changes together with the allocated pEPR funding. Of particular concern is the Minimum Funding Guarantee being set at 0% in 2025/26 (compared with 4% in 2024/25) and which now will also take into account increases in council tax income. The worst case scenario could result in this Council losing all of its assumed MFG grant of £814k in 2025/26.
- 7.6 Consequently, as a result of the above uncertainties, the MFG grant of £814k has been included in the estimates for 2025/26 but no allowance has been made for the net funding from pEPR.
- 7.7 Taking all the above into account, the Council's medium term forecasts are shown at Appendix B and summarised in Table 2 below. The table includes for Council Tax income to remain at its' current level from 2025/26 onwards.

Table 2 - MTFS – Council Tax income constant level from 2025/26 onwards

	Estimate	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure					
Net Service Expenditure	18,304	17,820	18,104	18,229	18,579
Corporate Items	1,480	1,678	1,777	2,129	2,394
Contribution to/from(-) Earmarked Reserves	-805	-189	-189	-111	-89
Net Expenditure (before use of balances)	18,979	19,309	19,692	20,247	20,884
Funding					
Revenue Support Grant	-188	-193	-198	-202	-208
Business Rates Funding (<i>detailed in Appendix B</i>)	-8,121	-8,243	-8,333	-8,428	-8,520
Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit (+)	47	0	0	0	0
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus(-)	-14	-50	-50	-50	-50
Council Tax (<i>cash level constant from 24/25 onwards</i>)	-8,045	-8,045	-8,045	-8,045	-8,045
Total Funding	-16,321	-16,531	-16,626	-16,725	-16,823
Surplus(-)/Shortfall(+) before use of balances	+2,658	+2,778	+3,066	+3,522	+4,061
Contribution to Budget Equalisation Reserve	0	0	0	0	0
Shortfall(+) after use of balances	+2,658	+2,778	+3,066	+3,522	+4,061

- 7.8 Government support for 2025/26 will be announced as part of the provisional finance settlement. This Council currently receives retained business rates and a small amount of Revenue Support Grant from the finance settlement. The projections for 2025/26 onwards are based on the best estimates and information available and are consistent with the announcements in the Autumn Budget 2024 and the Policy Statement issued on 28 November 2024. However, subject to further clarity on the detailed implementation of the announcements there remains significant uncertainty in these projections.

- 7.9 The net budget requirement for 2025/26 is currently estimated at **£18.979m** after all identified savings, contingencies and reserve transfers are included. This includes the assumptions detailed at Appendix C. With the provisional funding assumptions and Council Tax income remaining at current levels, **a shortfall of £2.658m** is currently forecast for 2025/26.
- 7.10 The estimates for 2024/25 benefited from a significant estimated surplus on the Business Rates Collection Fund account at the end of 2023/24. This surplus of £1.292m was a result of a significant decrease in the appeals provision required in 2023/24. There will always be an estimated surplus or deficit relating to the Business Rates Collection Fund in a particular year which is then included in the following years estimates. A deficit of £48k has been included in the estimates for 2025/26, a significant change from the surplus in 2024/25.
- 7.11 The development of the Commercial and Investment Strategy has the potential to generate additional significant returns over the MTFS. Currently, recharges to Fenland Future Ltd (FFL) for officer time, loan interest receipts and future dividends from current FFL developments have been included in the forecasts at Appendix A and B. These are based on the current business plan of FFL over the next three years. Additional returns may also be realised depending on the type and timing of investment opportunities. These are however limited at the current time due to high interest rates and the current policy of the PWLB not to lend for purely investment for yield projects. Consequently, no allowance for any further potential returns (over and above the recharges, loan interest and dividends from FFL) have been included in the MTFS at the current time.
- 7.12 As mentioned in Section 6 above, officers are progressing a number of initiatives to increase the amount of Housing Benefit subsidy reclaimed and together with the anticipated reduction in temporary accommodation costs (partly resulting from the additional houses purchased with assistance from the Local Authority Housing Fund and also from other properties to be purchased from the Council's own resources), **a significant increase in subsidy reclaimed and lower temporary accommodation costs of £600k has been included in the estimates for 2025/26**. As the timings of these initiatives are uncertain, this reduction remains a significant risk in the 2025/26 estimates.
- 7.13 Members will be aware that the Transformation Agenda 2 (TA2) programme is now underway and together with the Accommodation Review, is critical in achieving the necessary savings over the course of the MTFS. An amount of £170k has currently been included in the 2025/26 estimates as savings from the TA2 programme, increasing to £236k per annum by 2029/30. Significant savings over and above these will be required from this programme over the MTFS period.
- 7.14 Taking into account the proposals in the Table 2 above, the estimated net budget requirement in 2025/26 is detailed in Appendix A. The level of forecast resources available to the Council and the estimated levels of expenditure over the medium term are set out in detail in Appendix B. **These show a funding gap of £2.778m in 2026/27 rising to £4.061m by the end of 2029/30.**
- 7.15 There is still considerable uncertainty around the estimates for 2025/26 and the forecasts for the medium term. Currently there are a number of 'unknowns' which could both positively and negatively impact on the forecasts including:

Risks associated with the MTFS forecasts:

- Potential impact of the Provisional Finance Settlement (announcement in mid-December 2024) on 2025/26 and the medium term;
- Impact of potential changes to the New Home Bonus national total distribution and allocations from April 2026;
- Impact of the longer-term changes to the Business Rates Retention system from April 2026;
- Impact of pay awards higher or lower than currently allowed for in the MTFS (2% increase included for 2025/26 onwards);
- Impact of potential additional costs and income in 2025/26 from the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for managing packaging waste;
- Impact of potential net costs of the governments' Food Waste strategy;
- Impact on income streams being greater than anticipated due to external factors such as Port Income;
- Impact of the current review of Port operations and the future liability of the quay at Wisbech Port;
- Continuing impact of homelessness temporary accommodation costs in 2025/26 and the medium term and the impact on recovery of housing benefit subsidy;
- Impact of increases in Fees and Charges (where feasible) on the 2025/26 estimates and MTFS;
- Impact of service developments eg. Car Parking Enforcement (CPE);
- Revenue impact of funding new capital schemes not currently included in the capital programme. There are currently a number of significant unfunded capital schemes which will need to be considered over the MTFS;
- Potential impact of the Council's future transformation programme with associated savings. Further detailed work is required to quantify the extent of these savings;
- Potential positive impact over the MTFS of implementing the outcomes from the Accommodation Strategy;
- Review of the recharge of staff time to the LATCO (Fenland Future Ltd) to quantify potential revenue savings. Currently recharges of £125k in 2025/26 onwards have been assumed in the MTFS;
- Potential net benefits from FFL of loan interest and dividends from future developments over and above already included in the MTFS generating revenue income;
- Commercial and Investment Strategy and future potential positive returns to the Council;
- Review of the General Fund Balance and Earmarked Reserves to ensure they align with the future requirements of the Council.

