


Agenda Item No:	5	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	11 July 2022	
Report Title:	Annual Report of the Council 2021/22	

1 Purpose / Summary

To present the Annual Report of the Council for Cabinet to note the achievements made in delivering the Council's corporate priorities in 2021/22.

2 Key issues

- The Annual Report of the Council 2021/22 describes the performance of the Council over the last year, linking to the priorities detailed in our Business Plan. These are designed to deliver outcomes that improve the quality of life for Fenland residents and are listed under the key headings of Communities, Environment, Economy and Quality Organisation.
- The achievements listed in the Annual Report are not exhaustive but reflect some of our successful projects over the last year. Notable examples are given of how we have worked closely with the community and partners to tackle important local issues in a collaborative and efficient way.
- As like other local authorities, Fenland District Council faces significant financial challenges due to the impact of Covid and increased demand upon services. Nevertheless, we continue to provide high quality services whilst keeping our budget balanced.
- Our Cabinet members have selected a number of projects to contribute towards our 'Council for the Future' agenda. These projects have a variety of aims, from tackling areas of particular need within the district, to transforming services and the wider organisation sustainability to be fit for the future. Some of these projects are also interlinked with our corporate priorities. A new section of the report has been developed to detail progress on these projects over the past year.

3 Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Annual Report of the Council 2021/22.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Boden, Leader of the Council Cabinet Members
Report Originator(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director David Wright, Head of Policy & Communications

Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director David Wright, Head of Policy & Communications
Background Paper(s)	Business Plan 2021/22

1 Background / Introduction

- 1.1 The Annual Report of the Council 2021/22 summarises key examples of the Council's performance against each of our corporate objectives over the past year. This document is published and circulated on an annual basis to provide a summary of performance for Councillors, customers and partners.
- 1.2 In addition to our corporate priorities, our Cabinet members have selected a number of projects to contribute towards our 'Council for the Future' agenda. These projects have a variety of aims, from tackling areas of particular need within the district, to transforming services and the wider organisation sustainability to be fit for the future. Some of these projects are also interlinked with our corporate priorities. A new section of the report has been developed to detail progress on these projects over the past year
- 1.3 The Council continues to deliver high quality services and effective projects within each of its corporate priorities. Key examples include:

2 Communities - highlights

- 2.1 Our Housing Options team received 1,905 requests for homeless advice and assistance; 1,200 of these approaches were resolved through the advice provided. 335 households were prevented from becoming homeless.
- 2.2 We continued to provide Health and Wellbeing support for Fenland residents and businesses surrounding Covid-19. Self-isolation support through the pilot Enduring Transmission project was provided to over 200 Fenland residents, with a total funding allocation of over £57,000.
- 2.3 As soon as it was safe to do so, we re-established Fenland's Four Seasons events to provide local businesses opportunities to trade again. Supported by Government Welcome Back funding, we bolstered the re-opening of Fenland's high streets through additional pop-up events, business support, shop local marketing and town centre aesthetic improvements.

3 Environment - highlights

- 3.1 More than 2.9 million bin collections were made across the district in all weathers, with recycling waste generating £475,000 of recycling credits to support services as a result. Our Cleansing and Rapid response team continued to provide an excellent seven-day street sweeping and litter picking service, responding to over 1,200 service requests and undertaking over 1,300 inspections.
- 3.2 Our Street Scene team spent over 3,400 hours on patrol in Fenland; working closely with the community to tackle environmental and anti-social behaviour problems.
- 3.3 Our shared CCTV service with Peterborough City Council maintained its 100% service function, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, despite the pressures of Covid-19. The service conducted over 6,000 pro-active camera patrols, detected over 1,000 incidents of crime and disorder across the district and supported our policing partners to make 86 arrests for offences, helping to make our towns and public spaces safer.

