

AGENDA

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2025

2.30 PM

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

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

- 1 To receive apologies for absence
- 2 Previous Minutes (Pages 3 - 10)

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of 14 July 2025.
- 3 To report additional items for consideration which the Chairman deems urgent by virtue of the special circumstances to be now specified
- 4 Members to declare any interests under the Local Code of Conduct in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting
- 5 Review of Clarion (Pages 11 - 42)

To receive a presentation.
- 6 Annual Meeting with the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, including LGR (Pages 43 - 56)

To receive an update on the Council's key achievements and performance, to include a LGR update.
- 7 Commercial Investment Strategy and Investment Board Update (Pages 57 - 66)

To provide an update of the work of the Investment Board from April 2024 to March 2025.

8 Use of Waiver Provisions (Pages 67 - 70)

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

9 Update on Previous Actions (Pages 71 - 72)

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

10 Future Work Programme (Pages 73 - 80)

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

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

Friday, 24 October 2025

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

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 14 JULY 2025 - 10.00 AM



PRESENT: Councillor Mrs M Davis (Chairman), Councillor E Sennitt Clough (Vice-Chairman), Councillor B Barber, Councillor G Booth, Councillor L Foice-Beard, Councillor A Hay, Councillor N Meekins, Councillor D Roy and Councillor A Woollard.

APOLOGIES: Councillor J Carney and Councillor P Hicks.

Officers in attendance: Carol Pilson (Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer), Amy Brown (Assistant Director), Anna Goodall (Assistant Director), Stephen Beacher (Head of ICT Digital & Resilience), Phil Hughes (Head of Leisure Services/SRO March Future High Street Project), David Wright (Policy & Communications Manager), Garry Edwards (Engineering Manager) and Helen Moore (Member Services and Governance Officer).

Guests in attendance: Councillors Boden, Mrs French, Tierney and Wallwork. Dan Palframan and Matt Wickham (Freedom Leisure).

OSC11/25 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 9 June 2025 were confirmed and signed.

OSC12/25 FREEDOM LEISURE

Members considered the Freedom Leisure Operating Contract Annual Report, which was shared in the form of a presentation, welcoming Dan Palframan, Matt Wickham, Carol Pilson, Phil Hughes and Councillor Wallwork to the meeting.

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

- Councillor Barber referred to the figures shown in the presentation for the past year but there is nothing to base this on as there is no evidence of the previous year's figures. She asked for an explanation as to why the participation figures were down from last year as stated in the presentation. Dan Palframan responded that George Campbell has some competitors emerging locally, and in cases like this, if a low cost operator opens customers will tend to try it out and swap memberships, but then over time there is a turnaround and customers start to return and when looking quarter on quarter George Campbell is recovering in terms of numbers of participation on the gym and the fitness side. He continued in terms of the aquatics this is up year on year, however, there were some closures due to unplanned repairs that needed to take place.
- Councillor Barber stated two-thirds of the staff are female and only a third are male, is there a reason for this? Dan Palframan stated the reason for this is that there is a large learn to swim school scheme for swimming lessons and a high proportion of those employed are women, with it being a sector industry standard across the country, with a lot of the teachers being female. Matt Wickham added from a national perspective the statistics in Fenland are slightly skewed and there is an overall good mix to create a balance to the business, but locally this is a consistent trend.
- Councillor Barber stated that looking at the presentation she found it hard to read the small print around the pie charts. Dan Palframan agreed with the statement and noted it for future presentations.

- Councillor Barber stated that she had noticed that some of the customers had mentioned that there were not enough evening swim sessions and wondered if this was going to be reviewed. Dan Palframan responded that a review on the pool programme takes place quarterly and the approach is that as long as there is a balanced programme across all the pools with the idea that the customer can swim at any pool at any one time. He continued the programme does get reviewed and changed based on user trends.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked what the plans are there to improve the cleanliness of the Leisure Centres and to improve the maintenance of the gym equipment? Dan Palframan responded that recruitment had been a struggle, especially at the Manor Leisure Centre, this has now been resolved with a new manager in place, and he is slowly building his team around him to improve the service. He continued in regard to the maintenance of the gym equipment, this remains to be an ongoing challenge, however, there are talks on going to bring back a maintenance package which will speed up improvement to services across the Leisure Centres. Councillor Sennitt Clough stated that when attending the gym she overheard a conversation about a piece of leg equipment and it was evident that the staff did not know how to answer the questions being asked, with them stating 'it was above us' and she feels that the information shared today needs to be transferred down to the staff so they are better equipped with being able to deal with customer queries. Matt Wickham thanked Councillor Sennitt Clough for the feedback and will take this back to the local team.
- Councillor Foice-Beard stated, with another new gym opening in Wisbech, are there any plans in place to maintain members and promote new joiners? Dan Palframan responded there are some national campaigns coming up, but it is also recognised that the core of the staff and the team are local and know what is going on in their local community, there is funding and with the help of Phil there will be a campaign promoting what the Hudson provides versus other organisations. Councillor Foice-Beard asked if there were any concerns around Snap Fitness coming to Wisbech? Matt Wickham responded that there was not because this has happened so many times in the past and members leave out of curiosity but Freedom Leisure have a different offer and can go head to head on price on these budget gyms, but as stated previously there needs to be an improvement on cleanliness and maintenance of the gyms and also investment in trained experts as budget gyms do not supply that service and it is important to get the right knowledge and motivation from a trained team of experts which the Freedom gyms offer.
- Councillor Booth asked when the promotions are happening is there a focus on the fact that Freedom Leisure has these trained professionals and is the advertising more personable to show who those people are? Dan Palframan responded that this is something that is currently being worked on, there are national campaigns coming up as well as localised ones which can be adapted to local community needs. Matt Wickham added that the way the company is recruiting has changed from just qualification based to more personality, with the interview technique questions having been changed to focus on the personality because that is what interacts with the customers rather than just based on a qualification. He continued if the employee is the right person this will be presented to the public through social media as part of the advertising.
- Councillor Roy made an observation that in the Fenland years in numbers section of the presentation it would be useful to have the comparative figures from previous years so the difference can be seen. He continued it has been mentioned that gas is burnt to produce electricity, and he would like to understand if this is sustainable and whether there are plans to change it? Matt Wickham responded that the numbers can be provided but were not added to this presentation on a comparable basis. He continued the Combined Heat Power Units (CHP) are very common because gas is cheaper than electricity and generally new Leisure Centres will be built without a CHP unit, they will have installed air or seat pumps and solar PV, using solar thermal to offset the cost of the air seat pump which run electricity. Matt Wicken stated that in the Fenland area the buildings used by Freedom are inherited facilities which is a concern and from a sustainability point of view all the buildings would need to be closed down and solar PV or even wind farms would be used, but the cost is prohibitive and to take out the CHP would be phenomenal so there needs to be a balance

taken between Freedom Leisure and the Council as a whole and officers to understand exactly which way this needs to be taken. He continued there is Government funding and Public Sector Decarbonization Scheme Funding, but it does remain a challenge to remain cost effective and reduce the carbon numbers.

- Councillor Mrs Davis stated that the sauna and steam facilities have been closed for some time and are there any plans to reintegrate them or are they going to be permanently closed? Councillor Wallwork responded that there are no plans to re-open them as the cost of the renovation would be astronomical and the evidence showed that the footfall was not great enough to warrant the work needed.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked what measurable incentives are there in place to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for the underrepresented and the lower paid? Dan Palframan responded Freedom Leisure have a concessionary pricing structure available to those who are eligible, funded through Cambridgeshire County Council, which allows children to enjoy an activity at the venue and Freedom provide food vouchers which can be taken to a supermarket or any retailer who is part of the scheme. He added that Freedom Leisure work closely with other governing bodies such as Sport England, Swim England and UK Active to allow as much access as possible.
- Councillor Booth asked for more information concerning the five MPS and issues stated in the report and mentioned the quantum seems to be missing, for example, how many people are raising these and how big an issue is it? He also mentioned the Net Promoter score and the fact that certain people have been excluded because of known issues. Matt Wickham responded the issues with the Net Promoter score is probably around the George Campbell pool, it was a known issue, it was being fixed but it was unfortunate the survey went out at the same time so that was the justification because there was a problem which everyone was aware of, which took longer because more issues were found, and it was being resolved and that was the only item that was retracted. Councillor Booth asked what impact this had on the Net Promoter score and reiterated the question asked about the quantum and the five issues with the numbers of complaints made against each issue found. Dan Palframan responded he could give an indicative number and could provide the physical numbers directly through Phil Hughes' team. He continued around 100 surveys were received for the bigger venues, which is a finite snapshot in terms of volume and in terms of the MPS score it will be neutralized, ranging from some venues which were slightly negative to some venues that were very strong positives, but excluding the known issues over 53% were promoters so were scoring as nine or ten out of ten, there is also another 30% of people who are neutral and 27% who did not share a view. Councillor Booth recommended that this information is shared within the presentation as this is what the public get to see and congratulated the organisation on a successful MPS score.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated there has been a lot of discussion around customers coming back to Freedom Leisure after a new gym has opened in the area and asked what happens if these customers fail to come back? Matt Wickham responded ultimately Freedom are in a contracted position, the contract is set and will be in place for as long as that contract runs, with the key strength being to keep working with the Council, and the community to deliver the service and Freedom is in a strong place to deliver that as a partnership.

Members noted the information reported.

OSC13/25 PROGRESS OF CORPORATE PRIORITY - ENVIRONMENT

Members considered the Progress of Corporate Priority – Environment, welcoming Councillors Boden, Mrs French and Tierney together with Carol Pilson and Garry Edwards to the meeting.

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

- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked how are the priorities decided generally and what impact will Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) have on overseeing and managing the

priorities or what the predicted impact will be? Councillor Tierney responded that the priorities are decided through the Council's procedures, councillors and officers feed into the process then it is shared with all the committees it needs to be shared with including O&S, and then the priorities are finalised and pushed forward. He continued how this will be affected by the LGR he could not comment on as there was not enough detail out yet and stated that the priorities will be decided on a year-by-year basis using any new information to adjust as and when necessary.

- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked considering the changes about to take place, the Corporate Priorities model of a one-year plan with three-year aspirations, i.e. a medium-term strategy, is no longer the most effective suitable model and how will the changes taking place affect the viewing process? Councillor Tierney stated that he thinks the model is right, the medium-term plan is a four-year plan which is reviewed every year allowing the team to feed in and adjust accordingly.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked for an update on the Fenland Inspire projects. Councillor Boden responded that at the last Cabinet meeting which took place on the 16 June a report was given on Fenland Inspire and where the Council is with the projects divided into two tranches. He stated that the first tranche will be going ahead this year within the capacity available and the second tranche will be going ahead, when the Council has reasonable confirmation that the LGR is going to go ahead, which is going to take place from the 1 April 2028. Councillor Boden continued the Council is expecting legislation to be laid before both Houses of Parliament as statutory instruments in the spring of 2026 and as and when this happens will unlock the remaining part of Fenland Inspire because without that certainty of termination of FDC there could be difficulty in financing what it is that is being suggested. He continued having said that, at the meeting of Cabinet last month, it was announced that one of the projects will not be going ahead and that is the Wisbech Chapel project, with the reason being on the preliminary examination of the project it was evident that it would not be sustainable so hence it was removed from the list.
- Councillor Foice-Beard asked why there are 40 plus street light units still awaiting inspection and is the inspection in relation to the low-level lighting bulbs or the columns, and what is the risk if these are structurally unsafe? Councillor Mrs French responded that the outstanding street light testing works related to both electrical and structural integrity testing with the assets themselves being a combination of columns, poles, brackets and ground mounted up lighters and the delays are associated with factors such as contractors unable to access due to excessive tree vegetation overgrowth, the contractor unable to find the assets on site or access the assets which are restricted by locked gates, parked cars etc. She continued that a handful of assets also require traffic management by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) to obtain road space to access due to the asset's location with the highest structural risk being associated with columns that are cast iron or concrete, but ongoing work continues with the contractors. Garry Edwards added, in terms of street lighting, unfortunately there are some that are waiting to be structurally and electrically tested and it is hoped that they will be completed this week, but as stated earlier, parked cars and access to some of the streetlights can be difficult. He continued, in terms of the risk, any of the streetlights that the contractor comes across where there is immediate danger, they will remove the streetlights to make it safe for the public and so far, the total is 16 streetlights that are of the highest category.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked how many complaints have been received due to the new splay of lights from the new heads? Garry Edwards responded that complaints have been very low, but FDC only has responsibility for around 1,800 streetlights, and FDC do share the same road space as Cambridgeshire County Council's (CCC) assets who have more than 53,000 streetlights. He continued that CCC's luminaire specification is different to FDC's as in they seem dimmer, which is where the complaints have derived from and FDC have had a few complaints that the light is projected too far forward or too far rearwards, which is a quick fix by adding a small shield to prevent that light splay.
- Councillor Booth stated that there was a new contract in place for street lighting, and in Parson Drove there are some outstanding replacements, he is aware that UK Power

Networks are to undertake the connections, but would like to know how the handover with the new contractors is going and what is the plan to get up to speed with all the outstanding pieces of work? Garry Edwards confirmed that the handover with the new contractors has gone well but is slower than anticipated because of the different management systems of streetlights in place which has made the transition slow. He continued, in terms of the legacy schemes, every effort has been made to complete as much work as possible with the former contractor but unfortunately this has caused a three-way triangle between FDC, CCC and UK Power Network because of road space permits etc but what is sometimes undertaken is that FDC can fit a temporary supply so the streetlights are working.

- Councillor Mrs French referred to the TTRO's and the traffic management which has to be carried out through CCC, which has got to be booked for a minimum of 12 weeks.
- Councillor Roy stated he would like to raise the issue of bulky waste collection as since the increase in cost there has been evidence of constant fly tipping and wanted to know if this can be revisited or the possibility investigated of a discretionary scheme or even a bulky waste amnesty for the low-income community? Councillor Tierney responded that he did not feel there was any evidence that shows the small increase in bulky waste collection has increased the amount of fly tipping. He continued he felt the service is great value for money and is the cheapest other than Peterborough out of other local authorities and he was pleased to report that the service has been growing year on year. Councillor Tierney continued in regard to the amnesty he was aware that this has been tried in other authorities where people are given the opportunity to get rid of loads of waste but then as soon as this is over the rubbish starts to accumulate again so this encourages ongoing amnesties which costs a lot of money and he feels that most people accept that there is a cost to removing bulky waste and FDC is cheaper than most private companies and is doing it legally.
- Councillor Hay stated should there be clarification that LGR is definitely going ahead and FDC will be abolished, how will that affect the Council's ambition to introduce civil parking enforcement in the area? Councillor Boden responded that it should make no difference because civil parking enforcement is one of those projects that is going ahead anyway regardless of whether or not there is LGR, but in the likelihood of LGR taking place this will make it easier to overcome some of the obstacles that there has been up to now.
- Councillor Booth wished to come back to the point made by Councillor Tierney regarding bulky waste and that the Director has got the ability to provide an exemption, but there is not an option for this through the online form so practically there are no means to enact that service. He continued that Peterborough City Council tried an amnesty, but they did drop this idea due to the cost and suggested speaking to colleagues at Peterborough to research the results from this exercise. Councillor Booth also added that his biggest concern was the rogue traders that undercut the Council to collect bulky waste and then fly tip in the countryside and feels enforcement needs to be considered. Councillor Tierney agreed with this statement and questioned if the cost of an amnesty is going to be worth it from any environmental benefits that are gained but is happy to explore the options available.
- Councillor Barber stated in light of how much money the Council generates from the blue recycling, and how much is now not used because it is not recycled properly, it was noted from the report that FDC will continue to support customers to maximize their recycling efforts and she was curious on how this will be put in place? Councillor Tierney responded that FDC support customers all the time by providing a good service, alongside this FDC constantly promote recycling constantly on all the available channels, like Council communications, the website, libraries and community groups. He continued there are also the group called 'Getting it Sorted' which is a volunteer service which is being worked on presently and will be relaunched very soon. Councillor Tierney added that alongside this there is an encouragement to ask local councillors to keep spreading the word when out and about and reminding customers that by recycling they can save money at the same time. Councillor Barber commented that she did not feel that residents realise that they are generating savings within their Council Tax by recycling and feels this should be promoted more. She added that local WI groups and other coffee morning groups would also be a good place to promote recycling. Councillor Tierney took on board the feedback and added

that this is more an area for councillors to spread the word in the local communities through their daily duties rather than officers visiting local coffee mornings, etc.

- Councillor Mrs Davis stated that from April there is an Extender Producer Responsibility payment and asked would this be worth looking into as the more tonnage the more money Fenland can make. Councillor Tierney responded that the Extender Producer Responsibility acts as a tax, for example manufacturers who use packaging now have to pay for the packaging that they use and the more environmentally difficult it is to get rid of the more expensive that charge is which encourages manufacturers to use less packaging or to use different packaging that is more environmentally friendly, and conveying this to the public more is a good idea.
- Councillor Mrs Davis stated from the report there has only been 9 penalties issued from 790 fly tips, she asked is there a gap in the evidence and what makes it so difficult for these people to be caught? Councillor Tierney responded the reason it is so hard to prosecute these offenders is because people know if they fly tip they could get caught and these people know not to dump literature with address detail on it into the rubbish pile. He continued that officers do go out and visit sites and check for evidence as part of their job, and occasionally there will be some evidence found that can lead to a conviction but often the evidence is not found that is needed to prosecute. Councillor Mrs Davis asked if there were any plans to carry out the project that was trialled in New Road? Councillor Tierney commented that this was being looked at for the hotspot areas in Fenland but despite it being effective it was also expensive and there must be a balance between the cost to the Council versus the benefit.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked how will the Council measure carbon savings from the net zero village funding? Councillor Tierney stated that when the proposals were presented the carbon benefit and the saving had to be built into the planning which generally meant that less power was going to be used from sustainable power that benefited the net zero situation, this has been checked, the work has already been done and the benefits should already be there.
- Councillor Barber asked what the progress was concerning the food waste collection? Councillor Tierney stated that the reason this has not been spoken about is because it is a bit too early. He continued the Government has imposed new regulations regarding food waste and each Council has been given a little bit of leeway on how they will introduce that, FDC's plans are in place, the caddies have been ordered for inside and outside the house, it has been through Cabinet to order the vehicles and later on in the year the Council will be looking at the staffing ready for next year. Councillor Tierney added that around Autumn time the publicity will start to roll out so that everyone knows everything that is going on and answer all the questions. Councillor Barber asked if there were going to be bags to put inside the containers and will street vendors be included? Councillor Tierney responded in regard to the bags the answer is yes but some of this is still being worked on and in regard to traders, trade waste has to be arranged by the traders and can be provided through the Council. Carol Pilson added that all traders will need to familiarise themselves with the trade rules to find out whether they are covered or not at this stage.
- Councillor Booth stated that last year it was suggested that when the new regulations come in that officers take a look and see what opportunities there were to improve recycling, the food waste has been mandated by the Government, but what other opportunities are there to improve the recycling in this area? Councillor Tierney responded there is a report going through RECAP in the Autumn which will provide some more answers and a better understanding. Councillor Booth asked if the tax on the brown bins would be removed as a result of the new regulations or will there still be a charge? Councillor Tierney responded that at this present time there are no plans to remove the brown bin tax.

Members noted the information reported.

OSC14/25 PROGRESS OF CORPORATE PRIORITY - TRANSFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Members considered the Progress of Corporate Priority – Transformation and Communications, welcoming Councillors Boden and Tierney together with Anna Goodall, Stephen Beacher and David Wright to the meeting.