7.16 Further details relating to several of the above issues should become clearer with the publication of the Provisional Finance Settlement expected to be announced in mid-December 2024.

- 7.17 Between now and the final budget report in February 2025 further analysis will be carried out on the impact of the issues detailed above, as and when further information becomes available. Consequently, the estimate for 2025/26 could change significantly from that detailed at Appendix A.
- 7.18 **Whatever impact the above issues may have however, there will remain a significant structural deficit for the Council to address over the medium term.**
- 7.19 The forecasts for the years 2026/27 – 2029/30 are provisional at this stage and should be considered with extreme caution. The Provisional Finance Settlement announcements regarding local government funding are imminent and therefore, the figures could be different to those included in the forecast. Future announcements and consultation outcomes will also determine government policy and therefore the funding in the future years. In addition, the forecasts are dependent on permanently maintaining the savings identified through the My Fenland transformation initiative and the current TA2 programme.
- 7.20 As detailed earlier in this report, Business Rates Retention reform, Local Government Funding reform and changes to the New Homes Bonus could have a significant impact on the Council's forecast resources over term of the MTFS. Further to the risks associated with these externally determined funding streams the Council should also ensure that income budgets are achieved and new income streams considered and implemented for medium to long term sustainability in combination with any operational and transformational benefits that the Council realises. The use of general reserves to support revenue expenditure adds to the overall risks to the Council as such reserves can only be used once but the cumulative impact of such use will continue to be felt into the future.

Other Risks

Capital Programme – Future Funding

- 7.21 The Council is increasingly relying on borrowing (Internal and Prudential) to fund its future programme as the amount of capital receipts and the level of reserves available to fund the capital programme are reducing considerably over the next two years. Consequently, any new capital schemes (which do not generate a return to repay borrowing costs) will have to be funded through borrowing which will result in revenue costs and therefore will impact on the MTFS and future shortfalls.
- 7.22 For example, a £1m scheme with a 20 year life, funded by prudential borrowing, would result in around an additional £100,000 per annum in interest (5%) and repayment costs.
- 7.23 Consequently, a review of the current capital programme together with potential new schemes (as detailed in Section 11) and the ongoing revenue cost impact will need to be undertaken prior to the final budget report in February 2025, to ensure the final approved programme is sustainable within the context of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 7.24 To exemplify the effect on the MTFS of potential additional costs arising from the above risks, Table 3 below details a scenario whereby the Council loses 50% of its business rates growth income and 50% of its current NHB funding following the reforms in 2026/27.

Table 3: MTFs Potential Impact of Major Risks – for illustrative purposes only

	Estimate	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
MTFS Shortfall - Appendix B	2,658	2,778	3,066	3,522	4,061
<i>(Council Tax income level constant from 25/26 onwards)</i>					
50% loss of NNDR growth income		700	700	700	700
50% loss of NHB funding		296	296	296	296
Additional £1m per year borrowing	25	125	225	325	425
Revised Shortfall	2,683	3,899	4,287	4,843	5,482

- 7.25 As stated earlier, it is important to note that the figures detailed in the above table are purely illustrative as no decisions have yet been made regarding changes to these funding streams or new capital schemes and the potential impact on this Council.

8 FEES AND CHARGES

- 8.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel will consider all fees and charges for 2025/26 at its meeting on 20 January 2025 and recommend the Schedule of Fees and Charges to Cabinet at its meeting on 27 January 2025.
- 8.2 For the purposes of this report, no increase in fees over and above what has already been agreed (eg. Planning Fees and Garden Waste Subscriptions) has been included in the estimates for 2025/26 and the medium term. Income forecasts within the figures in this report are based on current fees and projected activity levels.
- 8.3 Members will be aware that several of our fees and charges are set by government or other bodies and we have no discretion to amend these. The number of fees and charges which we have discretion to amend and the extent to which any increases significantly impact the Medium Term Forecasts detailed in this report are limited.

9 COUNCIL TAX – 2025/26

- 9.1 The government has set the referendum limit for 2025/26 at 3% or £5, whichever is higher for District Councils (the same as 2024/25). A 3% increase on the Band D Council Tax equates to £7.56 per annum.
- 9.2 Social care authorities, such as Cambridgeshire County Council can also increase their element of council tax by a further 2% (5% in total which would equate to £80.91 on the County Council's Band D Council Tax if increase taken in full).
- 9.3 Council at its meeting on 17 July 2023, agreed to re-position the MTFs by keeping the cash level of Council Tax raised at the current level rather than the previously adopted 0% increase, while recognising that the Council continues to face significant financial challenges and uncertainties that may not allow this ambition to be met.
- 9.4 Members of the Council need to act responsibly each year when setting the precept to balance the ambition of keeping Council Tax income at its' current level with the legal need to balance the budget. It was agreed that raising Council Tax in any of

the next four years will be a last resort in order to minimise the financial effects of Council Tax on all of Fenland's households.

- 9.5 For information, an additional 1% increase in Council Tax in 2025/26 would generate in the region of £82k of revenue per annum to the Council. Even with this additional revenue included, the estimates for future years show a significant shortfall (see Table 4 below).