4 Economy - highlights

- 4.1 Our Finance and Business teams distributed £7.094million in Government coronavirus business grants in 2021/22 to help businesses impacted by trading restrictions and the emerging Omicron variant. During this period over 1,300 grants were given.
- 4.2 Our Planning service processed over 750 planning applications and dealt with over 900 other 'non-traditional' types of application. They also investigated and resolved 218 cases of unauthorised development that was reported to them.

- 4.3 Work continues on the £8.4million March Future High Streets Fund project, funded by the Government and the CPCA. Together with the March Area Transport Study (MATS), the project will transform March town centre through pedestrian, public realm and traffic flow changes to the Broad Street, Riverside and Market Place areas.

5. Quality Organisation - highlights

- 5.1 We collected over £61 million in Council Tax and £21 million in Business Rates. This plays a major part in funding the key services we provide to the community.
- 5.2 Our website received 849,000 hits and a record number of 23,000 online form submissions across 48 different topics. As part of our ongoing work to improve our digital services and user journeys, we launched a suite of improved online forms that integrate with back-office systems and provide real-time information to teams in the community.
- 5.3 Our Licensing team issued 461 licenses for a variety of services including Taxi, Premises, Alcohol, Scrap Metal and Animal Licensing, to help ensure such businesses are well managed and operating safely and legally. They also worked closely with partners during the pandemic through a variety of channels to support businesses to operate safely and take enforcement action when required.

6 Consideration

- 6.1 The Annual Report of the Council 2021/22 shows clear performance towards the achievement of our corporate priorities. It is only a summary document; many more projects are ongoing that aim to improve quality of life for Fenland residents.

7 Effect on Corporate Objectives

- 7.1 The Annual Report 2021/22 sets out the progress made in achieving the Council's corporate objectives.

8 Community Impact

- 8.1 The projects detailed in the Annual Report 2021/22 illustrate how the Council is contributing to improving quality of life in Fenland.

9 Conclusions

- 9.1 The projects detailed in the Annual Report 2021/22 are some examples of how the Council has delivered successful projects - meeting corporate objectives and securing the best possible life chances for local people.

Fenland District Council

Annual Report

2021/2022

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Introduction by the Leader and Chief Executive

Welcome to Fenland District Council's Annual Report for 2021/22

The cost of living is skyrocketing across the board. Energy, fuel, food, national insurance, mortgage rates and rents, against a backdrop of soaring inflation.

People might have expected us to raise our Council Tax too, but as the cost of living crisis began to bite at the start of 2022/23, Members determinedly froze Fenland's portion of the Council Tax for the fourth consecutive year.

Here, as we outline our achievements for 2021/22, we're proud to have maintained excellent public services and pushed forward with ambitious plans for the future, while consistently offering our residents a year-on-year, real-terms cut in their Council Tax.

Despite many national and global challenges in recent years, and resulting strains on our finances, the Council has remained innovative, resilient, and steadfast in its determination to improve the lives of Fenland residents. We have continued to ensure the needs of our residents and communities are recognised and responded to, put arrangements in place to secure on-going improvement, delivered vital public services to the highest of standards and, with reduced budgets, provided better value for money each year.

We have supported vulnerable members of our community; led emergency responses and built resilience; prevented and tackled homelessness; helped people to live in good quality, safe housing; worked with the police to prevent and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour; encouraged our residents to live healthier, more active lifestyles; protected and enhanced our parks and green spaces; cleaned streets and dealt with the district's waste and recycling; promoted and lobbied for infrastructure improvements; improved our air quality; secured investment in the district and held numerous community events all across Fenland.

Our Annual Report gives a summary of this work, outlines what we have achieved in the past year and how we have spent the money we receive, and charts progress made against the ambitions and commitments set out in our Business Plan 2021/22.

Key highlights include progress on numerous regeneration programmes such as our Railway Stations Masterplans, Wisbech High Street Project and March Future High Streets Fund work, the launch of several new online service request forms to make it even easier for people to access council services, tackling more rogue landlords who breached housing and safety legislation, expanding the district's air quality monitoring network, distributing more coronavirus business grants, and playing a key role in the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme by supporting Ukrainians seeking refuge from war.

