

AGENDA

CABINET

MONDAY, 21 JULY 2025

2.00 PM

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, FENLAND HALL,
COUNTY ROAD, MARCH**

Committee Officer: Linda Albon
Tel: 01354 622424
e-mail: memberservices@fenland.gov.uk

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

To confirm and sign the minutes of 16 June 2025.
- 3 To report additional items for consideration which the Chairman deems urgent by virtue of the special circumstances to be now specified
- 4 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
- 5 Fenland Inspire! Civil Parking Enforcement Update (Pages 9 - 26)

To update members on progress made to date by FDC and Cambridgeshire County Council in respect of CPE.
- 6 Fenland Inspire! Project: Play Equipment (Pages 27 - 34)

This report sets out the options for the scope and budgetary considerations of the Fenland Inspire! play areas project.
- 7 Fenland Inspire! Project regarding North Drive Recreation Ground - options for new play equipment (Pages 35 - 38)

This report highlights potential options for adding more equipment for young people into the North Drive Recreation Ground in March.

8 Annual Report 2024/25 (Pages 39 - 66)

To present the Annual Report of the Council for Cabinet to note the achievements made in delivering the Council's corporate priorities in 2024/25.

9 Revenue and Capital Outturn 2024/25 (Pages 67 - 76)

To inform Cabinet of the income and expenditure (known as 'Outturn') for the Council for 2024/25 and reasons for variations.

10 Policy and Procedures for Supporting Residents Experiencing Domestic Abuse (Pages 77 - 100)

For Cabinet to approve a new policy and procedure outlining how the Council will support members of the community who are survivors of domestic abuse.

11 Draft 6 Month Cabinet Forward Plan (Pages 101 - 102)

For information purposes.

12 Items which the Chairman has under item 3 deemed urgent

CONFIDENTIAL - ITEMS COMPRISING EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

13 Port Operations Report (CONFIDENTIAL)

Friday, 11 July 2025

Members: Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French (Vice-Chairman), Councillor G Christy, Councillor S Count, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor S Imafidon, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor S Tierney and Councillor S Wallwork

CABINET



MONDAY, 16 JUNE 2025 - 4.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor S Imafidon, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor S Tierney and Councillor S Wallwork

APOLOGIES: Councillor G Christy and Councillor S Count

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor A Miscandlon

Councillor Boden announced that since the Cabinet agenda was first published on 6 June 2025, a subsequent decision was taken to lift the exemption in relation to item 7 concerning the Fenland Inspire! Project report and make it a public report. This followed the necessary checks and enquiries being concluded in relation to the potential business and financial implications of publishing the information and specifically in relation to procurement and the public interest in achieving best value.

CAB1/25 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The public minutes of the meeting held 19 May 2025 were approved and signed.

CAB2/25 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2025-26

Members considered the Outside Bodies 2025/26 report presented by Councillor Boden.

Members commented as follows:

- Councillor Tierney pointed out that the names of the Combined Authority outside body committees had been changed from those listed in the report and requested that records be updated with the new names.
- Councillor Mrs Laws said she could not see the Peterborough Flood Committee listed and queried whether this is an outside body. Councillor Mrs French commented that it is a body she sits on with representatives nominated by the County Council. Councillor Mrs Laws said she believed it was a district appointment, so Councillor Boden requested the matter be investigated and brought back to the next Cabinet meeting.
- Councillor Mrs Laws advised she sits on the Middle Level Navigation Committee which again is not listed but is due to meet next week, and so queried whether she is still on this. Councillor Boden advised that this will also be checked but as she is named as a member of the board, she will remain on it if so.
- Councillor Seaton stated that he cannot see the A47 Alliance on this list which is an outside body he attends either virtually or in Norwich. Councillor Boden confirmed that Councillor Seaton is the representative, and he intends that Councillor Seaton be appointed to carry on.

Councillor Boden advised an updated report would be brought back to the next Cabinet meeting on 15 July.

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

- the appointments set out at Appendix A of the report
- note where required representatives to outside bodies cannot currently be fulfilled.
- delegate to the Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Group Leaders the addition or deletion of outside bodies as the need arises during the municipal year and appointment of members to vacancies on outside bodies during the municipal year.

CAB3/25 RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUNDING 2025-26

Members considered the Rural England Prosperity Funding 2025/26 report presented by Councillor Boden.

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

- recommend acceptance of Rural England Shared Prosperity Fund from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) for a one-year period 2025-26.
- recommend that officers be delegated to approve and liaise with the CPCA the Rural England Shared Prosperity Grant Funding Agreement 2025-26.

CAB4/25 FENLAND INSPIRE! PROJECTS UPDATE

Members considered the Fenland Inspire! Projects Update report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden advised that a proposed resolution had been tabled at the meeting which he proceeded to read in full as follows:

“Cabinet notes the report on Fenland Inspire!

Cabinet reaffirms its intent to use the Fenland Inspire! Programme to leave an inheritance for Fenland residents after FDC is abolished as a result of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

Cabinet further notes that the timescale for LGR is not yet certain, and that although it is currently thought likely that LGR will go ahead on 1st April 2028, there is at present no certainty as to the date of FDC’s abolition, assuming that LGR goes ahead at all.

Cabinet affirms that it is unacceptable for FDC to enter into spending commitments that it cannot meet and that FDC must therefore exercise caution in entering into spending commitments, in the interests of both current and future Fenland taxpayers.

Cabinet notes the significant increase in the estimated costs of the Fenland Inspire! Programme. It would clearly be inappropriate to progress all of the current elements of Fenland Inspire! although, once Government publishes a draft Statutory Instrument to effect LGR, we can reasonably assume that LGR will go ahead on the date stated in the Statutory Instrument.

Until Cabinet can reasonably assume that LGR will be going ahead, it would be imprudent to proceed with all of the Fenland Inspire! Projects, especially given that frustrated or wasted early costs on capital projects have to be accounted for as Revenue, rather than capital, expenditure.

However, several of the Fenland Inspire! Projects are already in the pipeline or are quite small in cost and low-risk in implementation. Most of these projects have already received approval from Cabinet or Council to progress.

Moreover, if we were to wait until we can reasonably assume that LGR will be going ahead, it is clear that FDC would have real capacity limitations in delivering all the projects in the programme.

Accordingly, Cabinet approves that Officers progress the projects, or parts of projects, listed in appendix 1.

The list of projects in Fenland Inspire! is not definitive. Projects may be added to or deleted from the list by Cabinet.

Cabinet believes that the Wisbech Chapel building improvement project is unsustainable and that it should be removed from the Fenland Inspire! Programme.

In light of the uncertainty surrounding LGR, Cabinet resolves to suspend further work on all projects (other than those listed in Appendix 1) until a comprehensive report is brought back to a future meeting of Cabinet.

Officers should, nevertheless, keep careful watch for external funding opportunities for all projects.

The Leader will provide Officers with an updated Schedule S, detailing which members are leading on which projects.

APPENDIX 1

- 1. Wisbech Park Splash Pad: phase one only.*
- 2. Wisbech 11/12 High Street*
- 3. Manor Leisure Centre Whittlesey*
- 4. Chatteris Leisure Centre condition survey work*
- 5. District wide assessment: new play equipment*
- 6. New Village Green Wimblington*
- 7. Civil Parking Enforcement*
- 8. St John's Graveyard, March*
- 9. New March Country Park: confirmation of land transfer agreement only.*
- 10. 3G pitches: preparing or submitting applications to the football Foundation for external funding."*

Members commented as follows:

- Councillor Mrs French requested that item 8 be corrected to read St John's Chapels, not St John's Graveyard.
- Councillor Tierney said it was important to clarify to the public what this all means. Fenland Inspire! came about because Government announced in December its plans to abolish FDC, so members want to leave a legacy for the benefit of Fenland residents with the idea being to spend Fenland's money locally and not have it taken into a big new authority where it would either be spent elsewhere or get swallowed by other councils' debts. However, the Government is known to U-turn on its policies so it would be unwise for FDC to rush to spend all the money whilst there is still some uncertainty as to whether it will be abolished. This is a good and prudent approach, but members want to push forward with whatever projects they can in time if the Council is to be dissolved.
- Councillor Boden responded that is the reason why Cabinet would like officers to come back with a more comprehensive and realistic report about what projects can be done and when. Some will not be completed by 31st March 2028 but certain projects, such as the proposed new swimming pool in Chatteris, may be so far advanced in construction or contractually that they will have to be completed by the new unitary authority.
- Councillor Hoy expressed her surprise that floodlighting for the Clarkson Memorial and the Wisbech Park pathway improvements are not listed on Appendix 1 considering they are relatively low cost and asked if this was an oversight. She said it may be that works are being

done already because the pathway is just general maintenance and the same with the lighting for the Clarkson Memorial as there are lights already there needing to be fixed, but importantly for her the Clarkson Memorial was going to have additional planters installed to stop illegal parking on the war memorial paving. She would not like to see this removed when it is a case of one or two thousand pounds as opposed to tens of thousands.

- Councillor Boden responded that in respect of the Wisbech floodlighting, the report shows it is more complicated than merely installing the floodlights. Questions have arisen over the power supply to the Clarkson Memorial and enquiries are being made about the road alterations around the War Memorial. The project is expected to be deliverable but may also require listed building permission for alterations to be made. Councillor Boden added that the original budgeted figure for this project was £30,000, not one or two thousand pounds and that is one of the reasons why it has been put back into the second phase but when revised information is received from officers, he sees no reason for a delay until there is certainty as to the date of FDC being abolished.
- Councillor Hoy replied that she believes the reason for the enhanced cost has more to do with the War Memorial rather than the Clarkson Memorial and in her opinion the two should not have been placed together as one project. She believes the Clarkson Memorial is the one that people are most bothered about and could have been quicker and so asked if these could potentially be split, as she believes the War Memorial will hold everything up and people will just keep parking on the Clarkson Memorial.
- Councillor Boden said he would be interested to hear what Wisbech members in particular thought of the suggestion to split the floodlighting and deal with the two memorials separately, and to prioritise the Clarkson Memorial.
- Councillor Imafidon spoke in support of Councillor Hoy's suggestion, saying that the Clarkson Memorial already has power to the site, the problem being that the original cables were damaged beyond use. However, there is an existing but redundant county council lighting facility that still has power to that unit, so if both are separated, he thinks the Clarkson Memorial lighting can be delivered more quickly.
- Councillor Tierney expressed his support for Councillor Hoy's suggestion saying that although both projects are important, if one can be done more quickly it should be. Councillor Wallwork said she agreed, particularly as parking at the Clarkson Memorial creates a lawless environment so it is paramount to move forward with whatever projects we can as soon as possible.
- Councillor Mrs French agreed with Councillor Wallwork and said that is why she is trying to push through civil parking enforcement. She recommended that if listed building consent is required, this should be applied for as soon as possible.
- Councillor Seaton agreed that parking around the Crescent is a nightmare, particularly for the emergency services. He said that despite Wisbech being a town that has free parking people continue to park inappropriately.

Councillor Boden suggested that in light of members' comments he proposed that Cabinet add the Clarkson Memorial lighting planters to Appendix 1. Members agreed to the proposal.

- Councillor Hoy sought clarification on the Wisbech Park Splash Pad improvements brought before last Cabinet, and specifically that phase one includes the canopy. Councillor Boden said the report papers state that phase one includes the expansion of the existing splash pad features as well as improvements to soft landscaping and park furniture. He added that the order has already been placed for the splash pad equipment from Canada and is not expected to arrive before the end of next month. The current budget for phase one is set at £60,000 so if it did not include the canopy that would be a lot of money for landscaping and park furniture. Phil Hughes, Head of Leisure Services confirmed that Councillor Hoy is correct that temporary umbrellas have been arranged for existing seating whilst additional seating, soft landscaping and a more substantive shade area is coming later as well as the splash pad enhancements coming from Canada all as part of phase one.
- Councillor Hoy asked if something could be done regarding the orchard in the park which,

although was a nice idea in theory, has become an eyesore due to not being maintained by the group set up to manage it, and it encourages antisocial behaviour. It also blocks the line of sight from the café to the splash pad and the playground. Councillor Hoy suggested a proper orchard project with the trees to be taken up and replanted in a more appropriate location. A general discussion followed regarding the time of year that replanting would be appropriate, and Councillor Mrs Laws offered to contact the appropriate officer for a response. Councillor Boden suggested that this issue be brought back to July's Cabinet meeting.

- Councillor Imafidon referred to the footpath in Wisbech Park and asked when it may be resurfaced as footfall has increased. Councillor Boden advised that is an ordinary maintenance matter and has never been part of the Fenland Inspire! project but Councillor Mrs French advised she will have the footpath inspected next week.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Seaton and AGREED to note the content of the report on Fenland Inspire! and resolved:

- to reaffirm Cabinet's intent to use the Fenland Inspire! Programme to leave an inheritance for Fenland residents after FDC is abolished as a result of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
- to further note that the timescale for LGR is not yet certain, and that although it is currently thought likely that LGR will go ahead on 1st April 2028, there is at present no certainty as to the date of FDC's abolition, assuming that LGR goes ahead at all.
- to affirm that it is unacceptable for FDC to enter into spending commitments that it cannot meet and that FDC must therefore exercise caution in entering into spending commitments, in the interests of both current and future Fenland taxpayers.
- to note the significant increase in the estimated costs of the Fenland Inspire! Programme. It would clearly be inappropriate to progress all of the current elements of Fenland Inspire! although, once Government publishes a Statutory Instrument, to effect LGR, it can be reasonably assumed that LGR will go ahead on the date stated in the Statutory Instrument.
- to note that until Cabinet can reasonably assume that LGR will be going ahead, it would be imprudent to proceed with all of the Fenland Inspire! Projects, especially given that frustrated or wasted early costs on capital projects have to be accounted for as Revenue, rather than Capital, expenditure. However, several of the Fenland Inspire! Projects are already in the pipeline or are quite small in cost and low risk in implementation. Most of the projects have already received approval from Cabinet or Council to progress. Moreover, if FDC was to wait until it can be reasonably assumed that LGR will be going ahead, it is clear that FDC would have real capacity limitations in delivering all the projects in the programme.
- to approve that officers progress the projects, or parts of projects, listed in appendix 1.
- that the list of projects in Fenland Inspire! is not definitive. Projects may be added to or deleted from the list by Cabinet.
- that the Wisbech Chapel building improvement project is unsustainable and should be removed from the Fenland Inspire! Programme.
- that in light of the uncertainty surrounding LGR, Cabinet will suspend further work on all projects, other than those listed in Appendix 1 below) until a comprehensive report is brought back to a future meeting of Cabinet.
- that officers should, nevertheless, keep careful watch for external funding opportunities for all projects.
- the Leader will provide officers with an updated Schedule S, detailing which members are leading on which projects.

APPENDIX 1

1. Wisbech Park Splash Pad: phase one only

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8. St John's Chapels, March
9. New March Country Park: confirmation of land transfer agreement only
10. 3G pitches: preparing or submitting applications to the Football Foundation for external funding
11. Clarkson Memorial lighting and planters

CAB5/25 DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN


The draft Cabinet Forward Plan was noted for information.

CAB6/25 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

The confidential minutes of the meeting held 19 May 2025 were approved and signed.

4.37 pm

Chairman

Agenda Item No:	5	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	21 July 2025	
Report Title:	Property, Assets & Major Projects – On and Off-Street Parking Enforcement	

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 To update members on progress made to date by FDC and Cambridgeshire County Council in respect of CPE and the revised estimated timeline, costs and scope of works associated with CPE implementation following the previous Cabinet update paper on 18th December 2023. To seek member approval to proceed with the implementation of CPE having due regard to the updated estimated implementation and running costs and timeline referenced in schedules 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5.

2 Key Issues

- Traffic Regulation Order Survey, Review and Corrective Works
- CPE Civil/Special Enforcement Area Designation Order
- Agency Agreement and Service Level Agreement
- Off Street Parking Places Regulation Review
- Project Delivery Timeline
- On and Off-Street Enforcement and Administration Costs
- Project Risks and Funding
- Liaison with Key Partners
- SCDC, HDC CPE Progress
- Fenland Sign & Line Corrective Work Estimate - Schedule 6.1
- FDC CPE Funding - Schedule 6.2
- Updated CPE Set-up Costs - Schedule 6.3
- Updated Estimated Operating Costs - Schedule 6.4
- Revised CPE Timetable - Schedule 6.5

3 Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 3.1 note the updated estimated increase in the overall project delivery cost, timelines and CPE running costs post implementation.
- 3.2 consent to officers proceeding with obtaining updated corrective works costs from Milestone which is likely in itself to incur a cost (currently unknown but estimated to be within the range of £50k to £100k).
- 3.3 consent to officers proceeding with the implementation of CPE based on the predicted costs contained within this update report in advance of obtaining actual costs. Estimated costs to be brought back to Cabinet for approval upon receipt.

- 3.4 provide an officer steer on any previously highlighted Red line areas within the previously drafted preliminary agency agreement.
- 3.5 Approve the member/officer CPE project team to agree any red line areas in order to progress the CPE project to implementation. This would include the administration of all highway permits, suspensions, waivers and dispensations.