Council Taxbase

- 9.6 The amount of Council Tax income recognised in the estimates is determined by the Council Taxbase (Band D equivalents) and the level of Band D Council Tax. For 2025/26, the Council Taxbase has been calculated using the number of dwellings (as notified by the Valuation Office Agency), the impact of exemptions and discounts (eg. Single Person discount) and the amount of Council Tax Support awarded as reported in the Council Tax Base return submitted to MHCLG in October 2024.
- 9.7 In addition, an allowance for growth and for non-collection is included together to produce the estimated taxbase. For 2025/26, the draft taxbase has been calculated as 32,050 (Band D equivalents), an increase of 479 (1.5%) on 2024/25.
- 9.8 The number of dwellings included on the VOA valuation list will be kept under review together with further analysis of growth within the district to ensure the final taxbase calculation reflects the latest position.
- 9.9 In line with the motion agreed by Council on 17 July 2023, assumed Council Tax income has remained at its' current level for 2025/26 and over the period of the MTFS.
- 9.10 At this level of Council Tax, there will be a significant deficit to fund over the period of the MTFS. Consequently, the Council will need to continually consider its strategy to meet the estimated shortfalls shown at Table 2 and in Appendix B.
- 9.11 The implications of not increasing Council Tax over the MTFS is that the Council will be reducing its financial base permanently as it would not be able to recover potential revenue foregone due to the cumulative year on year impact. The consequences of setting Council Tax at its' current level and not achieving the necessary savings/additional income have been clearly demonstrated by the events at other Councils. The ability to achieve significant year on year savings (without increasing existing and/or introducing new revenue streams together with transformational change) to balance the budget becomes progressively difficult without eventually impacting on front-line services and delivery.
- 9.12 Council can of course agree to an increase up to the referendum limit of 3% and a 1% increase in Council Tax raises around £82k revenue per annum. Table 4 shows the implications of increasing the Council Tax in 2025/26 by 2.97% per annum and thereafter compared to keeping the Council Tax income constant and compared to freezing the Council Tax in 2025/26 and throughout the MTFS period.

Table 4: MTFS Deficits at Differing Council Tax levels in 2025/26 onwards

Deficits based on different levels of Council Tax	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000
Deficits at CT at current level (as shown in Table 2/Appendix B)	+2,658	+2,778	+3,066	+3,522	+4,061
Additional CT with 0% increase p.a. from 2025/26	-121	-248	-378	-511	-646
Deficits at 0% increase	+2,537	+2,530	+2,688	+3,011	+3,415
Additional CT with 3% increase p.a. from 2025/26	-363	-749	-1,152	-1,575	-2,018
Deficits at 3% increase	+2,295	+2,029	+1,914	+1,947	+2,043

10 REVIEW OF GENERAL FUND BALANCE AND EARMARKED RESERVES

- 10.1 An important part of any budget strategy is the review and consideration of reserves. Earmarked Reserves are typically held and used in a planned way to deal with issues where it is foreseen that resources need to be set aside to meet a specific need but the exact amount and timing is not known. General Reserves are held to cushion the impact of an event or events that cannot be foreseen whilst maintaining these resources at a consistent and reasonable level over the medium term.
- 10.2 Sufficient levels of reserves are necessary to provide for various contingent and unplanned items that could include:-
- significant increased costs of providing statutory services
 - significant increased contractual costs
 - an unexpected and/or significant event or disaster, e.g. civil emergency
 - an unexpected major liability in law
 - the need to make significant payments in relation to prior year adjustments under the direction of the external auditor
- 10.3 The Council's current uncommitted General Fund Balance is £2m. It is good practice to keep the balance on this reserve under review alongside ensuring that the purposes for which other earmarked reserves were allocated remain consistent with and relevant to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 10.4 Consequently, a review of the level of the General Fund Balance and the number and purpose of the earmarked reserves will be undertaken and any amendments will be presented to Cabinet and Council in the final budget report in February 2025.
- 10.5 The Budget Equalisation Reserve was established in 2019/20 to provide a smoothing mechanism between financial years which could provide resources to help achieve balanced budgets in future years whilst maintaining a 0% Council tax increase each year. The current balance on this reserve is £1.654m and is available to meet potential budget shortfalls for 2024/25 and 2025/26. Funding the £536k current projected shortfall for 2024/25 from this reserve would reduce the balance available for future years to £1.118m.

- 10.6 In previous reports, the Leader has stated that one of the main purposes of the Budget Equalisation Reserve was to facilitate a form of feedback loop to counter what he described as the Council's systemic historic outturn surpluses. However, the deficit incurred in 2023/24 of £212k was the first for several years and demonstrated the challenging financial environment all Councils are currently experiencing. Table 5 below, details the historic surpluses prior to 2023/24 and the significant shift to a deficit position from 2023/24. This deficit position is projected to worsen in 2024/25 and increase significantly in 2025/26. It is, ultimately, a matter of political interpretation whether the pattern of historic repeated outturn surpluses was evidence of taxing residents more than we need to each year, or if it bears a different interpretation. That is entirely a political matter for Cabinet and Full Council to consider. It is though quite clear that the pattern of historic surpluses will not be repeated and there will be significant deficits over the MTFS for the Council to address.
- 10.7 At a time of much personal financial pressure for households across Fenland, the Leader proposed, and Full Council approved at their budget meeting in February 2023, a one-off 2% reduction in Council tax in 2023/24. Subsequently, Council at its meeting on 17 July 2023, agreed to re-position the MTFS by keeping the cash level of Council Tax raised at the current level rather than the previously adopted 0% increase, while recognising that the Council continues to face significant financial challenges and uncertainties that may not allow this ambition to be met. The decisions by Council in February and July 2023 was considered a more effective and appropriate way to eliminate the Council's pattern of outturn surpluses, and that the fact that the Budget Equalisation Reserve now stands at £1.654m (before any potential use to fund any shortfall in 2024/25) provides a limited facility to smooth any short term revenue account budget pressures in any year(s) over the term of the MTFS. The scale of the forecast deficits in the current year, 2025/26 and over the MTFS are significantly higher than what will be available to fund from the Budget Equalisation Reserve and further significant cost savings and/or income generation (eg. Council Tax increases) will be required to set a legally balanced budget.