We hope the report demonstrates the huge breadth of work we undertake with partners and the voluntary sector to make a positive difference to the lives of Fenland residents, and to ensure the district is well prepared for the future.



Paul Medd
Chief Executive

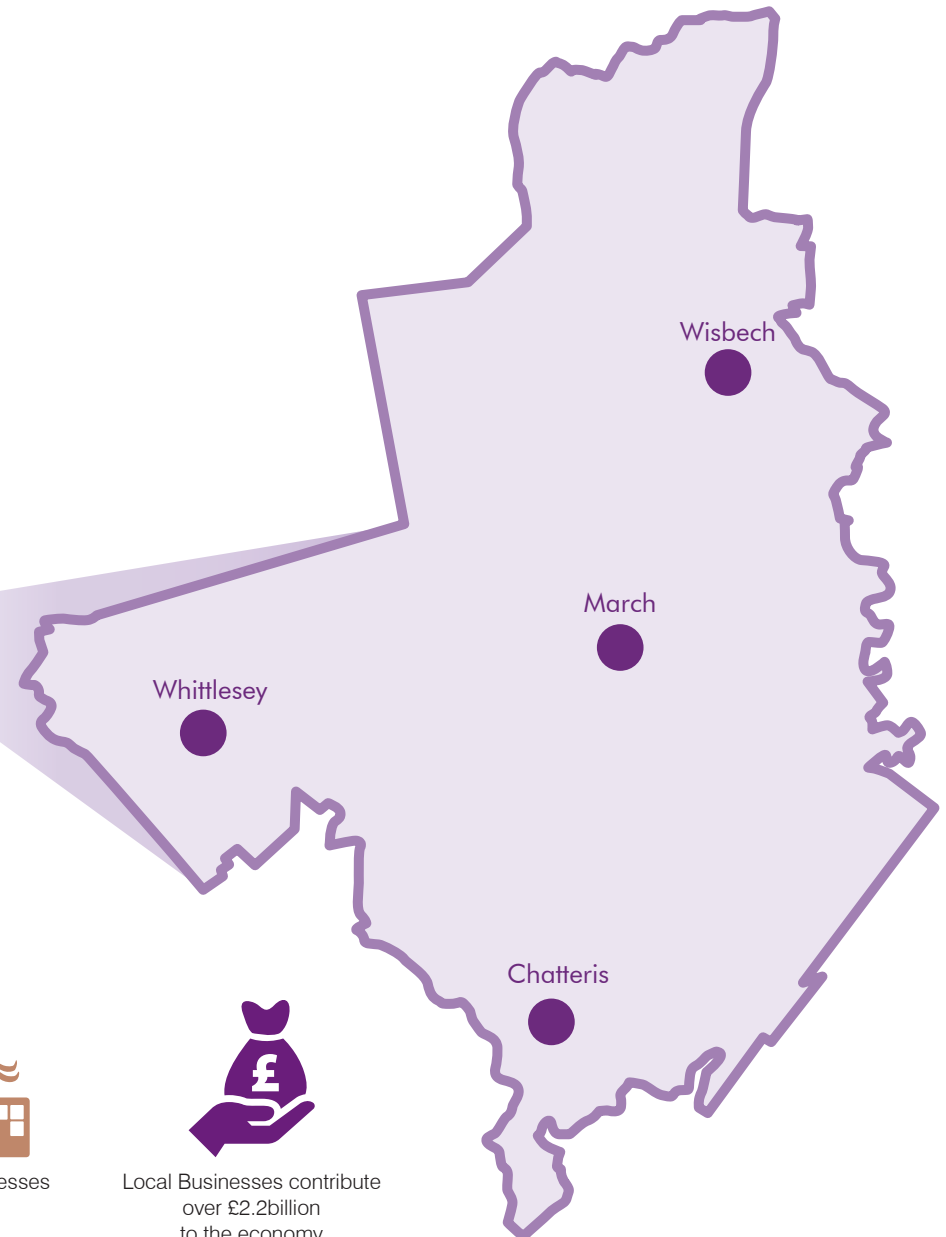


Chris Boden
Leader of the Council

About Fenland

Fenland is a district within North Cambridgeshire. 75% of residents live within our four market towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech. Our beautiful rural landscape is home to 29 villages and attracts visitors from nationwide.