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

- Councillor Roy stated that he would like to understand the real time cost savings regarding the digital switch over to the Council and has there been any significant impact on staffing levels? Councillor Tierney responded this has been a smooth transition with no costs or savings and no significant changes to staffing levels.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked since the move over to the Cloud infrastructure and the Team technology, what is the contingency plans for data loss, cyber-attacks and service interruptions? Councillor Tierney stated that there is sufficient cover for data loss, with Cloud backup in place with on and off-site backup and this system is regularly tested. Stephen Beacher confirmed that there is regular patching, fire walls and network segmentation in place to protect from any cyber-attack.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked how can the service-level improvements be quantified resulting from the £214k in cashable savings and 7,000 officer hours saved and specifically how have these gains transferred into better outcomes for residents and what governance or audit mechanism are in place to independently validate self-reported achievements and figures? Councillor Tierney stated that this is quantified through the Council's procedures, data and analysis are measured, tested and recorded, once the figures have been checked through the various departments the results are reported back to the committees, who can then question individual things if they feel there has been a mistake.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked how the Council is ensuring that consultations are reaching underrepresented or digitally excluded groups in Fenland and how is it ensured that the automation of services does not negatively impact those with complex needs or low digital literacy? Councillor Tierney stated that lots of people are ready to go digital and the more that can be encouraged the better it is because that frees up resources for those who cannot be supported. He continued with underrepresented people they are approached in lots of ways such as the Golden Age Fairs, press releases and the website alongside a variety of other actions within each community and in regard to others who are not digitally represented there are other methods like phone calls and the library. Councillor Mrs Davis asked if there are any information leaflets that can be shared at local coffee morning and events that councillors attend to spread the word? Councillor Tierney responded there was not but there is a hard copy of the information available which councillors could take with them with all the information inside.
- Councillor Mrs Davis referred to the Transformation Agenda (TA2) and asked how are the objectives aligned with the Council's long-term strategic goals especially in light of the LGR and Fenland Inspire Programme? Councillor Boden responded that it has changed, TA2 considerably especially around how FDC performs its services without harming the services which are provided, this has provided an opportunity to look at all the services provided to see how each service can be made more efficient and more effective, all of this demands an upfront cost in terms of the time it takes for officers to examine the system and put forward the changes, and the way transformation works is that the savings made following that initial cost outweighs that initial cost, and that is the justification for the transformation. He stated that the problem with LGR is that in many cases if looking at services provided by FDC, there will not be that trail of savings to be made because once LGR takes place, the overwhelming majority of the services provided will be provided in different ways and in ways at the moment that cannot be anticipated so to some extent TA2 has been truncated and the opportunity for FDC to make even more savings than FDC otherwise would have done.

Members noted the information reported.

OSC15/25 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

Councillor Mrs Davis presented the Annual Report to be submitted to the next Council meeting.

Members approved the draft Annual Report for forwarding to Council.

OSC16/25 UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS

Members considered and noted the update on previous actions.

OSC17/25 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered and noted the Future Work Programme.

12.10 pm

Chairman



CLARION
HOUSING GROUP

Fenland Scrutiny Panel

3rd November 2025



CLARION
HOUSING GROUP

The External Environment

Sue Stavers, Regional Director

External impacts through the year - national

- Rent restrictions and below target rents - £140m and £17.7m pa respectively
- Leaks, Condensation, Damp & Mould and preparation for Awaab's Law - £5m
- Increasing vulnerability among the people we house
- Cost of living impacts on our households
- Inflationary supply chain costs, far exceeding CPI.

Cost pressures ahead

- Awaab's Law: £5m pa
- Decent Homes 2: £1,000 per void property (≈£5m/year)
- Regulatory costs





Clarion 2050 – Asset Management update

Paul Norman, Director of Strategic Asset Management

Our long-term plan



CLARION
HOUSING GROUP



We understand our homes, the investment required over the whole life cycle and our customers perception of the homes we provide and maintain.



Homes in the areas that we work, which meet the other five strategic principles.



Homes that meet legal and regulatory requirements to make sure they're safe for our customers.



Homes are net zero carbon ready and works undertaken reduce the customer's energy use.



Understanding our neighbourhoods and communities, Creating spaces for people and nature, promoting mental and physical health and wellbeing.



Building capacity and resilience into our long-term financial plan to enable progressive investment in our homes and communities.

Understanding Our Homes



CLARION
HOUSING GROUP

Understanding our homes



We understand the condition of our homes, the investment required over the whole life cycle and our customers perception of the homes we provide and maintain.

- Legal and regulatory / Provides the strategic foundation
- Our asset condition strategy is critical in driving improved data of our homes
- Developed a suite of tools that enables us to turn data into actionable intelligence and insight
- Stay ahead of our legal and regulatory works
- Building Safety works
- Tackling LCDM and responding to Awaab's law
- Maintaining our homes in line with the Decent Homes Standards

Stock Condition Surveys - Units

Asset Investment Reporting

Social Housing Units	Units Built < 5 years	In-active Units	Cloned Surveys
3920	3	52	119

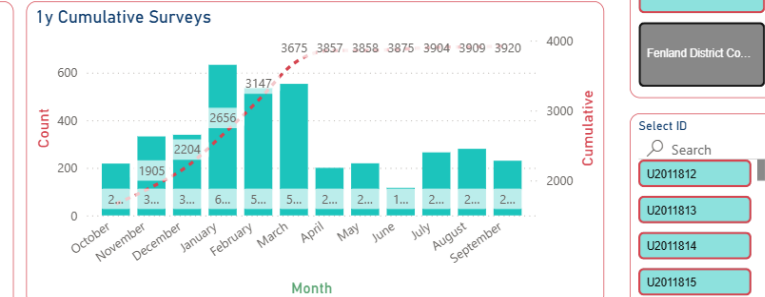
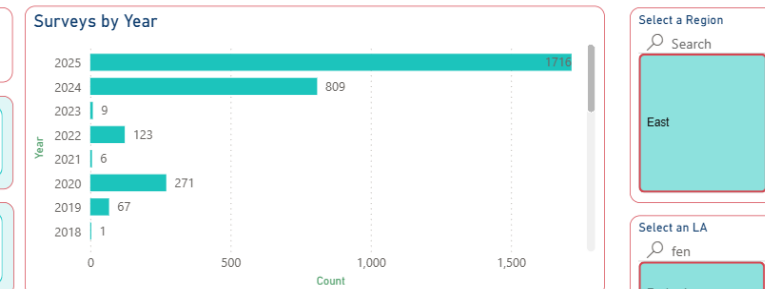
Total Unit Surveys	As a % of Applicable Units
3801	98.27%

Surveys done < 5 years	As a % of Applicable Units
2879	74.43%

Id	Description
U2027160	16 Cygnet Crescent
U2032403	16 Dagless Way, Badgene
U2061786	16 Doddington Road, Ber
U2061877	16 Doddington Road, Wir
U2062496	16 Eastwood Avenue
U2061902	16 Eaton Estate, Wimblin
U2061855	16 Festival Close, Manea
U2061562	16 Field Avenue, Tydd St.
U2063980	16 Fleming Court
U2062539	16 Gimbirt Square

Survey Source	Count
Pennin...	2307
Savills ...	848
EQUA...	381
In House	239
No Data	104
Clarion...	41

Home SCS-Units SCS-Props Decent Homes HHSRS Sustainable Homes



Select a Region
Search
East

Select an LA
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Fenland
Fenland District Co...

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U2011812
U2011813
U2011814
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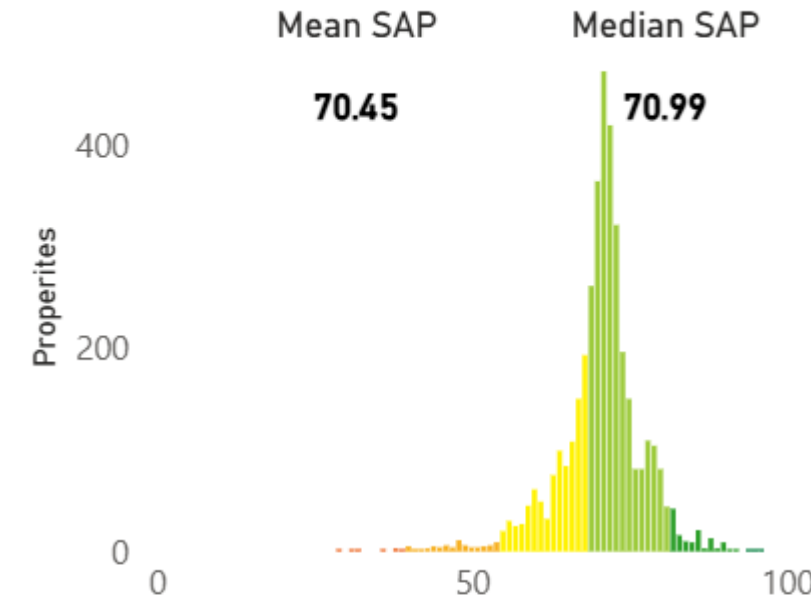
Decarbonization and Planned Investment



Our net zero commitment “....we will replace fossil fuel heating with renewable technology without increasing a customers fuel bill....”

- Decarbonization works aligned with our Net-Zero goals.
- Over £30m invested in Fenland in the last 5 years
- £11m investment estimated over the next 3 years
- 377 properties retrofitted so far with a further 60 to complete this financial year
- Cavity wall insulation, external wall insulation, loft insulation, windows & doors, ventilation, air tightness, air source heat pumps & solar PV

