

AGENDA

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2025

10.00 AM

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

Committee Officer: Helen Moore
Tel: 01354 622424
e-mail: memberservices@fenland.gov.uk

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Previous Minutes. (Pages 3 - 18)

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of 3 November 2025
- 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 from Anglian Water

This item will be in the form of a question and answer session with representatives from Anglian water.

- 6 LGO & 3C's update (Pages 19 - 28)

To update Members on the annual statistics in relation to the Local Government and Health and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) and the Council's corporate '3Cs' procedure. This explains how we deal with the comments, compliments, correspondence and complaints we receive

- 7 Progress of Corporate Priority- Communities (Pages 29 - 48)

For performance from February 2025 to October 2025

8 Use of the Waiver Provision (Pages 49 - 52)

To provide notice to members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of decisions taken without the need for notice to be given on the Forward Plan and/or for the call-in procedures to be applied.

9 Update on previous actions. (Pages 53 - 54)

Members to receive an update on the previous meeting's Action Plan.

10 Future Work Programme (Pages 55 - 60)

To consider the Draft Work Programme for Overview & Scrutiny Panel 2025/26.

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

Friday, 21 November 2025

Members: Councillor Mrs M Davis (Chairman), Councillor B Barber, Councillor G Booth, Councillor J Carney, Councillor L Foice-Beard, Councillor A Gowler, Councillor A Hay, Councillor P Hicks, Councillor N Meekins, Councillor D Roy and Councillor A Woollard

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2025 - 2.30 PM



PRESENT: Councillor Mrs M Davis (Chairman), Councillor J Carney, Councillor L Foice-Beard, Councillor A Hay, Councillor P Hicks and Councillor A Woollard

APOLOGIES: Councillor G Booth and Councillor D Roy

Officers in attendance: Helen Moore (Member Services and Governance Officer)

OSC18/23 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 14 July 2025 were confirmed and signed.

OSC19/23 REVIEW OF CLARION

Members received a presentation which gave an overview of Clarion's work and development by representatives of Clarion.

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

- Councillor Hay stated on the presentation it says that there are 52 inactive units and asked, is that meant to be empty homes? Sue Stavers responded that this is the way the system used captures information around the stock conditions, and these are units that have not been uploaded to the system yet. She continued there are to date 30 empty homes in the Fenland area. Councillor Hay asked how long these homes are likely to be empty for as she did notice there are waiting lists for every type of unit. Carl Grimmer emphasised the additional investment that Clarion have put into their empty homes in the Fenland area, he acknowledged that it has been difficult to maintain the number properties that are coming through as a void and to bring them back into a lettable position as quickly as Clarion would like to. He continued this figure has been improved by 60 within the last year but there are still a high number of voids that are coming through, but the return in the Fenland area is 12 a week, which is an improvement on previous figures, which has been achieved by doubling the bespoke work to the void properties and he is expecting the 30 to come down over the coming weeks.
- Councillor Hay asked for the phrase 'Cloned Survey' to be explained in more detail. Carl Grimmer explained that this survey is in relation to stock conditions information from the surveyor, once he has been out and collated all the information relating to a property, if the Surveyor is unable to enter a property and it is similar to one that they have already been into, it will be classed as a clone, for example, if there is a row of houses all of the same build and nine have access and information has been gathered, the tenth one would be classed as a clone.
- Councillor Hay asked where the wellbeing hub is going to be located in Chatteris and what sort of advertising has been done within the community? Maria Walker stated that the Wellbeing Hub is part of a joint application that Clarion Futures carried out with People and Animals to the health bid and they were awarded £38,000. She continued that the advertising is undertaken by the People and Animals, they are working closely with Living Sports and a local charity called Berts and Bees to open the hub. Maria Walker added that the wellbeing hub which is due to be run from the library will not be a one size fits all and

she would like to know what the local community would like to gain from the wellbeing hub being in Chatteris, which is why it has taken a little while to open. Councillor Hay asked why the Town Council has not been approached? Maria Walker stated that she will feed this information back.

- Councillor Hicks asked what Clarion would consider as a good figure for inactive units and are they achieving that? Carl Grimmer responded it depends on the value and cost to bring the properties round to a rentable state again, a rolling number of 20 would be reasonable for the Fenland area and he expects this to happen by the new year, bringing the figure down from 30 which it currently sits at, this is being achieved by doubling the internal workforce with a further 4 recently recruited bringing the workforce total to 15 from 8 working in the Fenland area.
- Councillor Woollard asked if Clarion is satisfied that the cost of air source heat pumps is justified against the saving on fuel and efficiency of the equipment? Andy Curry stated that Clarion are happy with the move away from fossil fuel burning appliances and air source is a good option to use with the addition of cap wall insulation, upgraded lock insulation, plus new doors, windows and external wall insulation if needed, He continued with these extra measures in place this will insure the best out of the heating systems for the customer. Daniel Reed added this is the same with the new builds, the company is ensuring that each property has a EPCB rating which is one of the highest rates that can be achieved on a house. He continued any new residents are educated on how to use the new heat system, so they are getting best value for money.
- Councillor Woollard asked what is the current situation and the real position against the three objectives that have been set out, how are they being met and what is being undertaken to achieve these objectives? Sally Greetham stated over that period show on the presentation, there was a reduction of anti-social behaviour, with the Police reporting an 80% drop in their figures and there was also an increase in customer satisfaction. She continued that Clarion are aware this is an ongoing challenge but there has been significant improvements which has come down to a close working partnership with other agencies, choosing the right tool to deal with the right problem at the right time and raising awareness on how customer tenants report things, plus adding additional features like CCTV and lighting for customer safety. Councillor Woollard asked if this scheme was going to be extended across Fenland? Sally Greetham responded that with the nature of anti-social behaviour, local bespoke solutions need to be considered to the challenges in that particular area, what Wisbech has given the team is a handy set of tool kits which could be shifted depending on what and where the challenges are.
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- Councillor Barber stated that in Newton two Clarion houses are up for sale and asked why they are not being improved for use rather than being put up for sale? Also, when Clarion put properties up for sale is the profit invested back into the new round of properties. Sue Stavers responded that the two properties in Newton were put up for sale because of the cost it would take to bring them up to an acceptable standard for Clarion to re-let out and as a transfer agreement there is a commitment that when Clarion sell its stock the money is reinvested into new builds.
- Councillor Foice-Beard asked if there was a list of the organisations mentioned in the presentation with their projects and locations for public access and do these organisations submit an evaluation piece with an impact report after the work is complete? Maria Walker replied that she has sent an email out to all the organisations asking them for a breakdown of everything that they are delivering that is linked to Clarion funding. She continued all of the organisations that Clarion support all handle their own advertising through social media, as this is a part of Clarion funding that is difficult to pinpoint, they get strategic support from Clarion which then will impact the things that they can deliver. Maria Walker committed to

forwarding an updated list of organisations involved in this project.

- Councillor Foice-Beard asked regarding the Fenland Project Work, how are these plans going and are they on schedule? Adam Curry responded that Clarion employs the service of Equans in the region which are a tier one contractor and the work is on schedule and due to be completed by the end of the financial year.
- Councillor Foice-Beard asked if there was any data on accessibility adaptations and adjustments requested and any data around Clarion's response or their assessment time on works completed? Sus Stavers answered that they did not have any data with them today but there is a special adaptations team who coordinate all the repairs and improvements, some of which are done in house, and some are external via the DFG. She continued there is a current vulnerability and accessibility strategy that accesses needs of the homeowner. Sue Staver committed to sharing some data as an action after the meeting. Councillor Foice-Beard added that there is a high volume of digital exclusion in some local areas, and some local residents do not use the digital world and asked if some of the information could cover this area.
- Councillor Foice-Beard stated as seen on the presentation measuring the success, how does this measure against last years and the year before that? She additionally asked, was this an isolated area of concern in Wisbech, or is this information from the whole of the Fenland area? Sally Greetham confirmed that the biggest area of anti-social behaviour is concentrated in Wisbech and the project that Clarion had was exclusively in Wisbech. She continued to say that across Fenland there has been a higher level of anti-social behaviour, but this has also been evident across the whole of the UK.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked if Awabb's law has gone past the pilot stage? Carl Grimmer stated that Awabbs Law went live this week and that is what Clarion is working on now through training and understanding on what this means for the Clarion organisation and its residents with changes to reporting and a change in the IT system.

Members noted the information provided

OSC20/23 ANNUAL MEETING WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE, INCLUDING LGR

Paul Medd and Council Chris Boden attended the meeting with a presentation having been circulated prior to the meeting.

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

- Councillor Woollard stated that in the report it says that the budget was originally balanced but now it is currently being suggested a possible deficit of £1.4 million if interventions are not met, and also following that projected deficits of £2.2 million for 2026 and rising in subsequent years and he would like some reassurance that Fenland District Council (FDC) are continuing to be a prudent Council and that FDC will expect to be budgeting wherever possible with no losses and no deficits. Councillor Boden responded that steps have been put in place through the Budget Equalisation Reserve which has not needed to be relied on which is testimony to the fact that the Finance Team and officers work really hard to ensure that FDC works as efficiently and effectively as possible when spending public money, however, officers face an unusual situation coming up regarding the budget for 2026/27 where legally FDC do not actually know for sure that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is going ahead, and that means being prudent FDC cannot assume that the Council will cease to exist on 31st March 2028. He continued the Council do believe that is likely to be the case, and believe it is the Governments current intention to carry this out, but it may not happen, and if it does not the Council cannot find itself in a position where it has made financial decisions on the assumption that LGR will take place and then it does not. Councillor Boden added with this in mind the 2026/27 budget will be much more difficult than the 2027/28 budget even though the projected deficit is smaller in 2026/27 because

the Council must not make the assumption that LGR will go ahead and the Council will cease to exist on 31st March 2028. He stated that there have been a good number of meetings to identify opportunities which exist so the Council can ensure that prudence continues to be shown by FDC either until the 31st March 2028 or into the indefinite future depending on what happens with LGR.