- Over 102,800 people living in Fenland
- Fenland covers approximately 211 square miles
- Over 200 miles of beautiful waterways
- Over 135 hectares of open green space
- Over 3,400 businesses in Fenland
- Local businesses contribute over £2.2billion to the economy
- Key sectors: Agri-food, manufacturing, financial and business services, wholesale and retail



Alongside our community, businesses and partners, we are working together to enable residents to access the support they need and to improve the quality of life for local people.



Fenland covers approximately 211 square miles



Over 200 miles of beautiful waterways



Over 135 hectares of open green space



Over 3,400 businesses in Fenland



Local Businesses contribute over £2.2billion to the economy

Our Councillors by Ward

Cabinet



Chris Boden
Leader of the Council
Bassenhall
(Whittlesey)



Jan French
Deputy Leader of the Council
March West



Ian Benney
Birch
(Chatteris)



Sam Clark
Roman Bank
(Wisbech)



Sam Hoy
Octavia Hill
(Wisbech)



Dee Laws
Stonard
(Whittlesey)



Andrew Lynn
Clarkson
(Wisbech)



Peter Murphy
Wenneye
(Chatteris)



Chris Seaton
Roman Bank
(Wisbech)



Steve Tierney
Medworth
(Wisbech)

Other Councillors



Alex Miscandlon
Benwick, Coates
and Eastrea



Bob Wicks
Benwick, Coates
and Eastrea



Anne Hay
The Mills
(Chatteris)



Daniel Divine
Slade Lode
(Chatteris)



David Connor
Doddington and
Wimblington



Maureen Davis
Doddington and
Wimblington



Michelle Tanfield
Elm and Christchurch



Will Sutton
Elm and Christchurch



Charlie Marks
Manea



Kim French
March North



Mike Cornwell
March North



Steve Count
March North



Fred Yeulett
March East



John Clark
March East



Mark Purser
March East



Rob Skoulding
March West



Simon Wilkes
March West



Gavin Booth
Parson Drove and
Wisbech St Mary



Sarah Bligh
Parson Drove and
Wisbech St Mary



Kay Mayor
Bassenhall
(Whittlesey)



Jason Mockett
Lattersey
(Whittlesey)



David Mason
St Andrews
(Whittlesey)



David Patrick
Kirkgate
(Wisbech)



Susan Wallwork
Octavia Hill
(Wisbech)



Nick Meekins
Peckover
(Wisbech)



Michael Humphrey
Roman Bank
(Wisbech)







David Topgood
Staithe
(Wisbech)



Andy Maul
Waterlees Village
(Wisbech)



Billy Rackley
Waterlees Village
(Wisbech)

Conservative 
Independent 
Green 
Liberal Democrat 

Money Matters

Where your Council Tax goes

In 2021/22, the Band D Council Tax bill was set at £1,981.35 (plus Parish amounts). In 2022/23, this increased to £2,062.62 (plus Parish amounts). Fenland District Council collects money through Council Tax on behalf of other authorities, as shown on the diagram.

Fenland District Council froze its element of Council Tax in 2020/21, 2021/22 and again in 2022/23 (the seventh time our element has been frozen in ten years). Just 12% of each household's Council Tax bill goes to Fenland District Council, with the remainder going to the other authorities.