Wards Affected	ALL
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/04JUL25/01
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Boden – Leader of the Council Cllr Jan French – Deputy Leader of the Council
Report Originator(s)	Garry Edwards - Engineering Manager gedwards@fenland.gov.uk
Contact Officer(s)	Peter Catchpole - Corporate Director (Finance) petercatchpole@fenland.gov.uk Garry Edwards - Engineering Manager gedwards@fenland.gov.uk
Background Papers	FDC Cabinet Paper 18-12-2023

4 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

Cambridgeshire County Council & Fenland District Council CPE Progress

- 4.1 Following completion of the design package works in November 2023 and the subsequent Cabinet CPE update paper of 18-12-2023, little progress has been made on the implementation of CPE within Fenland.
- 4.2 The detailed sign and line survey works were undertaken in November 2021 and this concluded that approximately 86% of all the signs and lines within Fenland were not in a condition suitable for the implementation of CPE. The survey recorded defects that were considered to be in both poor and fair condition with poor defects requiring immediate attention and fair defects rectification within 2 years. Signs and lines that were at the time considered to be in good condition would not require attention for 5-7 years.
- 4.3 With nearly four years having now passed since the survey was undertaken it is inevitable that some of the good signs and lines may now be in fair condition and that possibly 50% of the fair sign and line defects would be poor and require attention.
- 4.4 All the existing signs and lines within Fenland found to be defective would require rectification prior to the implementation of CPE. The corrective sign and line works were last estimated in 2023 and were estimated to cost in the region of **£538,539.39**. It is estimated that inflationary construction price increases over the last two years would have added up to 10% to that cost. In

addition the scope of works is also likely to have increased by up to 50% associated with further sign and line wear and deterioration for defects previously categorised as fair in the 2021 survey.

- 4.5 Cambridgeshire County Council and FDC officers have continued to meet regularly to discuss various aspects of the CPE project, but limited progress has been made since 2023 due to the significant project budget shortfall.
- 4.6 A draft application to the Department for Transport for a Civil/Special Enforcement Area Designation Order for the introduction of CPE in Fenland was prepared in February 2023 by Cambridgeshire County Council in partnership with FDC. No further work on the application can be made until:
 - The CPE agency and service level agreements have been agreed and signed off by both authorities.
 - Additional funding for the CPE project has been approved by members
 - Agreement has been reached on how FDC will enforce and administer CPE including associated PCN processing and highway permits, suspensions, waivers and dispensations.
 - An updated CPE implementation programme has been approved.

5 KEY ISSUES

Traffic Regulation Order Survey, Review and Corrective Works

- 5.1 The design work packages prepared by the County Councils framework contractor Milestone in October 2023 were used to inform the target costs for each of Fenlands four Market Towns and surrounding villages.
- 5.2 The target costs referred to as tranches one to four took several months to prepare and will need to be updated should members resolve to progress with CPE having considered the predicted implementation costs. Each tranche represents one of the Market Towns and surrounding areas where traffic regulation orders are currently in place. It is however likely that additional TRO's would have been implemented since the survey works were conducted in 2021.
- 5.3 At the time of the survey, collectively 294 signing defects were found to exist along with 743 lining defects associated with 4,899 LM of poor lining. The target cost based on the number of defects at the time was estimated to be £538,539.39. Target costs are estimated and could increase or decrease as the work progresses.
- 5.4 An inflationary rate uplift of 10% along with an estimated 50% addition for further wear and deterioration has been added in the estimated costs shown in Schedule 10.1. It is possible that the percentage of defects associated with lining previously categorised as fair may now be higher or lower than this estimation, however accuracy would only be possible by resurveying the signs and lines.

- 5.5 An updated target cost associated with the fair signs and lines would be required and will be requested following member approval to proceed with CPE. Given the work and resource required to produce a target cost, it is however likely that a sizeable associated cost would apply.
- 5.6 The design package works completed to date have been based only on the sign and line defects which were rated as poor (4,899 LM) at the time of the TRO survey. As the TRO survey works were undertaken in November 2021 it is inevitable that further lining defects will undoubtedly exist. Lining which at the time was considered to be in fair condition (remedial work action needed within two years) will now likely need to be included within the scope of works.
- 5.7 It is estimated that the defects noted at the time of the initial TRO survey as being fair (8,897 LM) will now have a high proportion rated as poor and require corrective works. It is predicted that the majority of the additional defects will be lining and that the scope of works would need to increase by approximately 50%. This figure is purely estimated and cannot be substantiated without resurveying the fair works defects. The additional costs have been used to inform the updated implementation cost.
- 5.8 It is important to note that civil parking enforcement relates only to the enforcement of static restrictions e.g. loading bays, double and single yellow lines etc and not moving traffic offences such as speed limit signs, driving in cycle lanes, one way systems and no entry restrictions etc. The enforcement of moving traffic offences would remain a police responsibility following the implementation of CPE.
- 5.9 The corrective signing works are for the most part not weather dependant and could be undertaken even during winter months, the lining works however would need to be undertaken during the spring/summer months. The County Council have previously advised that FDC would need to place a purchase order for the corrective works with Milestone several months in advance to enable the contractor to plan resources. Should there be any substantial delay in placing the order for the works, the target cost would need to be reviewed as the target costs are only valid for 90 days.
- 5.10 It is estimated that the corrective sign and line works would take 6-9 months to complete. This is largely due to the time taken to co-ordinate the works and obtain permits from the County Councils street works team.

CPE Civil/Special Enforcement Area Designation Order

- 5.11 Only the Highway Authority can apply to the Secretary of State for a Civil/Special Enforcement Area Designation Order for the introduction CPE. The Department for Transport no longer accept applications in March and September for CPE with so few local authorities now left to implement. Instead parliamentary time is granted on request and the application process can take up to 12 months.

- 5.12 A draft application was prepared in 2023 by CCC and FDC officers which would need to be reviewed and completed. A formal submission to the DfT cannot be made until a decision on the enforcement and administration provider has been made along with a CPE implementation date.

Agency Agreement and Service Level Agreement

- 5.13 The County Council require sign off on the agency and service level agreements between both authorities to be in place prior to the application to the DfT for CPE being made. Both documents were initially drafted but a number of concerns deemed to be red flags were raised at the time by the CPE project team. These were mostly associated with various delegation clauses and the Highway Authorities right to implement pay & display to on-street areas if they deemed necessary.
- 5.14 The County Council are likely to require the agency agreement between both parties to follow the Hunts DC model.
- 5.15 The County Council would require FDC as agents to be responsible for the administration of all highway parking suspensions, waivers, dispensations and permits. This would entail all the associated administration, signage and enforcement to be undertaken by FDC or their chosen enforcement and administration provider. Any income associated with the aforementioned delegated function would be retained by FDC or their chosen enforcement provider to offset costs. The permit fee's would be set by the highway authority.
- 5.16 Members have indicated to date that FDC managing the highway permits would not be deemed acceptable due to the likely additional resource and cost implications this would place on FDC. The highway authority have to date and continue to state this as being a red line and one that was conceded by Hunts DC in order for them to progress CPE. Common ground on any red flag clauses will need to be found prior to seeking legal advice and a member steer on such matters is now essential. It is likely that FDC will need to concede managing the highway permits if CPE is to be implemented within Fenland.
- 5.17 The detail within the agreements will impact on both the necessary FDC resources needed to operate CPE and the annual revenue deficit placed on FDC for the term of the agreement.
- 5.18 FDC as agents for the highway authority under the terms of the agency agreement would need to provide a suitable and sufficient level of enforcement to cover the whole of Fenlands administrative area. This would include enforcing the 329 TRO's currently within Fenland along with 28 public parking facilities likely to be included within the application.
- 5.19 Future changes in legislation such as pavement parking could also influence the level of enforcement required which would likely increase operational costs.

- 5.20 The County Council do have a budget designated for sign and line maintenance; however it is understood that no increase in this budget has been made following the level of defects highlighted by the sign and line survey works. Under the terms of the agreement the County Council would remain responsible for on-street sign and line maintenance. Therefore sign and line defects would be attended to in the same manner as they are currently within Fenland with defects being prioritised in line with CCC highway budgets and timelines within the CCC/Milestone contract.
- 5.21 There could be future enforcement challenges for FDC post CPE implementation if PCN's were unable to be issued due to a continued poor signs and line maintenance regime.

Off Street Parking Places Regulation Review

- 5.22 In preparation for the implementation of CPE, a new district wide Off Street Parking Places Order has been drafted. It is recommended that the allocation of short and long stay parking periods remain consistent across each of the four Market Towns 2/3 hours for short stay, and 9/10 hours for long. This would reduce the complexity for enforcement officers whilst providing a balance for both short term shopper and workforce needs. A variation in maximum stay period would however need to be more site specific for car parks located adjacent to rail stations.
- 5.23 FDC are responsible for twenty public car parks and a further eight parking facilities associated with leisure, business or corporate buildings which would be brought in under the new OSPPO. Each site will require new signage and either additional or modified lining, the cost of which has been assessed separately to the TRO signing and lining requirements.

Project Delivery Timeline

- 5.24 The design work target costs for all four Tranches was last updated by Milestone in November 2023. The target costs are only valid for 90 days and would now need to be updated by Milestone which in itself would likely incur costs.
- 5.25 As 3½ years have passed since the sign and line survey works were undertaken an updated target cost would now need to include the sign and line defects which were at the time considered to be fair (suitable for a further 2 years). This will require further design package works to be undertaken and the CPE officer lead has requested an estimated cost and timeline for this work.
- 5.26 The estimated costs provided in schedule 10 of this report are indicative and based on the best information available at the time of producing this report.
- 5.27 Procurement of the sign and line works through the County Councils highway services contract would be least demanding on FDC resources and advantageous in co-ordinating streetworks permits. However, it is important that the purchase order for the works is placed within 90 days of the target cost being updated, otherwise monthly price increases would be applicable.

- 5.28 An alternative means of procurement remains an option by an open tendered approach. However based on feedback from Hunts DC who opted for this procurement route, it is considered that any saving would likely be cost neutral given the increased staff/consultant/contractor time and cost required to procure and co-ordinate the works on the ground.
- 5.29 A purchase order would only be placed for the corrective sign and line works once agreement has been reached between both authorities and the agency agreement drafted for sealing. The lining works can only be undertaken during dry weather conditions and would therefore limit the works delivery period to between March and October 2026 or 2027.
- 5.30 The CPCA grant funding deadline has already been extended several times since the beginning of the CPE project with the current extension period granted until December 2025. This timeline however would need to be extended by a further 2 years to align with the projected project delivery timeline.
- 5.31 The CPCA grant funding contribution for CPE was £400,000 and to date approximately £84,339 has been spent on feasibility and survey works.
- 5.32 It was previously advised that applications to the Secretary of State for a CPE CEA/SEA order could only be made in April and October each year and that the application process would take approximately 6 months. It is now understood that the Department for Transport no longer have a schedule for CPE applications, instead parliamentary time is granted upon request and the application process could take up to a year.
- 5.33 The County Council would not be prepared to make such an application to the DfT until the agency and service level agreements have been agreed. The CPE project is unable to move forward until these agreements have been agreed and therefore this task remains the highest priority.

On and Off-Street Enforcement and Administration Costs

- 5.34 Three neighbouring local authorities had previously expressed an interest in providing both the CPE administrative and enforcement services for FDC under a shared service provision contract. No further progress on this aspect of the CPE project has been made since 2023. It is anticipated however that service provision costs would have increased since that time due to market increases in fuel, labour and material costs.
- 5.35 The CPE modelling costs were last updated in May 2025. Based on two full time civil enforcement officers and using the cheapest external service provision model it is predicted that the FDC operational running costs will be **£126,921** per year. Taking account of the estimated PCN income based on issuing **1983 PCN's** per year, it is predicted that the FDC running cost deficit will be **-£70,703** per year based on an operational cumulative cost of **£353,515** over the first 5 years. The updated modelling costs have taken into consideration feedback obtained from South Cambs DC CPE operations in respect of the predicted PCN hit rate.

- 5.36 It is not clear yet what impact local government reform will have on CPE within Fenland, however two of FDC's neighbouring local authorities are and will likely remain in favourable positions to offer enforcement and administrative services to FDC going forward. Therefore the estimated enforcement and administrative modelling costs have been updated using enforcement cost data gained from a neighbouring authority.

Project Risks and Funding

- 5.37 To date the greatest project risk has been affordability in terms of the implementation cost associated with the corrective sign and line works. The initial estimated cost outlined in the feasibility study undertaken in 2020 for the corrective sign and line works (based on other local authority CPE implementation projects) was £140k. However due to the exceptionally high number of sign and line defects discovered during the Fenland TRO survey in 2021, the cost of the corrective works was found to be much higher.
- 5.38 The corrective work costs were last estimated in 2023 to be in the region of **£538,539.39**. This figure would now have increased due to additional sign and line defects being present on the highway network throughout Fenland. The CPE project is now estimated to have funding shortfall in the region of **£914,510**
- 5.39 The other project risks to date has been time associated with the CPCA grant funding deadline and the ability for both authorities to reach a mutual agreement on red flag issues highlighted within the draft agency agreement. Until such time as the agency agreement has been signed off by both authorities, the application to the Secretary of State cannot be made and the corrective sign and line works procured.
- 5.40 The procurement of an external service provider for all enforcement and administrative duties associated with CPE along with the implementation of a shared service provider agreement is likely to take around 9 months. The application for the CPE order could equally take up to 12 months to implement following sign off of the agency agreement. The overall CPE project implementation timeline is therefore estimated to be 2 years with the earliest go live date being September 2027.
- 5.41 FDC would need to ascertain CPCA consent to extend the existing grant funding deadline of December 2025.

Liaison with Key Partners

- 5.42 Cambridgeshire County Council formally consulted all statutory consultees and partner organisations on the implementation of CPE within Fenland in April 2022. No objections were received and the collective feedback was used to form the basis of a draft CEA/SEA DfT application. Nothing has fundamentally changed in terms of key stakeholder governance arrangements within Fenland since that time and therefore it is considered that no further evidence would be required by DfT to support the application.

South Cambridgeshire & Huntingdonshire District Council CPE Progress SCDC

- 5.43 The application for a Civil/Special Enforcement Area Designation Order for the introduction of CPE in South Cambridgeshire was made by Cambridgeshire County Council on behalf of SCDC and brought into force in 2024. The DfT application for bus lane and bus gate enforcement was to be considered separately. If approved, powers to implement associated camera enforcement systems will be available from November 2025. Such powers would also apply to the HDC administrative area.
- 5.44 It is understood that following the initial CPE implementation period in SCDC where the number of penalty charge notices issued are usually higher during the settling in period, the PCN hit rate has been lower than predicted. This data has been useful to FDC when updating the Fenland CPE model and estimated running costs. It should however be noted that SCDC do not have off street car parks which is estimated to account for approximately 40% of the PCN's issued and associated income in the Fenland model.

HDC

- 5.45 In keeping with Fenland an unusually large amount of sign and line defects were discovered within Huntingdonshire during the TRO survey works, with a large proportion of the defects being located within St Neots. Approximately 80km of lining and over 200 signs were found to be unsuitable for CPE.
- 5.46 The County Council did provide HDC with estimated costs for their corrective sign and line works, however the cost didn't include the full extent of works associated with St Neots. HDC took the decision to deliver their sign and line works outside of the CCC framework contract and following three rounds of tendering appointed two separate contractors to deliver the sign and line works.
- 5.47 HDC predict their sign and line costs will be in the region of £900k and anticipate the corrective works to be completed by August to correspond with their CPE go live date.
- 5.48 It is not yet known the extent of savings that HDC will have realised by procuring the corrective works externally, however it is understood that such savings will be largely offset by the increased officer/contractor time required to co-ordinate the works on the ground. To a large extent the delivery period associated with the corrective works has been protracted due to the time associated with obtaining the necessary streetworks permits. On balance it could be deemed that any external procurement savings maybe cost neutral.
- 5.49 The HDC agency agreement is likely to form the basis of an FDC agreement with the County Council. The HDC agreement is based on an initial 5 year period with the right to withdraw following a 12 month notice period. Any surplus largely to be realised from paid parking will be used initially to offset the associated CPE set up costs with a percentage of any future income being shared with the highway authority. The administration of all highway related TRO permits, waivers, suspensions and dispensations are being undertaken by HDC.

- 5.50 Local government reform would certainly now be factored into an FDC agency agreement with the County Council due to the future transfer of highway authority responsibilities.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 note the updated estimated increase in the overall project delivery cost, timelines and CPE running costs post implementation.
- 6.2 consent to officers proceeding with obtaining updated corrective works costs from Milestone which is likely in itself to incur a cost (currently unknown but estimated to be within the range of £50k to £100k).
- 6.3 consent to officers proceeding with the implementation of CPE based on the predicted costs contained within this update report in advance of obtaining actual costs. Estimated costs to be brought back to cabinet for approval upon receipt.
- 6.4 provide an officer steer on any previously highlighted Red line areas within the previously drafted preliminary agency agreement.
- 6.5 approve the member/officer CPE project team to agree any red line areas in order to progress the CPE project to implementation. This would include the administration of all highway permits, suspensions, waivers and dispensations.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 All mandatory consultation with stakeholders was undertaken in April 2022. Little in the way of feedback was received, however all key stakeholders were supportive and responses used to inform the draft CEA/SEA application. It is considered that no further evidence would be required by DfT to support the CPE application.
- 7.2 A 12 week public advisory period would need to be advertised following the receipt of the CEA/SEA order from the Department for Transport providing advanced notice of the CPE implementation date.

8 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The only alternative option is to continue for now with the police carrying out any enforcement duties for on-street parking contraventions although this is not seen as a priority area of focus for the police. The high level of defective and non-compliant signs and lines on the public highway network throughout the district would certainly make enforcement in any guise challenging at present.
- 8.2 The high cost associated with the implementation of CPE within Fenland is largely associated with the lack of sign and line maintenance over a protracted period of time by the Highway Authority. Two of Fenlands

neighbouring local authorities have already introduced CPE and a third is scheduled to go live in 2025.