Table 5: Net Deficit/Surplus(-) transferred from/(to) Budget Equalisation Reserve

	Budget £000	Outturn £000		Outturn Transferred to(+)/from(-)	
				Budget Equalisation	Reserve Balance
2024/25	-3	536 (projected)		-536	1,118
2023/24	-4	212		-212	1,654
2022/23	203	-800		800	1,866
2021/22	842	-584		584	1,066
2020/21	0	-167		167	482
2019/20	151	-115		115	315
2018/19	73	-200		200	

- 10.8 The analysis of reserves at Appendix E details the projected General Fund and earmarked reserves position as at 31 March 2025 and 31 March 2026 before any use of these reserves to fund the potential shortfalls detailed at Appendix A. The final budget report to be considered by Cabinet and Council on 24 February 2025 will consider the use of these reserves.

11 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 11.1 Capital Expenditure and Income plans have been prepared through the Council's service and financial planning cycle. The Council's capital resources are dependent on government funding, external grants or through the ongoing disposal of assets.
- 11.2 Since February 2024, Members have continued to receive regular updates on several high-profile schemes including Wisbech High Street. In addition, Cabinet at their meetings of 30 September 2024 and 15 November 2024, have approved the purchase of additional properties to help support the Council's housing duties and these are included in Appendix D(i).
- 11.3 An updated Capital Programme for 2024-28 is presented at Appendix D(i) for approval. The programme has been updated to ensure it adequately reflects the cost and anticipated timing of schemes previously approved. **At this stage, no further capital schemes over and above those already approved have been included in the updated programme and no further financing costs included in the MTFS.**
- 11.4 No allowance has yet been made for any potential new schemes detailed in Appendix D(ii). These schemes will be subject to further review by officers and members prior to determining the final budget proposals in February 2025. **The potential additional revenue costs associated with any new schemes will increase the financial challenges facing the Council over the MTFS period.**
- 11.5 In addition, no allowance has yet been made for the following developments which will also significantly impact the Council's capital programme.

Accommodation Strategy

Currently members and officers are working closely with the Council's professional advisors to produce a Full Business Case in relation to the preferred Accommodation Strategy option agreed by Cabinet on 30 September 2024. The final decisions taken will inform the level of work required at Fenland Hall and The Base over the life of the capital programme. When final decisions are taken, the capital programme will need to be adjusted accordingly. On this basis no commitments relating to Fenland Hall and the Base have been included in the current programme. Whatever option is finally agreed, there will be a significant impact on the capital programme and future financing costs.

Structural Works – Wisbech Port

Major structural concrete repair works were carried out during 2023/24 to address the deteriorating condition of the suspended quay at Wisbech Port. Extensive further work will be required over the next few years to ensure the quay at the port of Wisbech remains safe and operational. Full details of this work was presented to Cabinet at their meeting on 16 March 2023. A detailed option appraisal regarding the future of Wisbech Port will be required before any further investment in the quay is considered. Ultimately, the long-term replacement of the suspended quay could cost in the region of £50m. Further reports will be brought to Cabinet for consideration of the future of Wisbech Port.

Leisure Centres

Following approval by Cabinet in November 2023, a Leisure Centre Facility Strategy to inform capital investment required over the next 5 years has been developed. Officers are currently assessing the outcome of this strategy and any potential available funding opportunities and a report on the various options for each centre will be presented to Cabinet at a future meeting. What is clear however, is that major investment in the Council's leisure centres is required to ensure they are fit for the future. This will have a very significant impact on the capital programme and future additional financing costs.

- 11.6 Should resources from external funding and/or capital receipts not generate the level of receipts forecast, or there is a delay in disposal of assets, then the capital programme will need re-visiting to ensure funding is sufficient to meet proposed expenditure including through borrowing. Reviews of the programme and resources available are carried out regularly during the year.
- 11.7 The Council's Borrowing Strategy which is incorporated into the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement, recognises that prudential borrowing will be required over the life of the capital programme. Details of the estimated borrowing required is detailed at Appendix D. The projected annual revenue costs for the Council of the current approved programme are reflected in the medium term forecasts at Appendix B.
- 11.8 As stated earlier, a review of the current and future capital programme and its ongoing revenue cost impact will be undertaken to ensure the programme is sustainable within the context of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

12 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 12.1 There is an element of risk inherent in any process that looks into the future to make forecasts, particularly in the current economic climate and other national and international events now or in the future that may impact on the Council either directly or indirectly. The Council has a strong track record in good financial management as recognised in the recent Annual Audit Letter. This risk is further minimised by adopting the following methodology when preparing the estimates:-
 - Service managers and the Accountancy Team working together to define likely service income/expenditure patterns matched with service delivery plans;
 - Maintaining "earmarked" reserves for expenditure that it is known will occur but the exact amount and timing of the expenditure is not known;
 - Maintaining an adequate level of general reserves to meet sudden and or unforeseen expenditure;
 - Adopting clear guidelines and control systems (robust revenue and capital budget management and monitoring procedures, Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules etc.) to alert service managers, and members before variances reach tolerance levels;
 - Using professional and expert advice and economic forecasts where these are available, e.g. treasury management, interest rates;
 - Maintaining a rolling review of forecast estimates beyond the current year.
- 12.2 These assumptions are made with all available information but are necessarily calculated based on broad assumptions. In the current economic climate, some of these assumptions are particularly volatile. The MTFS will be prepared annually on

a rolling basis so that as information becomes more certain the figures will be updated and early consideration can be given to any action or changes in direction that may be required.