- Councillor Woollard stated that March Country Park project mentions that there is confirmation of the land transfer agreement only, what does this mean, is this going ahead and has the land been agreed? Councillor Boden responded that the project was split into two phases because of the potential impact of LGR on phase one and phase two with Phase one identifying land ownership and then agreeing to the terms of the land transfer to FDC, and Phase two will see the detailed design and delivery of the project, He stated that the work has been done by officers and by lead members to confirm ownership and discussions have been undertaken with the owners, but as of yet no agreement has been reached on terms which are acceptable to both parties. Councillor Boden continued that work continues with officers who are currently preparing an update project briefing paper for the lead members which is expected imminently.
- Councillor Barber stated that in regard of the Fenland Inspire Projects and LGR, have any of these projects been started and if not is this because of LGR? Councillor Boden responded that this project was reviewed in June, and eleven projects were separated out which would progress currently with the remaining projects awaiting clarity of the attention of Central Government. He stated that if the Council were to progress all of the projects which are in the very lengthy Fenland inspire list, then the Council would not be being prudent and the eleven chosen are either because they were already underway or because their cost was such that it was definitely able to be achieved regardless of the LGR. Councillor Boden added that there was also the problem of limited officer resource as to why some of the projects could not proceed immediately and the Council needed to prioritise. The good news is that the eleven are continuing to move forward and will not be affected by LGR but having said that FDC does continue to have a fluid and flexible approach when opportunities arise. Councillor Barber suggested that a press release would be a good way of informing the public about some of the projects taking place as she finds she is getting asked all the time Councillor Boden stated that he was reluctant to be over exuberant about what the Council has achieved and is going to be achieving but having said that he did agree with Councillor Barber about giving out a public progress report and a success to date report and will be taking this away from the meeting to discuss with the Chief Executive.
- Councillor Foice-Beard stated that with regard to the Fenland Future Limited projects at Nene Waterfront, Wisbech and the Elms, Chatteris, can further details and dates for delivery be provided? Councillor Boden stated that a separate company has been set up called Fenland Future Ltd (FFL), which is dealing with the development of these two sites, legally that means that a lot of the decisions being made are not being made by FDC, officers or members of the Council, the decisions have to be made by the directors of the company with means that the Council does not direct the directors or FFL to do things, but occasionally conversations and observations do happen, and the FFL have faced challenges along the way but the final decisions are made by the directors. He continued things have slightly changed due to LGR and a business plan needs to be in place and published from FFL by 31st January 2026, between now and then the Council will be giving consideration to the effects of LGR on the two sites involved with FFL and the Council will be looking for recommendations to be made based on the evidence when the Council starts looking at the numbers in conjunction with LGR to work out what is best for FDC and the people of Fenland.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked how realistic are the commercial projections given the national economic uncertainty? Councillor Boden responded that the commercial projections income is holding up very well and at this time there is no need for mitigation to be made and as far as the Council are aware there is not going to be the prospect of any mitigation.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked what is the risk of partial delivery with the Fenland Inspire projects if external funding, such as Football Foundation does not materialise? Councillor

Boden stated that he worked on the assumption when originally putting forward the concept of Fenland Inspire that the Council would not receive any external funding to support projects, so if there were no external funding the proposal would still go ahead, however if there is a chance of external funding this can assist in bringing projects forward in terms of the delivery timetable which works in the Councils favour and allows the Council to be prudent in making decisions and bring the spend forward.

- Councillor Mrs Davis asked beyond financial savings, what evidence shows the transformation programme has improved customer satisfaction and service quality? Councillor Boden stated that the evidence lies within the performance indicators and also with the customer satisfaction levels which are shown and have held well which is credit to the officer service. Paul Medd added that the Council have been bold and ambitious around transformation, and this has clearly under pinned the high level of customer service satisfaction that FDC have managed to retain but the Council has also been pragmatic and sensible in the transformation programme that the Council has sought to pursue.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked are the savings from TA1 and TA2 sustainable or one-off efficiencies that will erode over time? Councillor Boden responded that the transformation agenda is not just about saving money, but largely about greater efficiency and greater cost effectiveness, with some of the changes in TA1 and TA2 being one-off changes and other changes were more fundamental which has reduced the amount of spend the Council had for that particular aspect of the Council's work, which was then fed into the base budgets for future years. He added that those ones that are sustainable, and the one-off ones are by definition a one-off and he was hoping to introduce a TA3 but due to the LGR there will be no long-term saving benefits as the Council will cease to exist from 31st March 2028 which will affect that long term payback period that the Council would have and the residents would benefit from if changes were made. Paul Medd gave the example of the success and savings made by the My Fenland team with the help of the Transformation team.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked on infrastructure projects, how can FDC leverage its consulting role to get tangible community benefits, e.g. jobs, environment, and skills? Councillor Boden stated that it has always been difficult for the Council to use its consulting role to achieve those objectives as there is a limited amount of effect the Council can have when it comes to the private sector investment which takes place within Fenland, however within the consulting role Government money is being channelled via the Combined Authority to the Fenland area and it is there where the consulting role and the interaction from FDC officers and other officers within Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority ensure Fenland gets its fair share of money made available by Central Government for a whole host of different areas. Paul Medd added that a lot of growth is organic and there is room for FDC to enhance that growth and the Council continue to be very active directly in connection with the Combined Authority.
- Councillor Hicks asked if FDC are in a position where staff are leaving because there will be no new jobs in two years' time, and has LGR affected recruitment? Councillor Boden responded this issue was highlighted when the Government made its announcement last December regarding LGR, but he has been pleasantly surprised that there does not seem to be any signs at this time of a leakage of staff as far as Fenland is concerned Paul Medd added this is a real issue and it has been ever since LGR was announced and he is sure it will continue to be a concern until the ongoing uncertainties associated with LGR are finally resolved one way or another. He added that staff are being fully updated on a regular basis to help alleviate stress and worry and in terms of recruitment thankfully there is a stable workforce, and recruitment has not been a big issue, and he feels the reputation FDC holds puts the Council in good stead. Councillor Hicks stated that he can see a situation as the end date becomes closer that there will be hardly any staff left Councillor Boden stated that the Council was not going to be in that position as the functions of Council will still be happening on the 1 April 2028, bins will still need to be emptied and that applies to all other functions across the Council, LGR will inherit different function run by the Council and this will stay in place until the new functions are rolled out which could take a long time. Paul Medd added that there has always been a turnover of staff within the Council but there is no

significant evidence this has anything to do with LGR.

Members noted the Information provided.

OSC21/23 COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT BOARD UPDATE

Members considered an update on the Commercial Investment Strategy and Investment Board from April 2024 to March 2025

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

- Councillor Woollard asked for clarification on the quarter of a million-pound fees for DM and DP attached to the Chatteris project. He continued there are also consultancy fees shown of £191,400 and £117,000 to Instinctively Green plus £41,000 in legal fees which are in his view colossal and are not allocated to the two principal projects, so what are they for, why have these fees been paid and are they justified? Councillor Boden stressed the FDC is not a development company and FFL does not have the expertise that is necessary for a development company, so the Council has to buy that expertise in. He explained that the abbreviation DM is the Development Management (DM) cost, and the DP is the Development Planning (DP) cost both of which are supplied to FDC by Luvals. Councillor Boden continued, as far as the legal costs the company has various things which it has to do like training, land transfers and legal advice for the overall objective to be achieved and there would be significant benefit to FDC in managing to subsidise its revenue account and services given to residents on an annual basis.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked if there are any confirmed timelines for the delivery and completion of the project as they seem to have been rolling on? Councillor Boden stressed that there has been a lot of work happening on the technical side both in terms of what appears on the ground and what has to go in for the planning application and also the way the company is set up and the decisions which have been made. He added that considering the options the Council has now based on LGR that may change what the Council has planned, but as far as the Elms in Chatteris is concerned if the Council was to continue to go ahead as planned the site should be under construction by July 2026 subject to the agreed viability assessments being positive and as far as the Nene Waterfront is concerned in Wisbech there are negotiations happening with an interested party for a significant part of that site and the Council is progressing well with the extra care offer on-site five which is due to go to Planning Committee soon.
- Councillor Mrs Davis stated there are rising loan costs of £147,000 in 2024/25 and asked at which point do projects become financially unviable and the decision taken to step away? Councillor Boden confirmed this figure was projected to increase significantly over the course of the forthcoming years as additional capital is required in order to achieve the objectives of the company. He continued that if the Council did find there was a significant financial lack of viability, then things can be changed and there are mechanisms in place to deal with unexpected financial lack of viability, and this is currently being reviewed under LGR, and he was expecting there to be options for the Council to work with.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked as there has been no formal investment board meetings in 2024/25 how is governance being maintained? Councillor Boden responded that there was very little point in holding Investment Board meetings if decisions were not being made, but every month the Investment Board members received an update on what the situation is, and good governance is exercised.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked what impact will LGR have on FFL assets, governance and accountability? Councillor Boden replied there is an obligation upon FFL to have a business plan published by 31st January 2026 and that is the responsibility of the directors of FFL with the situation being reviewed, and options be investigated.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked if there is an exit strategy for underperforming or stalled

projects? Councillor Boden stated that the basic answer is no, but there is a situation where there is a facility which was made available back in 2021 of £25 million pounds to support the Council's Investment Strategy but to date the Council has only scratched the surface of that £25 million pounds because the Council has been prudent with only one commercial investment which is mentioned in the report.

Members noted the information provided

OSC22/23 USE OF WAIVER PROVISIONS

Councillor Mrs Davis provided details of decisions that she had waived the need for notice to be given on the Forward Plan and call-in procedures.

Councillor Boden stated that it is necessary to exercise this waiver, but it is not desirable unless necessary and is pleased with the balance shown.

Members noted the waivers permitted by the Chairman since the date of the last meeting.

OSC23/23 UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS

Councillor Hay mentioned that some of the reports have been sent incomplete, Member Services agreed to re send the report with the missing information.

OSC24/23 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Mrs Davis stated there was nothing further to report.

4.55 pm

Chairman

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

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APOLOGIES: Councillor G Booth and Councillor D Roy

Officers in attendance: Paul Medd (Chief Executive), Peter Catchpole (Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer), Dan Horn (Assistant Director), Anna Goodall (Assistant Director), Sian Warren (Chief Accountant), Elaine Cooper (Member Services) and Helen Moore (Member Services and Governance Officer)

Also in attendance: Councillors Boden, Christy, Count, Mrs French, Hoy, Imafidon, Seaton, Tierney, and Wallwork.

Guest: Sue Stavers (Regional Director of Housing for the Eastern Region), Sally Greetham (Regional Housing Lead), Carl Grimmer (Regional Repair Lead), Daniel Read (Head of London Partnerships for the North Region at Clarion and Latimer), Adam Curry (Planning Investment Manager for Cambridgeshire), Tracey Thompson (Communities Team for Clarion Futures), and Maria Walker (Clarion Futures Communities Officer for the Fenland Area).