- 8.3 It is likely that following the implementation of the local government reform agenda and the formation of new Councils within Cambridgeshire that the existing CEA SEP order would be amended to include Fenlands administrative area. The cost of implementing CPE within Fenland along with all associated corrective sign and line works would transfer to the new authority from April 2028.

9 IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

- 9.1 A full legal review of the contractual documentation associated with the Fenland/County agency and service level agreement will need to take place once agreement has been reached by both authorities on all previous Red line areas.
- 9.2 The County Council would require FDC to concede to the transfer of responsibility for all permits, suspensions, waivers and dispensations associated with the public highway in order for CPE to be implemented within Fenland.
- 9.3 It is inevitable that the highway authority will require the service level agreement to be for a minimum 5 year term, however legal advice will need to be sought in respect of LGR implications.

Financial Implications

- 9.4 The estimated cost for the corrective sign and line works were last calculated in November 2023. This highlighted a significant budget shortfall of £500,000. It is estimated that this cost is now likely to be in the region of £914,510
- 9.5 Whilst there may be some small saving associated with tendering the corrective sign and line works, the savings are likely to be offset by the cost associated with additional officer and contractual resource required to procure and co-ordinate the works on the ground.

Equality Implications

- 9.6 None

10 SCHEDULES

10.1 Predicted FDC Sign & Line Corrective Work Costs (November 2023 with Contract Rate and Increased Work Scope uplift applied)

Fenland Sign & Line Corrective Work Costs (Cost produced using CCC NEC framework contract - Option D)				
Tranche One - Whittlesey		Cost per Query	Target Cost £ (not an actual cost and may rise or fall)	Total Estimated Cost for Tranche £
No.of Sign/Post/Foundation Queries	44	£395.33	£17,394.52	-
No. of Lining Queries	150	£507.10	£76,065.19	-
T1 Estimated Cost (cost now outside of 90 day period and to be updated)				£ 93,459.71
Tranche Two - Chatteris		Cost per Query	Target Cost £ (not an actual cost and may rise or fall)	Total Estimated Cost for Tranche £
No.of Sign/Post/Foundation Queries	56	£509.37	£28,524.52	-
No. of Lining Queries	89	£655.84	£58,370.15	-
T2 Estimated Cost (cost now outside of 90 day period and to be updated)				£ 86,894.67
Tranche Three - March		Cost per Query	Target Cost £ (not an actual cost and may rise or fall)	Total Estimated Cost for Tranche £
No.of Sign/Post/Foundation Queries	55	£623.28	£34,280.58	No.of Sign/Post/Foundation Queries
No. of Lining Queries	148	£417.75	£61,826.68	No. of Lining Queries
T3 Estimated Cost (cost now outside of 90 day period and to be updated)				£ 96,107.26
Tranche Four - Wisbech		Cost per Query	Target Cost £ (not an actual cost and may rise or fall)	Total Estimated Cost for Tranche £
No.of Sign/Post/Foundation Queries	139	£439.00	£61,021.41	No.of Sign/Post/Foundation Queries
No. of Lining Queries	356	£564.77	£201,056.34	No. of Lining Queries
T3 Estimated Cost				£ 262,077.75
2023 CCC Contract Cost for Signs & Lines (exc contingencies)				£ 538,539.39
10% Contract Rate Uplift for Signs & Lines 2023 to 2025				£ 53,853.94
50% Estimated Increase in work scope associated with 50% of all fair line defects				£ 537,912.62
Sub Total				£ 1,130,306
5% Contingency associated with potential additional defects post 2021 survey				£ 56,515.00
Total Predicted Cost for All Four Tranches				£ 1,186,821

Note: The County Council last provided updated target costs for All four Tranches on 20th November 2023. Target costs are only valid for 90 days following which the contractor is entitled to reprice. An updated target costs will need to be ascertained to provide members with the most up to date costs. The costs provided in Schedule 7.1 are predicted costs and have been provided by officers applying estimated rate increases along with a lump sum associated with additional poor defects that were previously deemed fair. Target costs exclude any contingency allowance for increased scope associated with design package works having been based on 2021 survey data. Therefore a 10% contingency allowance has been added.

10.2 FDC CPE Funding

Funding Allocation Description	Capital Funding (£)	Project Expenditure	Remaining Funding (£)
CPCA funding from market towns fund	£400,000	£84,339	£315,661
County Council contribution towards FDC CPE design package works	£150,000	£110,000	£40,000
Potential Greater Cambridge Partnership contribution towards FDC CPE implementation (TBC)	£150,000	£0	£150,000
Potential Additional CPCA contribution towards FDC CPE implementation (TBC)	£160,000	£0	£160,000
Total of project grant funding	£860,000	-	-
Total project expenditure to date	-	£194,339	-
Total grant funding remaining			£665,661

10.3 Updated FDC CPE Set-up Costs

Item Description	Capital Set-up Cost (£)	Revenue Shortfall (£)
Feasibility Work Costs Spent to date		
Consultant cost for On-street TRO sign & line survey, mapping and production of query sheets including submission to and liaison with highway authority	£54,269	-
Consultant cost for implementation works to date	£12,360	
FDC Internal Officer Recharge	£17,710	
Sign & Line design package works + Appyway software licence cost	£110,000	
Total of project expenditure to date	£194,339	
Estimated Implementation Work Costs		
Fenland Parking Review and Strategy Document (for FDC Car Parks) DfT Recommendation – Specialist Consultancy	£15,000	-
Consultant cost for implementation works	£20,000	
Legal costs for agency and service level agreements associated with DfT application indicative	£10,000	-
Estimated contractor design package works associated with fair sign & line defects	£50,000	
Updated TRO corrective sign and line costs. CCC target cost based on 2021 survey + 10% Uplift from 2023	£592,393	
Estimated sign & line defects associated with 50% of all fair signs and lines now assumed to be poor	£537,913	
Contingency Allowance 5%	£56,515	
Consultation costs for FDC Parking Place Orders Review	3,000	
Legal and Consultation costs for FDC Parking Place Orders (Estimated)	5,000	

Replacement Signs associated with updated CPE Parking Place Orders for short and long stay parking (27 signs over 17 sites)	12,150	
New Signage associated with CPE Parking Place Orders for short and long stay parking (13 signs over 11 sites)	22,750	
Lining costs associated with FDC owned/managed parking facilities (28 sites)	40,350	
Installation of Solar Powered machines for motorists to record their arrival time (43 no solar machines for 28 car parks 2419 spaces @ £4000 Each) 1 machine per 75 bays	£172,000	
Permitting set up costs for Off-Street Car Parks Indicative	£15,000	
Public Consultation/Advisory Advertisement	£5,000	
FDC Officer Time (Estimated)	£23,100	
Total Estimated Implementation Costs	£1,580,171	
Remaining CPE grant funding	£665,661	
Estimated Project Budget Shortfall for CPE Setup		£914,510

10.4 Updated Estimated CPE Operating Costs

Items	Revenue Cost Per year	Revenue Income per year
Income from PCNs based on issuing 1983 tickets (@ £50-£70) a year using 2 Full Time CEO's		£55,331
County Court Proceeds		£887
Operational Management (External)	£15,943	
On Street Enforcement Cost (External)	£41,862	
Off Street Enforcement Cost (External)	£34,110	
CEO Vehicle Costs x2 £7,500 per year plus mileage costs	£18,000	
Car Park Machine Vehicle Registration & On-street PCN Processing	£17,006	
Management of Highway Permits, Waivers, Suspensions & Dispensations	£0,000	
Average Estimated Annual Income		£56,218
Total Average Annual Operating Costs	£126,921	
Average Annual CPE Operating Deficit	- £70,703 DEFICIT	

Notes

- Operating costs have been based on 2 full-time enforcement officers. It is considered that 4 FTE CEO's would provide greater cover and resilience but would also further increase revenue costs. Having less CEO's or using part time CEO's would consequently reduce PCN income by virtue of having less time deployed issuing tickets. This would also not provide sufficient resource levels to enforce on-street areas throughout the district and the 28 Council owned/managed short/long stay parking facilities within the four Market Towns.
- The annual estimated CPE operating costs have been produced using the fully external enforcement and administration feasibility model V3B previously preferred by members which has been updated in June 2025.

- Running Civil Parking Enforcement in a largely rural area with spread out Market Towns, such as those in Fenland, the factor of Civil Enforcement Officer downtime has to be considered. CEO's will spend time travelling between small market towns and the likelihood of finding any parking infringements is lower than in a busy city centre such as Cambridge. The recent implementation of CPE in in SCDC supports this.
- The above income and operational CPE costs include costs associated with managing On-street parking, permits, dispensations, waivers and suspensions. Fee's associated with permit charging would be set and agreed by the County Council. Any income would be used to offset the administration costs. It is unlikely any surplus will be generated but in such cases these would be used in accordance with the agency agreement and CPE ringfencing rules.

10.5 Revised CPE Timetable

Action	Indicative dates	Individual Task Duration
Draft and Sign Off of FDC/CCC CPE Agency Agreement and SLA (subject to Red Flag areas being agreed)	August 2025 - Jan 2026	6 months
CCC to prepare and submit a detailed costed business case/application to Dft	Feb - March 2026	1 month
Submission of CPE Application to Dft October for designation order. (current time for Dft consideration/approval is 6 months)	March 2026 - March 2027	Up to 12 months
Undertake a review of all FDC off street parking places orders to include short & long stay parking and permitting	Oct 2025 - Jan 2026	3 months
Consultant to undertake an FDC Parking Review and District wide parking Strategy to link to the corporate transport objectives	Feb 2026 - August 2026	6 months
External Enforcement & Administration Services Tender/Procurement	August 2026 – Feb 2027	6 months
Implementation of On-street corrective sign works	March - June 2027	3 months
Implementation of On-street corrective line works	March - Sept 2027	6 months
Implementation of FDC CPE car park signs and lines	March – June 2027	3 months
Public/Partner Notice (mandatory prior to implementation of CPE)	July – Sept 2027	2 months
Estimated CPE Go Live Date	September 2027	

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Agenda Item No:	6	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	21 July 2025	
Report Title:	Fenland Inspire! Project: Play Equipment	

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the options for the scope and budgetary considerations of the Fenland Inspire! play areas project, asking for Cabinet decisions regarding the scope and also delegations necessary to move the project forwards.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The Council currently offers 48 play areas in various locations throughout the District. These play areas differ, from spaces with a single item of equipment up to more comprehensive offers such as the Wenny Recreation Ground in Chatteris with 14 items. In total there are more than 300 pieces of play equipment managed by the Council in Fenland. The equipment is assessed annually by ROSPA for safety whilst also being checked on a regular basis by our grounds maintenance contractor to ensure everything is safe for use throughout the year. Whilst the equipment is safe and a lot of equipment is in good order, there are items that are nearing the end of their life.
- 2.2 Additionally, the Council manages 6 skate parks across the District. These are popular facilities used by a wide range of the local communities from younger users with parents all the way up to adult users. A recent addition is a BMX pump track in West End Park. This project has been managed by the County Council and funded by CCC matched by the Mick George Community Fund. FDC will manage this site, within our park, and take on repair responsibility after the 1 year defects period has expired.
- 2.3 A further popular community facility is the Splash Pad in Wisbech Park, open throughout the summer and managed by the Council.
- 2.4 The Council also manages 6 multi-use games areas (also known as MUGA's) throughout the District. These are multi-sport, fenced facilities that are popular for basketball, football and netball. In addition to the MUGA's the Council offers tennis courts in Wisbech Park and at the Manor Field in Whittlesey. The Manor tennis facility management is to be switched to Whittlesey Town Council, with this arrangement now likely to take place after the summer, with Freedom currently facilitating bookings.
- 2.5 As part of the Fenland Inspire! initiative Members wish to increase the number of play areas available to local residents in Fenland. This paper covers the planned approach to achieve this aim, consideration of the current stock of play equipment and the necessary move of the skate park at the Manor Field as a result of the Fenland Inspire! Manor Leisure Centre Enhancement project.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet notes the report and the current comprehensive offer to the community in terms of play areas, skate parks, a splash pad and MUGA's across the District.
- 3.2 That Cabinet notes the General Fund Budget Estimates and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Report, agreed by Cabinet and Council in February which projects a

financial shortfall for 2025/26 of £1.432m increasing year on year amounting to around £3.4m by 2027/28.

- 3.3 That Cabinet instructs officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to assess requirements for new play areas on FDC land close to residential areas, or in the event that there are limited options available, to suggest enhancements to existing play areas with a rationale for the play areas selected. Any final decision on these new or enhanced play areas is to be made in the future by Cabinet.
- 3.4 That Cabinet approves the development of a new play area to replace the existing poor quality play area at Westmead Road in Wisbech, to an adjoining position in the same open space, with a maximum budget of £60,000 from the Fenland Inspire! capital project.
- 3.5 That Cabinet instructs officers to develop a database of current play equipment with an assessment of the useful life left in each piece of equipment, and that any equipment with a life of less than three years is replaced as part of this project, with the capital funding coming from the Fenland Inspire! capital fund.
- 3.6 That Cabinet notes that the refurbishment of the Manor Leisure Centre will mean the necessary movement of the skate park at Manor Field in Whittlesey, and that Cabinet notes that this work will form part of this play area project in conjunction with other proposed works. The budget will be from the Fenland Inspire! programme but will form part of the overall Manor Leisure refurbishment project costs.
- 3.7 That Cabinet authorises the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Fenland Inspire! and the Leader of the Council, in his role as Portfolio Holder for Finance, to execute and complete all requisite legal and governance documentation in relation to Cabinet decisions made regarding the matters outlined above, and that Cabinet authorises the Section 151 Officer to make all necessary financial arrangements within the Fenland Inspire! capital budget to carry forward decisions made by Cabinet as a result of this report.

Wards Affected	All wards	
Forward Plan References	KEY/14MAR25/01	Fenland Inspire! Project regarding play equipment
Portfolio Holders	Cllr Chris Seaton	Portfolio holder for Fenland Inspire! Projects
	Cllr Chris Boden	Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance
	Cllr Jan French	Portfolio Holder for Parks & Open Spaces
Report Originator	Phil Hughes	Head of Leisure Services
Contact Officers	Carol Pilson Phil Hughes	Corporate Director Head of Leisure Services
Background Papers	Open Spaces – play area capital investment policy – Cabinet report of December 2023	
	February 2025	Budget and Business Plan Agenda Items
	June 2025	Fenland Inspire! Projects Update Agenda Item

4. BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

4.1 A list of all play areas, equipment numbers, skate parks and MUGA's may be found in **SCHEDULE 1** – Play areas, skate parks and MUGA's across Fenland.

4.2 It is proposed that the Fenland Inspire! Play Equipment project could be potentially structured as follows:
Any single item end of life piece of play equipment that requires replacement by 2028, will be replaced.

- Westmead Play Area, Wisbech – up to £60,000
- Relocation of Whittlesey Skate Park
- Officer Review and recommendation of potential enhancements to be brought back to Cabinet
- Members to set a total budget to encompass all of these works.

4.3 Development of new play areas

4.4 The development of new play areas in the District may be interpreted in two ways;

- A play area developed in a location where one did not currently exist.
- The total refurbishment of an existing play area to offer a far better experience to local residents.

4.5 To achieve either aim the process to move this aspect of the project forwards is relatively simple and will take time following steps:

- Assess current play area locations to identify any 'cold spots' within residential areas and then determine what sort of facility would be realistic in such areas, delivered on FDC owned land. In the event that there are fewer than 4 new play

area options available, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder, a Cabinet report would then offer options to improve existing key play area(s) and a rationale as to why those play areas should be expanded or refurbished.

- Approximate play area costs are as follows and any future options presented to Cabinet will highlight what sort of area is required and an approximate cost:
 - £60,000 will provide a basic play area of 3 or 4 items of junior or toddler equipment
 - £100,000 will provide a good-sized facility with a mixture of equipment for differing age ranges
 - £150,000+ will provide a destination play facility, where people will travel to visit the new facility. A good example is the play area in Wisbech park.

4.6 Assessment of current play areas

4.7 An assessment of current play area equipment and a replacement programme of equipment that is reaching the end of its useful life within 3 years is recommended.

4.8 This work would:

- Create a database holding information about all play area equipment that the Council is responsible for, including an assessment of the likely necessary replacement date for each of over 300 items.
- Consider the most recent ROSPA assessment of play area equipment and cross reference this with the assessment of end of life.
- Identify equipment requiring replacement in the next three years, with replacement programme developed through FDC's grounds maintenance contractor and work undertaken in 2026.

5 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Fenland Inspire! initiative details new play areas and this paper highlights how this work may be taken forwards. Alongside this, ensuring the quality of current play areas is also included to ensure that the play areas in Fenland remain fit for purpose into the medium-term.

5.2 This work will determine a budget necessary to deliver the projects concerned from the Fenland Inspire! capital budget and determine a firm scope for the projects for officers to work within.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 Consultation will be undertaken regarding the replacement skate park at Manor Field. Additionally, for any new play areas local consultation will be undertaken on site with local residents, as well as elected Members, able to offer their thoughts on draft proposals.

