

Public Document Pack

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

A meeting of Council will be held at Council Chamber, Fenland Hall, County Road, March on MONDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2025 at 4.00 PM and I request you to attend accordingly for transaction of the following business:

- 1 To receive apologies for absence
- 2 Previous Minutes (Pages 3 - 8)

To confirm and sign the minutes of 21 July 2025.
- 3 Civic Engagements Update (Pages 9 - 10)
- 4 To receive any announcements from the Chairman of the Council and/or the Head of Paid Service
- 5 To receive members' declaration of any interests under the Local Code of Conduct or any interest under the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting
- 6 To receive questions from, and provide answers to, councillors in relation to matters which, in the opinion of the Chairman, accord with the provisions of Procedure Rules 8.4 and 8.6
- 7 To receive reports from and ask questions of Cabinet members with portfolio holder responsibilities, in accordance with Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 (Pages 11 - 66)
- 8 Motion submitted by Tim Taylor regarding Solar Farms and Food Security (Pages 67 - 68)
- 9 Audit and Risk Management Committee Annual Report (Pages 69 - 80)

To report to Full Council the commitment and effectiveness of the Audit and Risk Management Committee's work from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 (and wider to cover audit work).
- 10 Refuse, Recycling and Cleansing HGV Fleet Replacement (Pages 81 - 86)

Based upon Cabinet recommendation, to approve the procurement of the required HGV vehicles as part of the ongoing Fleet Replacement Plan.
- 11 Constitutional Amendments: Planning Scheme of Delegation (Pages 87 - 90)

To consider revisions to the Planning Scheme of Delegation within the Council's Constitution to allow delegation of authority to initiate prosecutions for non-compliance with enforcement notices to officers rather than requiring a resolution of the Planning Committee.

12 Members Allowances - Combined Authority SRA for Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committees (Pages 91 - 94)

To consider ceasing payment to Fenland District Council members of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committees.

Fenland Hall
March


Chief Executive

Friday, 5 September 2025

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

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

COUNCIL



MONDAY, 21 JULY 2025 - 4.00 PM

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

APOLOGIES: Councillor G Booth, Councillor G Christy, Councillor R Gerstner, Councillor S Harris, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor J Mockett and Councillor D Patrick

C15/24 **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of 19 May 2025 were confirmed and signed.

C16/24 **CIVIC ENGAGEMENTS UPDATE.**

The Chairman drew members' attention to the civic activities undertaken by herself and the Vice-Chairman in the weeks preceding Full Council.

C17/24 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE.**

The Chairman announced that her Civic Reception will take place at Gorefield Community Hall from 6.30pm on 19th September and her coffee morning in aid of Damsons will be in the Council Chamber from 10am on 23rd October. She thanked members for their support and looks forward to seeing as many of them as possible at these events.

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive.

C18/24 **TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM, AND PROVIDE ANSWERS TO, COUNCILLORS IN RELATION TO MATTERS WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIRMAN, ACCORD WITH THE PROVISIONS OF PROCEDURE RULES 8.4 AND 8.6.**

The Chairman stated that no written questions had been received under Procedure Rule 8.6. In the absence of Councillor Gavin Booth, Leader of the Opposition, and having been nominated by him to deputise, Councillor John Clark stated that he had no questions to raise under Procedure Rule 8.4.

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

- Councillor Cutler thanked all involved in the Fenland Inspire! projects and asked if anything will be done about the lack of play equipment in Murrow. She understands that Cabinet had said it is not financially prudent to pursue all the proposed projects, but those going ahead all appear to be town-based. Councillor Boden agreed he had said it is not currently financially viable to proceed with all the projects, but the aim is to provide a legacy for all Fenland residents and there are several out-of-town schemes, one of which is the district-wide play equipment assessment. This will include the villages, particularly those that are currently poorly served. Furthermore, it is not a one-off project but will run to March 2028 and he will ensure that the villages are not disadvantaged in the order of which works will arise.
- Councillor Nawaz said it is commendable to provide play equipment for young children, and the Council must do its utmost to deliver outdoor facilities. He asked if the Station Road recreation ground in Whittlesey is on the list as well as the villages of Coates, Eastrea, Turves and Pondersbridge and if not, why not? Councillor Boden responded that a full assessment is yet to be completed but it will review areas where there is little or no provision, including those mentioned. Meanwhile Councillor Nawaz will be aware that members stopped the Station Road ground being sold some months ago and work is being done to make the area available for the public in the long term. However, this area has been subjected to repeated serious vandalism and so there is no appetite to invest further money there. Councillor Nawaz said that vandalism can occur anywhere and requested that this be reviewed. The better option would be to work with the community and police to get vandalism under control otherwise this could be perceived as a collective punishment for the community. He is aware this is taxpayers' money and knows how carefully it is scrutinised, but the money is being spent on them, and decent young people should not be punished. Councillor Boden said the extent of this vandalism is far greater than anywhere else in the whole of Fenland and in this case there is alternative provision available at the nearby Manor Leisure Centre. He does not like the idea of withdrawing a facility but ultimately if the community fails to ensure a resource continues to an operational standard, a decision must be made on cost. Based on the level of vandalism previously, how long would new equipment at this site last, nine months, six months, a week?
- Councillor Nawaz voiced his concern at the mixed feedback for customer satisfaction at the leisure centres, noting that Freedom Leisure's national average score is 21 compared to Fenland's average score of 13. He asked what the plans are to increase this score and how it will be monitored and requested that the Council be given a progress update in six months' time. Councillor Boden said the quality of leisure services needs to be taken up with Councillor Wallwork and he would encourage members to forward any complaints to her. Meanwhile the Council is offering the biggest investment in leisure centres in the region of tens of millions of pounds. He cannot promise results in six months but by 2028, Fenland's leisure centre facilities will be substantially greater than they are now. Councillor Mrs Davis pointed out that Freedom Leisure representatives recently attended an Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting where all those questions were answered adequately and members can be reassured that Freedom Leisure remains under scrutiny.
- Councillor Nawaz was pleased to read that a health station is being placed in Wisbech and asked if this could be replicated in all the Fenland towns given the enormous health disparity in this region. Councillor Tierney said it is not always financially possible, but the concern should be more about trying to get everyone healthy, and not the disparity. Ultimately it is a matter of personal choice, and all FDC can do is provide information and get people to understand what will make them healthier, the rest is up to them.

Councillor Taylor presented his motion regarding meat labelling, which was seconded by Councillor Foice-Beard.

The item was opened for discussion and Members commented as follows:

- Councillor Carney said he would support this motion wholeheartedly, particularly due to dietary requirements and people becoming more aware of problems with food. However, he would ask for a recognised logo of halal friendly products as there are with other types of food.
- Councillor Tierney gave his support for the motion saying more information is needed regardless, but he gets frustrated when all Council can do is write to the Government, which he sees as virtue signalling. He would encourage members to think about what can be done within this Council's powers rather than just write to the Government as he believes they do not listen.
- Councillor Hay gave her support to what she said was a well written motion as she is against any unnecessary suffering to animals.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough agreed with Councillor Hay; however, she wonders if FDC has the leverage to lobby DEFRA. She is also concerned that halal practices are being singled out; it may be seen as targeting one religious group and where does this stop? It is a complex path that needs to be addressed with wider public engagement. She is not against supporting the motion but as stated, wonders if FDC has the lever to enact this through.
- Councillor Nawaz endorsed the points made by Councillor Sennitt Clough and Councillor Tierney. All members would be against suffering inflicted on animals. Halal has strict conditions but how many of us are aware of those? He echoes the points about the way this motion has been presented; it would appear that FDC is singling out one group in particular which may affect the credibility of the good cause being pursued. Would it apply to kosher meat, which also has a ritual attached to it? How effective is FDC going to be? He suggested consulting experts on both halal and kosher meats to find out exactly how they do things and then come back to Council with the motion. He asked if Councillor Taylor is seeking a simple labelling process. Councillor Nawaz added that the information he has is yes, it would benefit both but as far as he is aware halal is always marked otherwise Muslims would not buy it. He would agree that non-halal meat eaters have valid points. Halal is already labelled; non-halal is not and there may be some merit in ensuring non-halal is labelled as such.
- Councillor Boden said the situation is more complicated. As far as kosher is concerned the meat is slaughtered in ordinary slaughterhouses, but halal meat is only able to be slaughtered in houses that follow halal practices. That is why it is easy to indicate which are the halal slaughterhouses with an 'H'. In terms of consumer choice, the public should be able to see which ones are halal. He does not understand why this is being denied or restricted. People have ethical or religious reasons for doing so and those choices should be respected.
- Councillor Miscandlon said he does not believe the motion goes far enough and would like to see the labelling of kosher meat added to the motion.

Councillor Taylor summed up saying that the reason kosher is not being included in today's motion is because there is a large investigation ongoing regarding kosher meat. It has been found that traditional abattoirs kill kosher-style once or twice a week and knowing that the Jewish community only eat the front end of the cow down to the tenth rib, the back end of the cow ends up in the supermarket and in the human food chain. Because they are slaughtered in a traditional abattoir, they have that one traditional abattoir code. Both he and Rupert Lowe MP are trying hard to find out which abattoirs are killing kosher; it is a very long-drawn-out process, but the information will be released once all those abattoirs are known. This is a worldwide issue that people have got behind and is something that needs highlighting for all communities to get food labelled correctly to give all consumers a choice.

The Motion was approved.

(Cllr K French left the meeting at the end of this item).

C21/24 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25**

Members considered the Treasury Management Annual Report 2024/25 presented by Councillor Boden.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED to note the report.

(Councillor Marks left the meeting at the end of this item).

C22/24 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION UPDATE**

Members considered the Local Government Reorganisation Update report presented by Councillor Boden, which was seconded by Councillor Mrs French.

Members commented as follows:

- Councillor Cutler thanked Councillor Boden for the update on the three options and asked if the fourth option being put forward by Peterborough is likely to get off the drawing board and if Council also need to consider this.
- Councillor Boden responded that it is true that the two labour MPs in Peterborough have decided they would prefer something different for Peterborough, and it is a very interesting proposal for three unitary authorities instead of two. Currently there are two upper tier authorities, and they are responsible for the overwhelming majority of spend, 80% of the spend being social services. If there are three instead of two, the area with the greatest amount of spend will have a lesser economy of scale and that is concerning. Especially seeing how the areas have been divided up – Fenland is with East Cambs with a slither of Huntingdon from Ramsey to St Neots. Ramsey would be included, Sawtry would not. It is a dog's dinner. What is worse is that LGR will force disaggregation of assets, liabilities and responsibilities. Assets which the County Council has will all need to be split up and this is a massively complex process. Northamptonshire, who had unitarisation thrust upon them three years ago have still not managed to resolve this. Peterborough MPs want to disaggregate not just Cambridgeshire County Council but also Huntingdonshire District Council. If his understanding of their map is correct, they also want to split Huntingdonshire Town Council into different areas. He sees this proposal as being one which is absolutely determined by a very Peterborough 'centric' attitude and has severe doubts it will get through Peterborough City Council when it is put before them, and it is necessary for at least one local authority to put forward a scheme for it to be considered. He doubts that any authority will.
- Councillor Taylor said this is something he has not agreed with, it is just political party point scoring but through his motion, members will know the people he is dealing with and there is a strong movement that this may not happen yet. Jim McManh seems to be doing things on his own, so he just sees this as major point scoring with no one having a specific plan of what they want to do and how, and no chance of it happening by November this year.
- Councillor Woollard said looking purely at the three proposals, personally he is in favour of Option C – combining FDC with East Cambs, unfortunately also Peterborough City Council. This combination will safeguard the rural nature of Fenland along with East Cambs and water down the effect of the urban takeover from Peterborough.
- Councillor Tierney commented that since the current government came to power, they have made a lot of mistakes, but he does not think many people realise this is the most destructive policy they have issued, causing the most damage to Fenland communities. This is such a disastrous idea that will damage the ability of local institutions to try different things, to know who your councillors are, to make a difference, for no known reason. He does not want to vote for any of the options although he does have a preference. However, in his opinion everything is presumptuous, the argument being if you do not speak up now, they will do something to you, but he does not see the value in supporting it.

- Councillor Nawaz commented that as a principle he does not agree with this because despite the Government propaganda about local democracy, he believes it will damage it because the representatives will become increasingly remote. Huge wards are being proposed, currently the South Whittlesey ward is 9 miles long and 6-7 miles in width, how it would be possible to represent the widespread rural areas is open to question. He thinks it will put the representatives further away from the residents and therefore will be more difficult to articulate their hopes, aspirations and concerns. The fourth option, there is a prima facie case for that, and Councillor Boden has quite rightly poured cold water over it but that said, there are important differences between each of the councils. They are widespread rural areas with cultural differences, he knows, he grew up in Peterborough, but the temperament, expectations, cultural understandings and needs are not the same as those of Fenland or even Huntingdonshire. They are under huge debt, they put up their council taxes to the maximum, they have huge parking charges, Fenland does not and has kept council tax down for the seventh successive year. For all these reasons, he would be opposed to all three options.
- Councillor Hoy said that she similarly agrees with Councillor Nawaz. Going in with Peterborough will be a disaster, particularly for Wisbech, the reason being that so many of their rough sleepers will come to Wisbech. She worries that because of Fenland's cheaper housing many more landlords will pop up here, they will pick the cheapest place to live, it will exacerbate all this area's existing problems and make things worse. She has seen some people online saying the reasons, but they are overlooking the facts, it is strange that they are so scared of outsiders but also fiercely loyal, sceptical but would give you the shirt off their back. Wisbech is a beautiful town, a diamond in the rough, Chatteris, another lovely local town. Whittlesey, so much going on with beautiful buildings and lovely residents. March, another lovely useful place with lots of people who have lived there for years. Fenland is a wonderful place, if we lose sight of that, our villages, and the older she is getting the more she recognises the value of that lifestyle, if that is lost, we will never get it back, we will just become a massive enclave of Peterborough. It will just be Peterborough with Fenland's history lost forever.
- Councillor Mrs Davis said Government talks about localism but what this does is take that away from rural areas, it is vital for Fenland to have a voice at the table, but the voice will be very limited. FDC has not increased council tax and provides free parking, this will go, and there is talk about devolving some of the jobs down to parish level so the precepts will have to go up. It is bad for rural areas. She likes none of the options but if pushed, she would choose Option C as it gives rural areas more chance.
- Councillor Hay commented that she also thinks this is disastrous, so much for localism, it is as far away from that as you can get but if having to put in a proposal, she would be against proposal B which puts Fenland with four whereas the other options put us with three. She would like to keep the new authority as small as possible and would also favour Option C.
- Councillor Miscandlon recalled when he was Chairman of FDC, people used to say what is Fenland; four market towns and 13 villages and every one of them is different and he wants to keep it that way, he does not support this, it will be a mish mash. Government announced this just before Christmas and ruined it for people and they have been doing it ever since.
- Councillor Count commented that like many people, he does not agree with the proposals, but Fenland has to be at the table regardless. The three options presented have been narrowed down, members are not at the stage yet of saying which option they want, and they need the business plans to understand the financial and geographic synergies, and he thinks that will come along later. He sympathises with the person who said that it does not matter what you say because Government will pick the options, and he agrees with that but the main point about being at the table is being part of the voice as to what comes after. None of the proposals leave Fenland with Cambridgeshire County Council, that will be gone. All of them put Fenland with Peterborough City Council and he knows from experience the bones have always been at CCC, if Fenland is not at the table afterwards to argue its corner, then the damage comes. When £300m of the deficit is on Fen roads, Fenland needs a strong powerful voice to be involved all the way along to highlight the inconsistencies, it cannot be done at local level and government level, he is going to wait for the business plans. No matter how much members resent it, the Leader needs to be given an opportunity to engage.

- Councillor J Clark pointed out that local government reorganisation is not new, his father was part of this, and he is sure the comments at the time of the last review were the same. Personally, his business sense tells him it would be better staying connected to Cambridge but that is not an option. The Leader has been the one sitting in the meetings and getting the feedback, and so he would like to ask Councillor Boden what his feeling is about what the other councils may prefer that may probably help Councillor Clark to make up his mind.

Councillor Boden summed up that it had been a very useful and helpful debate, all comments will be considered but the Council has until 28th November to make a submission. In response to Councillor Clark asking what other leaders are saying, he can only say that South Cambs met and agreed to Option B, but he cannot speak for the others. Several members today have reluctantly mentioned their preference for Option C, and he agrees that this will give FDC the greatest voice and there is no option but to go with Peterborough regardless. Despite all this, the Government will end up doing what it wants anyway. However, FDC has to play the game to have any say at all and exercise what influence it can and ensure it has a say. Once more information is available, members can look again at what stands out as being best for this area. Another meeting will be held in the autumn to discuss further and choose options.

AGREED for Full Council to provide their feedback to Cabinet to support ongoing dialogue within the LGR process.

(Councillor Marks left the meeting at the end of this item).

C23/24 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

Members considered the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report presented by Councillor Mrs Davis as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Davis, seconded by Councillor Meekins and AGREED to note the report.

C24/24 **CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT**

Members considered the Constitutional Amendment Report presented by Councillor Hoy.

Proposed by Councillor Hoy, seconded by Councillor Sennitt Clough and AGREED to approve the amendments to the Constitution and Street Trading Policy as set out in the appendices, and to delegate to the Monitoring Officer to update the Council's Constitution accordingly.