13 CORPORATE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER (S151 Officer) STATEMENT

- 13.1 The proposed budget is set against the context of significant economic uncertainty, the current cost of living crisis, together with considerable uncertainty regarding government funding over the MTFS. The Government intends to make fundamental changes to the funding system for Local Government through the introduction of a new needs based fairer funding formula and the introduction of business rates. In addition the New Homes Bonus is being abolished in 2026/27 and there is still uncertainty around the net impact of the introduction of EPR, Food Waste and the Simpler Recycling reforms. The cumulative impact of these changes and lack of visibility on any transition or damping arrangements means that financial planning for 2026/27 and the medium term is very uncertain.
- 13.2 Although there are still many uncertainties around the estimates for 2025/26 and over the medium term to 2029/30 detailed in this report, there are undoubtedly significant challenges facing the Council over the next few years. The report also highlights several major areas of risk which could also adversely affect the estimates over the MTFS. Of particular concern is the additional revenue impact of any new capital schemes which may be included in the final budget in February 2025.
- 13.3 As detailed in the report, Council Tax over each year of the MTFS has been included at its' current level in accordance with the decision by Council at its' meeting on 17 July 2023. At this level, there are currently estimated shortfalls of £2.658m in 2025/26, rising to £4.061m in 2029/30.
- 13.4 These represent a significant challenge for the Council and it is therefore, imperative that a robust savings strategy is in place to meet these challenges. As detailed in the report, significant savings are expected from the Transformation Agenda 2 (TA2) programme and the outcome of the Accommodation Review.
- 13.5 Consequently, the delivery of the planned savings and major business projects **is critical** to the successful delivery of the Council's budget strategy. **Even with these, the scale of the forecast deficits over the MTFS period means that the current Council Tax strategy of keeping the level at the same cash amount as this year (or even a 0% increase per annum), is unsustainable and future increases in Council Tax inevitable to help deliver a balanced budget.** Table 4 in Section 9 of this report exemplifies the impact of increasing Council Tax by up to 3% (the current referendum limit) on the shortfalls over the MTFS detailed in Appendix B.
- 13.6 Given the uncertainties detailed in this report, it is imperative that the Council maintains sufficient resources to cover any in-year unforeseen expenditure. A risk based approach to the consideration of the level of reserves is a component of the Council's overall risk management framework. Operational risks should be managed within Services' bottom line budgets and thus will not normally result in any further call on the Council's General Balances, as detailed in Section 10 above.

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Summary of Revenue Estimates

	Council 26.02.24 Original Estimate 2024/25 £	Cabinet 16.12.24 Projected Outturn 2024/25 £	Cabinet 16.12.24 Draft Estimate 2025/26 £
Service Summary			
Growth & Infrastructure	1,454,340	1,330,666	1,329,910
Communities, Environment, Leisure & Planning	5,402,610	6,315,700	6,905,640
Resources & Customer Services	10,304,470	10,628,973	10,476,764
Vacancy Factor (1.5%)	-230,000	0	-238,000
Transformation Programme - TA2 savings	-225,000	-115,585	-170,000
NET COST OF GENERAL FUND SERVICES	16,706,420	18,159,754	18,304,314
Corporate Items			
Internal Drainage Board Levies	2,098,570	2,251,010	2,363,550
Internal Drainage Board Levies Grant	-177,280	-213,000	-213,000
Contributions to/ (from) Earmarked Reserves	-652,874	-878,913	-805,826
RTB/VAT Sharing Income	-20,000	-110,000	-20,000
Financing Charges - <i>Interest on External Borrowings</i>	906,325	556,325	835,267
Financing Charges - <i>MRP current Capital Programme</i>	587,700	451,166	651,200
Investment Income and Property Funds Income	-795,000	-765,000	-730,000
New Homes Bonus	-442,392	-442,392	-592,628
Services Grant	-25,846	-25,846	0
Core Spending Power Guarantee Grant/ Minimum Funding Guarantee	-788,558	-788,558	-814,404
Corporate Items	690,645	34,792	674,159
Net Expenditure	17,397,065	18,194,546	18,978,473
Contribution to/from(-) Budget Equalisation Reserve	2,515	0	0
NET EXPENDITURE after use of balances	17,399,580	18,194,546	18,978,473
Core Funding			
Revenue Support Grant	-184,901	-184,901	-187,989
Business Rates - Income due in Year			
Business Rates Funding	-11,177,561	-11,177,561	-11,603,273
Tariff Payment to Government	7,554,448	7,554,448	7,680,607
Renewable Energy Rates Retained	-1,476,267	-1,593,684	-1,588,253
Business Rates Pool - FDC Share of Benefit	-300,000	-350,000	-350,000
Business Rates S31 Grants due in year	-3,166,574	-3,066,658	-2,968,071
Business Rates Levy due in year	744,929	553,388	707,386
	-7,821,025	-8,080,067	-8,121,604
Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit(+)/Surplus(-)	-1,291,784	-1,291,784	47,526
Council Tax Collection Fund Deficit(+)/Surplus(-)	-57,899	-57,899	-13,830
Council Tax	-8,043,971	-8,043,971	-8,044,866
Business Rates and Council Tax Funding	-17,399,580	-17,658,622	-16,320,763
Surplus(-)/Shortfall(+)	0	535,924	2,657,710

APPENDIX B

(Council Tax income level constant
2025/26 onwards)