7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 Cabinet has been offered options within this paper, but much work remains outstanding and cannot be determined until approval to proceed is in place.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Legal Implications

8.2 Appropriate procurement processes will be followed in relation to this project.

8.3 Financial Implications

- 8.4 Cabinet and Council has recently approved the Council's Business Plan which includes this project specifically in the Fenland Inspire! Section, with budget allowed for the Fenland Inspire! Projects within the Council budget for 2025/26 and in later years.
- 8.5 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 £1.432m increasing year on year amounting to around £3.4m by 2027/28.
- 8.6 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.
- 8.7 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.
- 8.8 There may be an opportunity to apply for external funding from 3rd parties to offset the costs of play area equipment.
- 8.9 There may be s106 funding available in certain geographical areas that could be used for match funding.

8.10 Equality Implications


Any new play area and replacement of aging play equipment will include consideration of accessible play equipment.

SCHEDULE 1 – Play areas, skate parks and MUGA's across Fenland

		Equipment
Play Areas x 48	High Street, Benwick	9
	Cricketers Way, Chatteris	6
	Furrowfields, Chatteris	9
	Hunters Close, Chatteris	4
	Huntingdon Road, Chatteris Infant	7
	Huntingdon Road, Chatteris Junior	1
	Larham Way, Chatteris	6
	St Pauls Drive, Chatteris	3
	Wenny Road Recreation Ground, Chatteris	14
	Willey Terrace, Chatteris	2
	North Green, Coates	7
	South Green, Coates	2
	Beech Avenue, Doddington	4
	Beech Avenue, Doddington	6
	Walden Close, Doddington	2
	Springfields, Eastrea	5
	Thornham Way, Eastrea	5
	West Drive, Friday Bridge	5
	Williams Way, Manea	4
	Alberts Drive, March	6
	Dagless Way, March	6
	Gaul Road, March	8
	North Drive, March	6
	Robingoodfellows Lane, March	9
	Southwell Close, March	9
	The Avenue, March	8
	West End Park, March Play Area	12
	West End Park, timber equipment	4
	Main Road, Parson Drove	8
	Burdett Grove, Whittlesey	8
	Manor Recreation Ground, Whittlesey Play Area	11
	Pinewood Avenue, Whittlesey	3
	Snowley Park, Whittlesey	17
	Station Road, Whittlesey	7
	Tower Recreation Ground, Whittlesey	8
	Yarwells Headlands, Whittlesey	6
	Honeymead Road, Wimblington	1
	Barton Road, Wisbech	3
	Burcroft Road, Wisbech	2
	Conference Way	5

	Copperfields, Wisbech	4
	Fenmen Place, Wisbech	6
	Heron Road, Wisbech Junior	1
	Heron Road, Wisbech Infant	2
	Jasmin Close, Wisbech	3
	Malt Drive, Wisbech	4
	Westmead Avenue, Wisbech	2
	Wisbech Park, Wisbech Play Area	16
Outside Gym / trim trail	West End Park	16
Skate Parks x 6	Huntingdon Road, Chatteris Skate Park	
	Bath Road skate park	
	Wenny Road skate park	
	Manor Skate Park	
	West End Skate park	
	West End Skate bowl	
MUGA x 6	Wisbech Park	
	Huntingdon Road, Chatteris	
	Larham Way, Chatteris	
	Furrowfields, Chatteris	
	Wenny Road, Chatteris	
	High Street, Benwick	
Sports Court x 2	Manor Field - netball/ tennis court	
	Wisbech Park tennis court	
Splash Pad	Wisbech Park	

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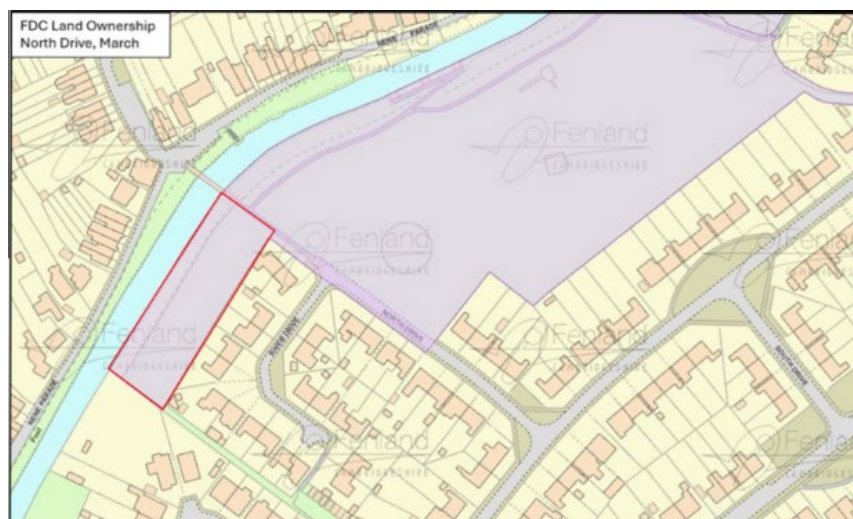
Agenda Item No:	7	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	21 July 2025	
Report Title:	Fenland Inspire! Project regarding North Drive Recreation Ground – options for new play equipment	

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 This report highlights potential options for adding more equipment for young people into the North Drive Recreation Ground in March, following the Cabinet Paper in November 2024 that instructed officers to investigate potential options.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The November 2024 Cabinet report regarding the options for North Drive Rec in March resulted in a decision for Officers to investigate a skate park for the open space.
- 2.2 Following Cabinet's decision, the open spaces team has reviewed the site. The best place to locate a facility will be away from residential housing. The best spot at North Drive rec will be adjacent to the pathway, north of the play area (play area is the circle in the bottom left large purple section below). The red-lined rectangle of land, previously identified in the November Cabinet report, is far too close to residential housing for a skate park or BMX pump track. Instead, this space is recommended for use for the necessary biodiversity net gain space required to offset a Skate Park or BMX pump track's use of green space.



3 Public Consultation

- 3.1 The Council will carry out a public consultation regarding the options of either a skate park or a BMX Pump track in this space and a further report to Cabinet will follow this work

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 Cabinet to instruct officers to proceed with a community consultation regarding the option of either a skate park or a BMX Pump track in the location described above on the open space at North Drive Recreation Ground in March.
- 4.2 Cabinet to note the original space discussed by Cabinet in November 2024 to be designated as space required for biodiversity net gain following the development of either a skate park or BMX pump track.

Wards Affected	All March wards	
Forward Plan References	KEY/21MAR25/01 North Drive Recreation Area, March. Potential development of skate park KEY/14MAR25/01 Fenland Inspire! Project regarding play equipment	
Portfolio Holders	Cllr Chris Seaton	Portfolio Holder for Fenland Inspire! projects
	Cllr Jan French	Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Open Spaces
	Cllr Chris Boden	Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance
Report Originator	Phil Hughes	Head of Leisure Services
Contact Officers	Carol Pilson Phil Hughes	Corporate Director Head of Leisure Services
Background Papers	November 2024 Cabinet Report regarding North Drive Recreation Ground in March	

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 This report is informing Cabinet about consultation on options for the open space.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 Cabinet considered alternative options in the Cabinet paper of November 2024.

7 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Legal Implications

- 7.2 None

7.3 Financial Implications

- 7.4 There are no financial implications in completing a public consultation, however, any project to improve equipment in this area will require significant spend and the options associated with that will be highlighted to Members in a future report.

7.5 Equality Implications

- 7.6 None

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Agenda Item No:	8	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	21 July 2025	
Report Title:	Annual Report 2024/25	

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 To present the Annual Report of the Council for Cabinet to note the achievements made in delivering the Council's corporate priorities in 2024/25.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The Annual Report of the Council 2024/25 sets out the Council's performance over the last year, linking to the priorities detailed in our Business Plan. These priorities are designed to deliver outcomes that improve the quality of life for Fenland residents and are listed under the key headings of Communities, Environment, Economy and Quality Organisation.
- 2.2 The achievements outlined in the Annual Report are not exhaustive but reflect some of our successful projects over the last year. Notable examples are given of how we have worked closely with the community and partners to tackle important local issues in a collaborative and efficient way.
- 2.3 The past 12 months has brought both ongoing challenges and significant developments, not least the Government's announcement in December 2024 of its plans for Local Government Reorganisation.
- 2.4 Once again, we reduced our element of Council Tax in 2024/25 by 0.2% following a 2% reduction in 2023/24 which followed four years of no increases. Members again decided to not increase its element of the Council Tax bill in 2025/26. A clear demonstration of our commitment to easing pressures on household budgets.
- 2.5 This year, Members also launched Fenland Inspire!, an exciting investment campaign designed to enhance sports, leisure, and heritage facilities across the district. The programme is aimed at promoting healthier, more active lifestyles whilst celebrating Fenland's unique character.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Annual Report of the Council 2024/25.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Boden, Leader of the Council Cabinet Members

Report Originator(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director Carol Pilson, Corporate Director David Wright, Head of Policy & Communications
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director Carol Pilson, Corporate Director David Wright, Head of Policy & Communications
Background Papers	Business Plan 2024/25

4 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 4.1 The Annual Report of the Council 2024/25 summarises key examples of the Council's performance against each of our corporate priorities over the past year. This document is published and circulated on an annual basis to provide a summary of performance for councillors, customers and partners.
- 4.2 The achievements outlined in the Annual Report are not exhaustive but reflect some of our successful projects over the last year. Notable examples are given of how we have worked closely with the community and partners to tackle important local issues in a collaborative and efficient way.
- 4.3 This year, Members also launched Fenland Inspire!, an exciting investment campaign designed to enhance sports, leisure, and heritage facilities across the district. The programme is aimed at promoting healthier, more active lifestyles whilst celebrating Fenland's unique character.
- 4.4 The Council continues to deliver high quality services and effective projects within each of its corporate priorities. Key examples include:

4.5 Communities - highlights

- 4.6 Our Housing Options team received 2201 requests for homeless advice and continued to demonstrate our commitment to supporting them at an early stage to prevent homelessness.
- 4.7 Used our powers to improve the condition of private rented homes and ensure they are safe, secure and accessible, investigating a total of 286 homes.
- 4.8 To assist in our aim of meeting housing needs, we brought 64 empty homes back into use.
- 4.9 Our My Fenland customer contact team enabled the Early Help Hub project to provide support to residents struggling to work due to poor physical or mental health, supporting 265 customers from June 2024. In December 2024, the externally funded WorkWell project launched with similar aims and 220 people were supported to year-end. With funding in place until March 2026, the project goes from strength to strength.
- 4.10 We worked collaboratively with partners, including operators of our four Fenland leisure centres Freedom Leisure and our health providers, to deliver leisure and wellbeing services. In July 2024, figures for the previous year were reported and showed active participation from 486,081 people; 100,050 gym visits and 93,510 swim visits.

- 4.11 We encouraged partners to support the delivery of Golden Age events providing information to over 60s on opportunities, services and support available to them. Four Golden Age events were held, reaching 528 visitors. A pilot Golden Age Christmas appeal saw 200 shoeboxes filled with donated gifts for distribution to over 60s in Fenland.
- 4.12 Our Active Fenland team, which provides free and low-cost social and fitness sessions in a bid to launch good health habits, delivered and supported a total of 1,463 sessions catering to young and old and focused often on reaching those who have lost fitness or do not do regular exercise.
- 4.13 We delivered on promoting culture and heritage including by issuing Fenland Culture Fund grants totalling more than £55,000 to 35 applicants. These are funded through the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund, via the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, and Arts Council England and is a partnership project with the Fenland Culture Partnership and Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy.

4.14 Environment – highlights

- 4.15 We continued to deliver an efficient and reliable refuse and recycling service, collecting over 39,192 tonnes of domestic and commercial waste across the district.
- 4.16 Our Garden Waste service remained extremely popular, with 24,403 households subscribed, generating £1.1 million to support the service's running costs. A total of 7,615 tonnes of garden waste was collected.
- 4.17 We Our Cleansing and Rapid Response team worked tirelessly 364 days a year to keep Fenland's streets and open spaces clean and welcoming. They responded to 1,651 environmental requests from the public – including litter, broken glass, fly-tipping and drug-related waste – and resolved 87% of these the same or next working day.
- 4.18 Working alongside Fenland's active volunteers, including Street Pride groups, the team delivered high standards of street cleanliness. Cleanliness was independently monitored using Keep Britain Tidy surveying methodology. Of 1,022 street cleanliness inspections, 98.7% met or exceeded required standards.
- 4.19 Our Street Scene team spent 4,150 hours in the community, in all weathers, working on various proactive environment and enforcement projects.
- 4.20 We worked with our contractor to ensure the maintenance of more than 135 hectares of green space, in excess of 40 play areas and 11 parks in Fenland.
- 4.21 We continued to deliver the CCTV shared service with Peterborough City Council, which responded to 1,225 incidents in Fenland. Direct outcomes included 200 arrests made by Cambridgeshire Police as a result of real-time CCTV detection, evidence gathering, and live support from the control room.

4.22 Economy – highlights

- 4.23 Promoting and developing our business premises to encourage investment, business development, job creation and skills diversification, resulted in overall occupancy across South Fens Business Centre, Chatteris; The Boathouse, Wisbech, and our light industrial units of 94.1%.
- 4.24 The three-year Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund grants programmes with funds from UK Government and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, completed. Initial assessments show benefits including:
 - More than £1million of grant support provided to Fenland businesses
 - 125 new Fenland jobs created
 - 11 new businesses started
 - 16 farm businesses supported including 9 diversification projects

- 4.25 The transformation of Broad Street was the final step in a multi-million pound programme of schemes to regenerate March town centre. Delivered in partnership with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council, the Broad Street project has transformed the appearance and functionality of the area. The scheme included changes to the road layout to improve traffic flow, improvements to the streetscape, better pedestrian facilities, enhanced green spaces, and upgraded lighting. The scheme was highly commended in the national Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation 'Creating Better Places Award'.
- 4.26 Our planning team assisted with the appropriate growth, development and infrastructure through delivering a proactive and effective planning service. In the year ending December 2024, 538 planning applications were received and 521 decisions made. Of those 462 were granted (89 per cent) A total of 83 per cent of decisions were delegated to officers.
- 4.27 A total of 240 new affordable homes were delivered (subject to final figure verification) in our bid to meet housing needs and a significant number of additional units are on the horizon. Pipeline developments provide more than 200 much-needed one-bed units, with around 50 of these to be under construction in the coming 12 months.

4.28 Quality Organisation – highlights

- 4.29 We collected over £73million in Council Tax and £29million in Business Rates. This plays a major part in funding the key services we provide to the community.
- 4.30 The MyFenland team answered more than 56,000 phone calls and resolved 92% of customer queries at the first point of call.
- 4.31 Our website over 20,000 online form submissions across 50 different topics.
- 4.32 We maintained our Customer Service Excellence accreditation demonstrating that we continue to deliver the most effective service to our communities.
- 4.33 Our transformation Agenda enabled us to make £241k of cashable savings in addition to saving more than 5,700 officer hours and identified and reduced more than 20 service risks. Each of these supports our goal of becoming a modern council that is more effective, flexible and future-ready.
- 4.34 We used a fair and proportionate approach to improve living, working and environmental standards as set out in our Enforcement Policies. This has included through our:
- housing enforcement policy where a total of 286 homes were investigated and a total of 87 enforcement notices, penalties or fines issued, such as in relation to landlords to rectify hazards and meet energy performance requirements
 - parking enforcement where appropriate on our land, such as in March Market Place.
 - close work with food businesses to make sure they operate safely by following food safety legislation and hygiene standards. In January to March alone, 79 businesses received an inspection and were awarded a score using the food hygiene rating scheme, where applicable.

5 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Annual Report of the Council 2024/25 shows clear performance towards the achievement of our corporate priorities. It is only a summary document; many more projects are ongoing that aim to improve quality of life for Fenland residents.

- 5.2 For Cabinet to note the achievements made in delivering the Council's corporate priorities and for Cabinet to approve the Annual Report of the Council 2024/25.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Not Applicable.

7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 No alternative options were considered as the Council has made an ongoing commitment to produce an Annual Report of the Council.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Legal Implications

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

8.3 Financial Implications

- 8.4 The Annual Report 2024/25 sets out high level corporate achievements that are linked to the priorities in our business plan which are reflected in the Council budget.

8.5 Equality Implications

- 8.6 Not Applicable.



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Introduction by the Leader and Chief Executive

Welcome to Fenland District Council's Annual Report for 2024/25

We are pleased to introduce you to our latest Annual Report, highlighting the progress we've made, the services we've delivered, and the work we've continued to carry out to support communities across Fenland.

The past 12 months has brought both ongoing challenges and significant developments, not least the Government's announcement in December 2024 of its plans for Local Government Reorganisation – the biggest shake-up in local government since the 1970s.

The proposals to replace existing district, city and council councils with single-tier unitary councils will have a far-reaching impact on how local services are delivered, and how people engage with councils in the future.

In response, we're working closely with councils across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to shape proposals for new unitary councils – and ensure that any new arrangements put in place by Government work in our residents' and businesses' best interests.

Work on these reforms will continue into the year ahead and beyond. But throughout the process and despite the uncertainties, our priorities and values will remain unchanged: to deliver high-quality, responsive services, support the most vulnerable, strengthen the local economy, and deliver value for money.

Once again, we reduced our element of Council Tax in 2024/25 by 0.2% following a 2% reduction in 2023/24 which followed four years of no increases. Members again decided to not increase its element of the Council Tax bill in 2025/26. A



Chris Boden
Leader of the
Council



Paul Medd
Chief Executive

clear demonstration of our commitment to easing pressures on household budgets.

This year, Members also launched Fenland Inspire!, an exciting investment campaign designed to enhance sports, leisure, and heritage facilities across the district. The programme is aimed at promoting healthier, more active lifestyles while celebrating Fenland's unique character.

Our transformation agenda has also continued at pace. We've taken further steps to modernise how we work, enhance our digital services, and improve customer experience, ensuring our services are as accessible, efficient and resilient as possible.