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- Councillor Foice-Beard asked if there was a list of the organisations mentioned in the presentation with their projects and locations for public access and do these organisations submit an evaluation piece with an impact report after the work is complete? Maria Walker replied that she has sent an email out to all the organisations asking them for a breakdown of everything that they are delivering that is linked to Clarion funding. She continued all of the organisations that Clarion support all handle their own advertising through social media, as this is a part of Clarion funding that is difficult to pinpoint, they get strategic support from Clarion which then will impact the things that they can deliver. Maria Walker committed to forwarding an updated list of organisations involved in this project.
- Councillor Foice-Beard asked regarding the Fenland Project Work, how are these plans going and are they on schedule? Adam Curry responded that Clarion employs the service of Equans in the region which are a tier one contractor and the work is on schedule and due to be completed by the end of the financial year.
- Councillor Foice-Beard asked if there was any data on accessibility adaptations and adjustments requested and any data around Clarion's response or their assessment time on works completed? Sus Stavers answered that they did not have any data with them today but there is a special adaptations team who coordinate all the repairs and improvements, some of which are done in house, and some are external via the DFG. She continued there is a current vulnerability and accessibility strategy that accesses needs of the homeowner. Sue Staver committed to sharing some data as an action after the meeting. Councillor Foice-Beard added that there is a high volume of digital exclusion in some local areas, and some local residents do not use the digital world and asked if some of the information could cover this area.
- Councillor Foice-Beard stated as seen on the presentation measuring the success, how does this measure against last years and the year before that? She additionally asked, was this an isolated area of concern in Wisbech, or is this information from the whole of the Fenland area? Sally Greetham confirmed that the biggest area of anti-social behaviour is concentrated in Wisbech and the project that Clarion had was exclusively in Wisbech. She continued to say that across Fenland there has been a higher level of anti-social behaviour, but this has also been evident across the whole of the UK.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked if Awabb's law has gone past the pilot stage? Carl Grimmer stated that Awabbs Law went live this week and that is what Clarion is working on now through training and understanding on what this means for the Clarion organisation and its residents with changes to reporting and a change in the IT system.

Members noted the information provided

OSC20/23 ANNUAL MEETING WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE, INCLUDING LGR

Paul Medd and Council Chris Boden attended the meeting with a presentation having been circulated prior to the meeting.

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

- Councillor Woollard stated that in the report it says that the budget was originally balanced but now it is currently being suggested a possible deficit of £1.4 million if interventions are not met, and also following that projected deficits of £2.2 million for 2026 and rising in subsequent years and he would like some reassurance that Fenland District Council (FDC) are continuing to be a prudent Council and that FDC will expect to be budgeting wherever possible with no losses and no deficits. Councillor Boden responded that steps have been

put in place through the Budget Equalisation Reserve which has not needed to be relied on which is testimony to the fact that the Finance Team and officers work really hard to ensure that FDC works as efficiently and effectively as possible when spending public money, however, officers face an unusual situation coming up regarding the budget for 2026/27 where legally FDC do not actually know for sure that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is going ahead, and that means being prudent FDC cannot assume that the Council will cease to exist on 31st March 2028. He continued the Council do believe that is likely to be the case, and believe it is the Governments current intention to carry this out, but it may not happen, and if it does not the Council cannot find itself in a position where it has made financial decisions on the assumption that LGR will take place and then it does not. Councillor Boden added with this in mind the 2026/27 budget will be much more difficult than the 2027/28 budget even though the projected deficit is smaller in 2026/27 because the Council must not make the assumption that LGR will go ahead and the Council will cease to exist on 31st March 2028. He stated that there have been a good number of meetings to identify opportunities which exist so the Council can ensure that prudence continues to be shown by FDC either until the 31 March 2028 or into the indefinite future depending on what happens with LGR.

- Councillor Woollard stated that March Country Park project mentions that there is confirmation of the land transfer agreement only, what does this mean, is this going ahead and has the land been agreed? Councillor Boden responded that the project was split into two phases because of the potential impact of LGR on phase one and phase two with Phase one identifying land ownership and then agreeing to the terms of the land transfer to FDC, and Phase two will see the detailed design and delivery of the project, He stated that the work has been done by officers and by lead members to confirm ownership and discussions have been undertaken with the owners, but as of yet no agreement has been reached on terms which are acceptable to both parties. Councillor Boden continued that work continues with officers who are currently preparing an update project briefing paper for the lead members which is expected imminently.
- Councillor Barber stated that in regard of the Fenland Inspire Projects and LGR, have any of these projects been started and if not is this because of LGR? Councillor Boden responded that this project was reviewed in June, and eleven projects were separated out which would progress currently with the remaining projects awaiting clarity of the attention of Central Government. He stated that if the Council were to progress all of the projects which are in the very lengthy Fenland inspire list, then the Council would not be being prudent and the eleven chosen are either because they were already underway or because their cost was such that it was definitely able to be achieved regardless of the LGR. Councillor Boden added that there was also the problem of limited officer resource as to why some of the projects could not proceed immediately and the Council needed to prioritise. The good news is that the eleven are continuing to move forward and will not be affected by LGR but having said that FDC does continue to have a fluid and flexible approach when opportunities arise. Councillor Barber suggested that a press release would be a good way of informing the public about some of the projects taking place as she finds she is getting asked all the time Councillor Boden stated that he was reluctant to be over exuberant about what the Council has achieved and is going to be achieving but having said that he did agree with Councillor Barber about giving out a public progress report and a success to date report and will be taking this away from the meeting to discuss with the Chief Executive.
- Councillor Foice-Beard stated that with regard to the Fenland Future Limited projects at Nene Waterfront, Wisbech and the Elms, Chatteris, can further details and dates for delivery be provided? Councillor Boden stated that a separate company has been set up called Fenland Future Ltd (FFL), which is dealing with the development of these two sites, legally that means that a lot of the decisions being made are not being made by FDC, officers or members of the Council, the decisions have to be made by the directors of the company with means that the Council does not direct the directors or FFL to do things, but occasionally conversations and observations do happen, and the FFL have faced challenges along the way but the final decisions are made by the directors. He continued

things have slightly changed due to LGR and a business plan needs to be in place and published from FFL by 31 January 2026, between now and then the Council will be giving consideration to the effects of LGR on the two sites involved with FFL and the Council will be looking for recommendations to be made based on the evidence when the Council starts looking at the numbers in conjunction with LGR to work out what is best for FDC and the people of Fenland.

- Councillor Mrs Davis asked how realistic are the commercial projections given the national economic uncertainty? Councillor Boden responded that the commercial projections income is holding up very well and at this time there is no need for mitigation to be made and as far as the Council are aware there is not going to be the prospect of any mitigation.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked what is the risk of partial delivery with the Fenland Inspire projects if external funding, such as Football Foundation does not materialise? Councillor Boden stated that he worked on the assumption when originally putting forward the concept of Fenland Inspire that the Council would not receive any external funding to support projects, so if there were no external funding the proposal would still go ahead, however if there is a chance of external funding this can assist in bringing projects forward in terms of the delivery timetable which works in the Councils favour and allows the Council to be prudent in making decisions and bring the spend forward.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked beyond financial savings, what evidence shows the transformation programme has improved customer satisfaction and service quality? Councillor Boden stated that the evidence lies within the performance indicators and also with the customer satisfaction levels which are shown and have held well which is credit to the officer service. Paul Medd added that the Council have been bold and ambitious around transformation, and this has clearly under pinned the high level of customer service satisfaction that FDC have managed to retain but the Council has also been pragmatic and sensible in the transformation programme that the Council has sought to pursue.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked are the savings from TA1 and TA2 sustainable or one-off efficiencies that will erode over time? Councillor Boden responded that the transformation agenda is not just about saving money, but largely about greater efficiency and greater cost effectiveness, with some of the changes in TA1 and TA2 being one-off changes and other changes were more fundamental which has reduced the amount of spend the Council had for that particular aspect of the Council's work, which was then fed into the base budgets for future years. He added that those ones that are sustainable, and the one-off ones are by definition a one-off and he was hoping to introduce a TA3 but due to the LGR there will be no long-term saving benefits as the Council will cease to exist from 31 March 2028 which will affect that long term payback period that the Council would have and the residents would benefit from if changes were made. Paul Medd gave the example of the success and savings made by the My Fenland team with the help of the Transformation team.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked on infrastructure projects, how can FDC leverage its consulting role to get tangible community benefits, e.g. jobs, environment, and skills? Councillor Boden stated that it has always been difficult for the Council to use its consulting role to achieve those objectives as there is a limited amount of effect the Council can have when it comes to the private sector investment which takes place within Fenland, however within the consulting role Government money is being channelled via the Combined Authority to the Fenland area and it is there where the consulting role and the interaction from FDC officers and other officers within Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority ensure Fenland gets its fair share of money made available by Central Government for a whole host of different areas. Paul Medd added that a lot of growth is organic and there is room for FDC to enhance that growth and the Council continue to be very active directly in connection with the Combined Authority.
- Councillor Hicks asked if FDC are in a position where staff are leaving because there will be no new jobs in two years' time, and has LGR affected recruitment? Councillor Boden responded this issue was highlighted when the Government made its announcement last December regarding LGR, but he has been pleasantly surprised that there does not seem to be any signs at this time of a leakage of staff as far as Fenland is concerned Paul Medd

added this is a real issue and it has been ever since LGR was announced and he is sure it will continue to be a concern until the ongoing uncertainties associated with LGR are finally resolved one way or another. He added that staff are being fully updated on a regular basis to help alleviate stress and worry and in terms of recruitment thankfully there is a stable workforce, and recruitment has not been a big issue, and he feels the reputation FDC holds puts the Council in good stead. Councillor Hicks stated that he can see a situation as the end date becomes closer that there will be hardly any staff left Councillor Boden stated that the Council was not going to be in that position as the functions of Council will still be happening on the 1 April 2028, bins will still need to be emptied and that applies to all other functions across the Council, LGR will inherit different function run by the Council and this will stay in place until the new functions are rolled out which could take a long time. Paul Medd added that there has always been a turnover of staff within the Council but there is no significant evidence this has anything to do with LGR.

Members noted the Information provided.