Medium Term Financial Strategy	Projected 2024/25 £000	Estimate 2025/26 £000	Forecast 2026/27 £000	Forecast 2027/28 £000	Forecast 2028/29 £000	Forecast 2029/30 £000
Expenditure						
Service Expenditure/Income						
Gross Service Expenditure	31,161	30,297	30,020	30,514	31,020	31,656
Gross Service Income	-12,885	-11,585	-11,753	-11,924	-12,299	-12,579
Vacancy Factor (1.5%)	0	-238	-244	-250	-256	-262
Transformation Programme - additional savings	-116	-170	-203	-236	-236	-236
Total Net Service Expenditure	18,160	18,304	17,820	18,104	18,229	18,579
Corporate Items						
Corporate Expenditure/Savings						
Internal Drainage Board Levies	2,251	2,364	2,482	2,606	2,736	2,873
Internal Drainage Board Levies Grant	-213	-213	-213	-213	-213	-213
Financing Charges - Interest on External Borrowing	556	835	1,285	1,310	1,360	1,460
Financing Charges - MRP Current Capital Programme	451	651	751	801	851	901
	3,045	3,637	4,305	4,504	4,734	5,021
Corporate Income Items						
Contribution to/(+)/from(-) Earmarked Reserves	-879	-805	-189	-189	-189	-189
RTB/VAT Sharing Income	-110	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20
Investment and Property Fund Income	-765	-730	-1,200	-1,300	-1,100	-1,100
New Homes Bonus	-442	-593	-593	-593	-593	-593
CSP Guarantee Grant	-788	-814	-814	-814	-814	-814
Services Grant	-26	0	0	0	0	0
Contribution to/from(-) Budget Equalisation Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
	-3,010	-2,962	-2,816	-2,916	-2,716	-2,716
Total Corporate Items	35	675	1,489	1,588	2,018	2,305
Gross Service/Corporate Expenditure	34,090	33,526	33,878	34,532	35,262	36,179
Gross Service/Corporate Income	-15,895	-14,547	-14,569	-14,840	-15,015	-15,295
Net Budget Requirement	18,195	18,979	19,309	19,692	20,247	20,884
Funding - RSG, Business Rates & Council Tax						
Revenue Support Grant	-185	-188	-193	-198	-202	-208
Business Rates						
Business Rates Baseline Funding	-11,178	-11,603	-12,111	-12,309	-12,510	-12,715
Tariff Payment to Government	7,554	7,681	7,850	8,007	8,167	8,330
Renewable Energy Rates Retained	-1,594	-1,588	-1,598	-1,606	-1,619	-1,628
Business Rates Pool - FDC Share of Benefit	-350	-350	-350	-350	-350	-350
Business Rates S31 Grants due in year	-3,065	-2,968	-2,673	-2,692	-2,711	-2,730
Business Rates Levy due in year	553	707	639	617	595	573
Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit/Surplus(-)	-1,292	47	0	0	0	0
Total Business Rates Funding	-9,372	-8,074	-8,243	-8,333	-8,428	-8,520
Council Tax						
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus(-)/Deficit	-58	-14	-50	-50	-50	-50
Council Tax (Constant level 2025/26 onwards)	-8,044	-8,045	-8,045	-8,045	-8,045	-8,045
Total Council Tax Funding	-8,102	-8,059	-8,095	-8,095	-8,095	-8,095
Total Funding - RSG/Business Rates/Council Tax	-17,659	-16,321	-16,531	-16,626	-16,725	-16,823
Surplus(-)/Shortfall(+)	+536	+2,658	+2,778	+3,066	+3,522	+4,061

Assumptions built into Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

Within the forecasts are a number of assumptions which are necessary to produce the overall budget strategy. However, there is an element of risk associated with this process although the aim is to mitigate these risks as detailed in section 12 of the main report.

The main assumptions are as follows:

- Council Tax income has been included at its current level over the period of the MTFS (£8.045m in 2025/26 and thereafter). With the estimated increases in the Council Tax base, this equates to a reduction in Band D Council Tax levels of £3.78 or 1.48% for 2025/26 with further similar reductions in the following years. The cumulative reduction in Council Tax by 2029/30 would be around £18.90 or 7.42%. (For comparison, a 0% increase would generate £121k of resources and a 3% increase around £363k of resources in 2025/26).
- 1.52% increase in Council Tax base in 2025/26 (Tax-base 32,050) and thereafter (increase of 500 Band D equivalent properties in 2026/27 rising to 530 in 2029/30).
- Inflation increases in Retained Business Rates income from 2026/27 onwards. Future net benefits or reduced retained income from Business Rates will be dependent upon the impact of the system re-set and other changes from April 2026 onwards.
- Inclusion of this Council's share (£350k) of the potential benefit arising from the continuation of the Cambridgeshire Business Rates Pool in 2025/26 onwards. Although Fenland will not formally be part of the Pool for 2025/26, the Pool members have agreed for Fenland to be no worse off as a result of the new Pool arrangements. Potential benefit from the Pool in future years will be dependent on any changes to the Business Rates Retention System from April 2026.
- Minimum Funding Guarantee Grant included at £814k in 2025/26 (the current total of the Services Grant and the Core Spending Guarantee Grant) and over the medium term. Although the national totals of these grants will remain in the Local Government sector in future years, they may be allocated differently as a result of changes to the Local Government funding system from April 2025, which could negatively affect our funding from this source.
- The New Homes Bonus (£442k allocated in 2024/25) has been included at £593k per annum from 2025/26. NHB will be abolished in 2026/27 and the total amount of funding included within the overall Finance Settlement. An allowance of £593k per annum has been included from 2026/27 onwards but this will be dependent on how the current funding is redistributed and allocated.
- 2% pay award in 2025/26 (£304k cost) and thereafter together with an allowance for pay increments of around 0.5% p.a. (£76k cost).
- Employer's Pension Contributions – following the triennial valuation as at 31.03.2022, the contribution rate for 2023/24 – 2025/26 increased slightly to 17.6% of salary (17.4% in 2022/23) with an additional past deficit lump sum payment of £922k for 2023/24, £884k for 2024/25 and £845k for 2025/26 representing an overall increase of 1% p.a. in total contributions.
- Inclusion of a vacancy factor for 2025/26 onwards, equivalent to a reduction in staff costs of 1.5% (£238k in 2025/26).