SAP score



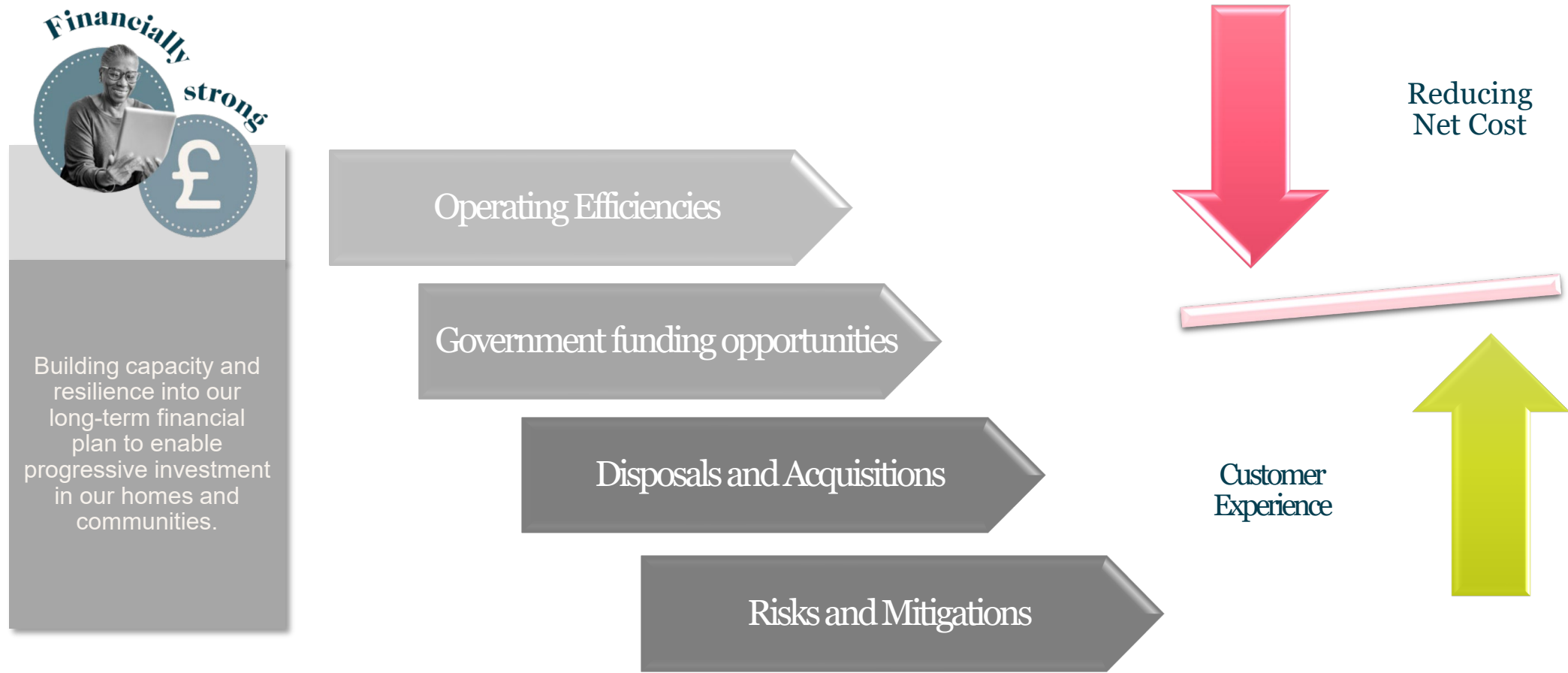
Calculated SAP score

SAP Band	Count of SAP Band
A	6
B	172
C	2639
D	998
E	78

Sustainable Business and Financial Resilience



CLARION
HOUSING GROUP





CLARION
HOUSING GROUP

Managing our homes in Fenland..

Sally Greetham, Regional Housing Lead

Managing anti-social behaviour....

In August 2025, we received 24 ASB new cases....

ASB Type	No. of Cases
Serious Threat of Violence (Urgent)	1
Domestic Abuse (Urgent)	3
Cuckooing (urgent)	1
Offensive Behaviour or Gestures	6
Drug taking or selling	2
Verbal Abuse	3
Dangerous driving	1
Criminal damage	1
Loud parties/music	3
Sexual activity (noise)	1
Shouting & Arguing	1
Dog Barking/Animal noise	1

OUR OBJECTIVE

“Reduce ASB, criminal activity, and rough sleeping in the space, and protect vulnerable residents.”

- ❖ 75% reduction in incidents/complaints within 6 months
- ❖ Intervention fully implemented within 3 months
- ❖ Formal reviews at 6 & 12 months



ACTION PLAN

From ASB Hotspot to Community Recovery

- ❖ ASB Hotspot
- ❖ Community awareness
- ❖ Environmental improvements
 - CCTV
 - Door alarms
 - Additional lighting
- ❖ PCC Community Grants
- ❖ Rough sleeper outreach
- ❖ Local Lettings Policy



MEASURING SUCCESS

- ❖ Police data: 80% drop in ASB incidents within 3 months
- ❖ No further unauthorised access into scheme
- ❖ Complaints dropped to zero post-environmental works within scheme
- ❖ Residents report feeling safer and more confident
- ❖ Ongoing monitoring: 3, 6 & 12-month reviews



CLARION
HOUSING GROUP





CLARION
HOUSING GROUP

Maintaining our homes...

Carl Grimmer, Regional Repairs Lead

Maintaining our homes

- **Delivery Model**
- **Performance**
- **Empty Homes / additional investment**
- **Leaks, Condensation, Damp and Mould**
- **Challenges**
- **Customer Satisfaction**



How are we performing?

Clarion Response	
% Emergency Repairs completed in 24 hours	96.95%
% Routine Repairs completed in 28 days	78.9%
% First time fix (attended bookings)	91.77%
% Negative Localz scores	6.39%

Swale – Gas / Oil contractor	
% Repairs completed in 24 hours	74.71%
% Repairs completed in 28 days	77.49%
& Gas compliance checks	99.71%
% Customers satisfied (TLF)	88%



Planned Investment and Sustainable Homes – Project update

Fenland Project Works - Plans for 2025/26



Waterlees Estate – Wisbech

- 20 Block locations that will see the replacement of failing Roofs/Windows/Facias and Soffits.
- A 3 million pound investment into homes in Fenland will see 80 families benefit from greater insulation and resistance from the ever-changing weather conditions we are seeing in the UK.
- Additional benefits will be the aesthetics to the externals of the buildings.
- Water currently pooling to failing roofs/guttering will be overcome with replacement roofs/rainwater goods. Removing any damp and mould concerns reported to us by our Clarion Response operatives and surveyors.
- The program of works commenced in May of this year and maintains its momentum to conclude in March 2026.
- Customer feedback is sought monthly at all stages of the works. From early communication/letters/Home visits around commencement pending works to your home, to feedback on the communication received from our partner EQUANS during the time works were being addressed.
- Weekly site inspections from Planned Inspection Managers, report good progress to the location, with feedback from residents that works to the area are "uplifting to the community".



- ▶ 100 properties programmed for Sustainable Homes in 25/26.
- ▶ £2,745,000 budgeted for 25/26
- ▶ 23 properties completed since March 25 in Fenland.
- ▶ Works being currently on site at Gloucester Court on the Waterlees Estate in Wisbech.
- ▶ Works vary from architype, measures can include external wall insulation, cavity wall insulation, window and door replacement, mechanical ventilation replacement, loft insulation upgrade and heating system replacement (ASHP).

FENLAND SUSTAINABLE HOMES PLANS FOR 2025/26





CLARION
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Developing new homes Fenland

Dan Read– Senior Land and Partnership Manager

On site - Springfield Avenue – 40 Social Rented Homes



CLARION
HOUSING GROUP

- Due to complete June 2026
- 28 x 2 Bedroom Houses
- 12 x 3 Bedroom Houses
- Social Rents at circa £20 below LHA level
- NDSS Compliant
- Air Source Heat Pump technology
- Enhanced grant rates required to deliver





CLARION
HOUSING GROUP

graphs taken at Site Visit



2. Plots 4 - 5



4. Plots 6 - 7



7. Plots 10 - 11



8. Plots 10 - 13



Pipeline

- 1) Continue to consider opportunities both land led and S106
- 2) Viability remains an issue with low house values and low LHA rates alongside increased build cost.
- 3) Contractor failure also a concern requiring Latimer to work with tier 1 and 2 contractors with higher overheads and build cost.
- 4) New HE program on the horizon with opportunity of possible higher grant rates or more flexible use of grant rates which may improve viability
- 5) Continued discussions with Persimmon, Allison Homes and Lovell in the area over possible development opportunities



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Home-link

Sally Greetham, Regional Housing Lead

Total lets in Fenland – all social landlords

	Lets in Fenland (All social Landlords)
Apr 2025 – Aug 2025	186
2024/25	361
2023/24	283
2022/23	248
2021/22	318
2020/21	279

Average time on housing register



April 2025 to August 25

Type/Size	Emergency	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D
Retirement		3 months	4 years	8 months	
Bedsit					
1 bed		7 months	31 months		
2 bed flat		11 weeks	6 months	27 months	
2 bed house	7 months	4 months	13 months	10 weeks	
3 bed		4 months	3 years		
4 bed		7 months	10 years		
5 bed					

Mar 24 to March 25

Type/Size	Emergency	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D
Retirement	4 months	11 weeks	10 months	9 months	12 weeks
Bedsit		7 months		10 weeks	
1 bed	4 months	15 months	16 months	3 years	4 months
2 bed flat		3 months	10 months	27 months	24 months
2 bed house	14 months	8 months	21 months	27 months	
3 bed		9 months	4 years (*)		
4 bed	15 months	30 months			
5 bed					



Clarion Futures

Tracey Thompson, Communities
Officer

Headlines from Communities



CLARION
FUTURES

£225,200 investment into Fenland this year

Funded

youth
provision
across
Wisbech,
Whittlesey
and March

Over **450**
Families in
Fenland
supported
with cost of
living

Additional
£30k invested
into Made In
Fenland after
FDC pulls out .
This secures
the **£911,399**
income for
Fenland
through the
Arts