OSC21/23 COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND INVESTMENT BOARD UPDATE

Members considered an update on the Commercial Investment Strategy and Investment Board from April 2024 to March 2025

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

- Councillor Woollard asked for clarification on the quarter of a million-pound fees for DM and DP attached to the Chatteris project. He continued there are also consultancy fees shown of £191,400 and £117,000 to Instinctively Green plus £41,000 in legal fees which are in his view colossal and are not allocated to the two principal projects, so what are they for, why have these fees been paid and are they justified? Councillor Boden stressed the FDC is not a development company and FFL does not have the expertise that is necessary for a development company, so the Council has to buy that expertise in. He explained that the abbreviation DM is the Development Management (DM) cost, and the DP is the Development Planning (DP) cost both of which are supplied to FDC by Luvals. Councillor Boden continued, as far as the legal costs the company has various things which it has to do like training, land transfers and legal advice for the overall objective to be achieved and there would be significant benefit to FDC in managing to subsidise its revenue account and services given to residents on an annual basis.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked if there are any confirmed timelines for the delivery and completion of the project as they seem to have been rolling on? Councillor Boden stressed that there has been a lot of work happening on the technical side both in terms of what appears on the ground and what has to go in for the planning application and also the way the company is set up and the decisions which have been made. He added that considering the options the Council has now based on LGR that may change what the Council has planned, but as far as the Elms in Chatteris is concerned if the Council was to continue to go ahead as planned the site should be under construction by July 2026 subject to the agreed viability assessments being positive and as far as the Nene Waterfront is concerned in Wisbech there are negotiations happening with an interested party for a significant part of that site and the Council is progressing well with the extra care offer on-site five which is due to go to Planning Committee soon.
- Councillor Mrs Davis stated there are rising loan costs of £147,000 in 2024/25 and asked at which point do projects become financially unviable and the decision taken to step away? Councillor Boden confirmed this figure was projected to increase significantly over the course of the forthcoming years as additional capital is required in order to achieve the objectives of the company. He continued that if the Council did find there was a significant financial lack of viability, then things can be changed and there are mechanisms in place to

deal with unexpected financial lack of viability, and this is currently being reviewed under LGR, and he was expecting there to be options for the Council to work with.

- Councillor Mrs Davis asked as there has been no formal investment board meetings in 2024/25 how is governance being maintained? Councillor Boden responded that there was very little point in holding Investment Board meetings if decisions were not being made, but every month the Investment Board members received an update on what the situation is, and good governance is exercised.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked what impact will LGR have on FFL assets, governance and accountability? Councillor Boden replied there is an obligation upon FFL to have a business plan published by 31st January 2026 and that is the responsibility of the directors of FFL with the situation being reviewed, and options be investigated.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked if there is an exit strategy for underperforming or stalled projects? Councillor Boden stated that the basic answer is no, but there is a situation where there is a facility which was made available back in 2021 of £25 million pounds to support the Council's Investment Strategy but to date the Council has only scratched the surface of that £25 million pounds because the Council has been prudent with only one commercial investment which is mentioned in the report.

Members noted the information provided

OSC22/23 USE OF WAIVER PROVISIONS

Councillor Mrs Davis provided details of decisions that she had waived the need for notice to be given on the Forward Plan and call-in procedures.

Councillor Boden stated that it is necessary to exercise this waiver, but it is not desirable unless necessary and is pleased with the balance shown.

Members noted the waivers permitted by the Chairman since the date of the last meeting.

OSC23/23 UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS

Councillor Hay mentioned that some of the reports have been sent incomplete, Member Services agreed to re send the report with the missing information.


OSC24/23 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Mrs Davis stated there was nothing further to report.

4.55 pm

Chairman

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Agenda Item No:	6	
Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny	
Date:	1 December 2025	
Report Title:	Annual Ombudsman Letter and 3Cs process	

1 Purpose / Summary

To update Members on the annual statistics in relation to the Local Government and Health and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) and the Council's corporate '3Cs' procedure. This explains how we deal with the comments, compliments, correspondence and complaints we receive.

2 Key issues:

- On an annual basis the Ombudsman forwards to the Council a summary of complaints received from members of the public. This is also copied to the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny.
- During 2024/25 the LGO dealt with 11 complaints relating to Fenland District Council. Two were not for the LGO or not ready for them to investigate. Two were investigated and seven were assessed and closed.
- The LGO made 9 decisions relating to services provided by Fenland District Council during 2024/25. Anyone can refer a complaint to the LGO if they have been through the Council's 3C's process. In 2024/25 we had 0 upheld decisions.
- In 2024/25, 3Cs received 540 pieces of contact. 199 were complaints (a 3.11% increase from 2023/24), 122 pieces of correspondence (17.3% more than in 2023/24) and 219 compliments (1.79% less than in 2023/24) were received. Overall, contact through 3Cs was up by 3.84% compared to the previous year.

3 Recommendations

- It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel consider and note the statistics in relation to the Ombudsman and 3Cs process.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/a
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Steve Tierney, Portfolio Holder for Transformation & Communications

Report Originator(s)	Sam King - Head of HR and OD sking@fenland.gov.uk Claire Wright – Customer Engagement and My Fenland Manager cwright@fenland.gov.uk
Contact Officer(s)	Peter Catchpole - Corporate Director petercatchpole@fenland.gov.uk Sam King - Head of HR and OD sking@fenland.gov.uk Claire Wright – Customer Engagement and My Fenland Manager cwright@fenland.gov.uk
Background Paper(s)	LGO Annual Report 2024/2025 https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/reports/annual-review-reports/local-government-complaint-reviews

An overview of the Council's 3Cs process

1. Our 3Cs process

1.1 Our corporate 3Cs procedure is the framework used for managing comments, compliments, correspondence and complaints across the Council. We aim to provide a fair, consistent and structured process to enable customers to give their views and receive an accurate response. The feedback we receive is used to monitor performance and improve our services.

1.2 Customers can contact the 3Cs team by:

- Completing an online or paper 3Cs form
- Emailing 3cs@fenland.gov.uk
- Phoning our contact centre
- Through their local councillor

1.3 The process for managing each type of contact for 2024/2025 is summarised in the table below:

Type of contact	Procedure
Comment	A comment is a brief statement of fact or a suggestion received by a customer. It is recorded under the 3Cs process and then passed to the relevant service area for consideration. If appropriate, the service area will contact the customer directly to discuss their comment further.
Compliment	A compliment is a positive comment about the service received. It may refer to an individual or a wider team. A compliment is recorded under the 3Cs process and is then passed to the relevant officer or team. We can use compliments from customers to improve what we do.
Correspondence	<p>Correspondence is two-way communication between a customer and the council. If its content forms a service request, it is referred directly to the appropriate service area for resolution outside of the 3Cs process.</p> <p>The majority of correspondence managed under the 3Cs system is from the MP's office and local councillors. Correspondence is acknowledged within five working days of receipt. It is passed to an appropriate officer who will respond within ten working days.</p>
Complaint	<p>A complaint is dissatisfaction with the service received from an individual, team or from the council as a whole. The complaints process can be up to three stages long.</p> <p>Stage 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer contacts 3Cs• 3Cs sends an acknowledgement to the customer within 5 working days. This contains the name of the officer responding to their complaint and the deadline for response (10 working days from acknowledgement)• Officer responds directly to customer. This is stored in the 3Cs system as a Stage 1 response

Type of contact	Procedure
	<p>If the customer is dissatisfied with the response, their complaint is escalated to Stage 2.</p> <p>Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer receives acknowledgement within 5 working days • Complaint passed to manager of the officer who provided a Stage 1 response. The deadline for response is 10 working days from acknowledgement • Officer responds directly to customer. This is stored in the 3Cs system as a Stage 2 response <p>If the customer is dissatisfied with the response, their complaint is escalated to Stage 3. This is the final stage in the complaints process.</p> <p>Stage 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer receives acknowledgment within 5 working days • Complaint passed to CMT lead for response. The deadline for response is 15 working days from acknowledgement • CMT lead responds directly to customer. They state that this is final response within our 3Cs process and give contact details for the LGO as a final course of redress. Their response is stored in the 3Cs system as a Stage 3 response. <p>Section 2 explains the LGO process.</p>
N. B	The Council implemented the new two stage 3Cs policy in April 2025.

- 1.4 Contact was split into three high level service areas:
- Communities, Environment, Leisure and Planning (CELP)
 - Growth and Infrastructure (GI)
 - Policy, Resources and Customer Services (PRCS)

Due to incorporating many frontline services, CELP has the largest volume of correspondence and complaints.

- 1.5 The table below provides a comparison of contact between 2024/25 and 2023/24:

3C's type	2023/24	2024/25	Variance
Compliments	223	219	-1.79%
Correspondence	104	122	+17.3%
Complaints	193	199	+3.11%
TOTAL	520	540	+3.84%

*We are reporting a 3.11% increase in the number of complaints received this year this equates to 6 for the year, across all council services.

An analysis has been undertaken and there is no obvious trend or theme associated with this increase.

- 1.6 The table below shows a summary of which service areas received complaints and how many complaints they received during 2024/25.

Summary of Service Area Complaints

CELP (Communities, Environment, Leisure, and Planning)	Complaints 2023/2024	Complaints 2024/25
Cemeteries	3	9
Community Support	1	0
Environmental Health	10	4
Housing	19	13
Leisure	2	4
Licensing	2	2
Markets & Events	0	2
Open Spaces	12	11
Planning Compliance	8	11
Planning Development	31	27
Port & Marine	0	1
Private Sector Housing	0	5
Refuse & Recycling	41	50
Street Cleansing	0	2
Street Scene	1	7
Trade Waste	2	0
	132	148
GI (Growth and Infrastructure)	Complaints 2023/2024	Complaints 2024/25
Growth and Infrastructure	3	1
	3	1
PRCS (Policy, Revenues and Customer Services)	Complaints 2023/2024	Complaints 2024/2025
Back Office	1	4
Benefits	11	5
Customer Services	8	2
Elections	3	1
Revenues	35	38
	58	50
	193	Total 199

- 1.7 We have analysed all the complaints across service areas for patterns or trends throughout the year. For example, more than one complaint relating to a specific location or topic.
- 1.8 The table below shows greater detail for all service areas receiving more than 12 complaints, i.e. averaging one or more a month over the last year.

CELP (Communities, Environment, Leisure and Planning)	Complaints 2024/25
Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness • Other <p>No common patterns with complaint topics, locations, or time of year. All 13 complaints were different and largely dependent on the individual circumstances involved.</p>	13 9 4
Planning Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications • Conservation • Decisions • Other <p>Five complaints relating to decisions relate to one application. Three complaints relating to Planning Committee. Two complaints predominantly about a decision, which reference Planning Committee, for two different applications.</p> <p>No common patterns with complaint topics, locations, or time of year were identified for the other 17 complaints.</p>	27 5 1 17 4
Refuse & Recycling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted collections • Bin delivery • Bin not returned • Bulky Waste • Contamination • Garden Waste • Missed bins • Other • Vehicles 	50 3 1 7 1 1 4 20 12 1

CELP (Communities, Environment, Leisure and Planning)	Complaints 2024/25
None of the above 50 complaints were linked and there were no common patterns with complaint topics, locations, or time of year.	
PRCS (Policy, Revenues and Customer Services)	Complaints 2024/25
Revenues	38
• Bailiff	3
• Bill query	19
• Discount / Exemptions	5
• Other	8
• Payments	3
None of the above 38 complaints were linked and there were no common patterns with complaint topics, locations, or time of year.	