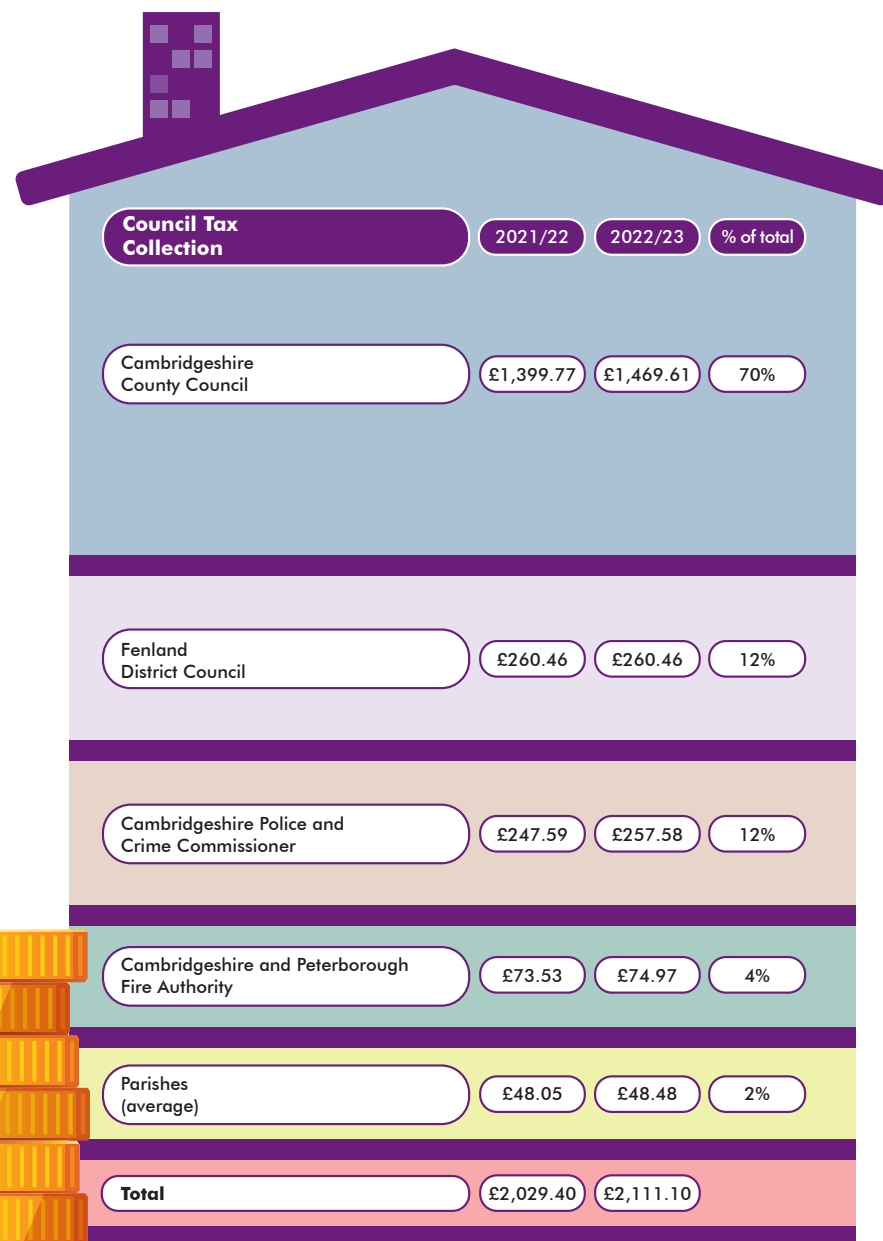
The numbers above relate to a Band D property. However, 82% of properties in Fenland are in Bands A-C. The average Council Tax per property in Fenland was £1,351.16 in 2021/22 and will be £1,415.21 in 2022/23.