£420k
ARTS
Council
Funding
secured for
Fenland



On average
432 YP
engaged
every
month

18
organisations
received
funding and
support

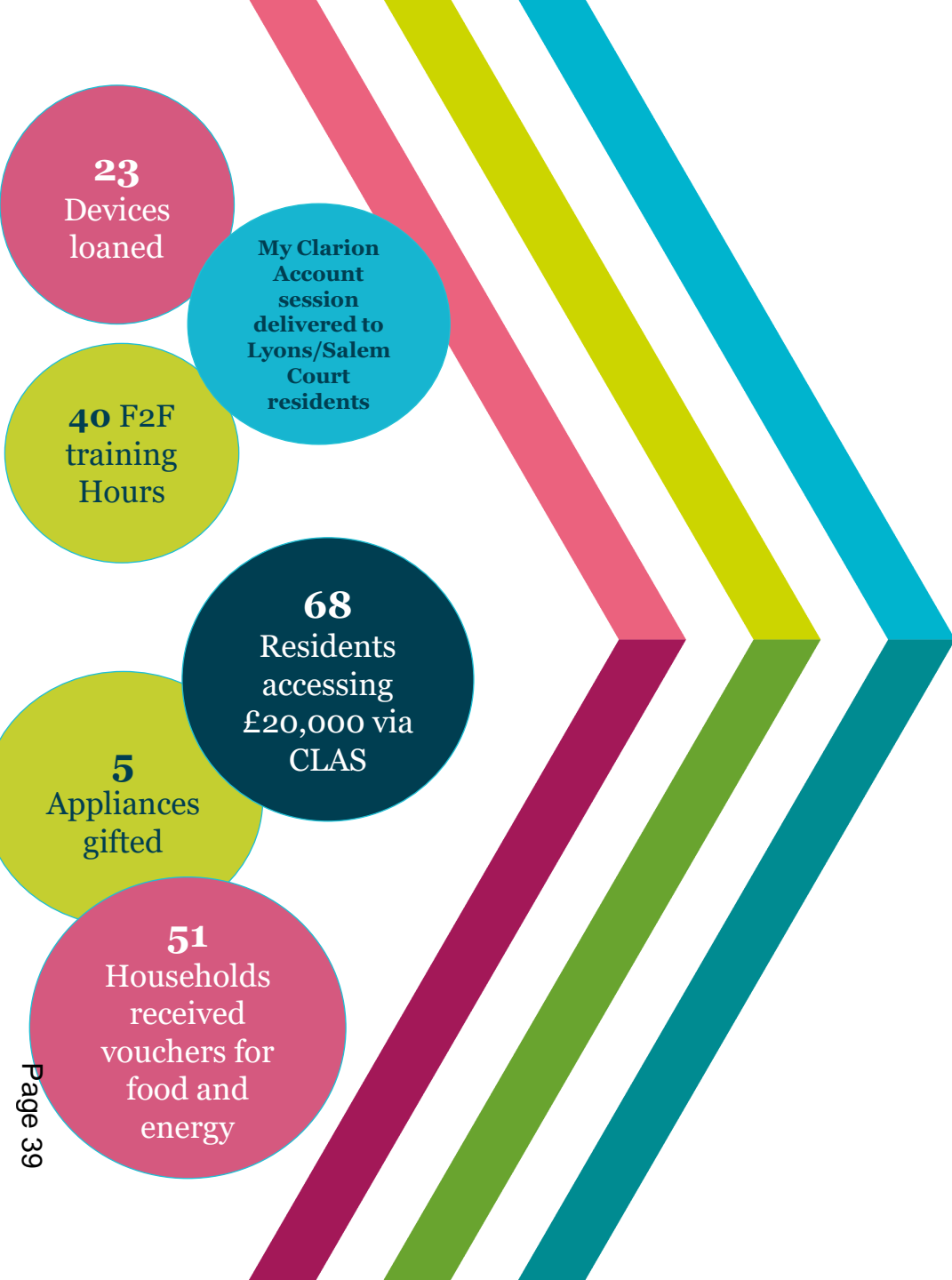
Supported 2
wellbeing
spaces at FACT
and People and
Animals with a
3rd to open in
Chatteris



15,270
volunteering
hours last
year

Funded
food hubs
March and
Whittlesey

968
individual
engagements
each month
on average.



Clarion Futures Digital

Online everyday, safely and securely

Helping residents get online and improve their digital skills to make a real difference in their lives, whatever their barrier and enabling access to the benefits the digital world has to offer.

Digital Device Scheme

- Tablets
- Laptops
- Mobile Phone
- Mifi units / Data
- Smartspeakers
- Accessories

Digital Skills Training

- Online
- In person

Digital drop in sessions

- Lyons Court/Salem Court

Digital Grants to Organisations

Clarion Futures Money

Last financial year we supported 53 households in the Fenland area with vouchers for food and energy and appliances, funding was from our hardship fund at valued at just under £8,000.

We have also assisted 1 family with a grant to help with the purchase of school uniforms for their children.

We continue to be a champion for the Local Assistance scheme in Cambridgeshire delivering grant support in Fenland. In 2024/25 we have helped 68 households in Fenland accessing funding of just over £20,000 through CLAS.



Jobs and Training

16 Fenland
residents
supported
into work

£30K
support for
skills and
training

- Delivering Functional Skills Maths & English for NEETs
- Supporting Fenland residents to develop careers in the creative industries
- Dedicated programme of careers provision for Thomas Clarkson Academy



1 Youth Centre Re-
Decorated

65 people
completed
accredited
training in
English, Maths or
Construction

An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood. The image shows a grid of streets with numerous houses, many of which have red-tiled roofs. There are green lawns, trees, and some swimming pools visible. A multi-lane road runs diagonally across the center of the image, with several cars and a red truck visible. A large, semi-transparent yellow rounded rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "Thank you for listening..".

Thank you for listening..

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Presentation by Leader and Chief Executive of Fenland District Council

FDC Overview & Scrutiny
Meeting
6 October 2025

Sources of further information

Please click on the links below to access further information:

[Business Plan 2025-26](#)

[Annual Report 2024-25](#)

[Corporate Priority Reports already tabled at O&S Committee meetings](#)

[Joint Portfolio Holder Reports tabled at Council Meetings](#)

Finance

- Balanced budget set for 2025/26 but in year pressures are currently suggesting a deficit £1,432k if interventions are not met.
- Projected deficit of £2,217k (2026/27) rising to £4,554k in 2029/30.
- No Council Tax increases included in these figures.
- Outcomes of Fair Funding, Business Rates and New Homes Bonus reviews are expected in 2026/27.
- Financial control and progress with the Commercial and Investment Strategy, transformation, savings and income continues to be very important for FDC.
- Draft Budget for 2026/27 will need to be considered by Cabinet in December.
- The External Audit backlog is now signed off and the 2024/25 Audit is well underway and will hopefully be signed off by December 2025.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

- On 16 December 2024, [English Devolution White Paper](#) (HM Government) was published outlining extensive reforms to the local government framework across England.
- The Government intends to implement LGR in all two-tier areas and in some adjoining unitary authority areas. All councils in an area are expected to collaborate on unitary proposals that serve the best interests of the region.

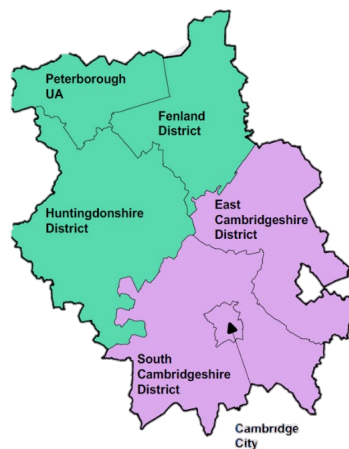
Progress to date

- 5 February 2025: Formal invite received to submit initial LGR proposal.
- 14 March 2025: Councillor's debate future of Local Government at Full Council meeting.
- 21 March 2025: Interim LGR response submitted by FDC leader Cllr Chris Boden.
- 11 June 2025: Council leaders announced three preferred options for creating new unitary councils across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- 19 June 2025: Engagement survey launched across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- 21 July 2025: FDC Councillor's discuss proposals for LGR.

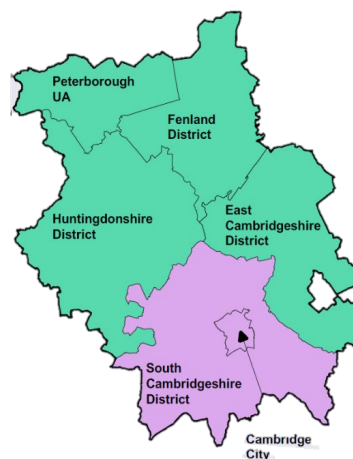
Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

What proposals are we considering?

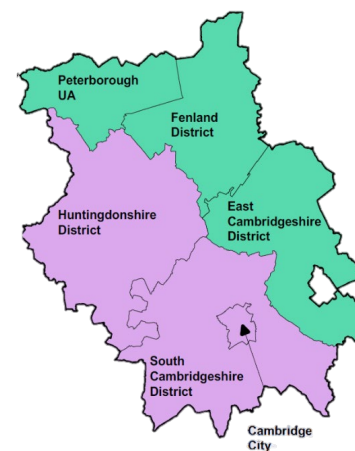
- ❖ The Leaders of Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire and East Cambs support **Option B**
- ❖ Cambridgeshire County supports **Option A**
- ❖ Huntingdonshire is considering **Option C** and a new **Option E**
- ❖ Peterborough are currently considering **Option D**



Option A



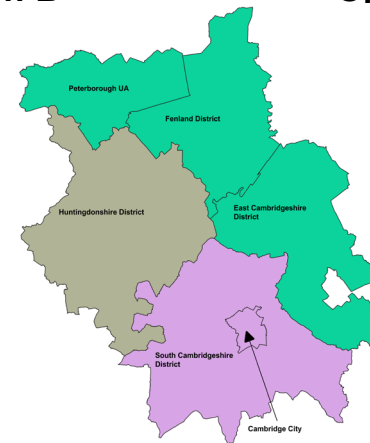
Option B



Option C



Option D



Option E

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

Next Steps:

- 28 November 2025: Local authorities to submit final proposals for LGR to Government. Government will then decide which proposals will be subject to a statutory consultation.
- January 2026 - April 2026: Government consultation on the submitted proposals.
- May 2026 - August 2026: Government to make decisions on which proposal to implement and prepare the necessary legislation for reorganisation.
- August 2026 - December 2026: Transitional legislation required for the reorganisation will be prepared and laid.
- May 2027: Shadow unitary elections will be held.
- 1 April 2028: The new unitary councils will go live.

Fenland Inspire!

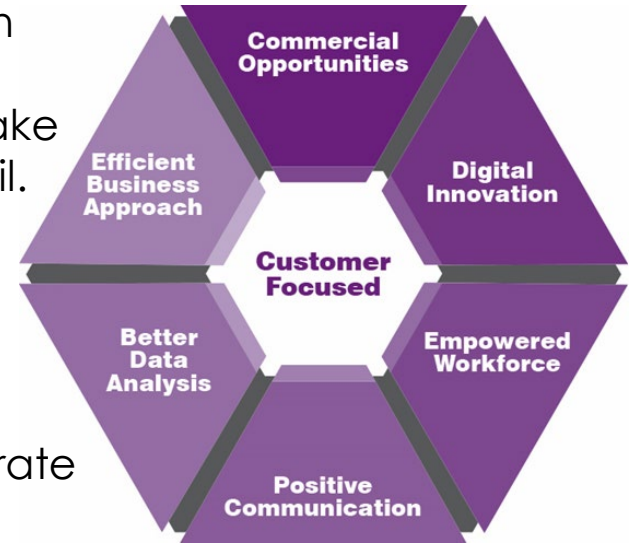
- A list of capital investment initiatives identified by Cabinet Members under the Fenland Inspire! banner. It is envisaged that these projects will enhance sports, leisure, and heritage facilities, promote healthy lifestyles and preserve the district's unique character.
- Officers are currently progressing the projects, or parts of projects, listed below:
 - Wisbech Park Splash Pad: phase one only
 - Wisbech 11/12 High Street
 - Manor Leisure Centre, Whittlesey
 - Chatteris Leisure Centre condition survey
 - District wide assessment: new play equipment
 - New Village Green, Wimblington
 - Civil Parking Enforcement
 - St John's Chapels, March
 - New March Country Park: confirmation of land transfer agreement only
 - 3G pitches: preparing or submitting applications to the Football Foundation for external funding
 - Clarkson Memorial lighting and planters



Corporate Projects

Transformation

- We continued to roll out our ongoing transformation agenda programme to optimise our workforce, improve services and customer experience and make it even easier for people to interact with the Council.
- TA1 has successfully delivered over £1m savings over the medium term. The TA2 Programme, currently supports three key strands of work, Service Reviews, encompassing all services across the organisation, Ad-Hoc requests in addition to Corporate Transformation projects.
- TA2 has so far delivered £241k of cashable savings, and over 7,000 of Officer hours have been saved by introducing more efficient business processes and the use of technology.
- We are exploring how the use of AI can assist with streamlining our back-office operations and administrative tasks and make them even more efficient.
- The transformation team are also increasingly supporting corporate projects due to the changing context in which the organisation works including the Fenland Inspire Programme and Local Government Reform.