In addition, we launched our WorkWell support programme to help people with health issues to get back to or stay in work, and it continues to go from strength to strength.

And we invested and used our powers where necessary to ensure more families have a safe place to call home.

We also successfully secured more funding for Fenland, to deliver thousands of pounds of grant funding for businesses, boost arts, culture and heritage activities, reduce carbon emissions and promote energy efficiency, help reduce youth anti-social behaviour and much, much more.

We encourage you to explore the rest of this report to learn more about the wide-ranging work we've carried out over the past year. From frontline services to long-term planning, community investment to environmental action, it offers a detailed picture of how we are working to support our residents, strengthen our district, and build a better future for Fenland.

About Fenland

Fenland is a district shaped by its rural character and strong community values, with wide-open landscapes, vibrant market towns and a deep-rooted connection to agriculture – and heritage.

Located in North Cambridgeshire, the Fenland District spans approximately 211 square miles and is home to an estimated 104,595 residents (ONS, mid-2023 estimate). Over 70% of the population lives in the four market towns – Chatteris, March, Whittlesey, and Wisbech – while the wider rural areas include 29 villages.

Fenland offers some of the most affordable housing in Cambridgeshire, with an average house price of £230,103 (UK HPI: March 2025), which is 22% below the national average. Its close proximity and excellent links to cities like Cambridge and Peterborough makes it attractive to new residents, with the district's population projected to grow to 120,860 by 2043, a 16% increase (ONS, mid-2023 estimate). Fenland also has a higher proportion of older residents, with 23% aged over 64 (approximately 24,540 people). We work closely with health and care partners to ensure older residents have access to the support and resources they need to maintain independence and wellbeing.

Despite economic and social challenges – we are ranked as the 80th most deprived area in England out of 317 local authorities (IMD, 2019*). Despite this, the community demonstrates resilience, and the council remains committed to working with partner organisations to invest in services, infrastructure, and opportunities for all.

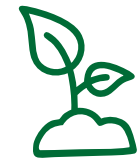
* The next release of the English Indices of Deprivation, including the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), is expected to be in late 2025.



Fenland covers approximately 211 square miles



Over 200 miles of navigable waterways



Over 135 hectares of open green space



The population is around 104,595



Average property price is £230,103

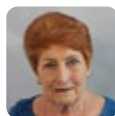


Over 3,160 businesses in Fenland

Cabinet



Chris Boden
Leader of the Council
Whittlesey East
and villages



Jan French
Deputy Leader of the Council
March South



Steve Count
March North



Gary Christy
March South



Chris Seaton
Leverington and
Wisbech Rural



Dee Laws
Whittlesey North West



Sam Hoy
Wisbech South



Steve Tierney
Wisbech South



Susan Wallwork
Wisbech South



Sidney Imafidon
Wisbech Waterlees and
Walsoken

Other Councillors



James Carney
Chatteris North
and Manea



Alan Gowler
Chatteris North
and Manea



Charlie Marks
Chatteris North
and Manea



Anne Hay
Chatteris South



Ian Benney
Chatteris South



Peter Murphy
Chatteris South



David Connor
Doddington and
Wimblington



Maureen Davis
Doddington and
Wimblington



Dal Roy
Elm and
Christchurch



Matthew Summers
Elm and
Christchurch



Brenda Barber
Leverington and
Wisbech Rural



Sam Clark
Leverington and
Wisbech Rural



John Clark
March East



Stuart Harris
March East



Mark Purser
March East



Kim French
March North



Paul Hicks
March North



Tim Taylor
March West and
Benwick



Andrew Woollard
March West and
Benwick



Gavin Booth
Parson Drove and
Wisbech St Mary



Diane Cutler
Parson Drove and
Wisbech St Mary



Michael Humphrey
Parson Drove and
Wisbech St Mary



Alex Miscandlon
Whittlesey East
and villages



Dr Haq Nawaz
Whittlesey East and
villages



Jason Mockett
Whittlesey Lattersey



Elisabeth Sennitt Clough
Whittlesey North West



Roy Gerstner
Whittlesey South



Gurninder Singh Gill
Whittlesey South



Lucie Foice-Beard
Wisbech North



Nick Meekins
Wisbech Riverside



David Oliver
Wisbech Riverside



David Patrick
Wisbech Waterlees and
Walsoken



Billy Rackley
Wisbech Waterlees and
Walsoken

Conservative 
Independent 
Liberal Democrat 

Money Matters

Where your Council Tax goes

In 2024/25, the Band D Council Tax bill was set at £2,278.35 (plus Parish amounts). In 2025/26, this increased to £2,378.07 (plus Parish amounts). Fenland District Council collects money through Council Tax on behalf of other authorities, as shown on the diagram.

Fenland District Council further reduced its element of Council Tax in 2024/25 by 0.2% following a 2% reduction in 2023/24 which followed four years of no increases.

Members again decided to not increase its element of the Council Tax bill in 2025/26. Just 10.5% of each household's Council Tax bill goes to Fenland District Council, with the remainder going to the other authorities.

The numbers above relate to a Band D property. However, 83% of properties in Fenland are in Bands A-C. The average Council Tax per property in Fenland was £1,585.11 in 2024/25 and is £1,666.27 in 2025/26 and is the lowest average per property in Cambridgeshire. This also compares to an average Council Tax per property of £1,769.94 in 2025/26 across all English authorities.

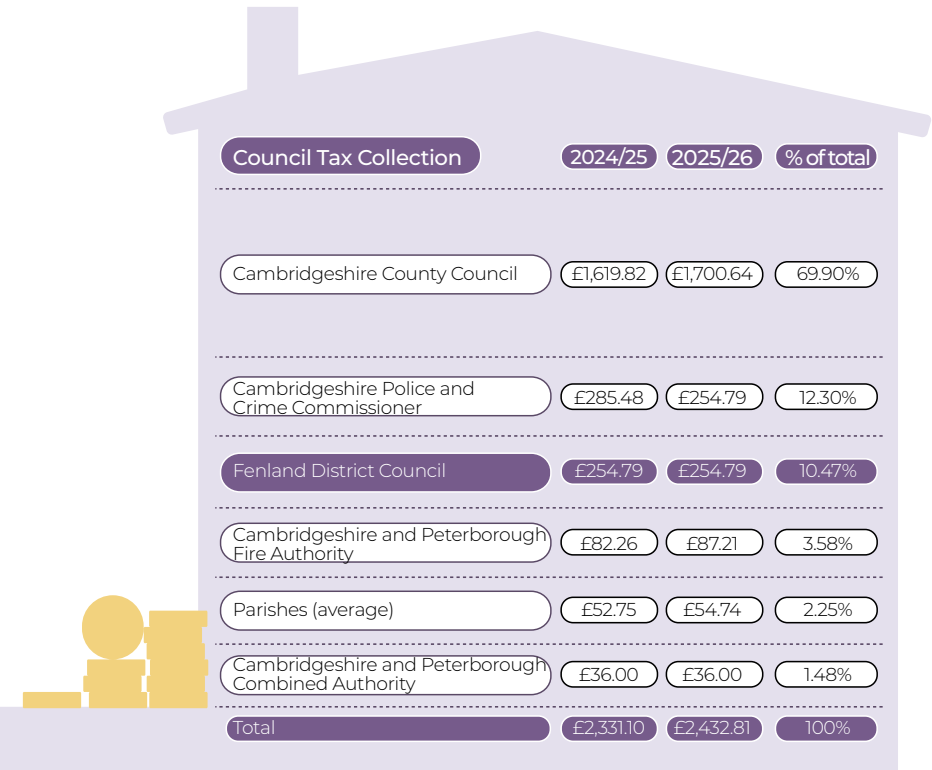
Our finances

The Council's net spending on services in 2024/25 was £17.616m. This sum is financed by the Council's share of Business Rates (£9.440m), Council Tax (£8.102m) and Government Revenue Support Grant (£0.185m) which resulted in a surplus of £130k being returned for 2024/25. At the budget meeting in February 2025, a net deficit of £350k was forecast at the year end. The surplus of £130k has been transferred to the Budget Equalisation Reserve.

This reserve represents the amount taken in tax which has not been spent and now stands at £2.213m.

Full details of the Council's Budget for 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy can be found at: www.fenland.gov.uk/finance

You may also wish to read our Business Plan. This explains our organisational priorities for the next financial year: www.fenland.gov.uk/businessplan



Transformation Agenda

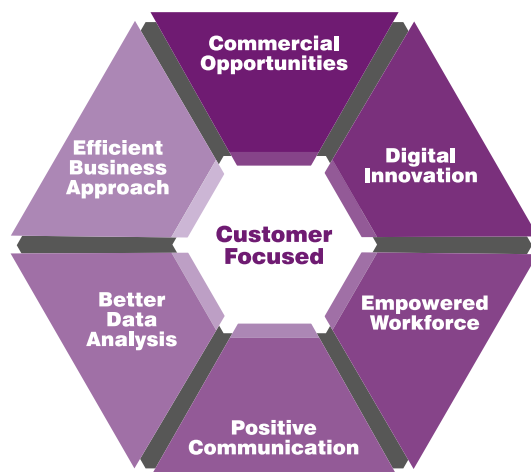
We began our ambitious Transformation Agenda programme back in 2019 to reshape how we deliver services and engage with our customers – with a clear focus on improving satisfaction while increasing efficiency and cost savings.

The first phase (TA1) successfully modernised core elements of our operations. It helped to deliver more responsive, customer-focused services and smarter ways of working – and delivered over £1million in savings.

Building on those successes, we launched the second phase (TA2) in 2024. Spanning across all services, this phase ties together all major 'change' initiatives that are looking to further improve how the council works and delivers services.

TA2 reflects our Cabinet members' determination to meet the changing needs of our residents and communities while maintaining high service standards in a challenging financial climate.

Key principals of our Transformation Agenda



A key focus of our Transformation Agenda 2 programme was to work with services across the council to carry out service reviews. This holistic approach ensured we maximised the opportunities, outlined below across the organisation;

- Efficiency
- Smarter ways of working
- Maximising the use of technology
- Enhanced customer experience
- Maximise opportunities for income generation

Results of the service reviews and their recommendations ensured we delivered cashable savings to the Council, cost avoidance, officer hours saved in services and risks mitigated against.

Our Service Review programme has focussed on ensuring the right tasks are being carried out by the right people whilst streamlining processes to the benefit of both the Council and our customers. . Whether reviewing how we deliver a frontline service or investing in digital tools to streamline back-office operations, each outcome supports our goal of becoming a modern council that is more effective, flexible and future-ready.

Key achievements included:



£236,115 worth of recommendations approved



7,044 hours saved of officer's time



20 risks identified and reduced

Our Communities

Support vulnerable members of our community

In our commitment to support vulnerable members of our community, we:

- used our housing powers to prevent homelessness, reduce rough sleeping, meet housing needs, improve housing
- enabled residents to claim the Council Tax and Housing Benefit support they're entitled to in partnership with our shared service Anglian Revenues Partnership
- used our powers to improve the condition of private rented homes and ensure they are safe, secure and accessible, investigating a total of 286 homes
- continued our focus on preventing homelessness and rough sleeping
- received inquiries from a total of 2002 households seeking housing advice and continued to demonstrate our commitment to supporting them at an early stage to prevent homelessness. When we've been able to get involved at an early stage our success rate of preventing homelessness has increased to 77 per cent this year from 52 per cent last year.
- continued The Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) project and supported 81 individuals. Of those 34 were supported into stable move-on accommodation. Due to the increase in complexity, 25 clients had an alternative outcome. This included prison, hospital, or loss of contact. We continued to support 22 people through the initiative at year-end. Every attempt is made to encourage engagement with services to allow secure futures for all.

To assist in our aim of meeting housing needs, we brought 64 empty homes back into use.

We supported residents to manage the effects of the cost-of-living through means including issuing food vouchers, benefits advice, signposting and assisting with online Universal Credit (UC) applications.

Our My Fenland customer contact team enabled the Early Help Hub project to provide support to residents struggling to work due to poor physical or mental health, supporting 265 customers from June 2024. In December 2024, the externally



286 rental properties
inspected



64 empty homes
brought back into use



220 people supported
to work

funded WorkWell project launched with similar aims and 220 people were supported to year-end. With funding in place until March 2026, the project goes from strength to strength.

We kept up our active support for our customers who correspond, compliment or complain about services. We use learnings from these interactions to improve service delivery and customer service.

Promote health and wellbeing for all

We worked collaboratively with partners, including operators of our four Fenland leisure centres Freedom Leisure and our health providers, to deliver leisure and wellbeing services.

In July 2024, figures for the previous year were reported and showed active participation from 486,081 people; 100,050 gym visits and 93,510 swim visits.

The leisure centres, three of them significantly aging, remain in a period of major maintenance and repair. Recent investment has been made into Whittlesey's Manor Leisure Centre car park resurfacing and pool covers; March's George Campbell Leisure Centre's swimming pool; Wisbech's Hudson Leisure Centre's swimming pool lighting and sports hall heating. Extensive further work is in progress and discussion.

We encouraged healthier communities through fitness and wellbeing activities developed, delivered and supported by our Active Fenland team, which provides free and low-cost social and fitness sessions in a bid to launch good health habits. Active Fenland delivered and supported a total of 1,463 sessions catering to young and old and focused often on reaching those who have lost fitness or do not do regular exercise.

We encouraged partners to support the delivery of Golden Age events providing information to over 60s on opportunities, services and support available to them.



486,081 active leisure
centre participants



1,463 Active Fenland
sessions



£55,000 of culture
grants awarded

Four Golden Age events were held, reaching 528 visitors. A pilot Golden Age Christmas appeal saw 200 shoeboxes filled with donated gifts for distribution to over 60s in Fenland.

Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture and Heritage

We delivered on promoting culture and heritage including by issuing Fenland Culture Fund grants totalling more than £55,000 to 35 applicants. These are funded through the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund, via the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, and Arts Council England and is a partnership project with the Fenland Culture Partnership and Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy.

In addition, high-quality, professional training workshops were enabled. And the Fenland Poet Laureate Award supported, which attracted 71 entries across two age categories.

We supported community groups to hold safe and successful public events, not least through Fenland Four Seasons events, which attracted thousands of visitors into our towns, provided crucial trading opportunities for stall holders and opportunities to showcase arts and culture.

Performance Indicators	Target 2024/25	Performance
Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	250	286
Proportion (%) of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing Options work	53%	46%
Number of empty properties brought back into use	50	64
Number of Active Fenland sessions delivered and total attendance per year	600	1547
Customer satisfaction (Net promoter score across Freedom Leisure facilities in Fenland	38	17
Value of Arts Council Grants achieved in Fenland.	£201,000	£445,000

Our Environment

Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

We continued to deliver an efficient and reliable refuse and recycling service, collecting over 39,192 tonnes of domestic and commercial waste across the district.

Despite an increase in the number of properties served, the total amount of waste collected fell compared to the previous year – a positive sign that residents are managing their waste more sustainably.

Our recycling efforts remained a key focus, with blue bin materials accounting for 25% of all collected household waste. While the volume of dry recycling decreased slightly, this reflects national trends and changing consumption habits.

To maintain and improve recycling quality, we stepped up our direct communications and advice to households. More than 6,700 bins were flagged for contamination, with most affected households receiving helpful guidance to recycle correctly in future.

Our team also proactively inspected nearly 3,750 recycling bins, with just 5% found to contain incorrect materials – demonstrating that most residents are recycling well.

Our Garden Waste service remained extremely popular, with 24,403 households subscribed, generating £1.1 million to support the service's running costs. A total of 7,615 tonnes of garden waste was collected.

Our Cleansing and Rapid Response team worked tirelessly 364 days a year to keep Fenland's streets and open spaces clean and welcoming. They responded to 1,651 environmental requests from the public – including litter, broken glass, fly-tipping and drug-related waste – and resolved 87% of these the same or next working day.

Working alongside Fenland's active volunteers, including Street Pride groups, the team delivered high standards of street cleanliness. Cleanliness was independently monitored using Keep Britain Tidy surveying methodology. Of 1,022 street cleanliness inspections, 98.7% met or exceeded required standards.



39,192 tonnes of waste collected



24,403 Garden Waste subscribers



1,441 requests for street sweeping, litter picking or fly-tipping removal resolved within 24 hours

In partnership with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership, we also began work on a revised waste strategy, with a draft due for member review in summer 2025 – helping to shape the future of waste and recycling across the area.

Work with partners and the community on projects to improve the environment and street scene

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

Our Street Scene team spent 4,150 hours in the community, in all weathers, working on various proactive environment and enforcement projects.

A total of 16 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued for waste offences, of which 11 were paid and the remaining five were referred for prosecution. To date, three of those individuals have appeared in court and had fines issued.

The team monitored illegal parking within council owned car parks and issued 22 parking fines at March Market Place.

A total of 269 reports of abandoned vehicles were investigated.

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

We worked with our contractor to ensure the maintenance of more than 135 hectares of green space, in excess of 40 play areas and 11 parks in Fenland. We continued our support for vital and valued community groups such as Street Pride, In Bloom, Friends of Groups, and Green Dog Walkers. Between January and March 2025 our volunteer groups undertook more than 120 events including wildflower planting, community woodland enhancements and recycled planter installations.



4,150 hours of Street
Scene patrols



135 hectares of green
space maintained



120 environmental
volunteer events

We continue to host and promote regular markets in Chatteris, March and Whittlesey and support Wisbech Town Council's markets in Wisbech.