Our finances

The Council's revised estimate for spending on services in 2021/22 was £13.65m. This sum is principally financed by the Council's share of Business Rates (£5.116m) and Council Tax (£7.851m). At the December 2021 Cabinet meeting, a net deficit of £987k was forecast for the year. At the budget meeting in February 2022, a net deficit of £243k was forecast for the year. We returned a surplus of £584k which is to be transferred to the budget equalisation reserve. The budget equalisation reserve represents the amount taken in tax which has not been spent and now stands at £1.067m.

Full details of the Council's Budget for 2021/22 and Medium Term Financial Strategy can be found at: www.fenland.gov.uk/finance

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



Council for the Future

Our Cabinet members have selected a number of projects to contribute towards our 'Council for the Future' agenda. These projects have a variety of aims; from tackling areas of particular need within Fenland, to sustainably transforming services and our organisation to be fit for the future. Although these are influenced by external factors, the aim is to have a programme of projects completed by the end of the current Council leadership term in 2023. Projects vary in scope and complexity, with some requiring close partnership working with external organisations and changes in policies before their aims can be delivered.

Modernising council services **Councillor Steve Tierney**

- ❶ Over 63,000 answered phone calls to contact centre and 99.5% of customer queries resolved at first point of contact in 2021.
- ❷ Our My Fenland team has transformed, bringing together 5 admin services, 29 staff have new roles, including technical officers to answer more detailed queries.
- ❸ Our Transformation team have completed 136 process maps, including redesigning 333 processes. These benefit either staff, our customers or both.

Safer homes for tenants **Councillor Samantha Hoy**

- ❶ 277 properties where positive action from the team helped resolve issues.
- ❷ £122,252 fines given to landlords not complying with housing and safety legislation.
- ❸ Proactive support given to tackle Covid regulations in HMO (Houses of Multiple Occupation) accommodation.

CCTV service **Councillor Andrew Lynn**

- ❶ Business continuity maintained 24/7, 365 days a year, for the CCTV service during the pandemic.
- ❷ 1,233 incidents captured on CCTV to support police outcomes, leading to 105 arrests being made.
- ❸ 4,633 (13 per day) pro-active camera controls completed, supporting early detection of community issues and crime reduction.

Planning for the future **Councillor Dee Laws**

- ❶ Completion of "call for sites" appraisal to inform consultation on the Local Plan in 2022/23.
- ❷ Development of Local Plan Policies to inform Local Plan consultation in 2022/23.
- ❸ Development of the evidence base to inform Local Plan consultation in 2022/23.



Better online services

Councillor Steve Tierney

- ❶ Launch back-office integrated Missed Bins and Environmental Service requests forms, enabling real-time notifications of issues and reducing processing time.
- ❷ New Digital Journeys back office integrated forms launched for 17 licensing processes, enabling residents to apply for certain Taxi and Premises licenses online for the first time.
- ❸ 1,300 successful Covid business grant applications were made through our online forms resulting in over £7million of payments made to local businesses.

Clamping down on poor parking

Councillor Jan French

- ❶ Completed on-street site surveys of all existing Traffic Regulation Orders in the district. This will identify works needed surrounding sign and line discrepancies.
- ❷ Working with Cambridgeshire County Council, we have prepared a draft application for the Department of Transport for the implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement.
- ❸ We wrote to all statutory consultees to find out any comments or objections in relation to the above draft application. Responses will inform the final application.

Competitive trade waste service

Councillor Peter Murphy

- ❶ Modernisation of the service by introducing the 'Bartec' system to manage invoicing and collection schedules. Ensuring all collections are recorded accurately for invoicing, which is produced automatically via a direct connection with the finance system.
- ❷ 50 new customers joined our service from other providers.
- ❸ Increased income year on year; income in 2021/22 was £369,000 – up 12% from 2019/20.

Bringing empty homes back into use

Councillor Samantha Hoy

- ❶ Implementation of new empty homes premium suspension scheme to encourage homes back into use. 8 suspensions awarded since September 2021 with 2 renovations completed, bringing properties back into use, and 2 due to complete by the end of May 2022.
- ❷ 77 homes brought back into use.
- ❸ £93,099 benefit from New Homes Bonus.