5.37 pm

Chairman



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Civic Engagements

From July 19, 2025, to September 5, 2025

21 July, 2025	Anglia in Bloom Judging Attended by the Chairman
25 July, 2025	RAF Wyton 70 th Anniversary Parade -Huntingdon Town Council Attended by the Chairman
27 July, 2025	Mayor of Thrapston Civic Service Attended by the Vice Chairman
28 July, 2025	Wreath Laying for Jim Hocking – St Wendredas Church Attended by the Chairman
1 August, 2025	South Holland District Council Race Night Attended by the Chairman
9 August, 2025	Royal Society of St George Summer Reception Attended by the Chairman
10 August, 2025	Mayor of Rushden Afternoon Tea Attended by the Chairman
15 August, 2025	Mayor of Peterborough VJ Day Event Attended by the Chairman
16 August, 2025	Park Run – Wisbech Park Attended by the Chairman
17 August, 2025	South Holland District Council VJ 80 th Anniversary Event Attended by the Vice Chairman
31 August, 2025	March Town Council Armed Forces Day Event Attended by the Chairman
4 September, 2025	RAF Wyton Annual Reception Attended by the Chairman

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Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

**September 2025
(For performance in June and July 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 Steve Count
Portfolio Holder for
Economic Growth, Land
Charges and Fenland
Inspire! Leisure Centre
Projects



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



Cllr Sidney Imafidon
Portfolio Holder Assets,
Business Premises, Health
& Safety and Food Safety,
Environmental Services and
Heritage



Cllr Dee Laws
Portfolio Holder for
Building Control, Flooding,
IDBs and Planning



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)

At the end of the first quarter Council Tax collection was within the target. Business Rates collection is ahead of target at the end of Quarter 1 and continues to be closely monitored.

Work on automation continues, with change of address automation in particular continuing to achieve excellent and improving results. Moving away from emails to expand the use of the new and improved Contact Us form has continued, enabling us to efficiently gather the right information first time and take up of online forms has increased by 69% from the previous year. To Date 70% of benefit processes and 11.5% of billing processes have been successfully automated.

We continue to promote e-billing to our residents to increase efficiency and save postage costs, utilising TelSolutions to contact customers by email and create a quick and easy e-billing sign up online form.

We continue to use automated messaging services for council tax reminders and reviews, which sees favourable results, again reduces postage costs and improves customer engagement and collection. The year-to-date processing times for Local Council Tax Support and Housing Benefits continue to be challenging. This is partly down to an increase in claims as Universal Credit migration continues, in addition several other factors have also contributed to these increases; there continue to be delays with customers providing new claim information, along with staff annual leave. We continue to ensure that Discretionary Housing Payments are assessed as soon as possible by having focus days to assist those customers who have an urgent need. This is reflected in Fenland District Council's DHP spend to date which is on target to be utilised in full.

Automation successfully continues, with 97% of Universal Credit notifications from the DWP being successfully automated. Universal Credit continues to be rolled out, with the migration of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants being brought forward from 2028 to 2025. The DWP continues with the discovery work of bringing together Housing Benefit and Pension Credit by 2026. The aim will be to improve information sharing and reduce duplication in the application process for customers claiming PC and HB.

Work continues to expand with our Communities Teams initiative, referring customers claiming Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) or who have cases passed to the Enforcement Agents and who may need financial/welfare advice for holistic support. We also continued to proactively contact customers who may be eligible to reclaim CTR and also liaised with our partners to support pension credit take up campaigns.

The team continue to be tasked, in accordance with the Business Case approved by Joint Committee, to identify and prevent fraud leading to an increase in Council Tax income in the following areas: Local Council Tax Support, Single Person Discount, Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates. The team continue to seek opportunities to identify dwellings and businesses

not registered or having had an undeclared change in use, leading to increased charges – including possible retrospective charges.

The Cambridgeshire Fraud Hub continues into its second year. This work continues to consistently see savings outweighing the costs of the work in the areas of Local Council Tax Reduction and Single Person Discounts.

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

Town	HMOs investigated	Other Homes investigated
Wisbech	8	20
March	0	12
Chatteris	4	0
Whittlesey	1	2
Villages	0	4

Total homes investigated is 51 - This is in line with the profile of interventions that are undertaken each year to the target of 250.

VILLAGE BREAKDOWN

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

No.s of Notices Served 01/04/25-31/07/25	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	6	2	0	0
July	2	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
Total	0	0	1	0	1	1	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 148 Enforcement Notices served, with £40,460 levied and £30,980 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 71 Final Civil Penalty Notices served (total levied £298,482)

- 41 have been paid in full,
- 12 are subject to payment arrangements,

Total collected £151,196.36

- 1 is subject to Money Judgement application (MCOL)
- 0 are with the High Court Bailiff,
- 7 are proposed to be written off as not recoverable
- 7 are subject to an ongoing RPT appeal.
- 2 subject to early enforcement
- 1 is being referred to legal for Charging Orders/Enforced Sale

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

So far in 2025/26, the Housing Options team has successfully addressed the housing issues for 70 households where we assessed they were owed a duty to either remain in their own home or found alternative accommodation within either a 56 day prevention period or 56 day relief period. This is broken down to 26 at the prevention stage and 44 at the relief stage.

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

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

The number of households seeking advice (homeless presentations) for this period were 600. The figure last year was 683. This represents a decrease of 12%

Housing advice has been given to 426 households where no duties were owed by the Council. This means that following a housing needs assessment, and any interventions, there was no need to issue a formal homeless decision.

We have accepted 174 prevention and relief duties with 42 households being owed a main housing duty (the latter means the Council could not resolve the housing issues presented by the household in either the prevention stage nor the relief stage and we now have a legal duty to find permanent accommodation and must accommodate them until so).

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

The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing Options work for the year = 40% (70 preventions divided by 174 households where duties were owed).

From the start of this financial year to end of July 2025, the Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSPARG), has supported a total of 48 rough sleepers. As at the end of July, 17 clients were rough sleeping, 12 had successfully moved on, 8 had lost contact with services, 6 were between rough sleeping and sofa surfing, 2 had an alternative outcome and 3 were placed in off the street accommodation awaiting move on. For those that were successfully supported with move on, this includes into accommodation such as private rent with support from our private sector housing team to check the property condition, into supported living routes such as Ferry Project or Amicus, or reconnected with family/friends.

The team work closely with those individuals who are between rough sleeping and sofa surfing to try and prevent them from becoming long term rough sleepers. The RSAPRG team remain

prevention focused with the view to move those who are rough sleeping into accommodation as quickly as possible. It is important to note, our rough sleeper clients have varying support needs and it is vital that the right type of accommodation and support package is found to avoid individuals returning to rough sleeping. Whilst we see an increase in rough sleeping in the summer months, the team remain committed to support all those who are street homeless in the district.

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 by MHCLG. Our current TPG figure is 7 and plans are in place to work with our partners to reduce this figure.

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

Between April and end of July 2024, homeless families (excluding single and couples) spent 1352 days in B&B. For the same period in 2025 this has reduced to 413 days. This is calculated by totalling the number of placements that ended within the period April to July 2024 (47 placements) and April to July 2025 (24 placements). This is a 68 % reduction. Work continues to get a similar impact with singles and couple households. For example, the Council has agreed the purchase of 10 properties to help in this regard.

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

The tables below represent properties brought back into use up to and including 31 July 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	4	12
Total for the period	1.4.24 – 31.3.25	16

Table 2

Represents the number of properties brought back into use for the New Homes Bonus From 7 October 2024 to 6 October 2025 (CTB1 submission date)

	LTE 6-11MTHS	LTEP 12MTHS+
Total Officer Involvement	7	27
Total for the period	7.10.24 - 6.10.25	34

During June and July, the officer completed visits to March and Wisbech and found several of the empty properties were occupied. She obtained the new owners' details and informed council tax so they could update the accounts and collect the arrears.

The Compulsory Purchase (CPO) of Willow View in March is proceeding and the Council are likely to take ownership of the property in September with the Vesting date to be confirmed. The property will be sold at auction, and we are placing a condition on the sale to ensure that the property is brought back into use. This will be dealt with by a positive covenant in the sale agreement to commence and complete works to bring the property back into use within a set timescale. We are currently exploring this with legal to ensure we achieve the right balance and don't put any potential buyers off from purchasing.

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

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

- Issuing food vouchers.
- Advising on additional benefits they can claim.
- Signposting to other partners who can support.
- Assisting with on-line Universal Credit (UC) applications.
- Working closely with our ARP colleagues we signpost to avenues where discretionary benefits might assist.
- We work with a huge range of partners who can also provide additional support, and we will link our customers into these channels.
- Our Early Help Hub (operating within our My Fenland customer facing team) to provide an additional channel of support to residents who may be ready to return to the work environment, having had a protracted spell of ill-health has provided support to over 300 customers since June 2024.

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

The Council has held the annual partnership networking event held in the Council Chamber at Fenland Hall and has managed a Golden Age Fair (Manor Leisure Centre). Both were very well attended by partners with the Whittlesey event being a record-breaking event where the number of visitors totalled 213 people.

One visitor said "I've probably been coming along for three or four years and before that I was secretary of the Royal British Legion Whittlesey branch and used to have a stall.

"I like to see the latest innovations and what's going on, it all helps to save a few pennies. Some of the giveaways help around the house."

Stallholders provided information on available services including independent living; emotions and wellbeing; finances; law; carers; health; home security; transport; social and volunteering opportunities.

At the events we had the following organisations join us to provide information, advice and guidance; Citizens Advice Rural Cambs, Age UK, Bobby Scheme, FDC Community Safety team, Cambridgeshire County Council, College of West Anglia, Whittlesey Community Pantry, Disability Information Services Huntingdon, P3 Charity, CamSight, March Model Railway, Library Service, CPFT, Healthy You, NHS talking therapies, Cambs Fire and Rescue, Everyturn charity, Anglian Water, Accent Housing, Active Fenland, RAF Benevolent Fund, Social Prescribers, SUN Network, Care Network, Dynamic Health and Clarion Housing.

For more information about our Golden Age events visit www.fenland.gov.uk/goldenage

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 has enjoyed a very busy summer season – helped by the fine weather – providing activities in communities at low or zero cost across the District. Feedback has been extremely positive from both residents and partners such as the National Trust.

Freedom Leisure continues to provide four leisure centres for community use throughout the week. Performance, in terms of attendees, this year has been, on the whole positive.

- The George Campbell seems to be recovering from the unplanned pool closure in the first two months of the calendar year
- The Hudson has introduced summer sessions with a pool inflatable following the Wisbech Town Board's grant to purchase equipment
- The Manor remains extremely strong in terms of learn to swim
- Chatteris leisure continues to perform well with a strong fitness class following, excellent uptake of gym use by younger people and Fenland Inspire! conditions survey project improvements to the facility due to be implemented in September
- Soft play numbers are down compared with June 2024 – likely due to the excellent weather this summer

A more detailed assessment of leisure centre use is as follows, comparing June 2024 with the current year:

Hudson	Jun-24		Jun-25
Total ACTIVE Participation	12539		12403 99%
Freedom Fitness	3245		3159 97%
Group Exercise	2387		2125 89%
Public Swimming	2307		2418 105%
Swimming Lessons	4020		4215 105%
Soft Play	580		486 84%
Manor	Jun-24		Jun-25
Total ACTIVE Participation	11007		11587 105%
Freedom Fitness	2101		2223 106%
Group Exercise	1557		1658 106%
Public Swimming	2164		2465 114%
Swimming Lessons	4739		4885 103%
Soft Play	446		356 80%
George Campbell	Jun-24		Jun-25
Total ACTIVE Participation	8301		9038 109%
Freedom Fitness	2101		2483 118%
Group Exercise	1557		1601 103%
Public Swimming	2164		2452 113%
Swimming Lessons	2479		2502 101%
Chatteris	Jun-24		Jun-25
Total ACTIVE Participation	2416		2245 93%
Freedom Fitness	1279		1089 85%
Group Exercise	1137		1156 102%

Work with partners to deliver the Early Help Hub and WorkWell Hub, providing a 'one stop shop' of support and advice to individuals and families in their times of need (Cllr Wallwork)

The work our Hub Coaches deliver continues to go from strength to strength, and overall, year to date we remain above our target by approximately 7%.

Our website page has had 126 views in June with 19 Self Referrals being received.

We are now capturing data about how people have heard about Work Well, so we can continue to expand this where possible. We continue to promote this service using social media, directly with a number of partners and stakeholders (for example at GP practices), and at various events/locations around the district.

We have been working with our communications colleagues and partners to identify sources of referrals to establish effectiveness of marketing, and we are investigating WorkWell banners to further advertise the programme in key locations. We have also identified key community contacts and external resources to support the uptake of WorkWell amongst our hard-to-reach groups.

We are now also actively working with ARP to receive referrals for potential participants identified via their work to support vulnerable customers.

Since launch we have a total of 399 participants against a target of 354 (cumulative since programme launch)

YTD for 2025/2026 we have 175 signed up participants against a target of 164; and this is testament to the dedication and hard work of the team.

We have received hugely positive feedback from participants which include:

- *“Found the initial calls difficult, they felt they were beneficial, and they felt better for them”.*
- *“Definitely glad I signed up”*
- *“I am getting help I need, but don’t feel pressured”*
- *“It’s good to know that someone cares”*
- *“Really love having a bit of a plan”*
- *“Thank you for helping me leave my house”*
- *“My coach gets me!, they listen are patient and not pushy, just what I need”*
- *“I look forward to speaking to my coach, they are kind, and the support is better than I had before”*

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 continue to meet bi-monthly and share information across the partnership group. The focus of the boards is very much the cascading of information about local services and charitable organisations who are working towards local priorities of:

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

In July 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.

A midway report in April/May 2025 was shared with board members to assist VCSE partners in their funding applications for the neighbourhood. The final report has been shared with Fenland locality IN board members and has also been shared with the panel who are scoring the VCSE bid applications for the Fenland locality, so the voices of Fenland people can hopefully influence and help shape what is going to be delivered soon.

Thank you to the Fenland people who took the time to share their views and experiences for this survey. Thanks also to all the partners in the Fenland Reducing Isolation and Loneliness working group who collaborated and assisted in the creation, sharing and reporting of this survey.

If you have not yet seen the report and would like to, please email katarzyna.penar@nhs.net.

The Boards also received information from the charity The Mindful Life regarding a free course available for older carers taking place in October:

We're running a **free, online Mindfulness for Older Adults who Care** course, open to local residents aged 65+ who are caring for someone. It's a gentle, supportive course led by a Chartered Clinical Psychologist specialising in older adult mental health and delivered by a registered Mindfulness Teacher.

Participants tell us it helps them feel less stressed and isolated, sleep better, and manage low mood or anxiety. It also provides a calm, friendly space for carers to focus on their own well-being - which is often the thing they neglect most.

The next course starts in **October** you can click the following links to:

- Our website: <https://the-mindful-life.com/>
- Apply to the course: https://openss.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a05BckYwh7ltS3I

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)

Road Safety - Speedwatch/ Vison Zero

- Vison Zero and Speedwatch attended the Fenland CSP community engagement session in March town centre. An opportunity to engage with local people about their speeding and road safety concerns. They will also attend the October meeting of the Community Safety Partnership and share opportunities where the CSP can support their Fenland based activity.

Loan Shark Project in Partnership with Illegal Money Lending Team (England)

- The CSP secured £4000 of funding from the Proceeds of Crime Act to develop a loans shark project in Wisbech, an area of high deprivation and risk of illegal money lending.

Spinney Playground

- Loan Shark Activity Day at The Adventure Playground, Wisbech. This event was supported by the County Council Youth and Communities team, the Spinney staff and Wisbech Neighbourhood Police Team. Parents and children took part in available craft and street art activities. Stop Loan Shark information was distributed in excess of 40 adults and the children took home their crafts

Wisbech Youth Cafe

- A second Loan Sharks Street Art session took place at the Wisbech Youth Café. Designs from local children and youths will be brought together to produce a single Local Sharks mural to be displayed at the Spinney later this year.

Safety Zone 2025

- Over 800 Fenland children participated in this year's Safety Zone sessions at Fire Stations in Whittlesey, Wisbech, and March.
- 21 primary schools attended a total of 6 days of Safety Zone sessions across Fenland. Where they learnt key skills linked to First Aid, Online Safety, Water Safety, Dog Safety and cybercrime, to name just a few.
- The sessions were supported by staff from a wide range of partner agencies which included, Cambs Fire, County Council, Police, FDC, and East Anglia Air Ambulance
- [Hundreds of children learn vital skills at Safety Zone events in Fenland - Fenland District Council](#)

Fenlander Newsletter

- The CSP now contribute content for the 'Fenlander Newsletter'. This is in preference to publishing our own bespoke Newsletter. The Fenlander has a much wider reach and provides greater opportunity to share key personal safety messages.

Community Engagement

Front facing community engagement events where FDC Community Safety Team (CS) and partners give advice and signposting on several community safety & wellbeing related issues.

- Old Barclays Bank March- supported by the local police team, Speedwatch, Clarion Housing Group, Cambs County Council Volunteering, Neighbourhood Watch, Cybercrime, Fraud & Scams Officer from Cambridgeshire Constabulary, and Cambs Fire & Rescue Service. Advice and signposting given on planning matters, speeding concern, reporting pathways for other agencies, & service delivery complaint procedures.
- Golden Age Fair Whittlesey 20/06/2025 - CS team supported residents, with advice on scams, reporting pathways, referrals to the Bobby scheme and CCTV.
- Newton coffee afternoon - CS team and Wisbech Neighbourhood Police Team (WNPT) attended and provided advice and/or signposting on a wide range of topics, including, CCTV, reporting pathways for other relevant agencies, reporting options for registered housing providers, personal safety and speeding.
- Elm Parish Church – Wellbeing event which the CS team were invited to participate, along with HAYU, Alzheimer's UK, Cambs Constabulary Scams & Cyber Team, Cambs Fire & Rescue and WNPT. Advice/signposting provided to attendees on parking, speeding, reporting pathways and scams.
- Oasis Centre Wisbech – An event organised by FDC Community safety, supported by the local police team and Cambs Fire & Rescue. Advice/signposting provided on topics such as highways concerns, reporting drug activity, nuisance calls, and anti-social behaviour.

Further sessions are being planned and will be advertised through FDC comms and partner platforms.

Serious Violence Duty

Fenland Community Safety Partnership has secured central government funding with the help of the County Police Crime Commissioners Office to deliver initiatives at diverting young people away from serious violence. One of the projects focuses on 'joint enterprise'.

Joint Enterprise

This project is aimed at working with young people identified as being at risk of becoming involved in knife crime. The objective is to educate the young people about the implications of joint enterprise, in regard to the impact of prosecutions and sentencing individuals who participate in group related crimes.