We remain committed to meeting all climate change targets which are legally required by the UK Government. We supported the delivery of Net Zero Village Fund grants with funds from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to enable community centres in four Fenland villages are to get environmentally friendly upgrades that will help secure their futures through cost and energy saving.

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

We continued to manage the Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime, hate crime and anti-social behaviour. This involved extensive partnership working with the police, partner local authorities, fire and rescue services, health and probation services.

Projects included:

- work to address youth related nuisance and drug activity at a residential property
- supporting police with patrols and engagements across Fenland during Business and Retail Crime week
- an extensive joint project to work with youths at risk of involvement with knife crime
- community safety information events
- supporting training of front line professionals.

We maintained support for the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to develop and deliver the Fenland-wide Community Cohesion Action Plan.

Our work to deliver the Community Safety Grant Agreement with the Police and Crime Commissioner has included:

- supporting reports and action related to quad bikes impacting on a rural location in March
- supporting the promotion of road safety initiative Speedwatch
- action on anti-social behaviour in Wisbech town centre including:
 - securing the injunction and subsequent jailing of a man responsible for causing significant harassment and distress
 - supporting police and partner work which has led to arrests of two further adults and action related to several youths
 - work towards closure orders for anti social behaviour linked residential properties.

We continued to deliver the CCTV shared service with Peterborough City Council, which responded to 1,225 incidents in Fenland. Direct outcomes included 200 arrests made by Cambridgeshire Police as a result of real-time CCTV detection, evidence gathering, and live support from the control room.

In addition to its responsive duties, the CCTV shared service has expanded its proactive surveillance programme, with operators completing 5,406 proactive patrols across town centres and known hotspots in Fenland. This represents a 25% increase on the 4,308 patrols conducted in the previous year.

The CCTV service also acted as the Council's out-of-hours contact centre, providing 24/7 telephone support across a range of key council services.

The team handled 437 emergency calls, covering:

- homelessness triage and emergency accommodation
- stray and lost dogs
- dangerous structures and buildings
- urgent cleansing or environmental incidents.

Performance Indicators	Target 2024/25	Performance
% of household waste recycled through the blue bin service	28%	25%
Customer satisfaction with our Refuse and Recycling services.	90%	97%
Customer satisfaction with our Garden Waste service	85%	97%
% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards	93%	99%
% of Rapid or Village response requests (to action issues such as fly-tipping, dog fouling and littering) actioned the same day	90%	87%
Number of Street Pride and Friends Of community environmental events supported	204	282
% of those asked satisfied with community events	90%	98%
% of businesses who said they were supported and treated fairly	95%	100%

Our Economy

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

We provided responsive business support to encourage business growth, job diversity, skills development and increased access to grants, including by attending events to drive growth. Conversations with businesses interested in moving to Fenland took place and are ongoing.

Work with external stakeholders, local businesses and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities has continued.

Promoting and developing our business premises to encourage investment, business development, job creation and skills diversification, resulted in overall occupancy across South Fens Business Centre, Chatteris; The Boathouse, Wisbech, and our light industrial units of 94.1%.

The three-year Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund grants programmes with funds from UK Government and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, completed.

Initial assessments show benefits including:

- More than £1million of grant support provided to Fenland businesses
- 125 new Fenland jobs created
- 11 new businesses started
- 16 farm businesses supported including 9 diversification projects

March town centre regeneration

The transformation of Broad Street was the final step in a multi-million pound programme of schemes to regenerate March town centre.

Delivered in partnership with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council, the Broad Street project has transformed the appearance and functionality of the area. The scheme included changes to the road layout to improve traffic flow, improvements to the streetscape,



94.1% business centre occupancy



£1million+ grant support for businesses



March regeneration 'highly commended' in national awards

better pedestrian facilities, enhanced green spaces, and upgraded lighting. The scheme was highly commended in the national Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation 'Creating Better Places Award'.

A project to support businesses with grants to improve shopfronts is ongoing.

Wisbech High Street improvements

Reconstruction of 24 High Street, Wisbech, to close a gap in and elevate the streetscene, continued and will be completed in summer 2025.

Plans to develop 11-12 High Street continue to be progressed.

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration

Strides were made in recruiting to our planning team, which has had an extended period of vacancies. This supported us to enable appropriate growth, development and infrastructure through delivering a proactive and effective planning service.

In the year ending December 2024, 538 planning applications were received and 521 decisions made. Of those 462 were granted (89 per cent) A total of 83 per cent of decisions were delegated to officers.

A total of 240 new affordable homes were delivered (subject to final figure verification) in our bid to meet housing needs and a significant number of additional units are on the horizon. Pipeline developments provide more than 200 much-needed one-bed units, with around 50 of these to be under construction in the coming 12 months.

In partnership with the Wisbech Town Board, Fenland was in a positive position in relation to the Long-Term Plans for Towns programme, with £20m funding secured. Wisbech Town Board has begun prioritisation of projects for the four-year investment plan.

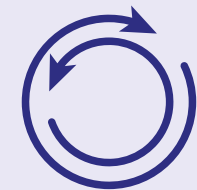
Separately, proactive projects to develop land owned by the council through the subsidiary Fenland Future Ltd were progressing at The Elms, Chatteris, and New Waterfront, Wisbech, at year-end.



521 planning
applications processed



240 new affordable homes
delivered



£20million secured for
Wisbech investment plan

Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements

Focus remained on promoting sustainable road, rail and concessionary transport initiatives to improve access to employment and local services.

Work on Whittlesea Station improvement project continued with the outline business case in progress.

We continued to engage with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council on the feasibility and delivery of major road and rail infrastructure projects.

The Whittlesey Relief Road Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) project, managed by Fenland District Council with funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) market towns programme, continued with a report due in early 2025.

The Council continued to work collaboratively with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and its constituent councils to submit a Local Growth Plan by the summer of 2025.

Performance Indicators	Target 2024/25	Performance
% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks	70%	91%
% of minor applications determined in 8 weeks	70%	85%
% of other applications determined in 8 weeks	80%	91%
% occupancy of our Business Estates	95%	94.2%
% occupancy of Wisbech Yacht Harbour	97%	85%

Quality Organisation

Performance Management (Performance Indicators)

We set relevant and robust performance targets to ensure the effective delivery of Business Plan priorities and report those regularly, including via publicly available portfolio holder reports.

We report regularly on service performance to the Corporate Management Team, Councillors and the public.

Provide excellent Customer Service

We maintained our Customer Service Excellence accreditation demonstrating that we continue to deliver the most effective service to our communities.

We helped residents to self-serve and access our services digitally where appropriate to allow us to provide 24/7 help for simpler queries and dedicate resources, where direct contact was needed, to those who needed greater support, such as vulnerable customers and in the case of complex queries.

Governance, Financial Control and Risk Management

We maintained robust and effective financial standards, internal controls and organisational management and complied with data protection and General Data Protection Regulation requirements.

Transformation and Efficiency

We sustainably delivered required savings whilst pursuing transformation and commercialisation opportunities to ensure the organisation is fit for the future. A laser focus on this led to £241k of cashable savings in addition to saving more than 5,700 officer hours across the planning team, markets and events, cemeteries, licensing, My Fenland customer service team, workshop and fleet and environmental services. We also identified and reduced more than 20 service risks.

We set out with an objective to engage with the Combined Authority's Public Service Reform agenda. Then, in December, the Government published the English Devolution White Paper, setting out its plans to reform local government



56,380 telephone
enquires answered



Over 50 online
self-service forms



Maintained Customer Service
Excellence accreditation

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

We have sent initial responses to the review.

Consultation and Engagement

We appropriately consulted with residents about our service and proposals as outlined in our Consultation Strategy and kept up proactive information streams via social media, our website, digital newsletter and responses to Press and public queries.

Equalities

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

Asset Management and Commercialisation

We continued to ensure our asset base is sustainable, suitable and fully utilised to maximise income opportunities and financial efficiencies. And delivered our adopted Capital Programme in line with our Corporate Asset Management Plan to maintain the integrity and safety of our assets.

This has included the progression of the projects to develop land owned by the council through the subsidiary Fenland Future Ltd at The Elms, Chatteris, and New Waterfront, Wisbech. As well as drawing rental income from a commercial investment in Wisbech made in 2021.

Workforce Development

We have a one-team and people focussed culture and believe very strongly in developing and supporting our workforce. We maintained our commitment to



Progressed two housing developments on council-owned land



87 housing enforcement notices issued



6 planning enforcement notices

equip our workforce with the right skills to effectively deliver our priorities and support and empower our staff to make effective decisions.

This was achieved through extensive opportunities for training and development, coaching, support and a defined appraisal and 121 process. We implemented a new people system to utilise technology to provide blended learning and development option to suit the needs and demands of our workforce.

Enforcement

We used a fair and proportionate approach to improve living, working and environmental standards as set out in our Enforcement Policies.

This has included through our:

- housing enforcement policy where a total of 286 homes were investigated and a total of 87 enforcement notices, penalties or fines issued, such as in relation to landlords to rectify hazards and meet energy performance requirements
- parking enforcement where appropriate on our land, such as in March Market Place. We also continued to consider taking on responsibilities for wider parking enforcement though so far costs have proven prohibitive.
- close work with food businesses to make sure they operate safely by following food safety legislation and hygiene standards. In January to March alone, 79 businesses received an inspection and were awarded a score using the food hygiene rating scheme, where applicable.

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

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


- Work as Port Health Authority, monitoring the classification of shellfish beds around the mouth of the River Nene.
- Recently we also participated in a national sampling study focusing on raw shell eggs and both unpasteurised and pasteurised milk cheese at retail sale in order to ascertain their microbiological safety and quality
- Planning enforcement, with six enforcement notices issued to year ending December 2024, four planning contravention notices and one breach of condition notice.

Health and Safety

We maintained a strong and focussed approach to ensuring effective health and safety systems to comply with all relevant legislation and local requirements.

Performance Indicators	Target 2024/25	Performance
% of customer queries processed at the first point of contact	85%	92.45%
% of customers satisfied by our service	95%	96.66%
% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	46.5%	57.54%
% of contact centre calls handled	80%	87.42%
Days taken to process new claims and changes for Council Tax Support	9	9.4
Days taken to process new claims and changes for Housing Benefit.	8	8.36
In year % of Council Tax collected	100%	99.67%
Council Tax net collection fund receipts	73,595,060	73,350,882
In year % of national non-domestic rates (NNDR) collected	96.57%	95.70%
national non-domestic rates (NNDR) net collection fund receipts	28,409,318	29,467,704

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Agenda Item 9

Agenda Item No:	9	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	21 July 2025	
Report Title:	Council Revenue and Capital Outturn 2024/25	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

To inform Cabinet of the income and expenditure (known as “Outturn”) for the Council for 2024/25 and reasons for variations.

2 Key issues

Revenue

- The Council's provisional General Fund services net surplus is £129,905 for the financial year 2024/25. This is an improvement of £480,316 compared to the projected deficit of £350,411 as reported to Council in February 2025.
- The surplus of £129,905 will be transferred to Budget Equalisation Reserve in accordance with the decision made by Council at their meeting on 9th January 2020 which established this reserve and approved that any underspend/deficit at financial year-end be transferred to this reserve.
- During the year-end review of the 2024/25 Statements of Accounts the Council was able to utilise £428,600 of the Horizons Reserve to support Council expenditure in services which met the criteria of the reserve and was then able to transfer that unused budget to the Budget Equalisation Reserve. As at 31 March 2025 the reserve has a balance of £2,212,647.
- The General Fund balance at 31 March 2025 remains at the approved minimum level of £2m.
- Given the scale of the challenges faced by the Council in 2024/25, the financial position at the year-end represents a considerable achievement and demonstrates the focus from Members and officers throughout the Council in reducing the projected deficit.
- As a result of continuing prudent financial management and improved income received, the Council is in an improved position, compared with the projections in February 2025, to deal with the significant ongoing financial challenges in 2025/26 and over the medium term.
- The Council's Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25 (subject to external audit) were signed off by the Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer on 30 June 2025 and published on the Council's Website. After the last few years of the delays to the publishing and auditing of the Council's accounts due to the impact of the pandemic it is an achievement to get the Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25 completed by the deadline and this has ensured that the Council is now adhering to the current Audit Regulations 2025. This will enable the external audit of the 2024/25 accounts by EY who have scheduled their audit to start in October 2025 with a view of completing their work by the end of December 2025.

The Statement of Accounts 2024/25 will incorporate all the outturn figures, revenue and capital presented in this report.

Capital

- The Capital Programme has been underspent by £2.3146m. This compares with an under-spend of £6.176m in 2023/24. The variation principally relates to the re-profiling of the high-profile grant-funded scheme, including High Street, March (-£1,256m) which relates to the capital works on Barclays Bank building and the new public conveniences in Broad Street, March. The capital spend on 24 High Street, Wisbech is nearing completion and the under spend of (-£0.563) will be used during 2025/26.
- Additionally, the timing and extent of capital works which need to be undertaken at Council-owned buildings and facilities will be reviewed with an updated programme being presented to Cabinet in September. There is no loss of resources arising from the re-phasing set out shown in Appendix B(i).

3 Recommendations

- It is recommended that :-
 - (i) The Outturn for the Council's General Fund services in 2024/25, as detailed at Appendix A and Section 2 of this report be noted and that Members note the transfer of the surplus to the Budget Equalisation Reserve;
 - (ii) The reasons for the variations from revised estimate be noted;
 - (iii) The current position on the Cambridgeshire Horizons Reserve, as detailed in Section 3 of this report be noted;
 - (iv) The proposed Capital Funding schedule for 2024/25 at Appendix B(i) be approved.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Boden, Leader & Portfolio Holder, Finance
Report Originator(s)	Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Sian Warren, Chief Accountant
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer Sian Warren, Chief Accountant
Background Paper(s)	Budget Setting Reports Monthly Budgetary Control Reports 2024/25 Final Accounts Working Papers 2024/25

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's income and expenditure figures for General Fund services and the Capital Programme for the financial year 2024/25 (known as 'Outturn') are presented in this report.
- 1.2 The Council's Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25 (subject to external audit) were signed off by the Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer on 30 June 2025 and published on the Council's Website. After the last few years of the delays to the publishing and auditing of the Council's accounts due to the impact of the pandemic it is an achievement to get the Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25 completed by the deadline and this has ensured that the Council are now adhering to the current Audit Regulations 2025. This will enable the external audit of the 2024/25 accounts by EY who have scheduled their audit to start in October 2025 with a view of completing their work by the end of December 2025.
- 1.3 The 2024/25 draft accounts, which are subject to external audit, have been published on the Council's website. The draft Annual Governance Statement will be presented at the Audit and Risk Management Committee on 28th July 2025 for approval and will be published on the Council's website along with the required notice of the Exercise of Public Rights to inspect the accounts (30 days from 29 July 2025).
- 1.4 The figures presented in this report are all provisional pending audit by the Council's external auditors EY (Ernst & Young). Any significant or material changes will be reported back to Members at a later stage.

2 The Revenue Budget

- 2.1 In February 2025 the Council's year end position was estimated as a deficit of £350,411. It is important to note that this figure was based on projections as at the end of December 2024 and the report to Council also noted that there were still many uncertainties around the year-end position, particularly around projected income levels and homelessness expenditure.
- 2.2 Following the closure process, the full position shows a net surplus of £129,905, an improvement of £480,316 compared to the previous projection. The net surplus of £129,905 represents 0.74% of the net expenditure of £17,261m and compares with an over spend of £212,425 in 2023/24.
- 2.3 An analysis of the overall position is shown at Appendix A(i) and explanations of variances are detailed in Appendix A(ii).
- 2.4 Of the reduction in deficit for the year, one-off variations show a reduction of £162k. Of this amount,
 - -£251k relates to additional fees and charges received,
 - £27K relates to lower income from Investments and Property Funds,
 - -£36k relates to higher income from the RTB/VAT sharing arrangement with Clarion,
 - £39k relates to a higher contribution to the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) costs due to lower Enforcement Fees,
 - £24k relates to higher Legal and External Audit Fees,
 - £60k relates to higher Bad Debts Provision
 - -£25k relates to higher retained Business Rates
- 2.5 Service variations have reduced the deficit by £468k, which includes lower employee costs (-£258k) across a variety of services. Lower Premises costs (-£150k), Transport costs (-£10k), Third Party payments (-£71k), NNDR Pool (-£20k) and Capital Financing costs (-£30k) have been off-set by higher Supplies and Services costs (£63k).

- 2.6 Together with the projected deficit of £350,181 (as detailed in the budget report to Cabinet and Council on 24 February 2025), the reduction in deficit of -£480,316 (detailed in 2.3 – 2.5 above) brings the total surplus in 2024/25 to £129,905. This has been transferred to the Budget Equalisation Reserve in accordance with the decision made by Council at their meeting on 9th January 2020 which established this reserve and approved that any underspend/deficit at financial year-end be transferred to this reserve. As at 31 March 2025, this reserve has a balance of £2,212,647.
- 2.7 As a result of continuing prudent financial management together with better than expected income received, the Council is in an improved position, compared to the projections in February 2025, to deal with the significant ongoing financial challenges in 2025/26 and over the medium term.
- 2.8 The Council's reserves will be reviewed again as part of the 2026/27 budget process during the Autumn of 2025.

3 Cambridgeshire Horizons Reserve

- 3.1 Members will recall that in May 2021, the Council received £3,891,500 as its' share of the surplus generated by Cambridgeshire Horizons Ltd. Of this, £1,050,000 was an agreed contribution to the A14 improvements which was paid during 2022/23 to the Department for Transport, as notified to Cabinet in July 2023. This left £2,841,500 available for this Council's future use and was set-aside in an earmarked reserve. There are numerous conditions attached to the use of this money, mainly around regeneration and future economic development of the district, which restricts its future use.
- 3.2 The following table summarises the use of the reserve to date together with current commitments leaving the balance currently uncommitted.