Protecting our environment

Councillors Peter Murphy and Samantha Hoy

- ❶ Successfully prosecuted a dark smoke offence and resolved a contaminated land incident caused by a leaking oil tank.
- ❷ 720 cleansing inspections undertaken to audit the cleanliness of the district.
- ❸ Undertook 14 interviews under Caution with individuals who we believe may help us/have been responsible for fly-tipped waste. Issued 12 Fixed Penalty Notices for Fly-tipping or Duty of Care offences (allowing fly-tipping to happen).

Better railways for Fenland

Councillor Chris Seaton

- ❶ The Platform 1 building project at March Station is complete. This has redeveloped the entire station to create an open-plan ticket hall and waiting area, accessible modern toilet facilities and retail outlets.
- ❷ Significant progress has been made on the construction of a car park for Manea Station.
- ❸ The existing car park refurbishment and extension at March Station is complete.

Healthy You

Councillors Sam Clark

- ❶ Re-start, continuation and new launches of Active Fenland sessions post lockdowns and Covid-19 restrictions. Fifteen different programmes in total.
- ❷ Creation and delivery of two multi-day social media campaigns as a digital offer for health and wellbeing providing key national messages and resources.
- ❸ Delivery of healthy eating workshops by Active Fenland across Key Stage 1&2 as part of Health and Wellbeing school days in various Fenland primary schools.

A more commercial outlook

Councillors Chris Boden, Ian Benney & Steve Tierney

- ❶ Received a full year's rent (£230,000) from the Wisbech property investment acquired in March 2021.
- ❷ Progress being made towards gaining outline planning permission for two Council owned development sites.
- ❸ Strategically purchased a property in March to support the Council's commercial investment strategy.

Our Communities

Support vulnerable members of our community

• Since its launch in March 2020, our **Covid-19 Community Hub** has provided a lifeline to those most at risk during the outbreak. Co-ordinating the support available from over **80 different organisations**, the Hub supported vulnerable residents with food shopping, medicine collection, general errands and money and employment advice. Since the Hub's launch, over **2,300 requests for support** have been received.

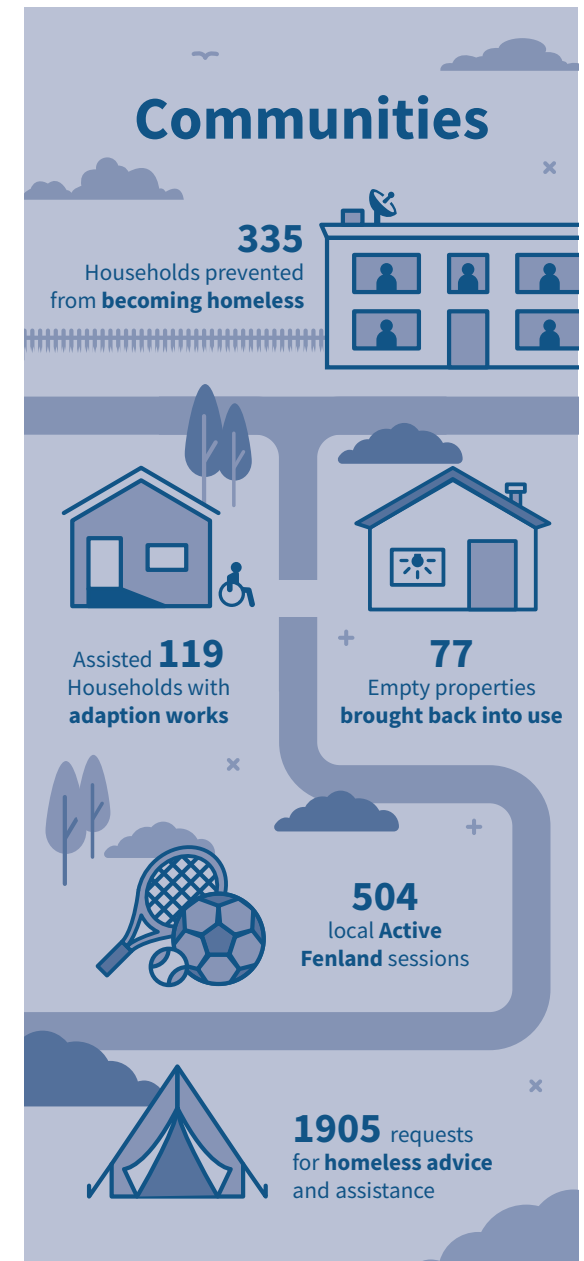
• Our Housing Options team received **1,905 requests for homeless advice and assistance**; 1,200 of these approaches were resolved through the advice provided. **335 households were prevented from becoming homeless**. Supported by our Housing Enforcement Policy, we issued a significant number of civil penalty notices to landlords choosing to flout regulations and legislation. We continue to support the increasing number of proactive landlords who request help from us to ensure their properties meet appropriate standards before being let. Hosting bi-annual landlord forums, detailing legislative amendments relevant to the private rented sector, also provides useful support to landlords.