Neale Wade Academy, March

- 2 sessions held for students in alternative provision, delivered by staff from County Council Youth Services, FDC Community Safety and Cambridgeshire Constabulary's Safer Schools Officer.

Thomas Clarkson Academy, Wisbech

- 3 sessions held for year 8 students, delivered by staff from County Council Youth

Services, FDC Community Safety, Cambridgeshire Constabulary's Safer Schools Office, and 20Twenty Productions CIC.

- Joint Enterprise - Focusing on topics such as: County Lines, Vaping and Drug use.
- An additional project which was led by students involved running a lemonade stand to raised money to support less privileged students to ensure they could participate in extracurricular activities.

Fenland's Professional and Voluntary Workforce Development

- In partnership with the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership the partnership delivered a session about Domestic Abuse & Carers. This followed a recommendation from an earlier Domestic Homicide Review, where complexities around caring for an older family member led to the need for the review. This was a well-attended session with 42 people attending, with a high representation from Primary Care and Residential Social Housing Providers.
- In partnership with Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Hate Crime training was delivered to 46 frontline professionals. A copy of the training presentation was shared with attendees, along with reporting pathways

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

The Rosmini Centre is a UK registered charity that supports migrants and culturally and linguistically diverse communities across Fenland and East Anglia. Their staff and volunteers offer support with a variety of issues

Their activities included:

- Free information, advice and advocacy on a range of topics, including immigration (OISC Level 2), EUSS, UK rights, police, education, housing, benefits and debt (FCA accredited)
- Free training including pre-ESOL and job search
- Facilitating access to healthcare and other specialist services
- Social activities for children and adults
- Volunteering opportunities
- Community cafe
- Community events and local projects.

The Rosmini Centre works to advance the knowledge of organisations working with culturally and linguistically diverse clients, by providing assistance to develop and promote good practice. This includes a range of bespoke services, including: Cultural Sensitivity Training and Translation & Interpretation services.

The Rosmini Centre closed their doors for the last time at the end of July and can no longer operate from the centre as their lease has ended.

What might the future hold?

The Council has been working to minimise the impact of the closure. The Rosmini Centre will continue providing weekly basic English as an additional language courses in March and Wisbech and conversations are taking place for the Queen Mary Centre to provide additional courses too. They are also considering what support that they can offer going forward and are

looking to do drop-in sessions to continue providing targeted support. The College of West Anglia see this as being a very important part of their accredited ESOL courses as people need to have a basic understanding of English when joining. More details of other activities will follow when this has been developed.

In addition to support offered by the Rural Citizens Advice Bureau and support at other community hubs in Fenland, the Hanseatic League (based in Kings Lynn) continue to offer Information, Advice and Guidance support to Fenland residents and conversations are ongoing with other support groups nearby to see if they can assist.

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

- Customer who submitted an ASB report to FDC and indicated they felt vulnerable alone in their home was referred to the Bobby Scheme. The Bobby Scheme offer a security check and preventive measures free of charge to victims of crime over 60 or at a small charge to all residents of Cambridgeshire.
- Vulnerable elderly couple who was being targeted by a group of local youths, were supported by FDC Community Safety who conducted visits to the couple and neighbourhood. There was also engagement with other FDC teams and the Police. Translation services provided, police criminal investigations conducted, Police reassurance patrols conducted, and neighbourhood cleansing facilitated. The partnership approach brought to end the targeted ASB that had been occurring for six months.

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

Reporting Period: 1st April 2025 – 31st July 2025

Community Safety and Incident Response

Between April and July 2025, the CCTV service supported **483 incidents** – an increase of 53 compared with the same period last year. These covered a wide range of community safety matters, including:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Criminal damage
- Violent offences
- Drug-related activity
- Weapon possession
- Theft and other acquisitive crimes

During this period, **69 arrests** were made by Cambridgeshire Police as a direct result of live detection, evidential support, and real-time operator intervention – five more than in the equivalent period last year. This demonstrates the increasingly proactive role of CCTV in both supporting enforcement activity and preventing crime through early action.

Proactive Monitoring

Alongside reactive responses, the service maintained a strong preventative focus through targeted proactive patrols. A total of **1,530 patrols** were conducted across identified hotspots, retail areas, town centres, parks, and open spaces – a reduction of just 34 from last year's

figure. These patrols helped to:

- Identify potential criminal activity at an early stage
- Provide visible reassurance to the public
- Support business crime reduction
- Detect environmental and safeguarding concerns

Out-of-Hours Emergency Support

The CCTV team also delivers the Council's 24/7 out-of-hours contact service, acting as the first point of contact for urgent public safety matters and essential service requests. From April to July 2025, the team handled **186 emergency calls** – an increase of 83 on the same period last year. Calls covered areas such as:

- Homelessness response and emergency accommodation
- Lost or stray dogs
- Council tax enquiries
- Anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance
- Environmental hazards and urgent cleansing needs

These figures underline the breadth of the CCTV team's role, showing their value not only in crime prevention but also in enabling effective emergency response and ensuring service continuity outside of core business hours.

Street Drinking Update (Cllr Wallwork)

There continues to be regular contact between Fenland District Council and the local police teams in March and Wisbech. This is in addition to other relevant internal and external partners.

Community Protection (ASB) Legislation has been used to deal with alcohol related issues within March town. In addition to the enforcement approach there has been extensive support in place over an extended period. This support continues.

Community reports of street drinking are relatively low. However, where they are reported the information is shared between agencies. A recent occurrence reported to FDC has been shared with the local police team, who attended the location, dealt with the individuals causing the nuisance, and updated the informants. FDC continue to engage with the informants and link with the local police team.

Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture & Heritage

Pride In Fenland Awards (Cllr Wallwork)

The community heroes of Fenland were recognised at the latest Pride in Fenland awards ceremony, celebrating volunteers in Fenland. The awards saw 87 nominations for individuals with Cllr Wallwork and Cllr Sam Clark making the night's announcements. All nominees were invited to the event where the impact they'd each made was mentioned and recognised.

Below is a list of winners and runners up:

Lifetime Volunteer Award - Jane Melloy

Dedicated community volunteer & fundraiser, in Tydd St Giles, and a former magistrate and

Witness Service volunteer, Jane has given many decades of service to her community and continues to do so now she is in her 80s.

Special Judges' Award - Steph Webb

Youth worker Steph shows outstanding dedication and support to Fenland youth projects, consistently inspiring young people and providing unparalleled opportunities and goes above and beyond in her job.

Fundraiser - Winner - Gary and Jay Dorman

Brothers Gary and Jay, run the Fen Diggers metal detecting club and organise year-round charity fundraisers, for good causes, raising more than £10,000 last year alone.

Fundraiser - Runner up - Luke Connolly

Generous Wisbech businessman Luke never stops giving back to the community, ranging from sending people on holidays to supporting fundraisers.

Sports and Recreation - Winner - Bob Fitzjohn

Bob is a 'cornerstone of our community'. He is the organiser of fishing matches, dedicated supporter of accessible fishing and keeps March tidy through riverside litter picking groups.

Sports and Recreation - Runner up - Whittlesey Small Fry Youth Fishing Club coaching team

Whittlesey Small Fry Fishing Club's volunteer team takes children fishing, teach environment matters, anti-pollution, water safety and takes education into primary schools.

Community Champion - Winner - Sarah Perkins

Sarah consistently goes above and beyond, involving Lyncroft Care Home residents, where she works, and the wider community in different yarn bomb events (colourful public yarn displays, such as post box toppers). She also established a St John's Ambulance group, helping youngsters gain vital first aid skills.

Community Champion - Runner up - Anna Foster

Dedicated and compassionate Anna has helped reduce food waste while tackling food insecurity running a community pantry in Whittlesey.

Community Volunteer - Winner - Spike Bailey

Chatteris In Bloom and the Friends of Little Acre Pocket Park (FLAPP) volunteer Spike is out in all weathers, pulling up weeds, tidying flower beds and planting trees and shrubs. Spike is always polite, cheerful and willing to help and makes a notable difference.

Community Volunteer - Runner up - Graham Chappell

Chairman of Fenland Road Safety Campaign (Charlotte's Way), Graham endlessly and tirelessly campaigns for better road safety measures and education. His actions have undoubtedly saved lives.

Special mention - in memory of Heather Johnson

A special certificate was given in memory of Heather Johnson in recognition of her dedication, compassion, and tireless work in wildlife care. Heather, who founded Heather's Hedgehog Hostel, in Chatteris, died on June 17. Teacher Heather's life was dedicated to supporting children and rescuing animals.

Community Group - Winner - Wisbech Youth Café

The team at Wisbech Youth Café create a safe space and engage young people in positive activities, from sport sessions to community involvement. They bring a sense of pride and belonging and make a tangible difference in countless lives.

Community Group - Runner up - Damsons Community Group

The volunteers provide invaluable care and support to both dementia sufferers and their families at their weekly club in Wisbech, creating a restful, happy environment, offering stimulation, fun and vital information.

Youth Volunteer - Winner - Kai Stoner

Junior parkrun volunteer Kai shows exceptional dedication and efficiency, infectious and inspiring enthusiasm. He is an outstanding and inspiring role model. Without Kai, the Junior parkrun wouldn't be the same joyful experience for so many families.

Youth Volunteer - Runner up - Cody Lenton

Cody has used his own experiences and challenges of dealing with ADHD, autism and hearing loss, to connect with young people and become involved in detached youth work in Whittlesey.

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

Works have commenced on site in accordance with the approved details. Given that the initial activity relates to the basement element of the development, this phase may not be highly visible from the public realm or surrounding properties. The Council has been advised that the next stage of the works, comprising demolition, scaffold erection, and installation of the supporting steel frame, is due to follow shortly. This phase is anticipated to take approximately 4 to 6 weeks to complete.

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	7 days	7 days	8.3 days	
ARP2	Days taken to process new claims and changes for Housing Benefit	10.0 days	6 days	9.2 days	
CELP1	Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	286	250	51	
CELP2	The proportion (%) of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing options work	46%	52%	40	
CELP3	Number of empty properties brought back into use	64	50	16	
CELP4	Total number of Active Fenland sessions offered per year (2025/26 reduced against baseline due to externally funding ending in October 2025, curtailing activities)	1463	750	378 As at July 31 st	
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	£199,000	£201,000	N/A (March 2026)	N/A

Key:

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

Comments

CELP 2 - This is below target reflecting complexity of cases to get resolution and available options for resolving homelessness particularly in the private rented sector where legislation has dictated that we cannot accept a housing duty so options are limited. However, it is envisaged there will be an improvement towards target over the rest of the financial year.

ARP1 and ARP2 Processing times have risen this month. There are several factors that have contributed to these increases. There

continue to be delays with customers providing new claim information, along with staff annual leave. We continue to ensure that DHPs are assessed as soon as possible by having focus days to assist those customers who have an urgent need. This is reflected in Fenland District Council's DHP spend to date which is on target to be utilised in full.

Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

Diverting waste from landfill (Cllr Teirney)

From April 2025 packaging within the blue bin materials attracted statutory Extender Producer Responsibility payments from [PackUK](#), which are confirmed to be £1.5 million for Fenland this year. By diverting blue bin waste from landfill the Council has also generated £110,294 of income from the County Council in recycling credits against their cost of landfill since April.

Against this background of increased income for recycling, the council continues to support our customers to maximise their recycling efforts and to treat their waste as a resource to generate income and reduce overall costs.

We have provisional waste data from the first quarter of the year only. During this period, the teams have collected more than 10,000 tonnes of domestic and commercial waste from our customers. Given the property growth in the past 12 months, we would expect to see overall waste increasing, but this is not the case. The Residual Waste (green bin waste) has increased (257 tonnes 4% increase), but the good quality blue bin Dry Recycling waste collected continues to reduce. Compared to the first quarter last year, customers are presenting by weight 13% less good quality recycling (284 tonnes). There have also been 422 tonnes less Garden Waste collected because of differing growing seasons year on year.

These provisional data will be updated as the year progresses and trends carefully monitored.

Collected Waste Tonnages (Quarter 1)	2024/25	2025/26	% Change
Overall tonnage	10,725	10,276	-4%
Residual Tonnage (green bins)	5,803	6,060	+4%
Dry Recycling Tonnage Actual (blue bins)	2,134	1,850	-13%
Compost Tonnage Actual (brown bins)	2,789	2,367	-15%
Dry Recycling & Compost Tonnage Total (blue and brown bins)	4,922	4,217	-15%

Collected Waste –		
Percentage Recycling (blue bins to green bins)	26.9%	23.4%
Percentage Recycling (blue and brown bins to green bins)	46%	41%

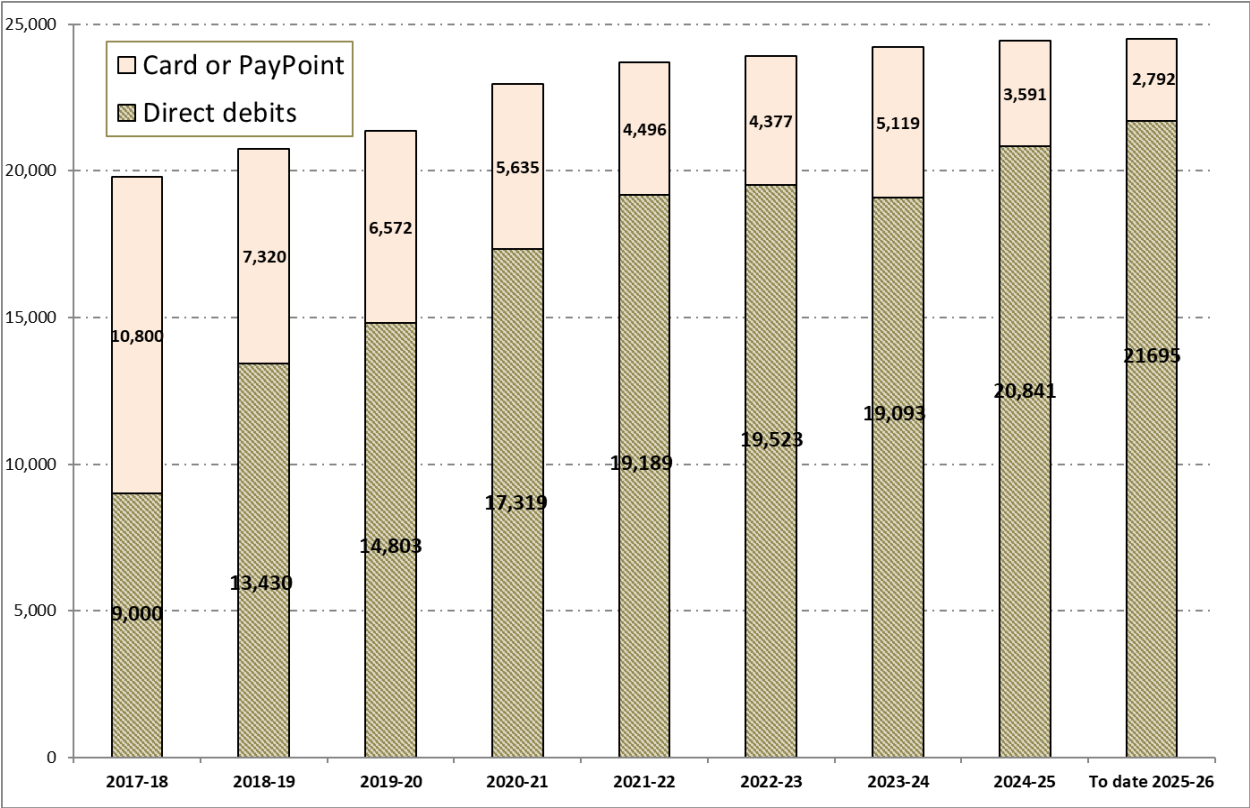
It can be seen in these provisional figures that the amount of good quality recycling has reduced when compared to the same period last year. This is somewhat the trend seen nationally with reduced packaging material weights, and for Fenland is also in part due to changes in the sampling methodology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

To protect the quality of recycling materials collected, the collection teams rejected 1,705 blue bins in the first 3 months of 2025/26 where they obviously contained general rubbish or non-recyclable materials. These customers are written to with information about how to help get their recycling correct.

Garden Waste Collection (Cllr Teirney)

To date this year we have 24,487 subscriptions, with 89% direct debits and a total of £1,184,393 of income to cover the costs of providing the garden waste service. This represents the highest levels of subscriptions and income, exceeding last year's 24,432 and £1,114,509.

Garden Waste Subscriptions by Year and Payment Type 2017-2025



Since the garden waste service commenced in 2017, it has generated more than £9.57 million and allowed the customers who choose to use the garden waste service to continue to do so.

Delivering clean streets and public spaces (Cllr Tierney)

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

Since April, the team have received 593 requests from the public to resolve environmental issues, such as litter, broken glass, flytipping, drug related litter or similar. 90% (537) of these were attended and dealt with the same or next working day.

The scheduled cleansing and Rapid Response service, with support from Fenland’s active local volunteers, including Street Pride groups, deliver clean streets and public open spaces in Fenland. The standard of cleanliness is monitored by Street Scene officers using Keep Britain Tidy surveying methodology across a range of land use types and all wards. Since April, officers have completed 300 surveys for litter and street sweeping and found 291 to be of a suitable standard (97%).

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

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

Monitor and respond to the DEFRA Waste & Resources Strategy consultation with RECAP partners (Cllr Tierney)

The Council has received more than £1 million of capital funding and £320,000 of revenue funding from Defra to commence the work developing the food waste services as set out in The Environment Act for 2026. A cross departmental team has been created to design and manage this project with support from relevant portfolio holders.

Cllr Tierney has developed a comprehensive communications plan for the additional weekly food waste service. Customers and members will start to hear about the changes at the end of this year with full details ahead of the service commencement in 2026.

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

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

The Street Scene Team continue to focus on reports from the public, town councils and partners of matters which affect them and their environment. Fly tipping continues to be a priority.

Month	Total	Chatteris	March	Whittlesey	Wisbech	villages
June 25	101	6	13	11	50	21
July 25	69	2	8	6	41	12

There have been 80 reports of matters requiring attention through June and July including waste accumulations, untidy bin storage areas and associated pest issues. All of these have been investigated and the majority resolved informally or are being monitored.