- 1.9 The table below shows greater detail about staff complaints made during 2024/2025. They have been categorised as follows:

Performance – Opportunities for further / refresher training identified to improve service delivery and / or meet the Council's Core Competencies to perform role.

Decision – Relates to an outcome of an application, process or service request where the customer is dissatisfied with the specific outcome rather than the individual. For example, a complaint about the issuer of a decision about the award of Council Tax Reduction

Service / Process – Relates to a team rather than an individual. For example, the time taken to action a request such as a Planning Application or Council Tax Change of Circumstances.

Service Area	Performance	Decision	Service / Process	Total
PRCS	1	0	4	5
G&I	0	0	0	0
CELP	10	0	2	12

- 1.10 Members receive a quarterly performance report within the Joint Portfolio Holder Briefing document tabled at Council meetings. This provides a quarterly cumulative comparison of contact between the current and previous financial year.

- 1.11 A monthly report is produced to measure response times for correspondence and complaints. It also measures how many complaints are progressed beyond Stage 1.
- 1.12 The Council produces an Annual Report after full complaints data is available for the previous financial year. This is available for the public to view on our website.

2. The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

- 2.1 Customers can contact the LGO if they have made a complaint and are dissatisfied with our response(s). The LGO will only investigate complaints that have fully completed our 3Cs procedure and relate to our services. They will *not* investigate if:
- The complainant has known about the issue for over 12 months but hasn't complained
 - The matter has not affected the complainant personally or caused them an injustice
 - The issue affects most people in the Fenland area
 - The complainant should have appealed or taken legal action (e.g. a tribunal, appeal to the Planning Inspectorate)
 - The complaint is about personnel matters (e.g. employment issues)
- 2.2 If a customer makes contact, the LGO Assessment team will then ask us to check if the customer has completed our 3Cs process. They will ask for copies of customer contact and our responses.
- 2.3 If the Assessment team decides further investigation is needed, the complaint information will be passed to a LGO investigator. They will ask further questions and may request further information.
- 2.4 Once the investigator thinks they have got enough information to make a fair decision, they will share a draft with the Council and the complainant. Both parties then have the opportunity to comment on this decision and share further relevant information.
- 2.5 Following this, a final decision will be made. Depending on complexity, this process usually takes about 26 weeks. There are 6 possible decision types:
- Uphold the complaint and give recommendation(s) about how the organisation should put it right
 - Uphold part of the complaint
 - Uphold the complaint but not make any recommendations as the organisation has already put things right
 - Uphold the complaint but not make any recommendations because the fault has not had a significant effect on the complainant
 - Not to uphold the complaint
 - The complaint cannot or will not be investigated
- 2.6 The LGO will write to the Council and customer to explain their decisions. If the Council is at fault, they may ask us to put things right (if we haven't already). This may involve:
- Apologising to the complainant

- Providing a service to the complainant that they should have had
- Making a different decision (that it should have made before)
- Reconsidering a decision that wasn't made properly
- Improving our procedures so similar issues don't happen again
- Making a payment

2.7 The LGO does not have legal powers to force organisations to comply with their recommendations – however, most Council's do. Their decisions are available to view on their website. They release an Annual Report for each authority every year.

2.8 The LGO states that complaint volume figures should not be used in isolation to evaluate corporate health. High volumes of complaints can show that an organisation is open to learning. In contrast, low complaint volumes can show that an organisation is not receptive to user feedback. By monitoring trends and customer feedback, we are able to quickly change processes if they are not working as well as they should.

2.9 Between April 2024 and March 2025, the LGO made decisions relating to services provided by Fenland District Council. The table below shows the complaints that the LGO made a decision on in 2024/25:

	Service	Subcategory	Date Decision Made	Decision
1	Corporate & Other services	Other	May 2024	Closed after initial enquiries
2	Corporate & Other services	Standards Committee	June 2024	Closed after initial enquiries
3	Benefits & Tax	Council tax	July 2024	Closed after initial enquiries
4	Benefits & Tax	Housing Benefit	July 2024	Closed after initial enquiries
5	Corporate & Other services	Standards Committee	August 2024	Closed after initial enquiries
6	Planning & Development	Householder Planning Application	August 2024	Not Upheld
7	Corporate & Other services	Standards Committee	September 2024	Closed after initial enquiries
8	Benefits & Tax	Council tax	October 2024	Closed after initial enquiries
9	Planning & Development	Other Planning Application	October 2024	Not Upheld

2.10 Between April 2024 and March 2025 no LGO complaints were upheld or partially upheld.

Please note that this report will be presented in a different format next year as the Council implemented the new two stage 3Cs policy in April 2025.

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Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Progress Against the Communities Priorities

**For performance from
February 2025 to October 2025**

Cabinet Members



Cllr Chris Boden
Leader of the Council
& Portfolio Holder for
Finance, Governance &
Business Rates



Cllr Jan French
Deputy Leader of the
Council, Portfolio Holder for
ARP, Car Parks, Parking
Decriminalisation and Parks
& Open Spaces



Cllr Gary Christy
Portfolio Holder for Housing,
Licensing & Environmental
Health Enforcement, Port,
SHA, Transport and Yacht
Harbour



Cllr Sam Hoy
Portfolio Holder for
Culture, Housing,
Licensing and Wisbech
Town Board



Cllr Chris Seaton
Portfolio Holder for Funfairs,
Fenland Inspire! Projects,
Markets and Wisbech High
Street Projects



Cllr Steve Tierney
Portfolio Holder for
Communications,
Decarbonisation, ICT,
Streetsweeping, Street Bins
& Dog Bins and Recycling &
Refuse Collection



Cllr Susan Wallwork
Portfolio Holder for
Cemeteries, Community,
Safety, Emergency
Planning, Freedom
Leisure, Military Covenant,
Policing, Street Pride,
Street Naming &
Numbering and Travellers
Sites

Support Vulnerable Members of Our Community

Enable residents to claim the Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit they are entitled to (Cllr French)

Welfare Reform was introduced by Government in 2012 as part of wider fiscal measures to reduce deficits, with the intention to encourage work whilst reducing welfare expenditure. As the migration of claimants from legacy benefits to Universal Credit nears completion, the DWP issued all Migration Notices by the end of September. 95% of total claimants have so far claimed Universal Credit.

The DWP has invested up to £15 million nationally in Help to Claim to support the most vulnerable customers move to UC. This enhanced support journey includes outbound calls, visits, and the new complex case coach role.

The spending review announced that £842 million has been made available for a Crisis Resilience Fund (CRF). This is a multi-year settlement and replaces the current Household Support Fund (HSF) and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs). The aim is to provide longer-term funding which will enable LAs to take a more preventative approach and plan more effectively to support communities.

The DWP is committed to working in partnership with Local Authorities to co-design the Crisis Resilience Fund, and Anglia Revenues Partnership was represented on the working group which is helping to shape the scheme and feed into how the fund will be implemented.

Taking the feedback from the working group into account, the DWP has now confirmed that they intend to take a phased approach to integrating Discretionary Housing Payments within the Crisis Resilience Fund. This means that funding allocations for housing support will be maintained and provided to the current Local Authority recipient until March 2028.

The year-to-date figures for the number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims and change of circumstances were over the target at the end of Quarter 2. ARP are currently working at 10.23 days to process Housing Benefit claims against a target of 8 days. As we move through Quarter 3, we expect to see an improvement in this performance due to a focus on new claims.

The year-to-date figures for processing Local Council Tax Reduction New Claims and change of circumstances were on target at the end of quarter 2 (9 days).

We continue to provide support for our residents via our My Fenland team to quickly signpost them to the support they need from partner organisations. We are currently working with public health partners to deliver the Help Hub based at Fenland to provide tailored support to individuals with employability concerns or who have experienced health issues impacting their ability to continue or access paid employment and are keen to get back into the workplace.

Use our housing powers to improve the condition of private rented homes (Cllr Christy) -

Town	HMOs investigated	Other Homes investigated
Wisbech	16	48
March	0	18
Chatteris	4	3
Whittlesey	1	6
Villages	0	8

Total homes investigated is 104 - This is in line with the profile of interventions that are undertaken each year to the target of 250.

VILLAGE BREAKDOWN

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

No.s of Notices Served 01/04/25- 31/10/25	S.11 Improvement Notice *	S.12 Improvement Notice **	Notice of Intent ***	Final Civil Penalty Notice ****	EICR *****	MEES *****	EPC *****	Prohibition Orders
April	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
May	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
June	0	0	1	0	1	4	0	0
July	2	2	2	0	2	1	0	0
Aug	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Sept	5	2	0	5	1	0	0	0
Oct	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0
Total	10	8	6	5	6	7	0	0

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In summary, since the new approach to enforcement was implemented in September 2019, out of the 180 Enforcement Notices served, with £44,620 levied and £34,055 having been paid.

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

Of the 76 Final Civil Penalty Notices served (total levied £522,819)

- 43 have been paid in full,
- 13 are subject to payment arrangements,
Total collected £152,696
- 1 are subject to formal court action,
- 0 are with the High Court Bailiff,
- 7 are proposed to be written off as not recoverable
- 7 are subject to an ongoing appeal.
- 5 subject to early enforcement
- Of the 18 fines issued due to EPC breaches, 18 have been paid. (total £3,600)
- Of the 43 Final CPN's served for breaches of Electrical Safety Regulations (totalling £184,033) 22 have been paid in full. Other debtors are paying by arrangement, with those

who are not being subject to appeals or formal enforcement action. (total paid £60,251)

- Of the 28 Penalty Notices served for breaches of Minimum Energy Efficiency Regulations, totalling £60,500, £35,212 has been paid with the remaining debts either subject to appeals or formal enforcement action

Use our housing powers to prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping (Cllr Hoy)

From the start of this financial year to end of October 2025, the Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSPARG), has supported a total of 64 rough sleepers. As at the end of October, 15 clients were rough sleeping. 20 had successfully moved on, 3 were between rough sleeping and sofa surfing, 2 had an alternative outcome and 4 were placed in off the street accommodation awaiting move on. Although 20 had lost contact with Outreach services, we know from intelligence gathering with local partners that they are no longer rough sleeping and found alternative accommodation. We will continue to link in with both our internal and external colleagues to discuss those who have lost contact with services, but likely from intel, remain at risk of rough sleeping i.e being in unstable accommodation. We will continue to work in our multi-agency approach to monitor these individuals and continue to offer support when appropriate and will work to prevent a return to the street where possible.

