

ACTION SCHEDULE FOR THE MEETING HELD ON Wednesday, 28 January 2026

No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
9/25	<u>Introduction and Apologies</u>			<p>Apologies received from: Emma Nasta and David Wyatt.</p> <p>Present: Hannah Albans (HA), Dino Biagioni (DB), Sheila Black (SB), Marcel Cooper (MC), Alan Davis (AD), Gareth Edwards (GE), Peter Harley (PH), Matthew Hall (MS), Zara Holland (ZH) Victoria Jones (VJ), Denise Laws (DL) Liam Lunn Towler (LLT), Shanna Penney (SP), David Rowen (DR), Matt Leigh (ML), Rachel Mottram (RM), Nick Seaton (NS), Shivesh Seedhar(SS), George Stone (GS), Michael Temple (MT), Jordan Trundle (JT) Shubhankar Umran (SU), Chris Walford (CW), Millie Walsh (MW), George Wilkinson (GW),</p>
10/25	<u>Review of Action Schedule from Last Meeting held on 9 July 2025</u>			The Action Schedule was approved.
11/25	<u>Local Plan Update</u>			<p>Kirsty Paul, the Planning Policy Manager, provided an update to the forum concerning the Local Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In December 2025, Full Council decided to withdraw the emerging Local Plan and to start a new plan making process under the new system. • The reasons for the change were a number of factors including change in circumstances and new development opportunities which are coming forward

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				<p>such as Fens Reservoir. Fenland is also allocated as an opportunity area within the Cambs & Peterborough Local Growth Plan which looks at Fens growth triangle. The Government deadlines for the current plan system would mean that there would need to be a plan submitted by 31/12/26 and there were no transitional arrangements that were made available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been decided that the best course of action now means that a new style plan will commence under the new plan making system. • The regulations are still to be published but there is detailed guidance on the Government website which explains the process along with some templates that can be utilised in terms of what the expectation will be around some of the earlier gateways. • The council's website will be updated as more information becomes available which will explain what the process is likely to entail and the key points for engagement going forwards. • With regards to technical evidence studies – there were multiple pieces of technical evidence which were produced to support the previous plan, and these will be carried through into the new plan but most of them would need to be updated in some way. They will form an important part of the initial work when looking at the what the scope of a new plan should be and trying to the initial optioneering work. • With regards to sites that are being promoted there will be a new call for sites

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				<p>process undertaken and all previously submitted sites will need to go through the process again. The database being used will be launched within two weeks and it is a very simple stripped back call for sites process which makes it really accessible to landowners without the use of having to use agents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a live Government consultation taking place at the current time on the NPPF and other proposed changes to the planning system and the consultation ends on the 10 March. The changed set out some radical reforms in terms of the NPPF process and how it interrelates with emerging local plans. • The indicative timeline was highlighted, and it was pointed out that there are key parts within it which mean it will have more interactions with the Planning Inspectorate. There are now three gateways that are worked through in addition to an examination process. • The statement of the notification to commence is published on the council's website and the four months' notice period has now been triggered to enter gateway 1, with the assumed date in May 2026. • Gateway 1 means that the Council are confirming the scope of the plan, including getting the reparation timetable agreed by PINS and looking at the behind-the-scenes project management side of things to ensure that there is a clear plan of action and reviewing how the engagement process with stakeholders will look. • To get to gateway 1 a scoping consultation

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				<p>has bene launched which is targeted at residents and local business owners, but agents and developers are welcome to submit representations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following gateway 1, then the next stage will be to develop the plans direction which will include deciding on the required policies and the level of required detail. • A further consultation will be undertaken prior to gateway 2 which will be an initial proposals consultation which will look at the vision, the objectives, spatial strategy and some early policy approaches. • Gateway 2 likely to commence early 2027 and whilst that is ongoing more detailed policies will be developed in preparation for the final public consultation which will take place between gateway 2 and 3 which is like the old Regulation 19 stage. The statutory time frame for this will be 8 weeks rather than 6 weeks and a full draft local plan will be published at that stage. • Final gateway stage will then be reached where confirmation regarding legal compliance, confirming whether the correct evidence is in place to ensure it is ready and fit for examination. • Examination process likely to be 6 months albeit a main modification consultation suggested so it could take longer. • Program is on the council's website and anticipation of adoption by March 2028. • Call for sites is likely to be launched mid Feb; this will be communicated to all FDF members and all stakeholders. • www.fenland.gov.uk/fenland50 provides