1 case was referred for prosecution as the fixed penalty notice had not been settled.

Since May there have been 3 fixed penalty notices for householder duty of care.

3 people have been issued with a formal written warning for their links to fly tipping.

1 community protection warning notice was issued for accumulations of materials left in a public place. This process uses anti-social behaviour legislation and enables the Streetscene officer to better control a variety of issues associated with resident's concerns.

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

Ensure well maintained parks and open spaces by working with our grounds maintenance contractor (Cllr French)

As a result of the fine summer weather and Tivoli's organisation, as well as FDC's officers' management of the contract, the open spaces around the District have looked exceptional this year.

The team have taken care to ensure open spaces used by community events are particularly well tendered prior to an event.

Heading into September Tivoli will begin hedge cutting and a general tidying up of the open spaces ready for the winter season.

The Council continues to maintain 6 open cemeteries and facilitate interment of ashes and burials. The Tivoli team, the FDC Bereavement Team, the FDC open spaces Cemeteries Officer and local funeral directors continue to work well together providing this important service to the local community.

The Council also maintains closed cemeteries that have been passed by law to FDC to maintain from the Church (via the Parish or Town Councils). These historic areas require particular attention as they often have significant trees within the cemeteries that require careful assessment and management. These closed cemeteries are some of the most beautiful and nature-rich green spaces in Fenland with Meeks and the closed section of New Road Cemeteries in Chatteris and Station Road Cemetery in March being fine examples where people can sit in a beautiful natural setting and enjoy a peaceful few minutes.

Supporting volunteer Street Pride groups and other environmental volunteers, organisations and partners (Cllr Wallwork)

Fenland Environmental Volunteers Party and Awards

The 2025 celebration event is planned for the evening of **16th October 2025** at **March Braza Club**. The event will focus on socialising and engagement across the groups. There will be a buffet and live music.

Award nominations can be made using the following link:

<https://forms.office.com/e/VC43TUFURZ>

Group updates

Newton Street Pride continues with their monthly litter picks, attracting 8 volunteers at their last session, collecting their regular abundance of litter. **Murrow Street Pride** also continue with their regular sessions (including coffee and cake) and plan a VJ Day Commemoration and Celebration event, which they are hosting on Saturday 16th August in Murrow Village Hall between 3pm and 5pm. **Benwick in Bloom** had a busy month preparing for their Anglia in

Bloom judging on the 21st of July 2025.

Anglia in Bloom – judging 21st July 2025

Cllr Brenda Barber (Chair of FDC and Volunteer/Chair of Tydd St Giles Street Pride) supported the groups for Benwick and Chatteris in Bloom during the judging process. It was fantastic seeing all of the hard work and creativity put into the displays and arrangements. The judges feedback how impressed they were that all the hard work and dedication was a result of volunteering.

Work with Town Councils and the community to provide local markets and thriving market town community events (Cllr Seaton)

On 28th and 29th June, the Chatteris Midsummer Festival took place and was a great success. The festival was at Furrowfields Recreation Ground.

- 10am to 10.30pm on Saturday, June 28 (admission £2 adults, £1 children), and,
- 10am to 4pm, on Sunday June 29 (admission £1 for all).

On Saturday, the parade assembled at 10.30am at Church Lane car park and sets off at 11am to arrive at Furrowfields Receptions Ground for 11.30am when fancy dress contest judging took place. The theme was TV cartoon characters.

The recreation ground was full of colourful live performances, stalls and delicious food.

The weather was very hot and so a decision was taken not to hold the dog show on Sunday but this was replaced by children's sporting activities, colour fun runs for all the family and tug of war.

Feedback on the day was very positive and the fairground for the children and stalls were particularly popular.

Attendees were encouraged to use public transport, walk or cycle to the event to reduce congestion in the town.

Chatteris Festival is a [Fenland Four Seasons event](#) led by a dedicated volunteer organising committee, supported by Chatteris Town Council and Fenland District Council

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

Update on the Net Zero Village Fund.

Gorefield Community Hall: Were awarded £25,000 for solar panels. Solar Panels and batteries now installed and fully functional – project installation completed and in monitoring phase.

Tydd St Giles Community Centre: Were awarded £10,00 for low-energy LED lighting, LED lighting now installed and fully functional – project installation completed and in monitoring phase.

Guyhurn Community Centre: Were awarded £9,198.41 for solar panels. Now installed and

fully functional – project installation completed and in monitoring phase.

Wimblington & Stonea Community Centre: £17,000 awarded for a green roof installation project – currently awaiting planning sign-off.

Grant 5: Expressions of interests have been received from three applicants, all for solar panel projects – to be reviewed and invited to full application ASAP.

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

Progress on CPE has been limited over the last 18 months since a shortfall in the available funding was last calculated in November 2023. A further update report was tabled at Cabinet on 21st July and all recommendations were approved by members.

Estimated costs were included within the report but formal quotes have been requested from Cambridgeshire County Councils framework contractor (Milestone). Upon receipt of the updated corrective sign and line costs, a further report will be brought back to Cabinet for final approval.

It is accepted that the corrective work costs would certainly now have increased. This is in part due to annual construction price increases and also the scope of works having increased associated with additional sign and line deterioration over the last 18 months.

The project delivery timeline is estimated to be 2 years from approval of the formal quotes. The earliest CPE go live date is currently estimated to be the end of 2027.

Street Lighting (Cllr French)

A total of twenty streetlight faults were reported and have been attended to during the months of June and July 2025 by Fenlands streetlight maintenance contractor. Ten of the reported faults related to District Council streetlights during this period.

An overview of the fault attendance can be seen below. These figures exclude any capital-programmed replacement or upgrade works undertaken by the Councils' streetlight contractor (Woodstock Streetlighting Services Ltd).

Fenland DC -	10 Fault Reports
Clarion -	0 Fault Reports
Parishes -	10 Fault Reports

The majority of the electrical and structural testing works have now been completed. Approximately 100 lighting assets were either unable to be tested due to power supply faults, or found to have below ground water ingress associated with uplighters. A number of minor earth tag faults were found along with 10 units requiring replacement of secondary isolator switches, all of which are in the process of being rectified.

18 streetlights failed the structural test and are either in the process of being replaced or have been stumped to temporarily make safe.

A number of test certificates are still awaited along with the updated inventory data from FDC's streetlight contractor. Upon receipt the data will be shared with third party asset owners.

FDC Car Park Maintenance (Cllr French)

Car park inspections are undertaken 6 monthly and are next scheduled to take place in September with any associated defects quantified and actioned. Works that were identified following the April inspections are currently being undertaken or have been programmed in. The inspection information is also used to inform minor improvement, and maintenance works for all the Councils public car parks.

The following works have either been identified or programmed.

1. Patching works to Chapel Road and Grosvenor Road car parks.
2. Vegetation and Tree trimming to specific sites
3. Road marking works at specific sites

The Engineering Team are responsible for around 6500 highway related assets. The majority of these assets are either streetlights or street furniture items such as seats, bus shelters, street name plates, signs, bollards etc.

Routine inspections for the high-risk assets are undertaken each year and various maintenance, and improvement works carried out to ensure that the assets remain safe and fit for purpose. Each year a number of seats, street name plates, streetlights and bus shelters are replaced or upgraded for safety reasons and to enhance the streetscene.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 25/26	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP7	% of Rapid or Village Response requests actioned the same or next day	87%	90%	90%	
CELP8	% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards	99%	90%	97%	
CELP9	% of household waste recycled through the blue bin service (1 month in arrears)	25.0%	25.0%	23.4	
CELP10	Customer satisfaction with refuse and recycling services	97%	90%	N/A (March 2026)	N/A
CELP11	Customer satisfaction with garden waste service	97%	90%	N/A (March 2026)	N/A
CELP12	Number of Street Pride, In Bloom, Friends Of Groups and Green Dog Walkers community environmental events supported	282	204	103	
CELP13	% of those asked who were satisfied with community events	100%	96%	98%	

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

Comments
CELP 9: The impact of extended producer responsibilities, increased contamination and reduced levels of recycling.

Economy

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

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

The Estates team continue to work to promote the investment portfolio and for the 3 months (May, June & July) average occupancy equated to 94.6%. For July this breaks down as follows:

- The Boathouse – 96.2%
- South Fens Business Centre – 72.5%
- South Fens Enterprise Park – 100%
- Manufacturing Factories – 100%

The Boathouse is showing as just below full occupancy however this is a transitional period, and new tenants are already identified and progressing through legal and therefore this should revert to 100% in the coming months

South Fens Business Centre whilst not full has seen a steady increase in occupancy this year with further interest now being shown which is encouraging. The property is shown with availability on the FDC web page, Rightmove and via local agents Eddison's.

The industrial units are consistently at full capacity, and we retain a list of prospective tenants that we can call on should one become vacant.

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration

Enable appropriate growth, development and infrastructure through delivering a proactive and effective Planning service (Cllr Laws)

The Planning Service is now fully staffed across Development Management, Planning Enforcement, and Planning Policy. This sustained period of stability is already delivering measurable benefits, including improved case handling, a more consistent approach to decision-making and greater internal resilience. A key structural change this year was the introduction of a Planning Enforcement Team Leader post, strengthening the management and oversight of enforcement matters.

Although overall application numbers, in 2025, are down compared to previous years, the Service continues to receive a disproportionately high volume of large and complex planning applications. These include major housing developments, commercial schemes and renewable energy projects. In response, one planning contractor has been retained to support the team. The cost of this additional resource is being met in full by the substantial application

fees attached to these schemes and the income for Planning Performance Agreements for the applications.

The Council continues to operate one of the lowest levels of delegation in the country; in 2024, it had the fifth lowest nationally. This results in a high proportion of applications being reported to Planning Committee. While this approach supports transparency and Member engagement, it places pressure on officers to meet statutory determination deadlines and contributes to lengthy committee agendas and an increased number of meetings.

Earlier this year, the Government consulted on a proposed National Scheme of Delegation, which would require all councils to adopt a standardised approach. The proposals represent a significant departure from the Council's current arrangements and would lead to far fewer applications being referred to committee. Fenland District Council in consultation with the Portfolio Holder submitted a formal response to the consultation, highlighting the implications for local accountability and the efficient operation of the planning system.

The Service continues to invest in service improvement and customer experience. A range of new guidance documents and internal process changes have been introduced to support more effective and consistent decision-making. In parallel, the Council is actively promoting its pre-application advice service to encourage early engagement and the submission of higher quality applications. This is helping to reduce avoidable delays and improve outcomes for applicants, communities and the authority.

The Planning Policy team has continued to progress the evidence base in support of the emerging Local Plan. Key outputs this year have included the publication of the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment (GTNA) and an updated Five-Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) position statement. The Council can currently demonstrate a 6.6-year supply of deliverable housing sites, a strong position which provides greater confidence in decision-making and helps resist speculative or inappropriate development.

The Policy team continues to lead the Council's work on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). Fenland is currently host authority for four NSIPs, all at different stages of development. These projects demand significant input and coordination, often on tight statutory timetables. Given the size of the authority, the level of resourcing required for this work is disproportionate, but the team continues to deliver this function effectively.

Activity	Outcomes	Performance Against Target
Speed of Determination of Planning applications 2024/25 to 31 July 2025	Major 93.02%	85%
	Minor 88.32%	85%
	Other 95.20%	85%
<p>The national performance requirement is measured over a 24-month rolling monitoring period and in relation to this we are performing as follows:</p> <p>Major 94.52% (against a target of 80%)</p> <p>Non-Major 86.81% (against a target of 80%)</p>		

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

The Council has over the last 12 months been supporting the development of a new Local Growth Plan for the Combined Authority to submit to Government to help inform future investment pipeline into the area linked with the National Industrial Strategy and the Comprehensive Spending review.

Drive forward the development and delivery of new homes and commercial space by using our surplus property and land assets to deliver sustainable economic and residential growth (Cllr Laws, Cllr Hoy, Cllr Count & Cllr Imafidon)

See the Elms and Nene Waterfront update.

Work with our partners to enable new affordable housing to meet housing needs (Cllr Laws & Cllr Hoy)

- 217 affordable homes are forecasted for completion in 2025/26 across key sites in March, Whittlesey, Elm, and Wimblington.
- A further 724 affordable homes are expected to begin construction during 2025/26, with completions anticipated within the next 18–36 months.
- The Council's enabling work has supported a strong pipeline of over 1,000 affordable homes in early planning stages, many with planning permission granted.
- Developer and registered provider interest remains high, with regular engagement by the Council to encourage a focus in Fenland.

Plan for Neighbourhoods (P4N), Wisbech (Cllr Hoy)

The P4N Town Board work continues to progress at pace with documents continuing to be developed ahead of the 28 November submission date.

The Regeneration Plan will be put before Cabinet at the October meeting for endorsement.

Alongside this ongoing work, consultation events are scheduled to take place on the following dates:

Wisbech Town Centre– Consultation - 24th September

Wisbech Hudson Leisure Centre - 26th September

Online – September 29th

The Town Board have also committed spend to some capacity building areas in line with the CLG guidance.

To date, £10,000 has been spent on investment at the Hudson Leisure Centre to create youth activities – this forms a test for further investment in the Hudson.

£99,999 has been allocated to the provision of Town Wardens in Wisbech, to be delivered by the Wisbech Town Council.

C£10,000 has been earmarked for the creation of a brand and website for the Board

Officers are confident of a submission being made successfully by the Town Board to Government by the deadline. This is required to secure the funding which, as of yet, has not been confirmed legally via MOU or GFA.

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

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) is a transitional fund for one-year 2025-26 to maintain support for businesses and communities prior to the introduction of the Government's Industrial Strategy to be launched in 2026. Fenland has negotiated with CPCA an SPF allocation of £279k. This is the largest single allocation to any of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local authorities.

The two SPF projects are, in summary: A continuation of the Investment in Business project with a budget of £220k. This project will provide access to the appropriate expertise and pump-priming grant funding for Fenland businesses to drive local economic growth, productivity, R&D, energy saving and business innovation to secure access to market opportunities. The project will proactively prioritise sectors that are important drivers for economic growth in Fenland including agri-food, precision engineering and advanced manufacturing sectors, however, there will be no sectoral restrictions for the project. The project will maintain the involvement of the Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce in assessing grant bids and making recommendations to the Council's Grant Team for final decisions on grant applications.

Following the deadline for submissions of expressions of interest in the Investment in Business scheme, in excess of 130 expressions of interest were received and of those 8 have been invited to submit a full application.

Firebreak and Anti-Social Behaviour - Delivered in partnership with the Fire Service, County Council Youth Engagement team, law enforcement agencies, and local youth organisation CICs, the project provides structured youth engagement opportunities, focusing on personal development and crime prevention. As well opportunities to engage and reassure the wider 33 community through visible policing across all areas of Fenland. A key component of this initiative addresses youth-related anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime through targeted outreach, increased police visibility, and proactive intervention strategies. Under Operation Luscombe, law enforcement will enhance patrols in ASB-prone areas across Fenland, improving public perception of safety and reducing nuisance incidents.

The Rural England Shared Prosperity Fund (REPF) builds on and is a top-up to the Governments Shared Prosperity Fund and is available only to eligible rural local authorities in England. The funding available to Fenland District is for £130k over a transitional one-year period 2025-26 and will support the continuation of the 2022-25 REPF rural business grant scheme. The key elements of the REPF Business Grant project are:

- A maximum grant of up to £10k per business.
- Businesses will need to contribute a minimum of 50% towards the total cost of the project.
- Only businesses with between 2 and 40 employees will be eligible.
- Only businesses located within the defined Fenland REPF area will be eligible
- Capital grants will be available for businesses to promote business growth and diversification and for the purchase of for example capital equipment, expansion of business premises and so on.

The criteria used in assessing applications for REPF will include:

- Projects that create and sustain rural jobs.
- The diversification of income streams.
- Certain types of rural businesses will receive priority including farming, suppliers to farming businesses, manufacturing and tourism businesses.

The deadline for receipt of initial expressions of interest in the scheme has now passed, over 50 were received and evaluation is currently underway following which, those successful, will be invited to submit a full application.

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

The March Future High Street fund programme is now in its final phase. All public realm improvement work is now completed with construction of the new toilets set to complete early October.

The final physical project is the demolition of the old Barclays bank building to prepare the development site which will be sold, returning a capital receipt to FDC. Demolition planning permission was granted by the Planning Committee in August, the team are now working to begin demolition at the end of September to be completed before Christmas.

Once the Barclays site is completed, Octavius will leave March and the programme will come to a formal close.

To date the project has run under budget, with the saving being used to complete the public realm work at the southern gateway to the town outside of Iceland.

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

Unfortunately, the contractor, Etec, has pushed back the handover date for 24 High Street once again. This has moved for 29 August to 16 September. The building is on the whole complete, with snagging being undertaken at the moment. A formal opening will be planned once FDC has taken ownership of the new building.

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

Awaiting planning permission determination.

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

Awaiting planning permission determination for an extra care scheme at plot 5.

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

Work continues in respect of the final sites identified in the first tranche of disposals with further sales completing recently. This results in overall sales in Tranche 1 of £676,000 with additional receipts from overage clawbacks of £49,090 thus a total return of £725,090 to date.

Work has also begun in relation to the second tranche of sales as approved by members in December. The first stage is to prioritise the sites to identify which can be progressed and also which have the potential to generate the most significant capital receipts for the Council, and this strategy will soon be discussed with Cllr Imafidon prior to implementation

Fenland Inspire! (Cllr Seaton and Cllr Count)

Projects Update

A report was tabled at the Cabinet meeting held on 16 June 2026 giving an update on all Fenland Inspire! projects - [Report and appendices A-S.pdf](#)

Wisbech Splash Pad

A report was tabled at the Cabinet meeting held on 24 March 2025:

[Draft Cabinet report - Fenland Inspire.pdf](#)

11-12 High Street, Wisbech

Following cabinets agreement to the initial design, planning and tender phase of this project, a multi-disciplinary team all of whom were involved in the design and delivery of 24 High Street, Wisbech have now been engaged and are commencing the final review of the outline designs and preparing for discussions with FDC planners on the most appropriate way forward with the project.