For those rough sleepers who are facing multiple-disadvantage, we continue to work collaboratively with Changing Futures, Housing First, MHCLG and closely with services such as mental health teams, the police, CGL and the Ferry Project to be creative in our approach to engage with these individuals and ensure the correct and most appropriate support is offered. This cohort are identified as our Target Priority Group (TPG) by MHCLG. Our current TPG figure is 7, of which 6 are rough sleeping and one successfully moved on. Plans are in place to work with our partners to reduce this figure.

We continue to utilise Prevention & Move On funding, with 15 interventions used to support rough sleepers with matter such as; mobile phones, deposits to access Private Rented sector, and to clear arrears to allow move on. This fund continues to break down specific barriers that individuals face from getting support and into accommodation.

FDC have also created a leaflet which will be given to charity providers such as Salvation Army and Feed Fenland to outline the services open to those who are experiencing rough sleeping and homelessness in Fenland. It is our aim that this leaflet will reach those individuals who may require support with their housing but may not yet known to support services.

Reduce emergency accommodation use to provide better quality and more cost-effective short-term accommodation and supported homes for homeless clients (Cllr Hoy)

Currently there are 186 active homeless cases. Caseloads are currently circa 30 per housing officer. This is enabling us to be pro-active in our preventative work along with our partnership working, which plays an important part of tenancy sustainment in the long term.

The Renters Reform Act has now achieved Royal Ascent, and we anticipate that the abolition of S21 notices will come into law by Spring 2026. This may have a significant impact on reducing homelessness and therefore the demand for emergency accommodation.

On 31/10/25 we had 26 households in B&B (2 families) with 64 in temporary accommodation in

total.

On the same day last year, we had 53 households in B&B (5 families) with 88 in temporary accommodation in total.

Families on average are spending 14 days less in B&B accommodation.

We now have 61 units of temporary accommodation available to us. 33 of these are owned by FDC with a 7-unit hostel. We lease 16 units from Clarion and 5 at Hope House via Ferry project.

The throughput from B&B into this stock is working and this is demonstrated by the reduced time families are spending in B&B. We will seek to maintain this positive progress while drawing our focus onto single people in B&B for a similar impact through ongoing projects to increase the supply of single person accommodation.

Use our housing powers to meet housing needs, including bringing empty homes back into use (Cllr Christy)

The tables below represent properties bought back into use up to and including 31 October 2025.

Table 1

Represents the total number of properties brought back into use through officer involvement.

From 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

	LTE 6-11MTHS	LTEP 12MTHS +
Total Officer involvement	8	27
Total for the period	1.4.24 – 31.3.25	35

Table 2

Represents the number of properties brought back into use for the New Homes Bonus

From 7 October 2025 to 5 October 2026 (CTB1 submission date)

	LTE 6-11MTHS	LTEP 12MTHS+
Total Officer Involvement	1	8
Total for the period	7.10.25 - 5.10.26	9

Willow View is a property the Council secured as part of a Compulsory purchase order (CPO) was sold at auction on 22 October 2025 and the completion should take place on 26 November 2025.

The 7 properties which had been empty over a year:

1 renovated and sold

1 renovated and then let to farm staff

1 renovated and is being used as a care facility for young people.

2 were found to have been occupied.

1 was sold and immediately occupied.

1 property was demolished to make way for a larger development of housing on the site.

The 1 property empty for less than a year:
Renovated and is now let.

There appears to be a lot of choice in the housing market currently and some of this may be due to second homeowners selling their properties due to the premium charge coming into effect on 1 April 2025. It may also be due to the high valuations by estate agents which is encouraging owners to sell. Feedback from owners regarding the current market is not always positive as they have had chains breakdown and buyers withdraw their offer in the final stages of the sale because another property has come onto the market. Solicitors and Land Registry are also adding to delays. Some owners have experienced complicating factors when trying to sell their properties and this is particularly difficult for owners who have inherited a property and are grieving the loss of a loved one whilst having to navigate a situation they don't want to deal with.

Support residents to manage the effects of the cost of living (Cllr Boden)

As part of our ongoing Cost of Living support work, a community event was held at Whittlesey Library on Friday 7th November, alongside another local engagement activity. The event brought together a range of partners, including Age UK, Know Your Neighbourhood project, Libraries, Work Well, Anglian Water, Social Prescribers, How Are You? Fenland, Citizens Advice Rural Cambs and the Armed Forces Covenant Officer.

Over the two-hour session, 45 residents attended to access vital services, seek advice, and discuss various aspects of their lives. The event provided valuable opportunities for early intervention and community connection, demonstrating the positive impact of partnership working in supporting residents through the ongoing cost of living challenges.

Encourage partners to support the delivery of the Golden Age programme and support older people (Cllr Wallwork)

Since February 2025, the Golden Age Fairs have continued to provide valuable information, advice, and support to older residents across Fenland. Three successful events were held in Friday Bridge, Whittlesey and Wisbech St Mary, attracting a record total of 595 across the three events. The highest number over three consecutive events in the programmes 22-year history.

- The Friday Bridge event (February 2025) welcomed 140 residents and 34 partner organisations, offering advice on health, wellbeing, safety, volunteering and local service.
- The Whittlesey event attracted 213 attendees and received excellent feedback from both residents and partners, with over 30 organisations in attendance providing wide-ranging community support.
- The Wisbech St Mary event achieved a record attendance of 242 people, reflecting the continued success and popularity of the initiative.

A Golden Age partners event was also held at Fenland Hall in June, attended by 29 partner organisations. This session provided an opportunity to gather feedback on event impact, coordination, and partnership working. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting that the events are well organised, inclusive and provide excellent opportunities for engagement with residents.

Now in its 22nd year, the Golden Age Programme continues to play a vital role in connecting older adults with the services, resources, and community networks that help them live healthier and more independent lives. Planning is already underway for the 2026 events, with details

published on the Council's website.

Promote Health & Wellbeing for all

Create healthier communities through activities developed and delivered by Active Fenland and Freedom Leisure (Cllr Wallwork)

The Active Fenland Team continues to deliver a broad range of opportunities to improve community health at either free or affordable prices across various accessible locations in Fenland.

Unfortunately, some of the grant funding to deliver these sessions is now no longer available so a rationalisation of the offer has been necessary. Despite this, delivery from January will continue as per the current programme, with these sessions being either supported by other funding from third parties or covered by the payments made by attendees.

The current Active Fenland programme can be found here;

<https://fenland.gov.uk/article/18692/Free-and-low-cost-exercise-and-activity-sessions-November-2025#ActiveFenlandProgramme>

Freedom Leisure continues to operate Fenland's Leisure centres on the Council's behalf. Following the difficulty of the past 4 years, the leisure business remains challenging, with very tight margins, but Freedom are delivering against their original budgeted estimates. Generally, income is higher – indicating more attendees – whilst expenditure is also higher, given the additional costs related to energy and staffing.

Total participation is up at the Hudson, Manor, and marginally at Chatteris, with it being down at the George Campbell. More detail indicates a rise in memberships across all four sites, but a decline in learn to swim attendees.

Freedom continues to promote the service through various channels including social media, the Freedom Leisure mobile phone app, email and SMS marketing and their website. Additionally, print is used for some promotions locally.

Currently Freedom's contract in Fenland has a Facebook following of approximately 8,000 people. Website users total around 10,000 per month, whilst the Freedom App – used for fitness class bookings – has around 38,000 users.

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 (Cllr Wallwork)

We have been delivering the WorkWell programme since November 2024, the project is currently funded until March 2026. [WorkWell Fenland - Fenland District Council](#).

Prior to this date people were supported via the Fenland Help Hub. Both the Help Hub and WorkWell are delivered by coaches who are part of the My Fenland Team.

Both projects have been funded via the Integrated Care Partnership with no impact on Fenland District Council's general fund.

WorkWell is designed to support people who are:

Aged 16 +

Have a health-related barrier to work

Eligible to work in the UK

Live in the Fenland area

Or

Are registered with a Cambs and Peterborough GP surgery or Job Centre Plus in Fenland

Since WorkWell started we have had:

Over **850** referrals

Signed up **506** participants

Made over **830** onward referrals or signposts to 98 different service providers

Employments needs and Mental health continue to be recorded most as a need.

Work with the Integrated Care System to tackle local health and wellbeing priorities and provide information to help people make healthier choices (Cllr Wallwork)

The Integrated Care Boards for North and South Fenland continue to meet bi-monthly and share information across the partnership group. In April this year they reset their priorities which were agreed as:

- Healthy Lifestyles – Obesity
- Prevention – Cancer Awareness
- Mental Health – Men/Children & Young People
- Fenland Locality wide projects – Loneliness and Isolation

In July 2025 the Integrated Care Service Newsletter was circulated. The following is information of note for Fenland:

Fenland Loneliness and Isolation Survey

The Fenland locality, including Wisbech Integrated Neighbourhood and Fenland and South Fenland Integrated Neighbourhood partners, worked together to create an online survey to hear from local Fenland people on their experiences of loneliness and isolation. A total of 115 responses were gathered, covering across the Fenland locality.

Of the total 115 responses, 90% of respondents (104 people) indicated they on some level feel isolated and/or feel they have no one to talk to, with 34% (39 individuals) of these stating that they often feel this way.

The top reported reasons for why people feel lonely and/or isolated include:

- A lack of transport in Fenland.
- Cost (not defined further but this could be in relation to the cost of activities, transport to support, perceived expected cost etc).
- Mobility and/or illness causing feelings of loneliness and isolation and being a barrier to accessing support.

- Feeling like there are no social activities available locally.

The report provides insight into what groups or activities are being utilised by Fenland people already, what the barriers to accessing these are, what is missing in the area, and how information leading people to social initiatives locally is often sought. The Fenland locality reducing isolation and loneliness working group will be using the recommendations in the report as actions to hopefully implement change across the locality where appropriate.

In August the North Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Partnership submitted an application to NHS England to participate in the first wave of the National Neighbourhood Health Implementation Programme (NNHIP). The programme brings together local health and social care professionals to develop bespoke care plans for residents, with the initial focus on improving services and support for the management of people with multiple conditions and those living with frailty. The application was successful. It was selected from 141 submissions. Applications were judged on evidence of partnership working across local health and care partners that have improved services and support that helped connect with local communities.

For further information on this, please see link to online website [here](#).

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 (Cllr Wallwork)

Members will recall this was looked at as an agenda item at the July meeting

[OS - CSP CCTV.pdf](#)

Hate Crime Champions

Community Safety Partnership is launching a new Hate Crime Champions Scheme in partnership with Cambridgeshire Constabulary and development work has been happening throughout this reporting period. Fenland District Council and partner organisations will be able to support their local authority and police to raise awareness of hate crime by nominating an individual within their organizations to become Hate Crime Champions

- The role of the Hate Crime Champions is voluntary and will include:
- ensure that hate crime information is displayed and available within your organisation (posters and leaflets)
- act as the main point of contact within your organisation for anyone wanting to discuss a hate crime
- signpost the individual to appropriate services, information, and guidance
- share key messages within your organisation from local authorities and police regarding hate crime

Fire Break

A Firebreak course was completed at Whittlesey fire station in October. The course for young people involved those who had been engaging in risky behaviours or were low in confidence. Ten students completed the full programme and will now be part of a follow up programme designed to have continued engagement and support.