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				<p>detail and content on the new style plan which is being prepared.</p>
12/25	<u>Performance</u>			<p>David Rowen presented the performance update.</p> <p>Validation – 4-day backlog</p> <p>Planning Applications – Year to Date 2025/26 (2024/25)</p> <p>Major - 92% (95%) Minor – 93% (84%) Other – 96% (89%)</p> <p>Against the Government 24 Month Rolling Performance Requirement</p> <p>Majors 92% (designation threshold 60%) Non-Major 90% (designation threshold 70%)</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Laws questioned whether the ‘Right First time’ figures were available. She added that it does make a significant difference to receive applications when they are right first time and include the necessary and relevant information upon submission.</p> <p>David Rowen stated that he will include those statistics going forward.</p>
13/25	<u>Article 4 Update</u>			<p>Kirsty Paul presented the detail concerning Article 4 Directions.</p> <p>Small Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in central Wisbech (comprising of the following wards, Wisbech Riverside and Wisbech South) was confirmed in August 2025. She explained that</p>

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				<p>if you are a small house going to a small HMO or small HMO going to a small house either way, requires planning permission in those two wards.</p> <p>Non immediate Article 4 direction for remaining areas in wider Wisbech Small Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in wider Wisbech (Wisbech North; Wisbech Walsoken and Waterless; and Leverington and Wisbech Rural) confirmation expected in February 2026.</p> <p>Immediate Article 4 Direction was approved by Cabinet on 26 January 2026 to protect Mud Walls in Whittlesey – confirmation is expected to be August 2026.</p>
14/25	<u>Planning and Infrastructure Bill</u>			<p>Matt Leigh explained that on 18 December 2025, the Planning and Infrastructure Bill 2024-25 received Royal Assent and will be known as the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025.</p> <p>No details yet on when the National Scheme of Delegation will be introduced.</p>
15/25	<u>Pre Application Fee Increase</u>			<p>Matt Leigh made the Forum members aware that the pre application fees will be increasing by 3.8% on April 1, 2026 in line with inflation.</p>
16/25	<u>Feed Back on News Letter Approach</u>			<p>Matt Leigh asked the Forum members for feedback on the newsletter that was circulated and whether they found it to be useful and beneficial in the absence of an actual meeting.</p> <p>Dino Biagioni stated that he found it helpful in the absence of the meeting and moving forward if it is</p>

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				<p>decided to hold fewer meetings then he would welcome the newsletter update approach.</p> <p>Marcel Cooper stated that the newsletter is a helpful document with useful advice but he does welcome the actual meetings.</p>
17/25	<u>Any Other Business</u>			<p>Kirsty Paul stated that now as a new plan process is underway, she feels that the forum could be a helpful way of getting market insights for pieces of work that are being undertaken, albeit around housing needs or employment.</p> <p>She urged members of the forum to attend the meetings with questions and information which can be shared in order that their experience and knowledge of working in planning and development in Fenland can go towards the policies that are being prepared. She added that it will help to ensure that the policies being prepared are responsive and reflective not just from a community perspective but also from a market point of view.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Laws stated that she wholeheartedly agrees with the points made by Kirsty and the Forum has the opportunity provide an input into the new local plan and that input is vital. She added that the newsletter is helpful if a meeting does need to be cancelled as it communicates useful information but face to face meetings are her preference with a possibility of extra meetings if required.</p> <p>Marcel Cooper added that officers could consider preparing questions for agents and develops to answer. Kirsty Paul stated that there could be</p>

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				<p>some discussion questions put forward to agents and developers at the technical evidence stage.</p> <p>Dino Biaggioni stated that an in-person meeting could be considered which could be useful whilst considering the new local plan and it may encourage interaction and feedback from members.</p>

Finish: 3.35 pm