As per Cabinet's direction the, project will gain planning consent and identify a preferred contractor and cost before being reported back to cabinet for formal approval to proceed with the delivery of the development

Wisbech Floodlighting for Clarkson Memorial

The work to restore lighting back to the Clarkson Memorial has been broken down into three sections:

1. Power enabling works – This involves extending the UKPN supply cable from an existing lighting asset to a new feeder pillar to be located adjacent to the former wine cellar entrance. These works have been ordered and are programmed to commence on site on 27/08/25 subject to County Council road space being approved.
2. New trenching, ducting and cabling works – Works on the planned cable route has commenced and is awaiting a formal quotation from FDC's streetlight contractor. Once the layout and quote is approved, an application to the County Council for a section 50 licence will be made.
3. Lighting design and formal quotes – lighting designs have been undertaken by four manufactures for the provision of three new LED lights and the designs are currently being analysed by the Engineering Team. The design and products that best suits the lighting requirements will be ordered. Installation will be undertaken by FDC's streetlight contractor.

Part of the project requirement is also to relocate and increase the number of planters, if required, located on the pedestrian island to prevent unauthorised vehicle parking. The existing planters are not owned or maintained by FDC and contact is being made with the local volunteer groups who maintain the planters to understand their access requirements and capacity to adopt some additional planters.

Several attempts have also been made to contact the owners of the wine cellar entrance to ascertain any above ground loading capacity requirements for the underground vaulted cellar. Officers will continue to contact the owners.

Manor Leisure Centre, Whittlesey

Work has commenced on this project since the confirmation to proceed at Cabinet in June 2025. This will be a complex, multi-faceted project that will deliver a substantially new facility in Whittlesey, on one site, with improved community facilities under one roof and a significantly enhanced community space at the Manor Field.

Currently the team is completing RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Stage 2 of the pre-construction work with the other pre-construction phases RIBA Stages 3 and 4 planned.

The project programme is as follows:

- **RIBA Stage 2 – Concept Design and stakeholder / community / local elected Member engagement;**

This stage is underway with stage completion anticipated in September 2025.

An online community engagement survey is currently under development, alongside seminars for those who have completed the initial survey and would like to take part in engagement sessions online. Finally for the local community, the opportunity to feed into the work will take place at a marketplace session and also with customers within the leisure centre. Additionally, in-person stakeholder meetings will take place in the coming weeks with the user clubs on the Manor site. A session will also be offered to local Elected Members to engage with the process.

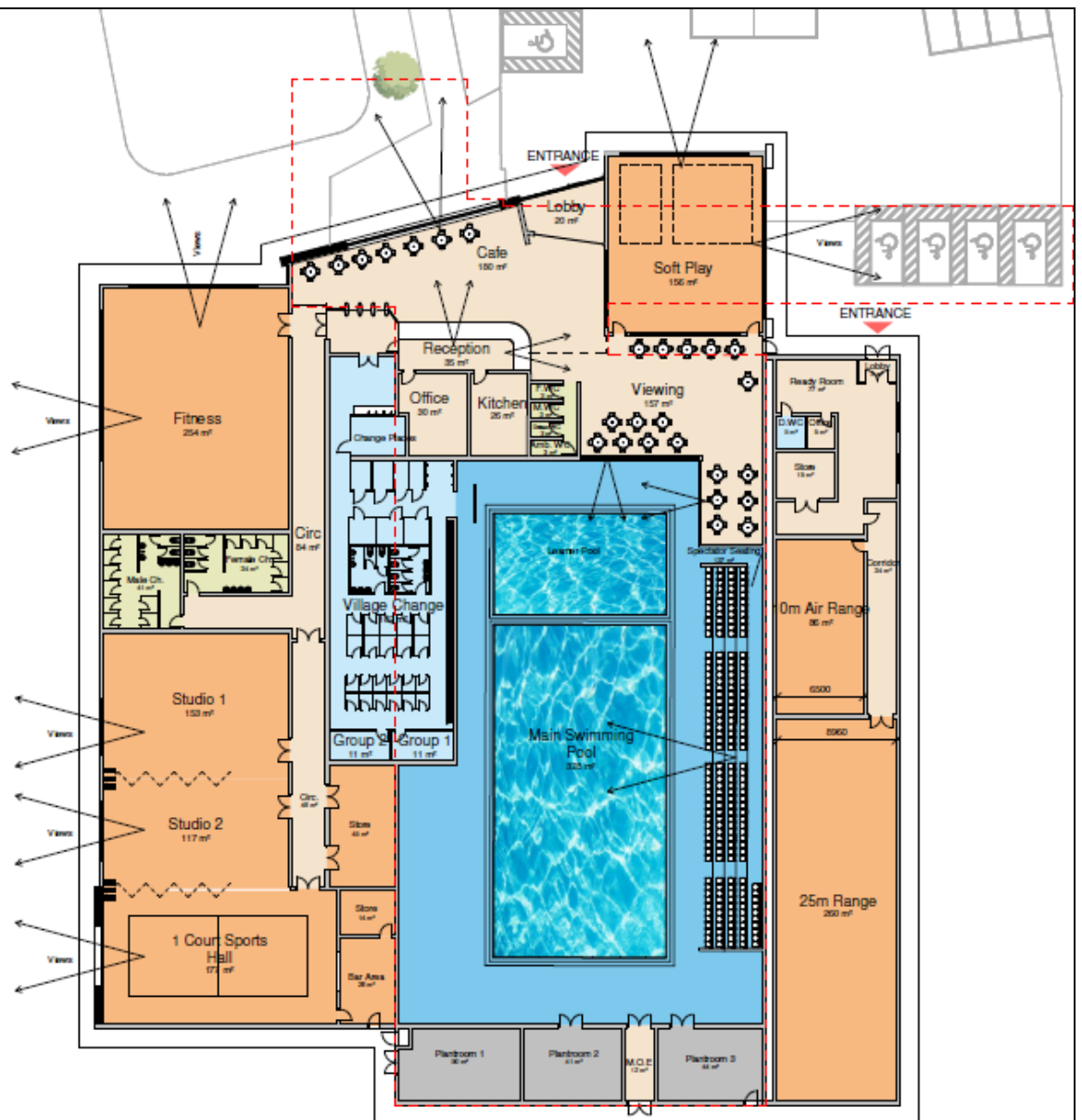
Stage Gateway:

A Portfolio holder discussion of the RIBA 2 completion report will take place in early October 2025.

Current Draft Designs and site plan

The current **draft** designs for the site and footprint of the new and refurbished pool facility are as follows. Note that these are DRAFT and are subject to stakeholder, community and local elected Member engagement sessions. Additionally, Sport England is likely to feed into the design with their expertise and utilising their design guidance information.

Additionally, the budget is a foremost consideration and as designs evolve and are assessed closely for cost there may be the need to value engineer aspects of the project to ensure that it remains affordable. There are several months of further work ahead prior to submitting plans to the Planning Authority (FDC) as part of a planning application.



The **draft** floor plan above highlights the main aspects of the revised facility. Again, as a draft, some details are missing, as well as some changes to the 1 Court sports hall storage / bar area that are anticipated to include a wellbeing space for older persons activity sessions and a consultation room for use by staff or teams associated with community support from the NHS. The footprint will change in the coming weeks. [For information, MOE indicated in the plant room areas to the foot of the diagram represent Means of Escape / Exit in terms of a fire exit or other emergency requirement for swimmers and those in the viewing area]

As noted above – these remain draft drawings and are already subject to change. Elected Member, community and stakeholder club feedback will add further input into the design, alongside Sport England feedback and Police assessment of the rifle range design. A final step in the design process is the planning application that may also influence design, materials, elevations and the use of materials such as glass.

- **RIBA Stage 3 – Spatial co-ordination and design development** will take place between mid-October and 8 December 2025.

Stage Gateway:

A Portfolio Holder discussion regarding the RIBA 3 completion report will take place by 19 December 2025.

The planning application follows RIBA 3 and runs concurrently with RIBA 4 with an expected timeframe of 5 January 2026 until 9 July 2026.

- **Planning Application**

- Expected submission of planning application in January 2026.
- Target date for securing planning consent late April 2026.
- Discharge of pre-commencement conditions expected by early July 2026.

- **RIBA Stage 4 - Technical Design phase** will run from 3 November 2025 until 10 July 2026.

Stage Gateway:

- A Portfolio Holder discussion regarding the RIBA 4 completion report will take place in June 2026.
- This will then lead to a Cabinet report and Full Council report on whether to move into the construction phase of the project.

Project Governance

This programme will complete the pre-construction side of the project. Throughout this process the Portfolio Holder for the project will be closely consulted and involved, with the Leader of the Council, as Portfolio holder for Finance, also kept closely informed of financial matters, with the Gateways indicated to ensure elected Members formally approve each stage of the project once completed.

At the completion of the pre-construction stage, a report will be prepared for Cabinet with a recommendation to Full Council to take the project forwards to construction, subject to affordability.

In regard to construction, the construction programme aims for mobilisation of the main contractor to start in July 2026.

Regarding budget management and the affordability of this significant capital project, each stage of the project has a focus on expected costs. As the Council is working within a procured framework for the project, this means that our construction contractor is already part of the team, so the cost assessment at every stage will be accurate and will also be cross-checked by a quantity surveyor. A further cost assessment could be undertaken should FDC be minded to contract a third-party QS.

Freedom Leisure

Renewed discussions with Freedom Leisure will commence in October 2025 in order that a revised agreement between FDC and Freedom relating to the Manor Leisure Centre part of our agreement is in place to facilitate an increased level of income to FDC

from the new facility in a mature year to offset some of the capital costs. Such an agreement will also take into account compensation to Freedom, where necessary for the loss of use of the pool during the construction phase.

It should be noted that all other aspects of the leisure centre will remain available to the community during construction, with the gym being moved to the sports hall building.

Sport England support

Very early initial discussions regarding design input have begun with Sport England. The project is now within Sport England's significant project pipeline. As the project progresses, it is anticipated that Sport England may ask the Council to submit a grant funding application. Any significant funding is only available by invitation from Sport England, where the governing body feels that the project fits within Sport England's strategic framework – Uniting the Movement - for increasing physical activity levels in the local population.

Other potential funding opportunities

As the national governing body for sport, Sport England is the best likely source for significant funding. However, FDC's project manager will also seek support from smaller potential funders (for instance wind farm funders, landfill tax credit funders, local charities, other national governing bodies for sport such as Swim England.)

The rifle club is already considering additional equipment that would be able to switch to the new facility – with grant funding applications being developed to support the purchase of this equipment.

Chatteris Leisure Centre Condition Survey Work

The work to carry out conditions survey aspects of the facility is under contract at a cost of £44,000 with this work due to complete in the next few weeks.

District Wide Assessment of New Play Equipment

Reports were tabled at the Cabinet meeting held on 21 July 2025:

[Report.pdf](#) (play equipment) and [Fenland Inspire Project North Drive.pdf](#) (North Drive Recreation Ground – options for new play equipment).

Work will commence on these projects once a project officer has been recruited to carry out the streams of work required.

March Country Park

Contact has been made with agents and representatives of the owners of the land which we hope will form the new Country Park. At this time the landowner's representative is awaiting a response and instructions from the board as to how they wish to proceed, and they will revert to us once received.

New Village Green for Wimblington

Provisional agreement for the transfer of the freehold of this site has been reached with senior members of the Parish Council and formal confirmation is awaited before solicitors are instructed.

The sale will also include restrictions on title limiting the use to that of Public Open Space

Development of five 3G synthetic turf sports pitches

The two PlayZone pitches identified in recent Cabinet reports at Whittlesey Manor and Barton Road, Wisbech both part-funded by FDC and the Football Foundation, are in the development phase with planning applications expected to be submitted in September. Subject to planning permission, construction is anticipated to begin in late November with the new sites handed to the Council in February 2026.

Further funding for PlayZones across England is being assessed by the Football Foundation's Board in September. If the Football Foundation opens another round of funding, FDC will work together with the Foundation to identify further suitable areas in Fenland, as well as third-party funding, where possible, to support such facilities.

St John's Chapel, Station Road, March

Initial discussions are taking place between estates officers and Town Council members to agree the preferred transfer method and from their terms and conditions can be formulated

Civil Parking Enforcement

A Cabinet report was tabled at the Cabinet meeting held on 21 July 2025:

[Civil Parking Enforcement Update Rev3 Final.pdf](#) and all recommendations were approved. Updated sign and line costs have been requested from Milestone via the County Councils Policy and Regulation Team. The awaited costs are for both the poor signs and lines identified in 2021 survey works and also an estimate of the 2021 fair lining which would now also be categorised as poor.

It is intended that a further Cabinet report will be tabled following receipt of the updated costs.

Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements

Promote sustainable road, rail and concessionary transport initiatives to improve access to employment and local services (Cllr Christy)

Whittlesea Station

The procurement phase for the design and feasibility work is expected to complete in August 2025. The procurement phase for the Outline Business case is expected to complete in September/October. The Survey work for the station and Station Road relating to the level crossing closures and volumes of traffic completed in July 2025.

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

Engage with the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council on the feasibility and delivery of road and rail infrastructure projects (Cllr Christy)

Whittlesey Relief Road Project SOBC

The Whittlesey Relief Road Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) project is now complete.

The final report and appendices were approved at FDC Cabinet in May 2025. Please see the link to the report and the Cabinet meeting minutes below.

[Agenda for Cabinet on Monday, 19th May, 2025, 2.00 pm - Fenland District Council](#)

Officers have been asked to consider options and sources for the additional funding that is needed to take forward the recommendations in the SOBC report forward. This includes opportunities to reduce potential costs of the scheme, further assessment on scheme benefits, a broader network wide assessment using the traffic model and an assessment of how the scheme supports economic growth and planning. Possible funding opportunities are being discussed with CPCA and other partner organisations.

A47

In July 2025, Government announced the funding of rail and road schemes following the spending review. Please see the link below which has the full details of the announcements. There is no new spending for A47 and the Wansford to Sutton Scheme that has been in developed for several years has now been cancelled.

[Green light for over 50 road and rail upgrades supporting over 39,000 new homes and 42,000 jobs - GOV.UK](#)

March Area Transport Study – Main schemes

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

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

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

Work with the Combined Authority to influence how housing and infrastructure funding is used to stimulate housing development and economic growth and improve connectivity in the district (Cllr Christy, Cllr Hoy and Cllr Laws)

Work is underway to develop operating practices for a new Strategic Place Partnership between the Combined Authority and Homes England to leverage additional investment for housing into the area over an above normal working investment pipelines.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 25/26	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP14	% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks	91%	85%	100%	
CELP15	% of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks	85%	85%	95%	
CELP16	% of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks	91%	85%	99.06%	
EGA1	% occupancy of our business estates	94.2%	92%	94.25%	
MS1	% occupancy of Wisbech Yacht Harbour	85%	90%	86%	

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

Comments

Excellent Customer Service

Help residents to self-serve and access our services digitally to allow us to provide greater support for vulnerable customers and complex queries (Cllr Tierney)

Work is ongoing in respect of the Council's approach to process automation. This is a project which puts a greater emphasis of maximising the use of technology in order to deliver excellent services to our customers, whilst freeing up Officers capacity to support those members of our community who are the most vulnerable or those who have the most complex needs. The project team have identified all the processes involved in receiving, validating and facilitating applications for services across the Council and a prioritisation approach is being utilised to automate those processes therefore exploiting technology where possible and appropriate. A Business Case has been drafted in respect of the high-volume manual processes and subject to Member engagement implementation will commence in the Autumn.

Elections Update (Cllr Boden)

Annual Canvass 2025

The Annual Canvass was reformed in 2020, but the purpose of Canvass remains the same, to identify everyone who should be on the electoral register. The start of the annual canvass project this year commenced in July with extensive data matching prior to communication being sent out to local residents.

The reformed canvass process incorporates a data matching step at the start in which registered electors are compared against National datasets to see if they match. The team also compare data against local datasets to match as many unmatched properties as they can. These steps inform us whether electors living in properties are likely to have changed allowing us to concentrate resources on the properties where data does not match.

Households of matched properties are allocated to Route 1 and those with email addresses received a Canvass Communication A (CCA) email, these emails require a response even if it is just to confirm there are no changes. We sent emails to approximately 25,000 households and have already received responses from around 25%. After the deadline non-responding households and those without email addresses will receive a CCA letter. Households of unmatched properties are allocated to Route 2 and receive a Canvass Communication B (CCB) this route follows a more traditional canvass process with a reminder and a household canvass visit.

The updated Electoral Register will be published on 01 December 2025

3C's Update (Cllr Tierney)

June - July 2025	Total received	On time	% On time
Correspondence			
	26	24	92%
Stage 1			
CELP	24	19	79%
GI	0	0	N/A
PRCS	8	7	88%
Stage 2			
CELP	3	3	100%
GI	0	0	N/A
PRCS	0	0	N/A

Governance, Financial Control & Risk Management

Maintain robust and effective financial standards, internal controls and organisational management (Cllr Boden)

The last 3 audits for the 24/25 year had final reports issued and the audits closed:

- Procurement – preparedness for the new Procurement legislation.
- Payroll – implementation of the new Payroll system and migration of data (Assurance Opinion: Reasonable).
- Declarations of Interest (Assurance Opinion: Reasonable)

New year 25.26 audits have commenced with:

- Main Accounting System
- Amendments to Supplier Standing Data (anti-fraud audit)
- Payroll (Starters & Leavers process)
- Corporate: Performance Management (follow-up)

The Head of Internal Audit gave her Annual Report and Opinion to the Audit & Risk Mgt Committee at their July meeting. This opinion feeds into our Annual Governance Statement which was also presented at the same meeting.

Based on the work that Internal Audit has performed the Head of Internal Audit's opinion for 2024-25 is that: **there is REASONABLE ASSURANCE as to the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls, risk management and governance arrangements.**

On the basis of the work undertaken during the year, it is considered that the key systems operate in a sound manner and that there has been no fundamental breakdown in control resulting in material discrepancy. However, the Head of Internal Audit's opinion can only provide a reasonable, not absolute, level of assurance as to the adequacy and effectiveness of these systems.