Corporate Projects

March High Street

- The March Future High Streets Fund Project aims to create a vibrant, sustainable, and attractive town centre for the benefit of local residents, businesses, and visitors.
- The completion of the Broad Street regeneration scheme represents a major milestone which has transformed the appearance and functionality of the area, including improvements to the streetscape, better pedestrian facilities, enhanced green spaces, and upgraded lighting.
- The scheme was awarded “highly commended” at the national CIHT Creating Better Places Awards on 4 June 2025.
- The completion of the regeneration of the Marketplace, which forms a central focal point of March's high street. These improvements have enhanced its appeal as a community hub, with better seating areas, more greenery, and improved pedestrian walkways.
- Improvements at the gateway point to the town outside Iceland have also been completed with new planters and paving, and the removal of a large dead tree that had previously dominated the space.
- The toilet block in March is now under construction and the anticipated completion date is October 2025.



Corporate Projects

24 High Street, Wisbech

- This project is in the final stages. The building is completed with all internal works finished and are down.
- A road closure is required in Wisbech High Street for connection to the sewer system and once completed the building will be handed over to the Council.



Fenland Future Ltd

- Fenland Future Ltd is developing its first two housing schemes on sites formerly owned by Fenland District Council. These are in Chatteris and Wisbech.
- The Elms, Chatteris - a residential development of up to 54 homes on a site to the east of Chatteris, off The Elms. The scheme will provide a range of homes for sale and affordable homes for rent and shared ownership. The homes for sale will include 2, 3 and 4 bed houses plus much-needed 2 bed bungalows.
- Nene Waterfront, Wisbech - bringing forward a range of housing options for the site. These will include a new all affordable extra care housing scheme for rent.

Strategic Projects

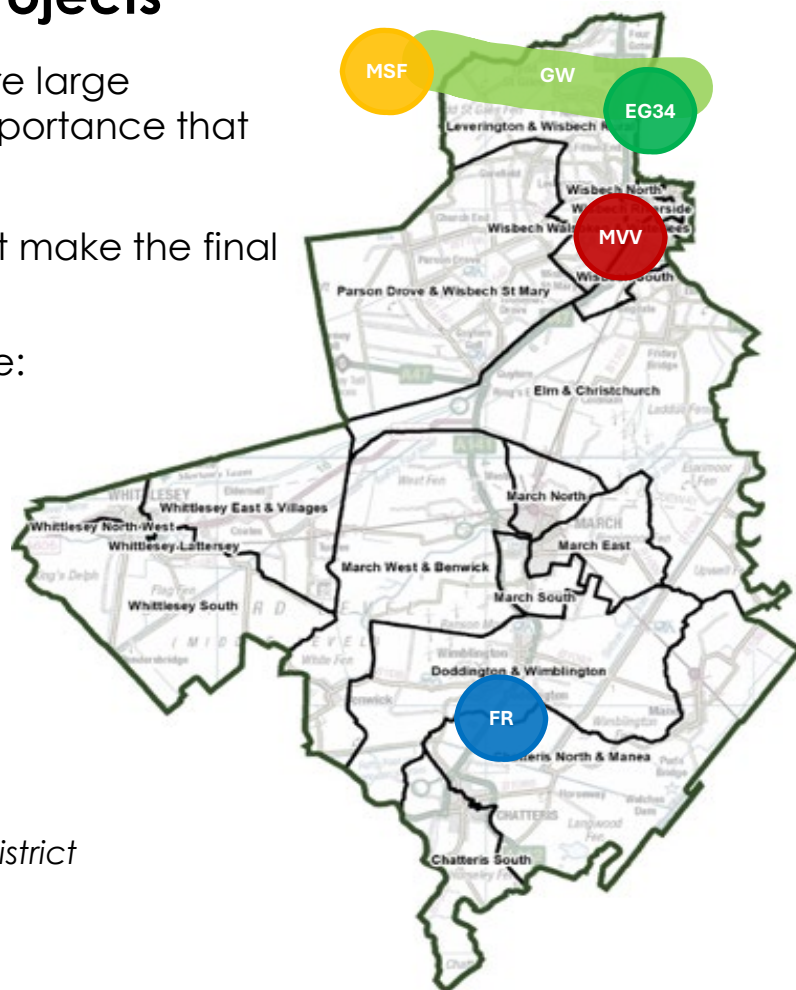
Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) are large infrastructure schemes that are of such scale and importance that they are determined nationally, not locally.

Local authorities are statutory consultees — we don't make the final decision, but we play a critical influencing role.

Current NSIPs within and adjacent to Fenland include:

- **Fens Reservoir** (Anglian Water)
pre-application stage - submission expected in early 2027
- **Grimsby to Walpole** (National Grid)
pre-application stage - submission expected in early 2027
- **Eastern Green Links 3 and 4** (National Grid)
pre-application stage - submission expected in late 2026
- **MVV Medworth Energy from Waste Facility**
consented – post-decision stage
- **Meridian Solar Farm**
Pre-application stage - this proposal is adjacent to the district

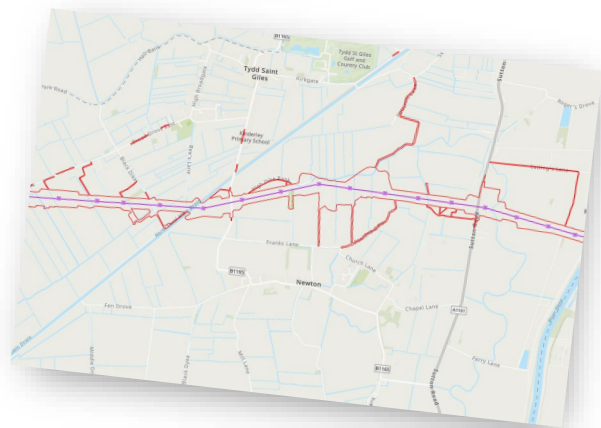


Strategic Projects



NSIP Progress Points

- Progressing Planning Performance Agreements with National Grid and Anglian Water to ensure full cost recovery for any work undertaken by FDC on engaging with their projects.
- Attending regular meetings with developers to help shape and influence proposals – including attending technical working groups and site visits on things like landscape, ecology, air quality, noise and vibration, traffic and transport and socio-economic matters.
 - Key issues raised include things like cumulative construction impacts; loss (or temporary disturbance) of best and most versatile agricultural land; impacts on local environment; impacts on nearby communities and businesses; skills and development opportunities and advocating for wider community benefits, i.e. a new visitor centre near Chatteris focusing on environmental education linked to the Fens Reservoir project.
- Responded to Stage 2 consultations on Grimsby to Walpole, Eastern Green Links 3 and 4 and Meridian Solar Farm



NB: A stage 3 non-statutory consultation on Fens Reservoir is anticipated to go live in mid-October – final date TBC

Strategic Projects

Transport

- **Whittlesey Relief Road**
- Public consultation launched in October 2024 to invite views on the initial options identified as part of the project
- Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) published May 2025 – preferred option emerging from the study is a new southern relief road for Whittlesey, with re-routing of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and active travel improvements for walking and cycling
- On 19 May 2025, Cabinet:
 - Noted the SOBC
 - Agreed in principle to refine the scheme and assess wider benefits
 - Requested officers explore funding options to secure an additional **£220,000** to progress the work.

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Agenda Item No:	6	
Committee:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY	
Date:	8 September 2025	
Report Title:	INVESTMENT BOARD ANNUAL REPORT	

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel of the work of the Investment Board from April 2024 to March 2025.

2 Key issues

- 2.1 The last annual report on Investment Board activity was presented to and noted by Cabinet on 24th March 2025.
- 2.2 Work has carried on during the 2024-25 financial year to progress the two identified sites, the Nene Waterfront in Wisbech and the Elms in Chatteris and outline planning permission has now been granted for both sites.
- 2.3 At the Cabinet meeting held on 12th December 2022, it was agreed that the land at Chatteris and Wisbech be transferred to FFL at market value in accordance with a Red Book valuation and the transfers are now completed.
- 2.4 FFL own the Nene Waterfront, Wisbech site and are in conditional contract to complete the transfer of the land off The Elms, Chatteris subject to a Reserved Matters Planning approval.
- 2.5 Work on the revised draft Business Plan for FFL was completed and circulated to the Investment Board on 31st January 2025.
- 2.6 No new opportunities have arisen since the last report on Investment Board activity was presented to Cabinet on 24th March 2025.
- 2.7 The Constitution states as follows at paragraph 3.1.1 of Table 3 which sets out the responsibility for executive functions:
 - Cabinet will be responsible for the following specific functions in relation to the Commercial Investment Strategy and the Council's companies and partnerships:
 - (a) Conducting a formal review of the Commercial Investment every 2 years and recommending any necessary amendments for approval by Full Council;
- 2.8 It was agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 24th March 2025 that the formal review of the Commercial and Investment Strategy is deferred as the focus has changed to delivering the Fenland Inspire programme. Additionally the present economic

conditions are challenging and interest rates in particular make it extremely difficult to identify new opportunities.

- 2.9 It should also be noted that during this review period Local Government Reorganisation was announced and this will undoubtedly lead to a strategic assessment of priorities.