- Specific allowance for inflation where required eg: employee costs (as detailed above), business rates, external contracts, energy and water, fuel costs etc. Otherwise, no allowance for inflation has been included.
- Estimated 5% increase in Internal Drainage Board Levies in 2025/26 and thereafter. The actual levies are not set by the Drainage Boards until after we have set our budget and Council Tax levels. To help off-set these increases, the government is once again allocating £3m nationally to the worst affected authorities. In 2024/25 we were allocated £213k of IDB grant and the same amount has been included for 2025/26. Allocations for 2025/26 will be announced in the coming months (and likely after we have set our budget) so the actual amount of grant received may be different to this.
- Investment interest rates are forecast to remain at current levels until Q1, 2025 before subsequently decreasing back to 3% in Q4, 2026 (£300k estimated income from temporary investments in 2025/26).
- Investment income includes the £4m investment in property funds in March 2022 (£130k p.a. income net of costs in 2025/26).
- Forecast income levels from fees and charges in 2025/26 include increases in fees already approved (eg. Garden Waste subscriptions) together with a review of activity levels. Final fee levels will not be set until the Cabinet meeting in January 2025.
- For 2025/26 onwards, provision has been included for a reduction in costs/increase in housing benefit subsidy reclaimed of £600k relating to temporary accommodation. This is a result of various initiatives currently progressing, in conjunction with current providers and from the impact of the additional houses purchased with support from the Local Authority Housing Fund and the current capital programme.
- Recharges to Fenland Future Limited to reflect the use of FDC officer time on the company's behalf has been included (£125k in 2022/23 and future years). This amount could vary depending on the amount of time and types of activities being carried out for the company.
- Potential net benefits from Fenland Future Ltd of loan interest and dividends from future developments have been included. These amounts could vary depending on the timing and profitability of developments being carried out by the company.
- No allowance has been made in the medium term forecasts for the potential impact of the government's waste strategy particularly relating to Food Waste.
- No additional income (or costs) from the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for managing packaging waste (effective from 2025/26) has been included. Although we have been allocated £958k for 2025/26, we will not be in a position to understand the net impact until the outcome of the provisional finance settlement.
- £170k of in-year savings have been included in 2025/26 for potential savings from the Transformation Agenda 2 programme, rising to £236k savings from 2027/28 onwards.
- Estimated financing costs (Interest and MRP) of the current capital programme as detailed in Appendix D(i) are included in the MTFS. No allowance has been made for any additional new capital schemes.

APPENDIX D(i)**CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND FUNDING 2024 - 2028**

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£000	£000	£000	£000
CURRENT FORECAST EXPENDITURE	17,932	8,802	9,314	1,794
FORECAST RESOURCES AVAILABLE				
Capital Grants	8,010	1,516	1,194	1,194
Usable Capital Receipts - In Year	250	250	250	250
Reserves used in year to fund Capital	1,205	200	0	0
Section 106s and Other Contributions	120	0	0	0
Borrowing (Internal and Prudential) - Capital Programme	4,847	1,836	350	350
Borrowing (Prudential) - CIS	3,500	5,000	7,520	0
TOTAL FORECAST RESOURCES	17,932	8,802	9,314	1,794

CAPITAL PROGRAMME SUMMARY 2024/25 - 2027/28					APPENDIX D(i)				
		Revised 2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total Cost £000	FDC Funding £000	External Funding £000	External Funders and FDC Reserves/S106
Leisure Centres									
1	Condition Survey Improvements	1,055	1,055			2,110	2,110	0	
2	Energy Efficiency Works - Solar PV; Manor CHP; Manor Pool AHU	443				443	366	77	£110k CPCA Growing Fenland; £250k Sport England
3	Manor Basketball/Tennis/Netball Improvements including site investment appraisal	60				60	0	60	£55k CPCA Growing Fenland; £25k FCC Communities Grant
4	Leisure Centres - Facility Strategy	89	25			114	114	0	
Regeneration Programmes									
5	Heritage Lottery Fund - Non-FDC Properties	98				98	0	98	HLF Grant.
6	Heritage Lottery Fund - 24 High Street, Wisbech	1,903				1,903	1,665	238	£220k CPCA Grant; £238k HLF
7	11 -12 High Street	20	30			50	50	0	
8	Future High Street Fund, March	5,139				5,139	0	5,139	£2,000k CPCA, £3,139k DLUHC Future High Streets,
9	Nene Waterfront Infrastructure Improvements	273				273	33	240	£181k Brownfield Land Release Fund £59 FFL
10	Whittlesey Market Place Improvements	20				20	0	20	£20k CPCA Growing Fenland Grant
11	Whittlesey Southern Relief Road - SOBC	174				174	0	174	£174k CPCA Growing Fenland Grant
Parks and Open Spaces									
12	Wisbech Park - Play Area Refurbishment	45				45	0	45	£20k DLUHC Levelling Up Parks Fund, £25k S106
13	National Trust Peckover House	40				40	0	40	£40K DLUHC Changing Places Grant
14	The construction of a sports pavilion on open space in Manea	40				40	0	40	S106 Funding
15	Manea PC - Purchase Land	15				15	0	15	S106 Funding
16	West End Park, March	10				10	0	10	S106 Funding
17	Manea PC - Play Park Improvements	10				10	0	10	S106 Funding
Cemeteries									
18	Cemetery Chapels Condition Survey Works	128				128	128	0	
19	Remedial Works in Closed Cemeteries	179	150			329	329	0	
20	Whittlesey St Andrew Church - Wall Maintenance	100				100	100	0	
Highways									
21	Category 2 Street Lights - FDC Lights	41	100			141	141	0	
22	Growing Fenland - Civil Parking Enforcement	0	322			322	0	322	£322k CPCA Grant
						0	0	0	
Environment									
23	Replacement and Additional Litter Bins	27				27	27	0	
Sub Total		9,909	1,682	0	0	11,591	5,063	6,528	

[illegible]