Comply with data protection and General Data Protection Regulation requirements (Cllr Boden)

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

In the same period, there has been 2 data subject access requests.

Communications and Consultation

News update:

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in June = 10. We also created an additional 2 news articles we published on our website.

Highlights include:

- Work begins on new public toilets in March
- Firms urged to bid for grants after more than £1million awarded
- Don't miss Chatteris Midsummer Festival
- Fenland residents getting well for work with WorkWell
- Discover new places and new faces – for free – with Fenland's new Travel Buddies project
- Have your say on plans for the future of local councils
- Community heroes of all ages celebrated at Pride in Fenland 2025
- Grants available for community projects

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in July = 8. We also created an additional 2 news articles we published on our website.

Highlights include:

- Fenland businesses invited to bid for grants of up to £25,000
- New free social and fitness sessions in Fenland
- £400 bill and criminal record for allowing waste to be fly-tipped
- Act now to keep your vote! Fenland's annual electoral canvass begins
- Get crime prevention advice and tips and highlight your concerns (Event, Aug 4)
- Speak up about how safe you feel in Fenland (closing date Aug 29)
- March's Broad Street improvements shortlisted for prestigious national transport award

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

Monthly update on FDC social media sites:

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

Twitter = 118

Facebook = 114

LinkedIn = 41

July:

Twitter = 108

Facebook = 103

LinkedIn = 28

We currently have 9,015 followers on Facebook, 8,557 followers on X and 2,160 on LinkedIn.

Consultation Summary:

- Future of local government in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough - 19 June to 20 July 2025.

Asset Management and Commercialisation

Ensure our asset base is sustainable, suitable and fully utilised to maximise income opportunities and financial efficiencies (Cllr Imafidon)

Please see updates on [business premises](#), [Local Growth Plan](#) and [property and assets](#) elsewhere in the document.

Work jointly with public, private and third sector partners to improve access to our services, including from co-located facilities (Cllr Imafidon)

We continue to work alongside colleagues for all public sector organisations to facilitate both the delivery of their services and our own. Examples of this include the Ambulance service having a substantial fixed base at Fenland Hall and the Peterborough Health Trust also providing a base and patient access out of Fenland Hall.

We work with the County Council on a transfer to Hereward Hall has been paused pending the outcome of the LGR process however we do work with County Colleagues to provide public contact points in their buildings as required by service need.

Other public sector colleagues are engaged either via the One Public Estate program or open market and this include the Ministry of Justice occupy space within the Boathouse facility in Wisbech as part of the probation service offering

Continue with our Commercial Investment Strategy to make informed decisions about the purchase and management of property assets through Fenland Future Limited (Cllr Boden, Cllr Count, Cllr Tierney & Cllr Imafidon)

As part of the Commercial and Investment Strategy, a facility of £25m was granted to the Investment Board to finance capital expenditure to be undertaken in accordance with the aims and objectives of the agreed strategy. At the end of March 2025, £4m of this facility has been utilised to fund the acquisition of a commercial investment in Wisbech and a house in March. These acquisitions were approved at Investment Board meetings held on 16 March 2021 and 3 December 2021 respectively. Further utilisation of this facility was used to fund the development of the two sites now owned by Fenland Future Ltd in line with the agreed Business Plan. A further £3m of the £25m facility has been approved by the Investment Board to support the Local Authority Housing Fund initiative where the government provides up to 40% of the capital cost of certain properties to support various housing initiatives.

The Commercial Investment in Wisbech has delivered a rental income of £230k every year since acquisition in March 2021 and continues to be on track for 2025/26. As we used our own funds to acquire this asset there is no external cost of capital and the loss of interest foregone on our funds is minimal at present. This acquisition has enhanced the Councils revenue position and has had a positive impact on the MTFS.

The most recent updates on the work of the Investment Board were presented to Cabinet at its meetings on 24 March 2025 and 15 September 2025. The annual report on Investment Board activity was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee held on 8 September 2025.

Workforce Development

Equip our workforce with the right skills to effectively deliver our priorities (Cllr Boden)

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

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

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

However, it is important that we continually review our learning and development offer to ensure it is fit for purpose and as accessible as possible, especially in light of the future changes to Local Government in the shape of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). LGR is by far the biggest change facing the Local Government sector in decades.

Whilst much of the change is unknown at this stage, the potential implications for our people are very significant, and we have created FDC People/Workforce LGR Workstream drawn from key personnel from CMT, HR, Communications, ICT, Transformation, our Heads of

Service population and the MTSP to ensure we retain and maximise the talent we have, and focus on and promote learning and development, apprenticeship opportunities, skills development, upskilling and equipping our workforce for change

We are also in the process of developing a new management Development Programme to be rolled out later this calendar year to all Council managers, supervisors and aspiring managers.

Support and empower our staff to make effective decisions (Cllr Boden)

We are committed to supporting and empowering our workforce, and we have a range of support that our staff can access, from an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The EAP is free and confidential for staff to use, and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and is accessible by phone, email and online.

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

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

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

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

We also undertake pulse surveys for our staff every quarter of dedicated topics via our new HR/Payroll system app to obtain more immediate feedback.

Transformation and Efficiency

Transformation Project updates (Cllr Boden & Cllr Tierney)

Transformation Project updates (Cllr Boden & Cllr Tierney) In 2019, we began our Transformation Agenda programme (TA1). This focussed on transforming the way the Council delivers all aspects of our services to our customers.

TA1 has successfully delivered over £1m savings over the medium term. In 2023/24 the Transformation Agenda 2 (TA2) was launched. The objectives of TA2 were to build in the successes of the TA1 programme and further drive forward transformation change across all services within the Council.

Following the emergence of the TA2 Programme, the Team currently supports three key strands of work including proactive Service Reviews, encompassing all services across the organisation, Ad-Hoc requests in addition to Corporate Transformation projects. Since the relaunch of TA2 in 2023/24, £241k of cashable savings have been implemented in addition to those already achieved as a result of TA1. In addition, over 7,000 of Officer hours have been saved as a result of exploiting the use of technology as well as introducing more efficient business processes. The team have also identified and put in place effective mitigating actions in respect of 20 significant business risks, which had the potential to cause significant service disruption and/ or reputation damage to the Council in the event that they materialised.

Work is ongoing in respect of the automation of business processes which will further exploit technology and free up office capacity to support those with the most complex of need. A draft business case has been compiled and subject to Member engagement, implementation will commence in the Autumn.

More recently however the team are increasingly supporting corporate projects to ensure their success. This slightly different emphasis has arisen due to the changing context in which the organisation works including the Fenland Inspire Programme and Local Government Reform

Local Government Reorganisation (Cllr Boden)

While many details of the government's LGR plans are still emerging, the Council is committed to supporting every member of our workforce through this period of uncertainty and change.

To help do that, a new specific LGR Workforce Workstream has now been created, tasked with shaping and delivering a robust support programme for staff over the next three years.

The Workforce Workstream will focus on the following areas:

- Recruitment and retention issues.
- Review of fixed-term contracts and secondments.
- Job description and contract updates.
- Learning and Development.
- Apprenticeships.
- Communication.
- Skills development and change management.
- Workforce wellbeing.

Enforcement & Compliance

Use a fair and proportionate approach to improve living, working and environmental standards as set out in our Enforcement Policies (Cllr French ([CPE](#)), Cllr Laws ([Planning](#)), Cllr Tierney ([Streetscene](#)), Cllr Christy (Environmental Health, [Housing](#) & Licensing Enforcement) & Cllr Seaton (Dilapidated Buildings & Enforcement))

Please follow links above for further information in this report.

Support businesses to ensure compliance with a wide range of regulatory requirements (Cllr Count & Cllr Imafidon)

Environmental Health inspection and business support programme

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

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

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

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

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

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

Food Hygiene Ratings were awarded as follows:

- 66 businesses received a 5
- 9 businesses received a 4
- 3 businesses received a 3
- 1 business received a 2
- 0 businesses received a 1
- 0 business received a 0

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

We received 4 applications for a food hygiene rating rescore visit. An opportunity to request a re-visit when improvements have been made in order to be re-assessed for a 'new' rating is one of the 3

safeguards to ensure that the Food Hygiene Rating scheme is fair to businesses, alongside a right to appeal and a right to reply. The re-score visit is unannounced and must take place within 3 months of the application being made by paying a fee via our website.

We also received 22 support requests, ranging from new business enquiries to foreign body and food poisoning complaints or issuing a food export certificate.

Working with our registered food businesses we have developed a better process of capturing their feedback during an inspection. This means we can capture not only visit outputs but also outcomes and we can capture a better picture of compliance overall. For example procedural improvements that may benefit a business in terms of productivity or improved audit compliance.

Health & Safety

Maintain effective Health and Safety systems to comply with relevant legislation and local requirements (Cllr Boden)

The Council has a comprehensive suite of Health and Safety Policies and procedures, which all managers are aware of and trained on.

We have a Health and Safety Panel, with membership drawn from all areas of the Council. This Panel meets every quarter to ensure ongoing compliance in all areas; to track all health and safety related issues, accidents and near misses.

An ongoing Action Plan to monitor the corporate health and safety goals is in place and well established. Work continues to drive forward improvements in health and safety management where required.

In 2025/26 the emphasis will be to continue to support managers and staff to continue good standards of health and safety, provide refresher training and upskilling in areas where there has been a high accident rate.

A summary of some of the work planned for 2025/2026 is provided below:

- Continue to review and update of the Council's Codes of Practice as required under the three yearly revision programme, and/or as a result of any legislative changes.
- Delivery of the ongoing corporate health and safety training programme.
- Conduct accident investigations as applicable and continue to build management skills in conducting these investigations.
- Coordinate delivery of a health surveillance programme across the Council.
- Development of e-learning training courses for the Council's new e-learning platform.
- Undertake audits/inspections of individual services/teams/buildings as per the audit programme.

- Continue to update intranet-based health and safety information for staff use.
- To deliver a programme of proactive health and welfare events across the Council.
- Conduct a review of the Council's lone worker devices.
- Update the Council's Driving at Work regulations and associated policies.

Development and consideration of additional people-centred leading indicators.

Deliver all aspects of the Council's Health and Safety action plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our workforce, partners and wider community (Cllr Boden)

Good progress has been made over the last 12 months to deliver our objectives as set out in the health and safety action plan for 2024/2025. Some of the actions are highlighted below:

- The roll out of health and safety e-learning courses developed for staff training.
- An analysis of all accidents and their consequent actions have been undertaken.
- The Accident Incident Rate (based on 100 per employees) was 5.96, which is a decrease of 1.75 on the previous year.
- Health and Safety corporate training was delivered to a total of 113 staff.
- An ongoing programme of audits and inspections have been undertaken.
- We have also delivered a quarterly focus on specific health and safety topics throughout the year to raise awareness and understanding amongst the workforce. Topics have included lone working, stress awareness, mental health awareness and wellbeing.

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

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

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

Office decision notices and Mayoral decision notices can be found [here](#).

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

CPCA COMMITTEE	DATE OF MEETING	LINK
Combined Authority Board	22.07.25	Agenda for Combined Authority Board on Tuesday, 22nd July, 2025, 10.00 am
Audit & Governance Committee	15.07.25	Agenda for Audit and Governance Committee on Tuesday, 15th July, 2025, 10.00 am
Business Panel	08.09.25	Agenda for Business Panel on Monday, 8th September, 2025, 2.30 pm
Funding Committee	01.09.25	Agenda for Funding Committee

		on Monday, 1st September, 2025, 10.00 am
Growth Committee	18.06.25	Agenda for Growth Committee on Wednesday, 18th June, 2025, 11.00 am
Growth Committee	10.09.25	Agenda for Growth Committee on Wednesday, 10th September, 2025, 10.00 am
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	24.06.25	Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 24th June, 2025, 10.00 am
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	09.09.25	Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 9th September, 2025, 10.00 am
Skills Committee	16.06.25	Agenda for Skills Committee on Monday, 16th June, 2025, 11.00 am
Skills Committee	08.09.25	Agenda for Skills Committee on Monday, 8th September, 2025, 10.00 am
Transport Committee	08.07.25	Agenda for Transport Committee on Tuesday, 8th July, 2025, 10.00 am
Transport Committee	15.09.25	Agenda for Transport Committee on Monday, 15th September, 2025, 10.00 am

Forthcoming CPCA meetings include:

CPCA COMMITTEE	DATE OF MEETING	LINK
Audit & Governance Committee	18.09.25	Agenda for Audit and Governance Committee on Thursday, 18th September, 2025, 10.00 am
Business Panel	10.11.25	Agenda for Business Panel on Monday, 10th November, 2025, 2.30 pm
Combined Authority Board	24.09.25	Agenda for Combined Authority Board on Wednesday, 24th September, 2025, 10.00 am
Funding Committee	13.10.25	Agenda for Funding Committee on Monday, 13th October, 2025, 10.00 am
Growth Committee	05.11.25	Agenda for Growth Committee on Wednesday, 5th November,

		2025, 10.00 am
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13.11.25	Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 13th November, 2025, 10.00 am
Skills Committee	01.12.25	Agenda for Skills Committee on Monday, 1st December, 2025, 10.00 am
Transport Committee (provisional date)	15.10.25	Agenda for Transport Committee on Wednesday, 15th October, 2025, 10.00 am

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Target 2025/26	Cumulative Target	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries processed at the first point of contact	92.45%	85%	86%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (measured annually in February)	96.66%	90%	N/A (Feb 2026)	
PRC3	% of contact centre calls handled	87.42%	80%	79%	
PRC4	% of businesses who said they were supported and treated fairly	100%	96%	98%	
ARP3	In year % of Council Tax collected	99.67%	96.20%	37.58%	
ARP4	Council Tax net collection fund receipts	£73,350,882	£78,224,486	29,281,273	
ARP5	In year % of NNDR collected	95.70%	96.46%	N/A (Mar 2026)	
ARP6	NNDR net collection fund receipts	£29,467,704	£30,701,571	£8,867,184	
HR2	% of staff that feel proud to work for FDC	86%	85%	N/A (Mar 2026)	

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

Comments

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SOLAR FARMS AND FOOD SECURITY

An increasing number of planning applications, both locally and nationally, have been submitted to Local Planning Authorities seeking permission to convert agricultural land to solar farms.

Current national planning regulations are currently not strong enough, so far as solar farm applications are concerned, and do not give enough weight to the importance of the agricultural land which is lost each time a solar farm is developed.

It is well established that the UK needs to become less dependent on overseas food imports. Food security, as a concept, is supported by Government. However, in practice, national planning regulations fail to directly and specifically recognise the importance of food security when new solar farms are proposed. Government policy to protect the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land from significant, inappropriate or unsustainable development proposals needs to be significantly improved to ensure adequate protections for BMV agricultural land from conversion to other uses, particularly solar farms.

This is a nationwide issue, but is of particular relevance to the Fens generally, and Fenland in particular, because our area has the greatest concentration of BMV agricultural land in the country.

Agricultural land is graded using the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) which divides agricultural land into 5 grades, from grade 1 (excellent) to grade 5 (very poor). About half of the ALC grade 1 land in the country is in the Fens, much of which is in Fenland.

ALC grade 1 (excellent), grade 2 (very good) and grade 3a (good) agricultural land officially constitutes the country's BMV agricultural land, and it is the preservation for agriculture of this land which is essential if policies supporting food security are to be successful. The vast majority of Fenland's agricultural land is officially BMV (the 'best and most versatile').

To promote food security in this country, there needs to be enhanced national planning policies leading to a better balance between approving solar farm planning applications and protecting the higher grade BMV food-producing land.

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL BELIEVES:

1. That the current national planning system fails to give adequate protection against inappropriate development of BMV (best and most versatile) agricultural land.

2. That better protection of BMV agricultural land is essential if we as a country are to improve our food security
3. That a better balance is required in the national planning system between the development of new solar farms and the protection of BMV agricultural land from inappropriate development.

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL THEREFORE RESOLVES:

1. To write to the Secretaries of State for (a) Environment, Food & Rural Affairs; (b) Housing Communities & Local Government and (c) Energy Security & Net Zero and to the Ministers of State for (a) Housing & Planning and (b) Food Security and Rural Affairs, enclosing a copy of this motion and calling upon them to amend current national planning guidance and practice so as (i) to prevent approval for any further ALC grade 1 agricultural land to be converted for use as a solar farm (ii) to create a presumption against approval for any further ALC grade 2 or 3a agricultural land to be converted for use as a solar farm.
2. To write to Stephen Barclay MP advising him of this motion.
3. To write to the following media organisations advising them of this motion:
 - A. Farmers Guide
 - B. Farming UK
 - C. Farming Monthly
 - D. Feedspot
 - E. Farmers Weekly
 - F. Farmers Guardian
 - G. NFUOnline
 - H. The Farmers Focus
 - I. FarmingUK
 - J. Farming News
 - K. BBC Farming Today
 - L. FarmingBritain.tv
 - M. BBC Countryfile

SOLAR FARMS AND FOOD SECURITY

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Current national planning regulations are currently not strong enough, so far as solar farm applications are concerned, and do not give enough weight to the importance of the agricultural land which is lost each time a solar farm is developed.

It is well established that the UK needs to become less dependent on overseas food imports. Food security, as a concept, is supported by Government. However, in practice, national planning regulations fail to directly and specifically recognise the importance of food security when new solar farms are proposed. Government policy to protect the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land from significant, inappropriate or unsustainable development proposals needs to be significantly improved to ensure adequate protections for BMV agricultural land from conversion to other uses, particularly solar farms.

This is a nationwide issue, but is of particular relevance to the Fens generally, and Fenland in particular, because our area has the greatest concentration of BMV agricultural land in the country.

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To promote food security in this country, there needs to be enhanced national planning policies leading to a better balance between approving planning applications and protecting the higher grade BMV food-producing land.

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL BELIEVES:

1. That the current national planning system fails to give adequate protection against inappropriate development of BMV (best and most versatile) agricultural land.
2. That better protection of BMV agricultural land is essential if we as a country are to improve our food security
3. That a better balance is required in the national planning system between the development and the protection of BMV agricultural land from inappropriate development.
4. The emerging local plan should reflect the same sentiment insofar as the NPPF permits.