Table 1: Cambridgeshire Horizons Reserve Current Position

Description	Actual 2021/22	Actual 2022/23	Actual 2023/24	Actual - March 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26
	£	£	£	£	£
Norr consultancy to produce Levelling Up Fund Proposal for Wisbech	61,866	52,642			
Simon Machen - projected cost to 31 March 2025	87,955	91,261	76,440	51,348	24,280
Economic Growth - Technical Officer - CG to Sept 25		19,407	35,741	37,950	19,800
Accommodation Strategy Review - Consultants		13,125	62,681		
Transformation Projects				176,565	

Description	Actual 2021/22	Actual 2022/23	Actual 2023/24	Actual 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26
	£	£	£	£	£
Planning Enforcement and Technical Team				252,035	
Local Plan Costs - New Plan					616,000
Total Utilised	149,821	176,435	194,802	517,898	660,080
Balance 1st April	2,841,500	2,691,679	2,515,244	2,320,442	1,802,544
Utilised during year	-149,821	-176,435	-194,802	-517,898	-660,080
Balance 31st March	2,691,679	2,515,244	2,320,442	1,802,544	1,142,464

- 3.3 After taking into account current commitments, there remains a balance uncommitted of £1.142m. Consideration is currently being given to the optimum funding strategy for the works to properties in the High Street, Wisbech and other initiatives which may result in the use of part of this reserve. Further details will be provided to Cabinet at future meetings regarding the use of this reserve.

4 Capital Programme

- 4.1 The Capital Programme has been underspent by £2.315m. This compares with an underspend of £6.176m 2023/24. The variation principally relates to the re-profiling of the high-profile grant-funded scheme in March £1.256m which will be used to fund the new public conveniences and the works to the old Barclays Bank building. The other underspend is the budget relating to 24 High Street, Wisbech £0.563m which is due to complete during 2025.
- 4.2 Additionally, the timing and extent of capital works which need to be undertaken at Council-owned buildings and facilities has been reviewed and this has resulted in changes in the budget required.
- 4.3 There is no loss of resources arising from this re-phasing as shown in Appendix B(i), which has been input to the 2025/26 programme as appropriate.
- 4.4 An updated Capital Programme for 2025-28 will be presented to Cabinet at the September meeting.

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Summary of Revenue Estimates

	Council 26.02.24 Original Estimate 2024/25 £	Cabinet 16.12.24 Revised Estimate 2024/25 £	Projected Outturn 2024/25 £	Outturn 2024/25 28.05.25 £	Variance to Projected £
Service Summary					
Growth & Infrastructure	1,454,340	1,330,666	1,039,571	601,500	-438,071
Communities, Environment, Leisure & Planning	5,402,610	6,315,700	6,421,833	5,135,434	-1,286,399
Resources & Customer Services	10,304,470	10,628,973	10,610,753	10,463,371	-147,382
ERS NI Contributions - Government Grant	0	0	0	0	0
Vacancy Factor (1.5%)	-230,000	0	0	0	0
Transformation & Service Review Programme savings	-225,000	-115,585	-115,585	-115,585	0
NET COST OF GENERAL FUND SERVICES	16,706,420	18,159,754	17,956,572	16,084,720	-1,871,852
Corporate Items					
Internal Drainage Board Levies	2,098,570	2,251,010	2,251,010	2,251,000	-10
Internal Drainage Board Levies Grant	-177,280	-213,000	-213,000	-213,000	0
Contributions to/ (from) Earmarked Reserves	-652,874	-878,913	-693,183	781,606	1,474,789
RTB/VAT Sharing Income	-20,000	-110,000	-150,000	-186,195	-36,195
Financing Charges - <i>Interest on External Borrowings</i>	906,325	556,325	514,325	484,746	-29,579
Financing Charges - <i>MRP current Capital Programme</i>	587,700	451,166	451,166	451,166	0
Investment Income and Property Funds Income	-795,000	-765,000	-808,000	-780,811	27,189
New Homes Bonus	-442,392	-442,392	-442,392	-442,392	0
Services Grant	-25,846	-25,846	-25,846	-25,846	0
Core Spending Power Guarantee Grant	-788,558	-788,558	-788,558	-788,558	0
Corporate Items	690,645	34,792	95,522	1,531,715	1,436,193
Net Expenditure	17,397,065	18,194,546	18,052,094	17,616,435	-435,659
Contribution to/from(-) Budget Equalisation Reserve	2,515	0	0	0	0
NET EXPENDITURE after use of balances	17,399,580	18,194,546	18,052,094	17,616,435	-435,659
Core Funding					
Revenue Support Grant	-184,901	-184,901	-184,901	-184,901	0
Business Rates - Income due in Year					
Business Rates Funding	-11,177,561	-11,177,561	-11,177,561	-11,177,561	0
Tariff Payment to Government	7,554,448	7,554,448	7,554,448	7,554,448	0
Renewable Energy Rates Retained	-1,476,267	-1,593,684	-1,593,684	-1,593,684	0
Business Rates Pool - FDC Share of Benefit	-300,000	-350,000	-350,000	-470,378	-120,378
Business Rates S31 Grants due in year	-3,166,574	-3,066,658	-3,097,731	-3,242,107	-144,376
Business Rates Levy due in year	744,929	553,388	572,446	792,542	220,096
Business Rates Levy Account Surplus allocation	0	0	-31,046	-31,046	0
	-7,821,025	-8,080,067	-8,123,128	-8,167,786	-44,658
Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit(+)/Surplus(-)	-1,291,784	-1,291,784	-1,291,784	-1,291,784	0
Council Tax Collection Fund Deficit(+)/Surplus(-)	-57,899	-57,899	-57,899	-57,899	0
Council Tax	-8,043,971	-8,043,971	-8,043,971	-8,043,971	0
Business Rates and Council Tax Funding	-17,399,580	-17,658,622	-17,701,683	-17,746,341	-44,658
Surplus(-)/Shortfall(+)	0	535,924	350,411	-129,905	-480,316

APPENDIX A(ii)

Summary of Revenue Provisional Out-turn 2024/25 - Main Variances

Summary of Revenue Provisional Out-turn 2024/25 - Main Variances		Over(+) / Under spend (-)		
Service Area	Description	£000	£000	
<u>One-Off Variations</u>				
Fees and Charges	Income variations across a variety of services			
	Enforcement Fees (Housing Standards)	-47		
	Marine Services - SHA & Wharfage Dues	-63		
	Planning & Pre-App Fees	-32		
	Trade Waste	-45		
	Economic Estates	-15		
	CCTV	-25		
	Cemeteries	-24		
			-251	
Other Income/Costs	Investment Income and property funds		27	
	RTB/VAT Sharing arrangement with Clarion		-36	
	Higher contribution to ARP costs mainly due to lower Enforcement Fees		39	
	Higher Legal & External Audit Fees		24	
	Higher Bad Debts Provision		60	
	Retained Business Rates		-25	
	Sub-Total One-Off Variations			-162
<u>Service Base Variations</u>				
Employee Costs	Variance across a variety of services mainly resulting from vacancies	-258		
Premises Costs	Lower costs across a variety of services	-150		
Transport Costs	Lower car allowance & mileage costs across a variety of services	-10		
Supplies and Services	Higher ICT costs across a variety of services	32		
	Homelessness - higher accommodation costs	31		
Third Party Payments	Net impact of Housing Benefit subsidy claim and overpayments	-71		
Capital Financing Costs	Lower Interest Paid	-30		
Other variations	Other cost/income variations	8		
NNDR Pool	Further Surplus	-20		
	Sub-Total Service Base Variations		-468	
Reserves	Transfer to Repairs & Maintenance Reserve		150	
	Reduction in Deficit		-480	
Projected Deficit 2024-25 at Revised Estimate (Cabinet/Council February 2025)			350	
Net Surplus 2024-25	Transfer to Budget Equalisation Reserve		-130	
Net surplus as a % of Net Expenditure (£17.621m for 2024/25)		0.74%		
	Balance on Budget Equalisation Reserve as at 01.04.24		1,654	
	Transfer of Surplus in 2024-25		130	
	Transfer of Budget supporting Council Expenditure Financed by Horizon Reserve		429	
	Balance on Budget Equalisation Reserve as at 31.03.25		2,213	

CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND FUNDING OUTTURN 2024/25

	Budget £000	Actual £000	Variance £000
Capital Programme (excluding Commercial and Investment Strategy Schemes)	11,345	9,471	(1,874)
Commercial and Investment Strategy	2,400	1,960	(440)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	13,745	11,431	(2,314)
RESOURCES AVAILABLE			
Capital Grants	6,931	6,021	(910)
Usable Capital Receipts - In Year	250	59	(191)
Reserves used in year to fund Capital	5	0	(5)
Section 106's and Other Contributions	120	115	(5)
Borrowing (Internal and Prudential)	2,825	2,319	(506)
	10,131	8,515	(1,616)
Borrowing (Prudential) - Commercial and Investment Strategy	3,614	2,916	(698)
Total Available Resources to fund Expenditure	13,745	11,431	(2,314)


GENERAL FUND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE VARIATIONS 2024/25

SCHEME	VARIATION £000	REASON
Leisure Centres		
Building Improvements	(366)	The Leisure Centre Survey and Other scheduled improvement works have been re-profiled to the 2025/26 financial year.
Regeneration Programmes		
Heritage Lottery Fund - Non-FDC Properties	(98)	Some minor works to other privately-owned properties on the High Street have been re-profiled to reflect revised timelines received from property owners and other works on the High Street are being appraised.
Heritage Lottery Fund - 24 High Street, Wisbech	(563)	Works are ongoing and due to be finished later in 2025. Cabinet receives regular updates on the High Street works and are aware that the costs of this project are higher than anticipated in the budget setting process.
Future High Street Fund, March	20	Options for the potential redevelopment of this site currently being investigated.
Future High Street Fund, March	(1,256)	The works on the March High Street are progressing well. This under spend is mainly due to the highways works being completed later than previously planned.
Whittlesey Market Place Improvements	(15)	This work is has been reprofiled into 2025/26.
Cemeteries		
Cemetery Chapels Condition Survey Works	27	Work remains ongoing to complete the works required in the findings of the conditions surveys.
Highways		
Street Light Improvements	(38)	Expenditure re-profiled and due to be incurred over the life of the project.
Whittlesey Southern Relief Road - SOBC	7	The completion of this work has been finished
Parks and Open Spaces		
Wisbech Water Park and Pavillion	50	Wisbech Pavillion works has now been completed and Cabinet are aware of the extra costs incurred.
Wisbech Park - Play Area Refurbishment	(45)	Reprofiled works in 2025/26.
Vehicles and Plant		
Vehicles	(198)	Replacement vehicle purchased ealier due to price increases.
CCTV	23	
ICT System Replacement Programme & Infrastructure Upgrades		
Information Technology	(15)	This scheme reflects a multi-year investment in the Council's transformation programme. Total planned investment across three years to 31 March 2026 remains unchanged.
Improvement of Assets		
Sewage Treatment Works Refurbishment	(33)	Reprofiled works in 2025/26.
Port	(127)	Remainder of previous accural not used
UK Shared Property Fund		
Investment in Business Grants	857	Grants given out but the budget was not profiled due unknown amounts to provide
Private Sector Housing Support		
Disabled Facilities Grants	(49)	Expenditure dependant on throughput of grant applications.Remaining budget committed but not spent and carried forward to 2025/26
Commercial and Investment Strategy		
Local Authority Housing Fund and Homelessness Properties	(256)	Reprofiled into 2025/26
Loans to Fenland Future Ltd (FFL)	(250)	Dependent upon cashflow requirements of FFL.
Other Minor Variations	11	Minor budget variations.
Total	(2,314)	

Key

() indicates the scheme is underspent by the amount shown
+ indicates scheme is overspent by the amount shown

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Agenda Item No:	10	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	21 July 2025	
Report Title:	Policy and Procedures For Supporting Residents Experiencing Domestic Abuse	

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 The Housing Options Team is working towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation for the Council. The process entails evidencing our approach to domestic abuse survivors including producing relevant policy
- 1.2 There is a requirement under DAHA accreditation that we will produce a policy and procedures outlining how we will support members of the community who are survivors of domestic abuse.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The accreditation requires the Housing Options service to meet a range of elements encompassing the whole service to ensure compliance and evidence how we meet every criteria of the accreditation.
- 2.2 The Housing Options team have been undertaking the accreditation work for the past 2 years. It's an extensive and challenging piece of work which requires the service to demonstrate the quality of the work undertaken by the team. This includes redacted random reviews of cases to ensure a very high standard of service and effective partnership working to enable the best outcomes for our customers.
- 2.3 As part of the development of the policy, we carried out consultation with the Domestic Abuse Champions staff group, along with domestic abuse survivors with lived experience. All agreed with the content of the document and were happy for it to be published on our website once approved.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
 - Approve the Policy and Procedure set out in Appendix B for supporting residents experiencing domestic abuse

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Samantha Hoy - Portfolio Holder for Housing
Report Originator(s)	Sarah Gove - Housing & Communities Manager
Contact Officer(s)	Sarah Gove – as above Dan Horn – Assistant Director Carol Pilson – Corporate Director
Background Papers	N/A

4 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 4.1 The Housing Options Team is working towards Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation for the council. The process entails evidencing our approach to domestic abuse survivors including producing relevant policy
- 4.2 The accreditation will demonstrate how the council reaches and practices a range of standards when supporting and advising clients experiencing domestic abuse.
- 4.3 The intended outcome is to publish the document on the council's website to enable all members of the public to have access to the advice contained within it, including a range of support providers and services available from the council.
- 4.4 Mandatory training is being undertaken by all staff as part of our corporate training schedule in response to an internal policy which will be considered by Employment Committee. The Council's Domestic Abuse Champions have undertaken level 2 training (intermediate – which goes into greater detail for those involved in domestic abuse approaches) and Housing Options Team level 3 (advanced – which is for existing practitioners who have a statutory function to respond and action domestic abuse cases as part of their day-to-day work).

5 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The policy concerned is for supporting residents of Fenland who are experiencing domestic abuse.
- 5.2 The policy and procedure provide advice and information to help support our customers who are experiencing domestic abuse.
- 5.3 The document is based on good practice and meets the criteria set out by DAHA. The accreditation process requires the document to be policy and procedures as opposed to procedures.
- 5.4 Training has been launched as part of a suite of mandatory training to be undertaken by all staff. Two other levels of training have been undertaken by the council Domestic Abuse Champions - level 2 and level 3 by the council's Housing Options Team.
- 5.5 The policy and procedures will be reviewed in 3 years or before in response to legislative changes or good practice. As part of the review the council will understand any learning when the policy has been utilised.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 As part of the development of the document, we carried out consultation with the Domestic Abuse Champions staff group, along with domestic abuse survivors from the community with lived experience. All agreed with the content of the document and were happy for it to be published on website once approved.
- 6.2 The Housing Options team have been undertaking the accreditation work for the past 2 years. It's an extensive and challenging piece of work which requires the service to demonstrate the quality of the work undertaken by the team. This includes redacted random reviews of cases by the DAHA team to ensure a very high standard of service and effective partnership working to enable the best outcomes for our customers.

- 6.3 A separate document aimed at staff has been produced and has been considered by the groups above. The procedure has been operational for some time but to meet criteria for accreditation the procedure is to be considered to become policy through Employment Committee.

7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 No alternative options have been considered as it is to meet accreditation criteria laid down by the DAHA system.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Legal Implications

- 8.1.1 There are no legal implications for this policy, although our accreditation reflects best practice when a survivor of Domestic Abuse contacts our Housing Options service for help. This therefore reduces the likelihood of legal challenge with homelessness legislation linked to Domestic Abuse Cases.

- 8.1.2 The information governance implications of receiving and managing sensitive information of the nature envisaged has been given detailed consideration with the Data Protection Officer and appropriate safeguards have been put in place to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act and UKGDPR.

8.2 Financial Implications

There is no financial resource implications in relation to implementing this policy. The service has been working to the policy as a procedure for some time and is within the core service budget.

8.3 Equality Implications

Appendix A is the Equality Impact Assessment

9 SCHEDULES

Appendix A - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Policy and Procedures For Supporting Residents Experiencing Domestic Abuse

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

APPENDIX A

INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 reminded all public authorities of their duty to have ‘due regard’ to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The protected groups (previously known as equality strands) are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnerships (eliminate unlawful discrimination only)

Other legislation and practice has determined that we extend this to cover:

- Human Rights
- Socio Economic factors

The duty reminds us of the need to analyse the effect of existing and new policies and practices on equality.

The equality analysis should be proportionate and relevant – not just a tick box exercise. In some cases the written record will be a quick set of bullet points or notes under each heading. Others will need a more detailed explanation.

However, legal case law makes it clear that we must carry out the analysis **before making the relevant policy decision**.

A meaningful equality analysis will help the Council make the best decisions or formulate a policy which best meets our customers needs.

Once a Customer Impact Assessment (replacing our existing Equality Impact Assessment) has been completed there is no need to automatically carry out a new assessment each year. A review assessment has been put in place, and can be completed if there has been no change to the original policy, the way it's implemented and its customer impact.

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO ASSESSING EQUALITY

What is Customer Impact Assessment (CIA)?