POTENTIAL NEW CAPITAL SCHEMES 2025/26 - 2027/28										APPENDIX D(ii)
		2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total Cost £000	FDC Funding £000	External Funding £000	External Funders and FDC Reserves/S106		
Leisure Centres										
1	Manor Leisure Centre	2,500	0	0	2,500	2,500	0	Pending outcome of Leisure Centre Facility Strategy		
2	Hudson Leisure Centre	700	0	0	700	700	0	Pending outcome of Leisure Centre Facility Strategy		
3	George Campbell Leisure Centre	600	0	0	600	600	0	Pending outcome of Leisure Centre Facility Strategy		
4	Cardio Gym Kit Replacement	100	0	0	100	100	0			
5	Resistance Gym Kit Replacement	0	500	0	500	500	0			
Parks and Open Spaces										
6	North Drive Park Path	12			12	12	0			
7	Park Infrastructure (paths / gates etc)	350	0	0	350	350	0			
8	Play Park Re-furb Programme	405	0	0	405	405	0			
9	Tree Works	100	0	0	100	100	0			
Cemeteries										
10	Remedial Works in Open Cemeteries	240	0	0	240	240	0			
11	Flood Management Programme - Eastwood Cem, March	100	0	0	100	100	0			
Highways										
12	Algores Way, Wisbech - Road Resurfacing Works	300	0	0	300	300	0			
13	Europa Way, Wisbech - Road Resurfacing Works	275	0	0	275	275	0			
14	Brewin Chase, March - Road Resurfacing Works	250	0	0	250	250	0			
Port										
15	Small Twin Screw Tug, Wisbech Port	500	0	0	500	500	0	Pending outcome of Port Operations Review		
16	Suspended Quay Works	1,733	0	1,420	3,153	3,153	0	Pending outcome of Port Operations Review		
Vehicles and Plant										
17	Vehicles (additional to current programme)	639	532	665	1,836	1,836	0			
18	Bring Banks							Budget and Funding to be decided		
Improvement of Assets										
19	West End Park Moorings, March	155	0	0	155	155	0			
20	Boat House, Wisbech							Budget and Funding to be decided		
21	Creek Hostel - Roof							Budget and Funding to be decided		
22	Accomodation Review							Pending outcome of Accommodation Full Business Case		
23	11 -12 High Street, Wisbech	5,220	0	0	5,220	720	4,500	£1m NLF: £2m Towns Fund; CPCA £1.5m		
Car Parks										
24	Chapel Road Car Park, Wisbech	750	0	0	750	750	0			
Total - Potential New Schemes										
		14,929	1,032	2,085	18,046	13,546	4,500			

Reserve Name	Balance 01.04.24 £	Capital Funding £	Revenue Contributions to(+)/from(-) 2024/25 £	Revised Balance 31.03.25 £	Capital Funding £	Revenue Contributions to(+)/from(-) 2025/26 £	Estimated Balance 31.03.26 £
Travellers Sites	479,244		47,260	526,504		46,620	573,124
CCTV - Plant & Equipment	51,128		10,000	61,128		10,000	71,128
Station Road, Whittlesey - Maintenance	13,200		2,800	16,000		2,800	18,800
Management of Change	234,313		-206,690	27,623		-27,623	0
Business Rates Equalisation Reserve	800,516			800,516			800,516
Capital Contribution Reserve	116,117			116,117			116,117
Port - Buoy Maintenance	145,798			145,798			145,798
Repairs and Maintenance	658,706	-5,000		653,706	-200,000		453,706
Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) - Wisbech	49,235			49,235			49,235
Highways Street Lighting	85,140		-2,420	82,720		19,230	101,950
Solid Wall Remediation	100,000			100,000			100,000
Investment Strategy Reserve	1,340,168			1,340,168			1,340,168
Budget Equalisation Reserve	1,654,142			1,654,142			1,654,142
Planning Reserve	335,601		-267,330	68,271		-21,234	47,037
Elections Reserve	111,382		-750	110,632		-4,110	106,522
Port - Pilots Staff Development Training	11,875			11,875			11,875
Cambridgeshire Horizons	2,320,442	-1,200,000	-174,780	945,662		-663,830	281,832
Specific Government Grants (received in previous years)	1,763,481		-287,003	1,476,478		-167,680	1,308,798
TOTAL EARMARKED RESERVES	10,270,485	-1,205,000	-878,913	8,186,571	-200,000	-805,826	7,180,745
General Fund Balance	2,000,000			2,000,000			2,000,000
TOTAL RESERVES	12,270,485	-1,205,000	-878,913	10,186,571	-200,000	-805,826	9,180,745

Comments / Conditions of Use

Can only be used for specific future maintenance liabilities.

Available for future CCTV maintenance & replacement liabilities.

Required for future road maintenance.

Available for the effective management of any organisational changes required to meet the Council's future priorities.

Available to assist the Council in smoothing out volatility in the business rates retention system.

Available to fund specific spending commitments in future years.

Available for future buoy maintenance to service windfarms.

Available to provide funding for one-off schemes, not covered by the normal Repairs and Maintenance revenue budgets.

To manage the Heritage Lottery Funded scheme in Wisbech.

Available to fund future repairs and maintenance relating to street lighting.

Available to fund potential costs linked to solid wall installations in the District.

Established to provide future funding for Commercial and Investment Strategy projects.

Year-end surpluses are transferred to this reserve. If a deficit is forecast this reserve can be used to offset the expected shortfall.

Available to fund additional planning costs not reflected in the annual budget, including the development of the Local Plan.

Available to fund four-yearly District-wide elections. Transfers are made to this reserve each year to fund the cost of the next District-wide election.

Available to fund the training of maritime pilots to fulfill the authority's statutory functions.

Available for the Council's future use in accordance with the conditions attached to the receipt.

Available to fund specific spending commitments in future years.

Unallocated general reserve required for various and unplanned for contingencies, to mitigate risks associated with future financial planning as well as for general day to day cash flow needs.

NB: In accordance with the Council's Financial Rules and Scheme of Financial Delegation (Part 4, Rule 6 of the Constitution), paragraphs B57 - B60 delegates authority to the Chief Finance Officer to approve expenditure from these reserves in accordance with their approved use as detailed above.

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Overview and Scrutiny – Draft Work Programme 2024-2025

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

Meeting Dates

<u>Agenda Despatch Due Date</u>	<u>Informal pre-meeting</u>			<u>Formal Overview & Scrutiny Meeting</u>	
	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting</u>
March 2025	25 February 2025	2.00pm	Via Teams	3 March 2025	10.00am
April 2025	22 April 2025	2.00pm	Via Teams	29 April 2025	10.00am

3 March 2025

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	Arts Council	Communities	
	Public Health & Education	Communities	
	Progress on Corporate Priorities – Communities	Communities	
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2023/24	All	Chairman Amy Brown

29 April 2025 (Boat house)

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	KEEP CLEAR IF POSSIBLE		
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2023/24	All	Chairman Amy Brown