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL THEREFORE RESOLVES:

1. To write to the Secretaries of State for (a) Environment, Food & Rural Affairs; (b) Housing Communities & Local Government and (c) Energy Security & Net Zero and to the Ministers of State for (a) Housing & Planning and (b) Food Security and Rural Affairs, enclosing a copy of this motion and calling upon them to amend current national planning guidance and practice so as (i) to prevent approval for any further ALC grade 1 agricultural land to be converted for use as a solar farm (ii) to create a presumption against approval for any further ALC grade 2 or 3a agricultural land to be converted for use as a solar farm.
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- K. BBC Farming Today
- L. FarmingBritain.tv
- M. BBC Countryfile

4. Ensure that the emerging local plan protects BMV to the greatest possible extent

Agenda Item No:	9	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	15 September 2025	
Report Title:	Audit and Risk Management Committee Annual Report	

1 Purpose / Summary

To report to Full Council the commitment and effectiveness of the Audit and Risk Management Committee's work from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 (and wider to cover external audit work).

2 Key issues

2.1 A good Corporate Governance framework helps the Council to deliver its Corporate Priorities.

The role of the Audit and Risk Management Committee includes:

- providing independent assurance of the adequacy of the governance, risk management framework and the control environment (GRC), plus
- overseeing the financial reporting and annual governance processes.

2.2 The Committee has taken action to ensure that its members are adequately informed on key themes of the Governance Framework via regular reports including:

- Governance
- Internal Control
- Risk Management
- Accounts and policies; and
Treasury Management.

2.3 The External Auditors provided the Statement of Accounts 2022-23 in December 2024, the Annual Auditor's Report 2022-23 in February 2024 and the Provisional Audit Plan 2024-25 in May 2025 (a postponed meeting from March).

2.4 The Committee has been fundamental in the review and maintenance of the Council's Governance Framework. The annual report details the matters it considered as part of its work programme for 2024-25.

2.5 In addition to the report attached the Committee Chair has completed a review of the committee's effectiveness using a checklist compiled by CIPFA, supported by the Head of Internal Audit. This was a recommendation made by the external quality assessment and endorsed by Corporate Governance (now Audit and Risk Management) Committee in February 2018. The completed checklist is attached as Appendix A.

3 Recommendations

It is recommended that Council agree the Audit and Risk Management Committee Annual Report for 2024-25.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Ref	Not applicable
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chirs Boden, Lead of the Council
Report Originator(s)	Cllr Kim French, Chair of Audit and Risk Management Committee Deborah Moss – Head of Internal Audit
Contact Officer(s)	Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director & Chief Finance Officer Deborah Moss – Head of Internal Audit
Background Paper(s)	Procured Rules 10 Audit & Risk Management Committee (<i>version 11 adopted 2020, amended 2023</i>) Audit and Risk Management Committee minutes 2024.25 CIPFA Position Statement on Audit Committees 2022 Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (CIPFA 2018)

Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Management Committee

April 2024 - March 2025



1 What is corporate governance?

- 1.1 Corporate Governance in Fenland District Council is an essential part of the Council's standards for transparent and informed management and decision-making. It provides assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the control environment, independent scrutiny of the Authority's financial and non-financial performance and to oversee the financial reporting process.

2 Responsibilities of the Committee

- 2.1 The Committee's purpose identified in the terms of reference (2023) states:

The purpose of our Audit and Risk Management Committee is to provide "independent assurance to the members and other parties of the adequacy of the Council's governance, risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides independent review of Fenland District Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It oversees Internal Audit and External Audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place. It also ensures the Council is managing the risk of ensuring services have the resources to deliver on the Council's statutory responsibilities and corporate priorities whilst recognising the Council's financial position."

3 Members' Commitment to the Committee in 2024-25

- 3.1 The Committee is committed to delivering governance oversight for the Council and meetings included development briefings, and items of topical interest, to maintain knowledge and awareness of the Council's governance framework. Examples were:

- the role of the Committee, Officers and the annual work plan
- interpretation of Annual Financial Statements
- the role of Internal Audit in Local Government. Update report on audits completed is provided which includes the number of and theme of recommendations
- reports on the Corporate Risk Register
- reports on policies including the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)
- reports from External Audit.

- 3.2 Members' attendance statistics for the 3* meetings in the year were as follows:

Member	Attendances
Councillor Kim French (Chair)	3
Councillor Jason Mockett (Vice)	0
Councillor Stuart Harris	0
Councillor Gary Christy	3
Councillor Gavin Booth	1
Councillor Steve Tierney	2
Councillor Jan French	3

(some of the planned meetings were cancelled or postponed due to alignment with external audit work)*

- 3.2 Training for Members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee is routinely discussed when reviewing the Committee's Work Plan for the year. All members are invited to submit their ideas and suggestions for relevant topics for training or briefing sessions, that will continue to develop their skills or support identified gaps in knowledge.
- 3.6 A training briefing session on Cyber Security at Fenland was held in a closed session with Committee Members in February 2025. The purpose was to inform and update Committee on cyber provisions and to take a question-and-answer session.

4 Work programme and outcomes

- 4.1 The Committee considered the matters in the table below as part of its work programme for 2024-25.

Programme	Outcome
Annual Governance Statement 2023-24	<p>The Authority has a statutory duty to publish a statement as to the level of effectiveness its governance and internal control framework.</p> <p>The Audit and Risk Management Committee was able to consider the sources of assurance and approve the content of the Statement prior to its publication with the Financial Accounts.</p> <p>The statement included an action plan which was reviewed during the year to ensure that governance and control framework weaknesses were addressed.</p> <p>This has helped the Council to proactively identify and manage governance and control risks that could affect Corporate Priorities. Examples include changes in legislation, finance and Government policy.</p>

Programme	Outcome
Internal Audit work programme	<p>The Audit and Risk Management Committee received reports, from the Head of Internal Audit, for review of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk based annual Audit Plan 24.25 and Charter • Annual Internal Audit Outturn 2023-24 • Head of Internal Audit's annual opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's control environment • Progress updates on delivery of the annual Audit Plan <p>These reports demonstrate that the Council has arrangements in place to comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, to maintain an adequate and effective Internal Audit and system of internal control.</p>
Risk Management Framework	<p>The Committee received regular updates on the Corporate Risk Register, discussed emerging risks, and any movements or new risks within the Register, and completed an annual review of the Risk Management Strategy.</p> <p>This provided assurance that significant risks are identified and managed for the Council.</p>
Treasury Management	<p>The Committee received reports throughout the year on the Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy, Annual Investment Strategy and financial performance.</p> <p>This provided assurance that the Council's assets are managed in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management.</p>
External Audit	<p>The Committee received reports throughout the year from the External Auditors, Ernst & Young, on the Statement of Accounts 2022-23 and 2023-24, the Annual Auditor's report 2022-23, Value for Money Report 22-23, and the External Audit Plan for 2024-25.</p> <p>This enhances the understanding of the Council's finances.</p>
Policies	<p>The Committee was presented with new/updated policies or policy reviews to approve that enhance governance, support risk management and reinforce controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing Policy • Corporate Debt Policy • Risk Management Policy & Strategy

Programme	Outcome
Ad Hoc Reports	<p>The Committee received the following reports for consideration and decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of an Independent Member to the ARMC (whereby the recommendation to appoint was discussed and a decision taken to refuse).
Annual Reports	<p>The Committee was presented with annual feedback on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIPA usage • Whistleblowing

** note that some of the above items were taken to the meeting in May 25 which was a postponement of the March 25 meeting.*

Fenland District Council
Audit and Risk Management Committee Self-Assessment Exercise for the Year 2024/25

No	Issue	Y	P	N	Evidence/ Comment	Action Required
AUDIT COMMITTEE PURPOSE AND GOVERNANCE						
1	Does the authority have a dedicated audit committee?	Y			Referred to as the Audit and Risk Committee.	
2	Does the audit committee report directly to full council? (applicable to local government only)	Y			The Audit & Risk Management Committee does report directly to Full Council.	
3	Do the terms of reference clearly set out the purpose of the committee in accordance with CIPFA's Position Statement?	Y			The Audit and Risk Management Committee has Terms of Reference that follow CIPFA's guidance on Audit Committees	
4	Is the role and purpose of the audit committee understood and accepted across the authority?	Y			The Committee's Terms of Reference are documented in the Council's Constitution, which is available on the website, where officers and Members can access relevant documentation. The revised Terms of Reference were agreed at Full Council in May 2023.	
5	Does the audit committee provide support to the authority in meeting the requirements of good governance?	Y			The committee supports the authority by following the Nolan Principles adopted by the authority and ensuring to the best of their ability that the corporate plan and strategic goals of the authority are adhered to. It reviews and approves the Council's Local Code of Governance and the Annual Governance Statement.	
6	Are the arrangements to hold the committee to account for its performance operating satisfactorily?	Y			The Audit and Risk Management Committee reports to Council and provides its Annual Report to Council. Throughout the year other members of the Council may request to attend the Committee's meetings.	

FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE						
7	Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement?	Y			The Committee's Terms of Reference were updated in 2023 and now cover all areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement.	
	good governance	Y				
	assurance framework, including partnerships and collaboration arrangements	Y				
	internal audit	Y				
	external audit	Y				
	financial reporting	Y				
	risk management	Y				
	value for money or best value	Y				
	counter fraud and corruption	Y				
	supporting the ethical framework	Y				
8	Is an annual evaluation undertaken to assess whether the committee is fulfilling its terms of reference and that adequate consideration has been given to all core areas?	Y			The Audit and Risk Management Committee completes an annual report, which encompasses this review and looks at all core areas. The committee also considers as part of its annual work the Annual Governance Statement and Corporate Risk Register. The Committee regularly receives reports from Internal Audit, External Audit and reviews the financial statements.	
9	Has the audit committee considered the wider areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement and whether it would be appropriate for the committee to undertake them?	Y			The committee reviews Treasury Management reports and has oversight of the annual report.	

10	Where coverage of core areas has been found to be limited, are plans in place to address this?	Y			A review of the Terms of Reference was completed in 2023.	
11	Has the committee maintained its advisory role by not taking on any decision-making powers that are not in line with its core purpose?	Y			Committee has no decision-making powers.	
MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT						
12	<p>Has an effective audit committee structure and composition of the committee been selected?</p> <p>This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • separation from the executive • an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills among the membership • a size of committee that is not unwieldy • consideration has been given to the inclusion of at least one independent member (where it is not already a mandatory requirement) 	Y			<p>The current Committee is separate from the Executive. The current membership has an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills, and the size is not unwieldy. The mix of members from each political party is in line with current policies.</p> <p>The Committee requested that the item to appoint an Independent Member be included on the Committee's action plan to review the need and requirement on an annual basis.</p> <p>The Committee gave second consideration to having an Independent Member and voted not to have one.</p>	Due consideration may be taken again in the next year.
13	Have independent members appointed to the committee been recruited in an open and transparent way and approved by the full council?	-	-	-	Not applicable – Committee decided not to have an Independent Member.	See 12 above
14	Does the Chair of the committee have appropriate knowledge and skills?	Y			The current Chair of the Committee has the appropriate subject knowledge for the position. Members of the Committee have a financial and risk background and are given opportunity to freely discuss matters with fellow members of the Committee. Officers attending the meetings are always available for advice to the chair if required.	Attendance at the Audit Committee Chair's Forum for the Eastern Region (for Chair and Deputy).

15	Are arrangements in place to support the committee with briefings and training?	Y			Training for members of the Committee is given to members on specific subjects (mainly technical areas – AGS, Statement of Accounts etc) prior to the official meetings taking place when requested. Training is offered/given to all members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee to ensure appropriate skills are up to date and relevant. Committee Members are asked to propose areas for training to support their roles.	
16	Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found to be satisfactory?	Y			The Committee membership is formed of members with financial backgrounds, historical knowledge of the authority, knowledge from other authorities resulting in a varied mix of experience and knowledge. A formal assessment has taken place as part of the selection process for the year.	A skills assessment may be useful in light of recent changes.
17	Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the CFO?	Y			All meetings are attended by a mixture of officers, including the Corporate Director/S151 officer, External Audit, Chief Accountant, and Head of Internal Audit.	
18	Is adequate secretariat and administrative support to the committee provided?	Y			Relevant officers attend meetings to facilitate secretarial and administrative support to the Committee.	
EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMITTEE						
19	Has the committee obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?	Y			The Chairman of the Audit Committee presents an annual report to the Council and receives feedback from the Executive.	
20	Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members?	Y			All members are encouraged to be involved fully at all meetings. Relevant officers are invited to attend meetings to provide greater detail to help discussions and engagement. Minutes evidence the questions raised by Members at meetings.	
21	Does the committee engage with a wide range of leaders and managers, including discussion of audit findings, risks and action plans with the	Y			The Committee engages with the relevant responsible officers when discussing risks and action plans and at presentation of reports. Examples of this are the AGS,	

	responsible officers?				Corporate Risk Register, Treasury Reports, RIPA and whistleblowing policies.	
22	Does the committee make recommendations for the improvement of governance, risk and control and are these acted on?	Y			All reports presented to the Committee for approval are discussed and actions minuted on suggested improvements. These actions are reviewed by the officers to ensure they are followed up on and discussed at the following meeting.	
23	Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?		P		No formal evaluation has taken place, but the annual audit committee effectiveness report considers this to some degree. The Committee regularly challenges all the reports submitted, which are documented in the minutes.	Committee to discuss its 'adding value' (at future pre-meeting session).
24	Does the committee have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness?	Y			An action plan for the Committee was introduced to monitor actions and is included as part of the workplan	Continue to monitor the action plan and how it adds value to the organisation.
25	Does the committee publish an annual report to account for its performance and explain its work?	Y			Audit and Risk Management Committee Annual Report evidences its work over the year. This is reported by the Chair of ARMC to Full Council.	

Agenda Item No:	10	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	15 September 2025	
Report Title:	Refuse, Recycling and Cleansing HGV Fleet Replacement	

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 Based upon Cabinet recommendation, to approve the procurement of the required HGV vehicles as part of the ongoing Fleet Replacement Plan.
- 1.2 To delegate the procurement of these vehicles to the relevant director, through existing procurement frameworks or mini tender as required, in consultation with the portfolio holder.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Fenland has an efficient approach to vehicle replacement that allows frontline vehicles to be in service for more than 10 years, where they remain viable.
- 2.2 To provide the key frontline services, such as domestic waste and recycling, garden waste, commercial waste and street sweeping services the Council requires a fleet of 20 HGV vehicles.
- 2.3 There is a Fleet Replacement Plan in place for these vehicles as they come to the end of their serviceable lives.
- 2.4 Lead times for this type of vehicle are increasing, at present they can be 12 months, and it is important to allow these services to keep running without issue, that the Council has an approved vehicle and capital replacement plan. For the coming 3 financial years this includes the vehicles in the table below that will require ordering and replacement.
- 2.5 The vehicles being replaced will have been in service for between 9 and 15 years at the point they are replaced.

Table 1. Fleet HGV Replacement Schedule 2026-2029

Vehicle Type	Service Area	Age ¹	Delivery	Cost Est.
2026/27 Capital Commitment				
12 Tonne Refuse Freighter	Garden Waste	15 yrs	Apr 26	£155,000
26 Tonne Refuse Freighter	Garden Waste	10 yrs	Apr 26	£233,000
26 Tonne Refuse Freighter	Refuse/Recycling	10 yrs	Apr 26	£233,000
18 Tonne Street Sweeper	St. Cleansing	12 yrs	Apr 26	£190,000
Total				£811,000
2027/28 Capital Commitment				
7.5 Tonne Refuse Freighter	Refuse/Recycling	10 yrs	Apr 27	£135,000
26 Tonne Refuse Freighter	Refuse/Recycling	10 yrs	Apr 27	£240,000
26 Tonne Refuse Freighter	Refuse/Recycling	10 yrs	Apr 27	£240,000
26 Tonne Refuse Freighter	Garden Waste	10 yrs	Apr 27	£240,000
Total				£855,000
2028/29 Capital Commitment				
7.5 Tonne Refuse Freighter	Refuse/Recycling	10 yrs	Apr 28	£140,000
26 Tonne Refuse Freighter	Commercial Waste	9 yrs	Apr 28	£260,000
26 Tonne Refuse Freighter	Refuse/Recycling	10 yrs	Apr 28	£250,000
26 Tonne Refuse Freighter	Refuse/Recycling	10 yrs	Apr 28	£250,000
Total				£900,000

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Based on Cabinet recommendation, to approve the procurement of the 4 HGV vehicles for delivery April 2026 as part of the ongoing Fleet Replacement Plan.
- 3.2 Based on Cabinet recommendation, to approve the vehicle and capital requirement for 2027/28 and 2028/29 and for these requirements to be added to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 3.3 Based on Cabinet recommendation, to approve the delegation of the procurement of these vehicles to the corporate director with responsibility for Environmental Services, through existing procurement frameworks or mini tender as required, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder responsible for street sweeping, recycling and refuse collection.
- 3.4 To note that the total value of required vehicles that will need to be ordered within the next 24 months is expected to be in the region of £2,560,000. The Chief Finance Officer will determine the best value means of financing these necessary vehicles.

¹ Age at replacement

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/10JUN25/01
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Boden, Leader and Finance Portfolio Holder Cllr Steve Tierney, Portfolio Holder for Communications, Decarbonisation, ICT, Street Sweeping, Street Bins & Dog Bins, Recycling & Refuse Collection.
Report Originator(s)	Mark Mathews Head of Environmental Services
Contact Officer(s)	Carol Pilson Director and Monitoring Officer Peter Catchpole Director and S151 Officer
Background Papers	

1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 1.1 The Council has in place a Fleet Replacement Plan (appendix 1 for HGVs) to ensure that vehicles remain serviceable, safe and offer efficient running costs. The larger refuse vehicles are run for between 9 and 11 years, and some of the smaller HGV vehicles can last 15 years before they require replacement.
- 1.2 Non-HGV fleet vehicles, such as vans and cleansing vehicles, are already included within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy capital plan, with £200,000 set aside for this year and next.
- 1.3 Newer vehicles offer improved environmental credentials, and the larger HGV refuse, garden waste and recycling collection vehicles all have hybrid electric bin lifts to reduce fuel usage and noise.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Fenland provides statutory and chargeable waste services to domestic, municipal and commercial premises. To achieve this in a reliable, efficient and effective fashion there is a need to maintain the HGV vehicle fleet appropriately, including replacement at end of life.
- 2.2 The lead-in and build times on these types of vehicles is currently around 12 months, the sooner that approval and orders are in place the more likely definite delivery dates will match to service requirements and the fleet replacement plan.
- 2.3 The refuse freighters are purchased through a RECAP shared framework to provide best value for the Cambridgeshire authorities, including Peterborough.