- CIA is the act of systematically assessing the likely (or actual) effects of policies or services on people based on the following:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Gender
 - Sexual orientation
 - Marriage and civil partnerships
 - Human Rights
 - Socio Economic factors

This means considering the above, as set out in the table below, in relation to a policy, practice or service, before a decision is made.

PLEASE SEE EXPLANATIONS BELOW

	Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Advancing equality of opportunity between different groups	Fostering good relations between different groups
Disability			
Age			
Pregnancy/ maternity/ paternity			
Race			
Religion or belief			
Sex/ Gender			
Gender reassignment/ Transgender			
Sexual orientation			
Human Rights			
Socio Economic Factors			

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

Marriage and civil partnerships			
---------------------------------	--	--	--

- You are looking for opportunities to promote equality, and good relations between all groups as well as removing or mitigating negative or adverse impacts.
- Remember it might not be possible to remove all barriers to service or your policy or practice may have a negative impact on certain groups ... please note anything of this nature

Why is it important?

- Assessing equality issues helps us understand the needs of our customers, ensures our decisions meet those needs, and are also cost effective, and demonstratable.
- As a public authority we also have a **legal** duty to show “*due regard*” for equality in decision making and the way services are provided
- To be able us to show “*due regard*”, we need to show that consideration of [possible impact to the groups mentioned have taken place **prior** to a decision being made; that equality issues were considered, and that this consideration was rigorous, open minded, and involved thinking about the three arms of the Equality Act as part of this process, and that potential adverse impacts were either removed or reduced, and that all our decisions can be defended if challenged.
- Documenting our equality analysis enables the Council show it has had “*due regard*” for equality if decisions are challenged. If “*due regard*” for equality can not be shown, decisions may be overturned at judicial review. This could result in lost time, money and negative publicity.
- The sooner equality is considered in a process; the more efficiently that process can be carried out.

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

How can equality be assessed?

1. Gather information This can be consulting with relevant groups, using a previous EqlA as a starting point, consultations carried out by other services, details of the service 'hard to reach groups', customer satisfaction surveys, MOASIC data, consider relevance to equality



2. Assess impact Could different groups be affected differently? Is this difference positive or negative? Consider the three arms of the Equality Act in relation to all the protected groups as per the table. NOTE: The quality of the assessment will depend on the quality of the information gathered



3. Take action This could be to reduce negative or increase positive impact. Produce an action plan where appropriate; make actions SMART. Unlawful discrimination MUST be actioned immediately



4. Summarise your findings on the EqlA form. Where it is clear from initial information gathering that a policy will not have any effect on equality, this may simply be a sentence recording this; the greater the relevance to equality, the greater the level of detail required. Publish your findings



5. Monitor the on-going effects of the policy on equality. This is usually in the form of the annual review carried out in October of each year, to fit in with the service planning cycle. The Equality Act is a **continuing** duty!

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

Customer Impact Assessment

Name and brief description of policy being analysed

Briefly summarise the policy including any key information such as aims, context etc; note timescales and milestones for new policies; use plain language – NO JARGON; refer to other documents if required

The council is undertaking a Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation. This is a national accreditation and is being lead by the council's Housing Options team. Part of the requirement to achieve the accreditation is to produce two policies and procedures to inform both external customers on our website and internal staff colleagues via the council's intranet of types of abuse and the support available.

Information used for customer analysis

Note relevant consultation; who took part and key findings; refer to, or attach other documents if needed; include dates where possible

The strategy and action plan have consulted on for the statutory 10 weeks consultation process – the responses have been captured in a table and relevant feedback has been captured and incorporated within the strategy and action plan.

Potential cultural barriers have been addressed e.g. Modern slavery under the Cambridgeshire County Council's statutory duty

	Could particularly benefit	Neutral	May adversely impact	Explanations	Is action possible or required?	Details of actions or explanations if actions are not possible Please note details of any actions to be placed in your Service Plan
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Women are more likely to suffer domestic abuse than men, however the policies are cover both men and women and same sex relationships. The policies	N	
Sex		X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

				link to the council's Safeguarding vulnerable adults policy also.		
Gender reassignment/ Transgender	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Disability- physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Age 60+		X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)		X			N	
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Pregnancy, maternity and paternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Human Rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Socio Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Multiple/ Cross Cutting	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	

Outcome(s) of customer analysis

a) Will the policy/ procedure impact on the whole population of Fenland and/ or identified groups within the population; negative ☐ neutral ☐ positive ☒

No major change needed ☒ Adjust the policy ☐ Adverse impact but continue ☐ Stop and remove / reconsider policy ☐

Arrangements for future monitoring:
Note when analysis will be reviewed; include any equality indicators and performance against those indicators 2029

Details of any data/ Research used (both FDC & Partners):

The policies have both been consulted on with survivors with lived experience and the council's Domestic Abuse champions staff group

Completed by:

Name: Sarah Gove

Position: Housing & Communities Manager

Approved by (manager signature):	Date published: This should be the date the analysis was published on the intranet
Details of any Committee approved by (if applicable):	Date endorsed by Members if applicable:

Policy and procedure for Supporting Residents Experiencing Domestic Abuse

April 2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Fenland District council (FDC) is committed to ensuring that all residents affected by domestic abuse are dealt with in a sympathetic and sensitive manner and that staff act in a non-judgemental way. This policy and procedure sets out the level of service we aim to provide.
- 1.2. For the purposes of this policy and procedure, the statutory definition of abuse applies and incorporates behaviours of violence as well as other forms of abuse, including economic abuse and coercive control.
- 1.3. The Council have signed an agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council to work within their Adult Safeguarding policy guidelines and procedures. More information can be read at the Cambridgeshire County Council website.
- 1.4. The Council has a corporate policy regarding safeguarding and therefore this policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Harm Policy, the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Adults Board Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policy. How we respond to domestic abuse is set out within these documents.
- 1.5. The Council also has a policy for any staff members that may be experiencing domestic abuse, which can be found on our intranet.

2. What is domestic abuse?

2.1 Statutory Definition of Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines domestic abuse as:

Behaviour of a person ("A") towards another person ("B") is "domestic abuse" if

–

- A and B are each aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other, and
- the behaviour is abusive
- Behaviour is "abusive" if it consists of any of the following –
 - physical or sexual abuse;
 - violent or threatening behaviour;

- controlling or coercive behaviour;
- economic abuse (see subsection (4));
- Psychological, emotional or other abuse; and it does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.
- “Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to –
 - acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
 - obtain goods or services.
- For the purposes of this Act A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B despite the fact that it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child).
- References in this Act to being abusive towards another person are to be read in accordance with this section.

2.2 Who can experience domestic abuse?

Definition of “personally connected”

For the purposes of this Act, two people are “personally connected” to each other if any of the following applies –

- they are, or have been, married to each other;
- they are, or have been, civil partners of each other;
- they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated);
- they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other;
- they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child (see subsection (2));
- they are relatives.

For the purposes of subsection (1)(f) a person has a parental relationship in relation to a child if –

- the person is a parent of the child, or
- the person has parental responsibility for the child.

You can find the full definition at [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

3. Support

- 3.1 We will treat all reports of domestic abuse with respect, sympathy and confidentiality and we will listen to the needs and wishes of the survivor in agreeing a course of action.
- 3.2 We take a victim-centred approach to those experiencing domestic abuse and will always make the safety, dignity and well-being of the person the priority.
- 3.3 All reports of domestic abuse will be investigated in accordance with Cambridgeshire County Council's Adult Safeguarding policy guidelines and procedures, our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and our Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Harm Policy.
- 3.4 Each case will be different; we will always place an individual's needs at the forefront of any support we provide. This will include (but not be limited to), physical needs, mental needs, communication needs and each of the nine characteristics of the Equality Act (2010).
- 3.5 We can refer the person to other agencies that provide specialist support and guidance.
- 3.6 Domestic abuse is a criminal offence and we will encourage people to report it to the police, whether they are the victim of abuse or a witness to abuse. In an emergency, always call 999.
- 3.7 We can also refer domestic abuse victims to courses, such as the 'Freedom Programme, which "examines the roles played by attitudes and beliefs on the actions of abusive men and the responses of victims and survivors. The aim is to help them to make sense of and understand what has happened to them."
- 3.8 We are part of the 'Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership', which consists of other key agencies in the area to offer support, services and information to survivors of domestic abuse.
- 3.9 In addition, in terms of supporting people experiencing domestic abuse, the council recognises that a person's intersectional needs will impact on their experience and the support required. The council promotes a range of resources and information via its webpages which can support staff and champions access specialised advice.

4. Multi-agency working

4.1 We will work with other agencies to provide support to victims of domestic abuse, where consent is provided by the person, or in circumstances where we have a duty to share information (please see section 5 for full information of information sharing and consent). These may include, but are not limited to:

- The police
- Specialist domestic abuse support agencies
- Independent Domestic-Based Violence Advocates (IDVAs)
- Legal advisory services
- Victim support services
- Education
- Social Care
- Learning Disabilities Partnership (LDP)
- Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer(s) (Where required)
- Other housing partners

4.2 Some members of staff throughout the organisation receive enhanced training and are Domestic Abuse Support Champions. They are available to offer support and advice to colleagues in relation to good practice. Their role is also to raise awareness of domestic abuse and ensure staff know how to access support.

4.3 Members of our Private Sector Housing Team, Housing Options Team and the Community Safety Team also attend multi-agency working groups on a regular basis, such as the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), the Perpetrator Panel and the Problem Solving Group.

5. Information sharing and consent

5.1 We will only share information with other agencies with the consent of the person experiencing any domestic abuse, or if:

- The information is required for the protection of children.
- We are required by law to share the information.
- There are legal reasons to protect a person without capacity.

- 5.2 As stated in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Adults Board Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policy (2017), any decisions made by professionals that affect the person experiencing domestic abuse should be proportionate and take into account their wishes (where known) as closely as possible. However, any wishes of the individual cannot undermine any FDC legal duty to act.

6. Housing options

- 6.1 Housing staff recognise the importance of the Whole Housing Approach (WHA) and to ensuring access to a range of housing options and initiatives which give choice to people experiencing domestic abuse in relation to relocation or remaining in their existing accommodation. Housing Options Team staff receive domestic abuse awareness training and are also trained in completing DASH (domestic Abuse, Stalking, harassment and honour Based Violence Assessment) risk assessments. Staff will offer advice and support to assist those experiencing domestic abuse to identify possible ways of resolving their housing situation.
- 6.2 Victims of harassment, violence or abuse may get preferential banding for housing in accordance with the Council's Lettings Policy. In addition, the Lettings Policy recognises the impact that economic control can have on an individual's finances and does not take a blanket approach to debt incurred as a result of domestic abuse or harassment.
- 6.3 We can help with access to emergency accommodation or access to refuge services where required.
- 6.4 The Housing Options team have links to support services who can assist with providing additional home security to those wishing to remain in their own home. In addition, other financial support such as access to Rent Deposit and rent in advance may be available to people wishing to relocate.

7. Joint tenancies

- 7.1 In situations of domestic abuse between joint tenants, the landlord is unable to remove a person's name from the tenancy without their consent.

- 7.2 In these circumstances the survivor can apply for an occupation order or for a court order to transfer the tenancy into their sole name. We encourage the victim to obtain independent legal advice on how best to proceed.
- 7.3 If a survivor has a secure tenancy (not a fixed-term tenancy, as both tenants are required to give notice on this type); they will also have the option to serve a notice to quit on the property, which will end the tenancy for both parties. If the perpetrator does not vacate the property, the landlord could decide to begin possession proceedings and may then consider using discretion to grant the victim a sole tenancy at an alternative property or the original property.
- 7.4 In the case of social housing tenancy, Housing Associations are likely to begin possession proceedings against a perpetrator. However, this decision will be made on a case-by-case basis based on the level of risk involved and will be made in consultation with the victim and other professionals (such as the Independent Domestic Abuse Advisory Service).
- 7.5 If a survivor of domestic abuse loses their secure tenancy as a result of the abuse, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires local authorities to grant another secure tenancy to the victim if they rehouse them (via a Social Housing provider). Granting a sole tenancy to the original property will depend on the person's housing needs and whether it would be considered safe for them to remain there. (Again, these decisions will be made in consultation with the victim and other professionals such as the Independent Domestic Abuse Advisory Service) along with the Social Housing provider.
- 7.6 The survivor should always seek advice and support to be fully informed of their options and to avoid losing their tenancy.

8. [Taking action](#)

- 8.1 The Council have signed an agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council to work within their Adult Safeguarding policy guidelines and procedures. More information can be read at the Cambridgeshire County Council website.
- 8.2 We can refer survivors to access advice on their options and may be able to provide support when taking legal action against the person committing the domestic abuse.

9. Repairs and security

- 9.1 We would work with partners to assist with necessary repairs and security.
- 9.2 We will refer people to initiatives such as the Cambridgeshire Bobby Scheme, who can also provide assistance.

10. Perpetrator management

- 10.1 When supporting someone experiencing abuse, we will take account of their wishes and not assume that they wish the matter to be reported to the police or that they want a shared living arrangement to end. If the survivor wishes to remain with the perpetrator, any decisions around support will be based on the specific risks associated with the situation. Housing Options staff are trained in DASH risk assessments and are also encouraged to refer to the specialist Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Service where there are concerns.
- 10.2 Where it is appropriate for enforcement action to be taken (for example, reporting to the police, action against a tenancy)
- 10.3 It is also recognised that, from time to time, Housing Options staff may be expected to support a perpetrator with their housing options. There is no blanket policy to prevent perpetrators from accessing social housing via the Home-Link allocation system, although the policy does allow exclusions based on behaviour. Any decisions to exclude someone will be on a case by cases basis and informed by the level of risk to associated parties if an exclusion was to exist.
- 10.4 The council will also ensure that information and support is available to perpetrators who wish to address their behaviour. This can include signposting to Respect and services for further advice.

11. Prevention and awareness

- 11.1 The Council are committed to learning from good practice and providing appropriate training for staff. This will include e-learning domestic abuse awareness for all staff, specialist training for key roles and the introduction of Domestic Abuse Support Champions throughout the organisation.

- 11.2 We will actively seek to raise awareness of domestic violence and encourage anyone that is experiencing it to engage with support services.
- 11.3 We are committed to achieving Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation and seek to learn and improve services through the accreditation process.
- 11.4 We will also raise awareness of the topic through articles published on our website, where appropriate.

12. Related legislation and regulations

- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act (2014)
- Care Act (2014)
- Civil Partnership Act (2004)
- Crime and Security Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- Domestic Abuse Crime and Victims Act (2004)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Family Law Act (1996)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003)
- Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act (2007)
- Homelessness Act (2002)
- Housing Act (1996)
- Protection from Harassment Act (1997)
- Serious Crime Act (2015)
- Clare's Law (2017)

13. Related documents

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Internal Staff Domestic Abuse Policy (HR)
- Lettings Policy
- Safeguarding children and adults at risk

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Adults Board Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policy

14. Equality and Diversity

14.1 Equality is about treating individuals fairly, supported by legislation designed to promote equality and eliminate discrimination and harassment. Diversity is about the recognition and valuing of difference for the benefit of the Council and the individual. Equality and diversity are not interchangeable but are interdependent. There is no equality of opportunity if difference is not recognised and valued.

14.2 We are committed to identifying, understanding and eliminating all barriers that prevent access to services, information and employment.

14.3 As a major employer and provider of services, Fenland District Council is committed to actively promoting equality and diversity, and working to combat discrimination across all nine protected characteristics of equality;

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnerships
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion / Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

14.4 An equality impact assessment has been carried out for this policy

15. Complaints

15.1 Any complaints should be addressed in line with the Council's 3C's procedure.

15.2 An overview of the complaint's procedure is available on the website

<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/threecs>

16. Review

16.1 This policy and its procedures will be reviewed in June 2028. However, earlier reassessment may be required if there are changes in operations and / or legislation etc. As part of the review the council will understand any learning when the policy has been utilised.

JUNE 2025

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**DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN –
Updated 4 July 2025**

(For any queries, please refer to the published forward plan)

CABINET

CABINET DATE	ITEMS	LEAD PORTFOLIO HOLDER
15 Sept 2025	1. Fenland Inspire! Projects Update	Cllr Boden
	2. Fenland Inspire! Floodlighting for Clarkson Memorial, Wisbech	Cllr Boden Cllr Seaton Cllr Imafidon
	3. Fenland Inspire! Wisbech Orchard Park	Cllr French
	4. Investment Board Update & Review of the Commercial & Investment Strategy	Cllr Boden Cllr Tierney
	5. Wisbech High Street Update	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney
	6. RECAP Waste Strategy	Cllr Tierney
	7. Air Quality Update (Wisbech)	Cllr Wallwork
	8. Local Plan Update	Cllr Laws
	9. Wisbech Town Board, 10-Year Vision Document and 3-Year Investment Plan	Cllr Hoy
	10. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
13 Oct 2025	1. Fenland Inspire! Projects Update	Cllr Boden
	2. Wisbech High Street Update	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney
	3. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
17 Nov 2025	1. Fenland Inspire! Projects Update	Cllr Boden
	2. Wisbech High Street Update	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney
	3. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
15 Dec 2025	1. Draft Business Plan 2025/26	Cllr Boden
	2. Draft Budget & MTFS 2025/26	Cllr Boden
	3. Fenland Inspire! Projects Update	Cllr Boden
	4. Wisbech High Street Update	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney
	5. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
26 January 2026	1. Fenland Inspire! Projects Update	Cllr Boden
	2. Fees and Charges	Cllr Boden
	3. Wisbech High Street Update	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney
	4. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden

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