3 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel note the annual report from the Investment Board.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Ref	Not applicable
Portfolio Holder(s)	<p>Cllr Chris Boden – Leader, Finance Portfolio Holder and Chairman of the Investment Board</p> <p>Cllr Steve Tierney – Transformation and Comms Portfolio Holder and Investment Board Member</p> <p>Cllr Sidney Imafidon – Economic Growth Portfolio Holder and Investment Board Member</p>
Report Originator(s)	<p>Paul Medd – Chief Executive</p> <p>Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director & Chief Finance Officer</p> <p>Carol Pilson – Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Amy Brown - Head of Legal and Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer</p>
Contact Officer(s)	<p>Paul Medd – Chief Executive</p> <p>Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director & Chief Finance Officer</p> <p>Carol Pilson – Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Amy Brown - Head of Legal and Governance and Acting Monitoring Officer</p>
Background Paper(s)	<p>Investment Board minutes</p> <p>Commercial and Investment Strategy</p> <p>Cabinet update reports dated 22nd March 2022, 30th January 2023, 16th March 2023, 11th September 2023, 15th July 2024 and 24th March 2025</p>

Appendix: Annual report

Report of the Investment Board

April 2024 – March 2025



1 What is the Investment Board?

- 1.1 The Investment Board was created on 16th January 2020 to help drive forward the Council's Commercial and Investment Strategy which was approved by Full Council on 9th January 2020. The Investment Board is a sub-committee of Cabinet designed to be more "fleet of foot" in order to be able to respond to opportunities in an agile and commercial manner.

2 Purpose of the Investment Board

- 2.1 The Investment Board is responsible for implementing the Commercial and Investment Strategy including oversight of the Council's companies and partnerships.
- 2.2 The Investment Board will act as a decision-making body in relation to the functions delegated to it and will report to Cabinet in relation to the exercise of those functions.
- 2.3 Support and advice will be provided to the Investment Board by key members of the Corporate Management team.

3 Membership and Operation of the Investment Board

- 3.1 The Investment Board will comprise a maximum of two Cabinet Members (one of whom should be the portfolio holder for finance if that position is not held by the Leader) in addition to the Leader who will determine their appointment annually.
- 3.2 The Investment Board shall meet on a basis agreed by itself with a minimum of 3 meetings per year.
- 3.2 The quorum shall be the Leader in the presence of a minimum of;

- a. one other Cabinet Member;
- b. one senior advisory officer (or their appointed deputy)

An invitation to attend must have been provided to the Chair of O&S at least 5 clear days in advance of the meeting taking place. This notice period may be waived if the Chair of O&S or their nominated deputy so agrees.

An invitation to attend must also have been provided to the Section 151 officer and the Monitoring Officer (or their nominated deputies) which will normally be at least 5 clear days in advance of the meeting taking place.

- 3.3 The provisions relating to substitution set out at paragraph 28 of the Standing Orders shall apply to meetings of the Investment Board save that the Leader and Cabinet Members may only be substituted by Cabinet Members [and the Chair of O&S may only be substituted by the Vice Chairman]. Such substitutions to be notified to Council as part of the annual nomination process.

- 3.4 The Cabinet Procedure Rules shall apply to meetings of the Investment Board save in respect of paragraphs 1.6, 1.8, 2.2 (second paragraph), 2.3(g) and (h) and paragraph 2.5(d) which shall be disapplied.

4 Functions of the Investment Board

- 4.1 To determine investment appraisals submitted under Part 2 of the Council's Commercial and Investment Strategy together with the most appropriate means of delivery;
- 4.2 To determine business cases submitted under Part 3 of the Council's Commercial and Investment Strategy by the Council's companies and partnerships;
- 4.3 To determine the amount and terms of any investments, loans and assets required for the delivery of proposals approved in accordance with paragraphs (a) and (b) above from the agreed budget allocation;
- 4.4 To produce a report to Cabinet twice a year summarising its activities in accordance with paragraphs (a) to (c) above.
- 4.5 Approve the business plans of the Council's companies and partnerships;
- 4.6 To monitor performance and financial delivery in line with the approved business plans;
- 4.7 To ensure that those companies and partnerships comply with relevant Council policies, strategies and objectives;
- 4.8 To exercise decisions, where delegated by Cabinet, in relation to a company or partnerships' reserved matters;
- 4.9 To oversee the relationships between the Council and the Council's companies and partnerships in accordance with the Council's objectives.
- 4.10 To prepare and present an annual report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- 4.11 To determine for each individual company or partnership whether the Investment Board recommends to Cabinet the delegation of any functions to the officers of the Council.
- 4.12 All other matters not falling within the remit of the Investment Board functions set out at 4.1 to 4.11 above will be referred to Cabinet for decision.

5 Background

- 5.1 The Commercial and Investment Strategy was approved by Full Council on 9th January 2020.
- 5.2 At the same meeting Full Council also agreed to establish a Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo) for the purpose of facilitating the delivery of the agreed strategy and noted the proposed intention that the Investment Board will be able to utilise reserves and/or borrow sums up to a combined maximum of £25 million in order to deliver the objectives of the Strategy.

- 5.3 Following on from this approval the creation of the Investment Board and the delegation of functions was approved by Cabinet on 16th January 2020.
- 5.4 The business case for the creation of the LATCo was approved by Cabinet on 9th June 2020 and Fenland Future Ltd (FFL) was incorporated on 10th June 2020.
- 5.5 FFL held its inaugural board meeting on 8th December 2020 and a first draft business plan was circulated to the Investment Board for discussion and approval. The final business plan was formally presented to the Investment Board in March 2022.
- 5.6 At a meeting of the Investment Board on 18th September 2020 approval was given to take forward to a detailed business case the development of FDC owned land at the Nene waterfront in Wisbech.
- 5.7 At a meeting of the Investment Board on 12th January 2021 approval was given to take forward to a detailed business case the development of FDC owned land in Chatteris.
- 5.8 At a meeting of the Investment Board on 16th March 2021 approval was given to acquire a commercial property in Wisbech and this was subsequently completed on 26th March 2021.
- 5.9 The last annual report on Investment Board activity was presented to and noted by Cabinet on 24th March 2025.

6 Work programme and outcomes

- 6.1 There have been formal Investment Board meetings in 2024/25 as there were no substantive items to discuss. A monthly report on progress is prepared and sent to the Investment Board to keep them abreast of developments.

7 Commercial and Investment Strategy (CIS) Update

FDC

- 7.1 As part of the Commercial and Investment Strategy a facility of £25m was granted to the Investment Board to finance capital expenditure to be undertaken in accordance with the aims and objectives of the agreed strategy. At the end of March 2025 £4m of this facility has been utilised to fund the acquisition detailed in 7.2 below and a strategic purchase which offers an opportunity to open up access to a Council owned potential development site. These acquisitions were approved at Investment Board meetings held on 16th March 2021 and 3rd December 2021 respectively.
- 7.2 The Commercial Investment in Wisbech has delivered a rental income of £230k p.a since acquisition in March 2021 and is up to date for 2024-25. As we used our own funds to acquire this asset there was no external cost of capital. This acquisition has enhanced the Councils revenue position and has had a positive impact on the MTFS as presented to Full Council in February 2025.
- 7.3 A further £3m of the £25m facility has been approved by the Investment Board to support the Local Authority Housing Fund initiative where the government provides up to 40% of the capital cost of certain properties to support various housing initiatives.

- 7.4 Since the last time Commercial Investment was scrutinised by O&S one further opportunity is being progressed in relation to a property portfolio in Elm. Work is currently underway to complete the purchase of this property asset. No other opportunities have been progressed as the initial due diligence as prescribed in the Commercial and Investment Strategy was not passed.
- 7.5 The current Commercial and Investment Strategy (CIS) strategy review as required by the constitution is on hold as focus has changed to delivering the Fenland Inspire programme. Additionally the present economic conditions are challenging and interest rates in particular make it extremely difficult to identify new opportunities.

FFL update including finance

- 7.6 Further utilisation of the above mentioned “facility” will be needed when the funding position of Fenland Future Ltd is fully agreed.
A full cash flow was produced as part of the Business Plan required by 31st January 2024 and further refinement will be required as updated site appraisals are prepared. At a suitable point funding drawdown will be requested following the process as detailed in the financing agreement agreed by the Investment Board in July 2022.
- 7.6 The land transfers of the two sites, The Elms, Chatteris and the Nene Waterfront, Wisbech were approved by Cabinet on 12th December 2022 and legal work relating to these transfers is now complete.
- 7.7 Both sites now have Outline Planning Permission and work has progressed on the delivery models needed to develop them.
- 7.8 A development manager has been appointed for The Elms site and work to prepare and complete a Reserved Matters Application is progressing. This includes detailed design work and technical reports as well as revised financial appraisals for the scheme.
- 7.9 Work on the Nene Waterfront includes the delivery of a new electricity substation funded through the Brownfields Land Release Fund and the potential delivery of an Extra care facility for which design and pre-application work has commenced. The electricity sub station is now complete.
- 7.10 FFL have signed heads of terms with Fenland Extra Care Consortium for plot 5 of the Nene Waterfront. Reserved Matters planning application was submitted in June 2025 and we are awaiting determination. This will be an all-affordable home scheme for older people with care needs (circa 70 homes).
- 7.11 To date Fenland Future Ltd expenditure and commitments are as shown in the table below. The company have drawn down a loan from FDC to meet commitments relating to both sites.
- 7.12 Based on the revised cash flows further funding will need to drawn down from Fenland District Council to both cover the costs detailed below and to enable FFL to meet its future financial commitments to develop the sites. A further update will be taken to the Investment Board later in the year along with the request to drawdown any extra funding required.
- 7.13 For information the Board of Directors for Fenland Future Ltd comprises:-