3 CONSULTATION

N/A

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Continue to maintain existing fleet without replacement. This option was discounted as a result of the risk of significant expensive failures such as engine, chassis or transmission creating large costs and service disruption in these high mileage vehicles.
- 4.2 The transformation team identified that contract hire was significantly more expensive than outright purchase within their review of the Environmental Services Workshop and thus contract hire has been dismissed as an option.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Legal Implications

- 5.2 The Council has a statutory duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, as amended, to collect household waste and specified recyclable household waste. The council must also arrange for the collection of commercial waste and recyclable commercial waste when requested by the occupier of the premises. From 2026 these duties will also include the weekly collection of domestic food waste.

5.3 Financial Implications

- 5.4 The General Fund Budget Estimates and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Report, agreed by Cabinet and Council in February, projects a financial shortfall for 2025/26 of £1.4m increasing year on year amounting to around £3.4m by 2027/28.

Although there are currently many uncertainties regarding the budget for 2025/26 and the MTFS, there remains a significant structural deficit which the Council will need to address.

Any additional costs for items not already included in the budget will incur additional revenue costs of circa. £81k p.a. for every additional £1m required based on an assumed 30 year borrowing profile.

For the purpose of vehicle purchases, if the money is borrowed, £1m will cost £146,000 in revenue each year over a 10 year period.

- 5.5 The garden waste service is self-funding through subscriptions, including the provision of required fleet vehicles.

The commercial waste service is income generating and fees charged to local businesses include the provision of required fleet vehicles.

The Council, from 2025/26, receives funding through Extended Producer Payments for packaging waste (£1.5m in 2025/26) and also continues to claim recycling credits.

This recycling-based income is expected to total between £1.5 and £1.9 million in 2026/27. These payments are set in statute and intended to fund the collection of the materials in question, including the provision of fleet vehicles.

- 5.6 It is noted that whilst any order for vehicle(s) due to be replaced in 2026/27 is made within the current financial year, the capital funds are not released until delivery within the 2026/27 year. If approved, these capital commitments will be added to Medium-term Financial Strategy.
- 5.7 At present this Fleet Replacement Plan does not include any additional fleet vehicles to accommodate property growth. This is expected to be required within this 3-year window but not included within this report because of the anticipated changes to local government that will likely change borders, collection routes and similar. Should LGR not take place or be delayed then additional capital spend is a likely requirement.

5.8 Equality Implications

N/A

Appendix 1 HGV Fleet Replacement Plan

Front Line RCV - Household Refuse and Recycling														
Reg No	Current Round	Type	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33
VX16ACF	SERVICE SUPPORT	Refuse Vehicle STD												
VX17JZA	BRAVO 7	Refuse Vehicle STD												
VX17JZC	BRAVO 1	Refuse Vehicle STD												
VU68MWJ	BRAVO 9	Refuse Vehicle STD												
VK69EXT	BRAVO 8	Refuse Vehicle STD												
VK20XWM	BRAVO 4	Refuse Vehicle STD												
VX23ZGY	BRAVO 6	Refuse Vehicle STD		£ 196,000										
VX24HRL	BRAVO 3	Refuse Vehicle STD				£ 211,000								
VX24HRM	BRAVO 5	Refuse Vehicle STD				£ 211,000								
VN25DWL	BRAVO 2	Refuse Vehicle STD				£ 211,000								
VN25DWM	BRAVO 10	Refuse Vehicle STD					£ 225,000							
VX16ACF (REPLACEMENT)	TBA	Refuse Vehicle STD						£ 233,000						
VX17JZA (REPLACEMENT)	TBA	Refuse Vehicle STD							£ 240,000					
VX17JZC (REPLACEMENT)	TBA	Refuse Vehicle STD							£ 240,000					
VU68MWJ (REPLACEMENT)	TBA	Refuse Vehicle STD								£ 250,000				
VK69EXT (REPLACEMENT)	TBA	Refuse Vehicle STD								£ 250,000				
VK20XWM (REPLACEMENT)	TBA	Refuse Vehicle STD									£ 250,000			
VX23ZGY (REPLACEMENT)	TBA	Refuse Vehicle STD												
VX24HRL (REPLACEMENT)	TBA	Refuse Vehicle STD												
VX24HRM (REPLACEMENT)	TBA	Refuse Vehicle STD												
			£ -	£ 196,000	£ -	£ 422,000	£ 450,000	£ 233,000	£ 480,000	£ 500,000	£ 250,000	£ -	£ -	£ -
														£ 2,531,000

Front Line RCV - Garden Waste Collection														
Reg No	Current Round	Type	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33
VX16ABZ	BRAVO 16	Refuse Vehicle STD												
VU68MWK	BRAVO 17	Refuse Vehicle STD												
VA21ZHO	BRAVO 18	Refuse Vehicle STD	£ 180,000											
VX16ABZ (REPLACEMENT)	BRAVO 16	Refuse Vehicle STD						£ 233,000						
VU68MWK (REPLACEMENT)	BRAVO 17	Refuse Vehicle STD							£ 240,000					
VA21ZHO (REPLACEMENT)	BRAVO 18	Refuse Vehicle STD										£ 260,000		
			£ 180,000	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 233,000	£ 240,000	£ -	£ -	£ 260,000	£ -	£ -
														£ 913,000

Front Line RCV Small - All Streams (Note - KE54AFO Retained For Longer Period As Back Up)														
Reg No	Current Round	Type	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33
KE54AFO	WEST END	Caged Tipper												
UK11DZL	SERVICE SUPPORT	Refuse Vehicle Small												
DX16AAO	BULKY	BOX												
UK17WYP	BRAVO 11	Refuse Vehicle Small												
UK17WYO	BRAVO 15	Refuse Vehicle Small												
DG22ASU	BRAVO 12	Refuse Vehicle Med	£ 126,000											
KE54AFO (REPLACEMENT)	WEST END	Caged Tipper				£ 46,000								
FJ25YKX (DX16AAO REPLACEMENT)	BULKY	BOX				£ 64,000								
UK11DZL (REPLACEMENT)	BRAVO 15	Refuse Vehicle 12t						£ 155,000						
UK17WYP (REPLACEMENT)	BRAVO 11	Refuse Vehicle 7.5t							£ 135,000					
UK17WYO (REPLACEMENT)	SPARE SUPPORT	Refuse Vehicle 7.5t								£ 140,000				
DG22ASU (REPLACEMENT)	BRAVO 12	Refuse Vehicle 12t										£ 180,000		
			£ 126,000	£ -	£ -	£ 110,000	£ -	£ 155,000	£ 135,000	£ 140,000	£ -	£ 180,000	£ -	£ -
														£ 846,000

Trade RCV - (Note - Uses Vehicle VX23ZGY When VOR)														
Reg No	Current Round	Type	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33
VK69EWE	BRAVO 14	Refuse Vehicle Trade												
VK69EWE (REPLACEMENT)	BRAVO 14	Refuse Vehicle Trade												
			£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 260,000	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
														£ 260,000

Cleansing Sweeper (Large Channel)														
Reg No	Current Round	Type	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33
EY64SZU	SIERRA	SCARAB												
EY64SZU (REPLACEMENT)	SIERRA	SCARAB						£ 190,000						
EY64SZU (REPLACEMENT 2)	SIERRA	SCARAB												
			£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 190,000	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
														£ 190,000

Agenda Item No:	11	
Committee:	Full Council	
Date:	15 September 2025	
Report Title:	Constitutional Amendments: Planning Scheme of Delegation	

1 Purpose / Summary

The purpose of this report is to consider revisions to the Planning scheme of delegation within the Council's Constitution. This is to allow the delegation of authority to initiate prosecutions for non-compliance with enforcement notices to officers, rather than requiring a resolution of the Planning Committee.

2 Key issues

- The Council's Constitution includes within it a scheme of delegation. This identifies what duties / tasks can be carried out by officers instead of Planning Committee and sets out any conditions associated with these authorisations.
- Under the existing Scheme of Delegation, prosecution for non-compliance with an enforcement notice must be authorised by the Planning Committee, creating potential delays.

3 Recommendations

- Revise the Planning scheme of delegation within the Council's Constitution as set out at Appendix 1 to:
 - 89. Planning Enforcement:
 - To:
 - (i) issue Planning Contravention Notices;
 - (ii) issue Requisitions for Information;
 - (iii) authorise and issue Breach of Condition Notice proceedings;
 - (iv) authorise and issue Waste Land Notices;
 - (v) authorise and initiate Proceedings against Fly Posters;
 - (vi) authorise and initiate Proceedings against Unauthorised Signs.
 - (vii) issue Temporary Stop Notices
 - (ix) issue Enforcement Notices
 - (x) authorise prosecution following non-compliance with an enforcement notice of any type
 - (xi) in cases of urgency in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee (unless such consultation would have a detrimental effect on this power) to:
 - a. issue a Stop Notice.
 - b. authorise an application for an injunction.
 - c. authorise the commencement of any legal proceedings such actions to be notified to the next scheduled meeting of the Planning Committee.

(xii) issue notices requiring the Proper Maintenance of Land

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Mrs D Laws
Report Originator(s)	Matthew Leigh
Contact Officer(s)	Matthew Leigh - Head of Planning mleigh@fenland.gov.uk
Background Paper(s)	Constitution

4 Background / introduction

- 4.1 The Scheme of Delegation (SoD) for Planning governs the division of decision-making between officers and Members. Each local authority operates its own scheme of delegation, which sets out the circumstances in which planning matters are to be determined by Committee rather than under officer delegation. The aim of the SoD is that it ensures decisions are made at the appropriate level, in accordance with statutory duties, principles of good governance, and the need for an efficient and effective planning system.
- 4.2 Under the current SoD, the Planning Committee must resolve to pursue prosecution for non-compliance with an enforcement notices of any type. This approach reflects a historical preference for Member oversight of formal legal proceedings. However, there is no statutory requirement for such decisions to rest with Members.

5 Considerations

- 5.1 The delegation of prosecution powers to officers is considered appropriate and proportionate and aligns with practice at many other local planning authorities.
- 5.2 Officer's have taken a number of reports to the Planning Committee over the last 12 months and in every instance the Planning Committee has authorised prosecution.
- 5.3 The following benefits, of delegating this matter to officer, have been identified:
- **Timeliness and Efficiency:** Enforcement action often requires prompt decisions in response to ongoing breaches. Delegation allows for swifter progression to prosecution, avoiding delays linked to Committee cycles.
 - **Member Focus:** This change would enable the Planning Committee to focus on its primary function of determining planning applications.
 - **Resource Management:** Preparing prosecution reports for Committee consumes officer time and committee resource, even where the outcomes are non-contentious. Delegation helps streamline workload and allows officers to focus on the progression of alleged breaches of planning control.
 - **Alignment with Legal Practice:** Decisions to prosecute in other areas of Council activity (e.g. licensing) are typically delegated to officers. Planning enforcement should be consistent with this wider approach.
 - **Need for Timeliness:** Effective enforcement relies on timely action; delays can undermine the credibility of the planning system and compliance with notices.

6 Effect on corporate objectives

- 6.1 The proposed changes supports the following stated objective:
Quality Organisation

7 Community impact


- 7.1 Faster decision-making enables the Council to act more quickly against ongoing planning breaches, helping to protect local residents from prolonged harm to visual amenity, noise, or other adverse impacts. Whilst prompt enforcement reinforces public trust that the Council takes breaches of planning control seriously and will take robust action where necessary.
- 7.2 Timely enforcement action is particularly important in cases where unauthorised development harms residential amenity or safety, often affecting more vulnerable groups disproportionately.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 Delegating prosecution powers for enforcement notice non-compliance to officers would modernise and streamline the Council's enforcement processes, in line with best practice and legal precedent. It would support timely and proportionate planning enforcement without undermining accountability.

87. Planning Enforcement: To:

- (i) issue Planning Contravention Notices;
- (ii) issue Requisitions for Information;
- (iii) authorise and issue Breach of Condition Notice proceedings;
- (iv) authorise and issue Waste Land Notices;
- (v) authorise and initiate Proceedings against Fly Posters;
- (vi) authorise and initiate Proceedings against Unauthorised Signs.
- (vii) issue Temporary Stop Notices
- (ix) issue Enforcement Notices
- (x) authorise prosecution following non-compliance with an enforcement notice of any type
- (xi) in cases of urgency in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee (unless such consultation would have a detrimental effect on this power) to:
 - a. issue a Stop Notice
 - b. authorise an application for an injunction
 - c. authorise the commencement of any legal proceedings such actions to be notified to the next scheduled meeting of the Planning Committee
 - d. ~~authorise prosecution following non-compliance with an enforcement notice of any type~~
- (xii) issue notices requiring the Proper Maintenance of Land.

Agenda Item No:	12	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	15 September 2025	
Report Title:	Members' Allowances – Combined Authority SRA for Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committees	

1 Purpose / Summary

To consider ceasing payment to Fenland District Council members of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committees.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 As a result of an Independent Remuneration Panel recommendation at the Combined Authority they have agreed to make payments to constituent authority members of their Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committees.
- 2.2 The last Fenland Members Allowances Review in December 2023 agreed to pay Fenland District Council members appointed to CPCA Committees (excluding other substitute Committee members) an SRA.
- 2.3 Three members are affected by this proposal and are now receiving two payments for the same role, one from the CPCA and one from Fenland District Council.
- 2.4 Consultation has been undertaken with neighbouring authorities to ascertain the approach these authorities are taking and with the affected members and Fenland's Independent Remuneration Panel.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 To act on the feedback of the Independent Remuneration Panel and agree to remove the SRA from the Members' Allowances Scheme for members appointed to the CPCA Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committees.
- 3.2 To agree to delegate to the Monitoring Officer to update the Members' Allowances Scheme within the Constitution in line with the decision taken by Council as set out at Appendix 1.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	Not Applicable
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Chris Boden, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Governance
Report Originator(s)	Elaine Cooper, Elections, Land Charges and Member Services Team Leader

Contact Officer(s)	Carol Pilson, Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer Amy Brown, Assistant Director and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Background Papers	Combined Authority e-mail and IRP report - Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.pdf

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the last Members Allowances Review approved in December 2023, the Independent Remuneration Panel agreed to pay an SRA to members appointed to committees on the CPCA due to the significant responsibilities, extent of decision making and associated time commitment these roles carry above that expected of a District Councillor. The IRP also acknowledged the importance and associated potential benefits of having Fenland representatives contributing to the role of the CPCA and recognised that at that time the CPCA did not pay an allowance to members of constituent authorities on these committees.
- 1.2 On 6 June 2025 the CPCA notified authorities that, as a result of their own Independent Remuneration Panel recommendations, they would be paying a special responsibility allowance of £2,176 to constituent local authority members of their Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committees.
- 1.3 Members who sit on the CPCA Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Governance committees are now currently receiving two allowances for the same role.

2 CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Benchmarking was undertaken with the other authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to ascertain whether they were going to cease payment of their allowance to members of these committees of the CPCA. Three of the authorities are ceasing their payments, one was still deciding on the way forward and the other authority did not pay an allowance.
- 2.2 Members who currently sit on the Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committees were also canvassed to seek their views on whether this SRA should cease to be paid by Fenland. All three affected members agreed that the SRA from Fenland should be removed.
- 2.3 Members of Fenland's Independent Remuneration Panel (Amanda Orchard, Nicky Blanning and Ged Demsey) were also contacted to seek their views and they all agreed that the SRA for these committees should be withdrawn in light of the Combined Authority now making a payment.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Do nothing but then members of the Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committees would be receiving two SRAs for the same role, one from the CPCA and one from Fenland District Council.

4 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Legal Implications

The Constitution requires that any amendment to the Member Allowance Scheme is made by Full Council, ordinarily following a review by the Independent Remuneration Panel. In this instance as the proposed amendment impacts only one aspect of the Members' Allowance Scheme which was put in place to address a specific issue which has now been resolved by the CPCA, it was considered that seeking the views of the IRP would suffice. The views of the IRP have been reflected in this Report and the correct governance is therefore in place to enable members to take a properly constituted decision.

4.2 Financial Implications

- 4.2.1 Should the recommendations set out in this report be approved, there will be a small saving to Member Allowances payments of approximately £3,912 per annum (this figure does not include pay award increases for 2025/26).

4.3 Equality Implications

Not applicable.

PART 6

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

3. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE

- 3.1 For each year a special responsibility allowance shall be paid to those councillors who hold special responsibilities outlined within the Schedule of Allowances.
- 3.2 The amount of each such allowance shall be that specified in the schedule to this scheme.
- 3.3 A councillor may receive no more than one special responsibility allowance at any one time, with the exception of the allowance to Planning Committee members and the allowance to members of the Combined Authority.
- 3.4 No SRA allowance will be paid to members of the Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committees due to the Combined Authority now paying the constituent authority members an allowance.
- 3.5 In considering the Allowances for Opposition Group Leaders, the Main Opposition Group Leader Allowance will be given to the Leader of the largest group, of 5 members or more. Any other opposition group leaders will receive the Other Opposition Allowance regardless of the size of the group. In the event there are two or more equal sized opposition groups each having 5 or more members then they will all receive the Main Opposition Group Leader Allowance. In the event there are two or more Other Opposition Group Leaders then they will all receive the Other Opposition Group Leader Allowance.

(ii) Special Responsibility Allowance

Payable to the following post holders:

Combined Authority Committee Members (apart from Overview and Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committee members)

£1304 p.a.