Each student has received a certificate of course completion and has achieved qualifications in Firefighting skills and active citizenship, and basic life support and CPR.

Two further courses are planned at Wisbech and March Fire Stations in December and February 2026 respectively.

Community Engagement – August/September/October 2025

Wisbech St. Mary Golden Age Fair – Community Safety attended alongside many other stallholders. Support was given to over 60 residents. This included advice and signposting for a range of concerns, including e-scooter use, motorbikes causing a disturbance, school bullying guidance, Scam advice and how to report ASB to Fenland District Council.

- Christchurch Community Engagement Event – Community safety attended Christchurch Village Hall alongside members of the local police team and provided advice and signposting on issues such as: Illegally modified vehicles, scrambler bikes causing disturbances, and issues of an overgrown garden.
- Doddington Community Engagement Event held at Doddington Church Rooms. Community Safety alongside members of the local police team attended. Advice, support and signposting provided on Drug activity, parking, dog fouling, planning and highways.

Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland-wide Community Cohesion Action Plan (Cllr Tierney)

The Fenland Diverse Community Forum encourage collaboration between all parties including the statutory, voluntary services, supporting charities, faith, and community groups. The Forums are open to all organisations that operate in the district and partners in neighbouring areas. Feedback garnered from these forums help inform partners, future topics, and discussions, we were delighted to welcome over 60 attendees to this meeting.

The Chair welcomed all to the event and explained in more detail the work that the core group and partners have done over the last year and ensure that vulnerable people didn't get lost in the system. He then explained the programme for the day and that there would be ample time for questions and answer session after each speaker.

The speakers:

- Nick Blencowe – Chief Executive Rural Citizens Advice Bureau (RCAB) & Joint Chair of the Cambridgeshire Poverty Commission
- Chris Stevens – Oasis Centre & Wisbech Community Trust Manager
- Jo White & Claire Wright – Work Well Project
- Keith Smith – Chief Executive of the Ferry Project
- Molly Alexander – Rough Sleeper Coordinator

- Sandra Ferreira – Chief Executive designate of the Ferry Project taking up her role in April 2026
- Carl Suckling – Cambridgeshire County Council Disability Rights Advocate
- Ashley Dolling – Fenland District Council Environmental projects

To summarise what they said.

Nick Blencowe

Nick set the scene about the financial challenges facing local people. He said that from 1st April to the end of September this year the RCAB had seen 3,827 people in rural Cambridgeshire out of these figures 2,066 were from Fenland. The total issues these people had were 23,056.

The total income gain that the RCAB had been able to help all obtain was £2,505,164 and in Fenland this figure was £1,440,505.

The total debts that they were able to write off was £279,371 and in Fenland the figure was £259,839.

Other grants/ emergency support that they were able to find was £137,263 all of this was for Fenland clients.

Chris Stevens

Chris explained that the **Wisbech Community Development Trust** is providing a wide range of life changing services for all the communities'

Chris talked through the challenges they see at the trust.

She then talked about the work that they do.

- Providing Information Guidance & Advice.
- Health programmes delivered from the Oasis Centre.
- Keeping venue hire costs as low as practically possible to enable partners and residents to access.

Jo White/ Claire Wright

Work Well

The project is designed to assist individuals struggling to find or maintain employment due to health issues.

Jo & Claire explained how to make a referral and how they support people. From November 2024 there were 861 referrals to this project, of these 506 people signed up for the project..

Keith Smith

Ferry Project/ Queen Marys Centre/ Kings Church

Keith explained that the Ferry Project is here to help homeless people in Fenland - not simply to provide accommodation, but to give them the skills they need to live independently' He then went through the statistics and the projects that they have in place to achieve this outcome including work skills, financial budgeting, and cookery classes.

Queen Mary Centre

This Community Hub is hosting Faith groups, lunch clubs. The activities there include a donations hub, family volunteering club, a variety of health services as well as being a warm hub where people can come along and get a drink at the well-appointed Café.

Kings Church

The Kings Church have been meeting at the Queen Mary Centre for 30 years and will be taking over the management of the donation's hub. The hub supplies warm clothing, kitchen utensils and a range of practical items used daily by people.

Molly Alexander

Rough Sleeper Coordinator

Molly explained the rough sleeper initiative that she coordinates. Explaining how rough sleeping begins, the immediate support that people are offered. The move on options as well as the current challenges. Explaining the projects close ties to the Ferry project and other partners to deliver these initiatives.

Sandra Ferreira

Ferry Project designate Chief Executive Officer

Sandra gave a run down of her background in South Lincolnshire and Norfolk and that she looked forward to being more involved with Diverse Communities Forum.

Carl Suckling

Cambridgeshire County Council and Disability Rights Advocate

Carl talked about the prejudice and barriers faced by disabled people, as well as the kinds of measures that can be taken to address these. He is part of a newly formed Wisbech Disability Support group that is currently looking at access issues for wheelchair users in the town there will be updates when this survey has been completed.

Ashley Dolling

Fenland District Council Environmental projects

Ashley spoke about the need to reduce waste in Fenland, going on to say what sustainability looks like and.

- Why people don't recycle
- Making reducing waste the norm.
- Getting it sorted – the local project to address the above.

Deliver the Community Safety Grant Agreement with the Police and Crime Commissioner (Cllr Wallwork)

Members will recall this was looked at as an agenda item at the July meeting

[OS - CSP CCTV.pdf](#)

At the latest grant monitoring meeting in October 25, Officers of the Police Crime Commissioner were very pleased as ever with the delivery programme for the funding the Council receives.

Some recent case examples :

- Supported Police with collecting evidence and supporting a victim of personal ASB. The customer was supported by Community Safety providing advice, guidance and reassurance. Evidence shared by the customer was passed to the police as appropriate, and following assessment and further customer contact, the police served a Community Protection Warning on the alleged perpetrator
- Online report received that disclosed complex concerns about domestic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour which was allegedly being witnessed by a child. Further enquiries were made with the author of the report which disclosed more supporting information to suggest the incidents were happening as being reported. Advice was provided to the witness regards actions to take if they were to witness future incidents. Community Safety shared the information with the police and also submitted a child safeguarding referral.
- Reports received of nuisance activity late at night in a play area. Community Safety spoke to the customer to seek more information on what was happening, when and by who. This information was shared with the local police team who completed patrol activity in the area. Community Safety were also aware of youth detached work capabilities in the area and through contact with the youth workers they completed outreach work at the location.

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

Members will recall that CCTV was scrutinised in July as per the link below.

[OS - CSP CCTV.pdf](#)

Data for end of October was temporarily unavailable due to the control room system upgrade. Full October figures will be incorporated into the next reporting cycle – End of September figures.

The CCTV Shared Service continues to play a key role in supporting community safety across Fenland's four market towns. The service provides essential 24/7 operational support to partners and frontline services, helping to deliver on both local priorities and broader community reassurance.

Community Safety and Incident Response

Between April and October 2025, CCTV operators supported 703 incidents - a rise of 20 compared with the same period in 2024. These included a wide range of community safety concerns such as:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Criminal damage
- Violent offences
- Drug-related activity
- Possession of weapons
- Theft and other acquisitive crimes

CCTV intervention directly supported 99 arrests by Cambridgeshire Police during this period. This outcome reflects the service's growing impact - not only in assisting live policing operations but also in deterring and disrupting criminal behaviour through early detection and real-time support.

Please note: Data for late October was temporarily unavailable due to the control room system upgrade. Full October figures will be incorporated into the next reporting cycle.

Proactive Monitoring and Prevention

Alongside responding to live incidents, the team maintained a strong preventative focus through targeted proactive patrols. Between April and October, a total of 2,272 proactive patrols were carried out across key areas including town centres, parks, open spaces, and retail zones.

These patrols aimed to:

- Detect and deter suspicious or criminal activity
- Provide visible reassurance to the public
- Support the local business crime reduction agenda
- Identify environmental and safeguarding issues early

This proactive capability continues to make CCTV a vital contributor to wider community resilience.

Out-of-Hours Emergency Support

The CCTV team also manages the Council's 24/7 out-of-hours call-handling service, acting as the first point of contact for urgent public safety matters and time-sensitive service requests. Between April and October 2025, the team handled 285 emergency calls - an increase of 116 compared to the same period last year.

Calls related to:

- Homelessness support and emergency accommodation
- Stray or dangerous dogs
- Council tax and payment support
- Noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour
- Urgent cleansing and environmental hazards

This highlights the team's pivotal role in maintaining service continuity outside normal office hours and ensuring the Council remains responsive to residents' needs around the clock.

Control Room Upgrade and Future Readiness

To ensure long-term service resilience, a major project to upgrade the CCTV control room hardware and infrastructure was successfully completed during September and October 2025. This investment ensures the Shared Service remains compliant with national security standards and capable of supporting future growth, system integration, and technological development across both council areas.

Street Drinking Update (Cllr Wallwork)

Members will recall this was looked at as an agenda item at the July meeting

[OS - CSP CCTV.pdf](#)

Following a peak of reported incidents linked to street drinking in August there has been a

gradual decline in reported occurrences. This is likely the outcome of Community Protection Warning issues relating to problems being experienced in the area of Bridge Street, Wisbech. Community Safety are currently preparing for the renewal process of the alcohol related Public Spaces Protection Orders for Wisbech. These are due for renewal no later than October 2026. There has been police patrol activity in the town and social media awareness of positive interventions leading to warnings and alcohol confiscation.

Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture & Heritage

Provide proportionate support and advice for community groups to hold safe and successful public events (Cllr Seaton)

This year colleagues from different service areas came together to form the FDC Event Land Group. The aim is to have a coordinated, streamlined and supportive approach for those who wish to use our land for community events. Event organisers and community representatives are directed to our website which provides a wealth of information on planning an event and has links to external resources such as the 'Purple Guide' - a useful safety guide for large scale public events. This guide outlines steps organisers need to consider when planning an event and topics include risk assessments, licences, insurance, funding and forming a committee.

The Council also offers support should the organisers need road closures or additional more in-depth help from the Safety Advisory Group. This partnership group aims to enable event organisers to safely host events taking place in the district. This is whilst safeguarding the well-being of all residents and visitors at those public events and ensuring that, as far as reasonably practicable, any inconvenience to residents, businesses and the general public arising from such events is minimised. Made up of various partner agencies they offer specialist advice on issues related to public safety. This is free for event organisers to attend and is an opportunity to talk to experts.