Dan Horn – Managing Director and Chairman

Sian Warren – Director


Anna Goodall – Director

Jane Bailey – Company Secretary

Fenland Future Ltd Financial Update		Total FFL Costs £	Nene Waterfront £	Chatteris £	Ex Barclays March £	FFL Set up Costs £	Consultancy Costs £	Legal Costs General £	FDC Recharges £	Loan Interest £
Set up costs	Integra - Agresso set up	2,925.00				2,925.00				
Total Paid	2020/21	2,925.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,925.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Set up costs	Integra - Agresso set up	975.00				975.00				
Architectural Services	Norr	29,575.08	14,575.08	15,000.00						
Ecology survey	Tetra Tech	5,000.00	2,500.00	2,500.00						
Pre Planning consultancy	Tetra Tech	62,200.00	22,200.00	40,000.00						
Ecology Species Survey	Tetra Tech	5,000.00		5,000.00						
Topographical Survey	Survey Solutions	950.00		950.00						
Site clearance work	Tivoli Group	1,924.75	1,924.75							
Planning Advice	ELG Planning	2,215.00		2,215.00						
Site Appraisals	Carter Jonas	4,000.00	2,250.00	1,750.00						
Highways Consultancy	JDS Consulting	2,000.00		2,000.00						
Consultancy	Bloom - Consultancy	34,807.50					34,807.50			
Legal services	Bevan Brittan	1,497.60						1,497.60		
Support Recharges	FDC SLA 2021/22	100,000.00							100,000.00	
Total Paid	2021/22	250,144.93	43,449.83	69,415.00	0.00	975.00	34,807.50	1,497.60	100,000.00	0.00
Data Protection Fee	Information Commissioner	40.00				40.00				
Planning Application Fees	FDC	21,728.00	8,778.00	12,950.00						
Planning Consultancy Support	Barmach	2,500.00	2,500.00							
Electricity Supply	UK Power Networks	20,798.56	9,888.84	10,909.72						
Site Appraisals/Valuations	Carter Jonas	37,700.00	19,100.00	17,600.00	1,000.00			26,921.80		
Legal services	Bevan Brittan	35,172.20	4,060.45	4,189.95						
Consultancy	Bloom - Consultancy	96,391.58					96,391.58			
Architectural Services	Norr	18,142.25	8,997.25	9,145.00						
Ecology Species Survey	Tetra Tech	19,200.00		19,200.00						
Pre Planning consultancy	Tetra Tech	32,010.00	10,100.00	21,910.00						
Planning Advice	ELG Planning	12,285.49	3,325.00	8,960.49						
Support Recharges	FDC SLA 2022/23	125,000.00							125,000.00	
Total Paid	2022/23	420,968.08	66,749.54	104,865.16	1,000.00	40.00	96,391.58	26,921.80	125,000.00	0.00
Data Protection Fee	Information Commissioner	40.00				40.00				
Registration Fee	Companies House	13.00				13.00				
Employers Agent Services	AECOM Ltd	8,227.50					8,227.50			
Legal services	Bevan Brittan	65,260.25	21,508.50	31,823.50				11,928.25		
Land Purchase from FDC - Deposit	Bevan Brittan - Land Deposit	20,000.00		20,000.00						
Land Purchase from FDC - Balance	Bevan Brittan - Land Purchase	180,000.00		180,000.00						
Consultancy	Bloom - Consultancy	73,710.00					73,710.00			
Consultancy	Instinctively Green	23,400.00					23,400.00			
Grass Cutting, The Elms	Tivoli	2,225.00		2,225.00						
Directors Insurance	AON UK Ltd	3,920.00				3,920.00				
Architectural Services	Norr	3,000.00	3,000.00							
Planning consultancy	Tetra Tech	20,365.00	19,865.00	500.00						
Local Rented Market Report	Carter Jonas	9,000.00	9,000.00							
Nene Waterfront appraisal	Redloft	4,530.00	4,530.00							
FFL Website	Chameleon Studios	4,252.50				4,252.50				
Support Recharges	FDC SLA 2023/24	125,000.00							125,000.00	
Interest Costs	FDC Loans 2023/24 - (27.03.24)	2,274.66								2,274.66
Total Paid	2023/24	545,217.91	57,903.50	234,548.50	0.00	8,225.50	105,337.50	11,928.25	125,000.00	2,274.66
Confirmation Statement	Companies House	34.00				34.00				
Data Protection Fee	Information Commissioner	40.00				40.00				
Bank Charges	Barclays Bank	56.20				56.20				
Consultancy	Instinctively Green	93,600.00					93,600.00			
Legal services	Bevan Brittan	20,752.50	18,092.50	2,400.00				260.00		
Planning consultancy	Tetra Tech	4,750.00	4,750.00							
Valuation Report - The Elms	Carter Jonas	750.00		750.00						
Archeology Services	Headland Archeology	29,695.25	29,695.25							
Planning Fee	Fenland District Council	363.00	363.00							
Planning Consultancy Support	Barmach	500.00	500.00							
DM Fee + DP Fees	Lovell	241,440.97		241,440.97						
Directors Insurance	AON UK Ltd	3,920.00				3,920.00				
FFL Website	Chameleon Studios	972.50				972.50				
Interest Received on Late Repayment	HMRC - VAT Claim	-1,275.05				-1,275.05				
Support Recharges	FDC SLA 2024/25 - 12 months	127,363.00				2,363.00			125,000.00	
Interest Costs	FDC Loans 2024/25 - 12 months	147,518.49								147,518.49
Total Paid	2024/25	670,480.86	53,400.75	244,590.97	0.00	6,110.65	93,600.00	260.00	125,000.00	147,518.49
Grand Total Paid to Date	To 31.03.25	1,889,736.78	221,503.62	653,419.63	1,000.00	18,276.15	330,136.58	40,607.65	475,000.00	149,793.15
Total Benefit to FDC Revenue Account - to 31.03.25		627,156.15								
Total Benefit to FDC - Capital Receipt - to 31.03.25		200,000.00								

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 Reviewing the CIS ensures compliance with our best value duty and is also compliant with the delegations to Cabinet in which it is provided that it will be reviewed every 2 years. See paragraph 2.8 above which indicates Cabinets decision to defer this.

Agenda Item No:	8	
Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny	
Date:	3 November 2025	
Report Title:	Reporting – Use of Waiver Provisions	

1 Purpose / Summary

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

2 Key Issues

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

3 Recommendations

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

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

1. BACKGROUND

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

2 NOTIFICATION OF DECISIONS

- 2.1 Since the date of the last meeting the Chairman of O&S has permitted the use of the waiver provisions on three occasions:
- 2.1.1 A waiver of the requirement to place an entry on the Forward Plan for the full period of 28 days was granted on 27th June 2025 together with a waiver of the associated call-in provisions. The Decision Notice relating to that decision can be found via the following link and related to a recommendation to urgently proceed with the proposed roof repair due to the level of deterioration and escalating health and safety concerns: [Decision - Award of a contract to Roof-Link in the sum of £190,256+VAT for the replacement of the existing roof on industrial units at Longhill Road, March - Fenland District Council.](#)
- 2.1.2 A waiver of the requirement to place an entry on the Forward Plan for the full period was granted on 4th July 2025. An entry was published on the Forward Plan on 4th July 2025 ([Issue details - Fenland Inspire! Project - Civil Parking Enforcement Update - KEY/04JUL25/01 - Fenland District Council](#)). However as the decision was taken by Cabinet on 21st July 2025 ([Civil Parking Enforcement Update Rev3 Final.pdf](#)) the entry was not on the Forward Plan for the full period of 28 days. The need for a waiver arose due to the need for an urgent commitment in relation to the application of funds to the delivery of the project within required timescales.
- 2.1.1 A waiver of the requirement to place an entry on the Forward Plan for the full period was granted on 10th October 2025. An entry was published on the Forward Plan on 9 October 2025 (Issue details - [Garden Waste Direct Debts Sept 2025 - KEY/09OCT25/01](#)). The decision was taken by the Portfolio Holder Cllr Steve Tierney on 14 October 2025, and with approval from Cllr Davis the Forward Plan notification period and call in period was waived. The need for a waiver arose due to the need for the urgent purchase of software as a result of the current provider no longer being able to provide the direct debit process ahead of the services going on sale again in January 2026.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

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

4 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Legal Implications

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

4.2 Financial Implications

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

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UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS

Agenda Item No. 9

REF	Date Requested	Question	Target Date
COMPLETED ACTIONS			
		None at Present	
ONGOING ACTIONS			
.	09-06-25	Diagnostic Centre, Wisbech Arrange for additional statistical data to be shared with panel members as an action following the meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor Booth asked what the number would need be to be, to have the CT scanner running per day at the North Cambridgeshire Hospital? CSP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action for FDC Communications Team to help promote the Speed Watch Scheme and to get more groups set up across the Fenland area. Find out if there is a cost involved with the Speed watch Scheme and what exactly the Constabulary provides free of charge. 	
.			
WATCHING BRIEF ITEMS			
		None at Present	

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Overview and Scrutiny – Draft Work Programme 2025-2026

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

Meeting Dates

<u>Agenda Despatch Due Date</u>	<u>Informal pre-meeting</u>			<u>Formal Overview & Scrutiny Meeting</u>	
	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting</u>
24 October 2025	27 October 2025	2.00pm	Via Teams	3 November 2025	10.00am
21 November 2025	24 November 2025	2.00pm	Via Teams	1 December 2025	10.00am
9 January 2026	12 January 2026	2.00pm	Via Teams	19 January 2026	10.00am
20 February 2026	24 February 2026	2.00pm	Via Teams	2 March 2026	10.00am
10 April 2026	13 April 2026	2.00pm	Via Teams	20 April 2026	10.00am

3 November 2025

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
	Clarion		Dan Horn Sally Greetham Sue Stavers Paul Newman Daniel Read Karl Grimmer Daniel ShurvingtonCllr Hoy
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	Annual Meeting with the Leader and Chief Executive to include LGR update.		Paul Medd All of CMT Cllr Boden All of Cabinet
	Commercial Investment Strategy and Investment Board Update	Economy	Paul Medd Peter Catchpole Dan Horn Anna Goodall Sian Warren Adam Broadway Simon Machen Cllr Boden Cllr Tierney Cllr Imafidon Cllr Maureen Davis
	Waiver Report	All	Amy Brown Chair
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown Chair
	Future Work Programme 2025/26	All	Amy Brown Chair

1 December 2025

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	Anglian Water		Cllr Imafidon Grant Tuffs Anglian Water
	3C's	Quality Organisation	Peter Catchpole Cllr Tierney David Wright Sam Anthoney
	Progress of Corporate Priority – Communities	Communities	Carol Pilson Dan Horn Cllr Mrs French Cllr Wallwork Cllr Christy Cllr Boden Cllr Hoy Cllr Laws Cllr Seaton Cllr Tierney Annabel Tighe

			Phil Hughes Sam Anthony
	Waivers Report	All	Amy Brown Chair
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown Chair
	Future Work Programme 2024/25	All	Amy Brown Chair

19 January 2026

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

			Chair
	Future Work Programme 2024/25	All	Amy Brown Chair

2 March 2026

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

	Waivers Report	All	Amy Brown Chair
	Future Work Programme 2023/24	All	Amy Brown Chair

20 April 2026

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

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