Whether an event is large or small we are able to also offer organisers and community groups further assistance in the form of council services such as waste removal and car park closures, which are paid for as appropriate.

The new streamlined approach has worked well with more than 40 events being facilitated this year so far.

Pride In Fenland Awards (Cllr Wallwork)

The Pride In Fenland Awards took place on Wednesday 25th June at Wisbech St Mary Community and Sports Centre. The event celebrated outstanding individuals and groups who make a positive difference in their communities.

A total of 87 nominations were received across eight categories, Sports and Recreational, Fundraiser, Community Volunteer, Community Champion, Youth, Group, Special Judges and Lifetime Achievement. All nominees were recognised with certificates, and winners and runners-up received trophies.

The evening showcased inspiring stories of community commitment across all ages, highlighting dedication, kindness, and civic pride throughout the district. The Council's Communication Team provided live updates during the event, allowing wider community participation through social media which has received positive feedback.

A notable highlight was a young environmental award winner (pictured below) being invited to visit the base to further develop and encourage his community initiatives. He described the experience as a “privilege.”

The next Pride In Fenland awards event will take place in July 2026.




Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 2025/26	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
ARP1	Days taken to process new claims and changes for Council Tax Support	9.4 days	7.0 days	9.04 (to end of Sep)	
ARP2	Days taken to process new claims and changes for Housing Benefit	8.36 days	7.00 days	10.23 (to end of Sep)	
CELP1	Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	286	250	104 (to end of Oct)	
CELP2	The proportion (%) of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing options work	46%	52%	46 (to end of Oct)	
CELP3	Number of empty properties brought back into use	64	50	35 (to end of Oct)	
CELP4	Total attendance at Active Fenland sessions per year	1463	750	746 (to end of Sep)	
CELP5	Customer satisfaction with our leisure centres (Net Promoter Score)	17	25	N/A (March 2026)	N/A
CELP6	Value of Arts Council Grants achieved in Fenland	£450,000	£75,000	N/A (March 2026)	N/A

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

Comments
CELP1 – profile on track to meet target as a result of winter calls for service

Agenda Item No:	8	
Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny	
Date:	01 December 2025	
Report Title:	Reporting – Use of Waiver Provisions	

1 Purpose / Summary

To provide notice to members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of decisions taken without the need for notice to be given on the Forward Plan and/or for the call-in procedures to be applied.

2 Key Issues

To comply with the notice requirements set out in the Council's Constitution at paragraphs 16.3 of Procedure Rule 2 and paragraph and 20.4 of Procedure Rule 4.

3 Recommendations

For the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to note the waivers permitted by the Chairman since the date of the last meeting.

Wards Affected	All
Report Originator (s)	Maureen Davis, Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Amy Brown, Assistant Director for Legal and Governance amybrown@fenland.gov.uk
Contact Officer(s)	As above
Back-ground Papers	Fenland District Council's Constitution: https://www.fenland.gov.uk/localgov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=315&MId=2451&info=1&bcr=1

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Access to Information Procedure Rules which constitute Rule 2 of the Council's Constitution specify at paragraph 13.1 that a key decision may not be taken unless notice of that decision has been published in the Forward Plan for a minimum period of 28 days. The Council's Forward Plan is accessible via the following link: <https://moderngov.fenland.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=136&RD=0&bcr=1>
- 1.2 Article 13 of the Council's Constitution defines a key decision as any decision which results in saving or expenditure in excess of £100,000 or, in respect of any land or property acquisition in excess of £250,000 and/or which is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area of the District comprising two or more wards.
- 1.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Procedures Rules which constitute Rule 5 of the Council's Constitution specify at paragraph 18 that when a decision is made by Cabinet, an individual member of the Cabinet, a committee of the Cabinet or a key decision is made by an officer with delegate authority from the Cabinet or under joint arrangements, that decision must be published within 3 working days of being made. There then follows a period of 5 working days following publication and prior to implementation, during which that decision can be called-in. Information about the procedure for call-in can also be found at Rule 5 of the Council's Constitution.
- 1.4 In exceptional circumstances, if it is not possible to meet the forward plan publication requirements, there are 2 procedures that can be followed to enable the decision to still be taken:
- 1.5 Procedure Rule 2, paragraph 16 of the Council's Constitution specifies that if a matter which is likely to be a key decision has not been included in the Forward Plan and the procedure at paragraph 15 cannot be complied with then, in cases of special urgency, the decision may still be taken if the Chairman of O&S or, in their absence, the Chairman of the Council agrees that the taking of the decision cannot be reasonably deferred.
- 1.6 Rule 4 of the Council's Constitution which comprises the Cabinet Procedure Rules specify at paragraph 20 that the call-in procedure shall not apply where the decision being taken is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. The Chairman of O&S or, in their absence, the Chairman of the Council agrees that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances to be treated as a matter of urgency.
- 1.7 Paragraph 16 of Procedure Rule 2 and Paragraph 20.4 of Procedure Rule 4 both specify that decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel together with the reasons for the urgency.
- 1.8 Decisions taken after the application of the urgency provisions are also routinely published in the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's annual report which is also submitted to Full Council for approval.

2 NOTIFICATION OF DECISIONS

- 2.1 Since the date of the last meeting the Chairman of O&S has permitted the use of the waiver provisions on one occasion:
 - 2.1.1 A waiver of the requirement to place an entry on the Forward Plan for the full period of 28 days was requested as the Council was required to notify Government of the its acceptance of £1.5m of Pride In Place Funding on 7 November 2025. An entry was published on the Forward Plan on 30 October 2025 ([Pride in Place Allocation of Funding - KEY/30OCT25/01](#)). A cabinet report on the acceptance of funding was tabled on 7 November 2025 ([Report and appendices signatures redacted.pdf](#)). The timings of the notification of the availability of the funding, the need for an entry on the forward plan and the ordinary cycle of meetings did not allow for the full period of 28 days.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny has to date provided a verbal update as to the use of the waivers provided for in the Constitution. In future, unless it is not possible to prepare a Report in time for Agenda dispatch in relation to the next available meeting of O&S, a Report will be prepared.

4 IMPLICATIONS


4.1 Legal Implications

- 4.1.1 The legal implications are as set out in the main body of this Report.

4.2 Financial Implications

- 4.2.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this Report.

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REF	Date Requested	Question	Target Date																		
COMPLETED ACTONS																					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">11/11/25	<p>Clarion Questions:</p> <p>Headlines from Communities (page 38 of agenda pack) - Is there a list of organisations, with their projects and locations? Do the organisations submit an evaluation piece with an impact report?</p> <p>Is there any data on accessibility adaptations/adjustments requests and Clarion’s response assessment time on works completed?</p> <div><p>Copy of Copy of FDC Project Activity Tracker response received 14-11-25</p></div> <p>Here is a list of the “major” adaptations we’ve completed in Fenland since 2019. Anything that costs less than £1k is excluded from this process:</p> <table><thead><tr><th>Row Labels</th><th>Count of AdaptUpn</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Adaptation - Bathroom</td><td>9</td></tr><tr><td>Adaptation - Extension</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td>Adaptation - Kitchen</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>Door - Entry equipment</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Door - Thresholds</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Door - Widening</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>Dropped Kerb</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Hardstanding</td><td>4</td></tr></tbody></table>	Row Labels	Count of AdaptUpn	Adaptation - Bathroom	9	Adaptation - Extension	7	Adaptation - Kitchen	8	Door - Entry equipment	1	Door - Thresholds	5	Door - Widening	4	Dropped Kerb	1	Hardstanding	4	<p>19/11/25</p> <p>19/11/25</p>
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Door - Thresholds	5																				
Door - Widening	4																				
Dropped Kerb	1																				
Hardstanding	4																				

		Heating Adjustment	1	
		Lift - Hoist	5	
		Lift - Stairlift	13	
		Lift - through floor	1	
		Miscellaneous - Major	2	
		Miscellaneous - Minor	1	
		Multiple - Major	17	
		Multiple - Minor	1	
		OT Visit -Rehousing	1	
		Rail - Drop Down	1	
		Rail - Grab	9	
		Ramp	25	
		Shower - Level		
		Access	94	
		Shower - over bath	6	
		Shower - Seat	1	
		Toilet - Bidet_Bio		
		Bidet	1	
		Toilet -Clos-o-mat	7	
		Wet Room	10	
		Grand Total	235	
		We're committed (via the stock transfer agreement) to spend c. £440k in Fenland on major adaptations in 25/26 (this is uplifted by CPI each year), which we have pretty much spent/committed already this year.		
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WATCHING BRIEF ITEMS				
		None at present		

Overview and Scrutiny – Draft Work Programme 2025-2026

**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>
9 January 2026	12 January 2026	2.00pm	Via Teams	19 January 2026	10.00am
20 February 2026	24 February 2026	2.00pm	Via Teams	2 March 2026	10.00am
10 April 2026	13 April 2026	2.00pm	Via Teams	20 April 2026	10.00am

19 January 2026

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	Draft Budget 2025/26	Quality Organisation	All of CMT Sian Warren All of Cabinet
	Draft Business Plan 2025/26	Quality Organisation	All of CMT Dave Wright All of Cabinet
	Fees and Charges 2025/26	Quality Organisation	Peter Catchpole All of CMT Sian Warren Cllr Boden All of Cabinet
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown Chair
	Waivers report	All	Amy Brown Chair
	Future Work Programme 2024/25	All	Amy Brown Chair

2 March 2026

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	Annual Review of Anglia Revenues Partnership	All	Peter Catchpole Anna Goodall Cllr French ARP representatives
	Road Safety Partnership update		Dan Horn Alan Boughen Cllr Wallwork Simon Burgin
	Public Health & Education	Communities	Carol Pilson Anna Goodall Annabel Tighe Cllr Count (skills)
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown Chair
	Waivers Report	All	Amy Brown Chair
	Future Work Programme 2023/24	All	Amy Brown Chair

20 April 2026

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	Progress in Delivering the Economy Corporate Objectives to include Planning 2025/26	Economy	Peter Catchpole Carol Pilson Dan Horn Anna Goodall Mark Greenwood Phil Hughes Wendy Otter Matt Leigh Cllr Count Cllr Seaton Cllr Laws Cllr Boden Cllr Gary Christy
	Update on CPCA Growth Service and impact on Economic Development in Fenland	Economy	Peter Catchpole Anna Goodall Mark Greenwood Cllr Count
	Waivers Report	All	Amy Brown Chair
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown Chair
	Future Work Programme 2024/25	All	Amy Brown Chair

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