• Through our Disabled Facilities Grants scheme, the Council provides **adaption works for elderly and disabled householders** to remain safe, secure and protected in their own homes. Last year **we assisted 119 households with adaption works**. These included the **installation of walk-in showers, stairlifts, ramped** access facilities and specialist equipment such as person hoists.

• The **14th annual Pride in Fenland awards** took place in November to celebrate the incredible contributions of unsung heroes from across the district. Organised by Fenland District Council and the Fenland Citizen newspaper, this year's online awards were **dedicated to those who went above and beyond during the pandemic**. Judges heard many inspiring stories of kindness and selfless support across five categories: Community Group, Young Person in the Community, Good Friend, Special Judges' award and the Community Covid awards.

• The **Whittlesey Big Bash** took place on September 12th at Whittlesey Manor Leisure Centre. The Golden Age team and 17 partners took part in the event, with a **great turnout of over 200 people** visiting in the space of 2 hours. As the event was not just a Golden Age fair, many partners commented on the great opportunities they had to speak with family members of older residents who were going to pass vital information on.

• As the terrible events in Ukraine unfolded in February 2022, we **pledged to provide support for Ukrainian refugees** as soon as the Government's extended safe routes opened. As part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Ukraine Refugee Response group, we arranged for property checks to be undertaken at sponsors' homes, support sponsors to undertake the DBS process and developed a welcome pack with information about essential and local services.



Promote health and wellbeing for all

- The Freedom team have worked exceptionally hard to encourage people back into Fenland's leisure centres following the pandemic. There has been considerable success with **growth in the Swimming Lesson programme** now at almost double the number of participants compared with pre-pandemic. Casual swimming and membership levels are back above 90% of the pre-pandemic levels. The pandemic did allow people time to reassess their health and **the four leisure centres in Fenland are playing a significant role in helping people become healthier**.
- **Health and Wellbeing support** for Fenland residents continued to focus on **Covid-19**. Businesses were offered guidance surrounding Covid secure practices in the workplace, access testing for staff, risk assessments and wellbeing visits by public health staff to discuss vaccination concerns and broader issues such as long covid. This has helped deliver businesses continuity; especially for many of our larger food/product producers and packers. **Self-isolation support through the pilot Enduring Transmission project** was provided to over 200 Fenland residents (where Covid-19 rates remained stubbornly high), with a total allocation of over £57,000. We also continued to provide support for vaccination centres including agreeing locations, monitoring uptake and accessibility.
- The pandemic made clear to our community how important open spaces are to having a happy and healthy life. Together with our contractor Tivoli, we've **continued to provide excellent open spaces across Fenland**. Work in the past year has included the improvement of several play areas with resulting increases in use by children and their families.

Work with partners to promote Fenland through culture and heritage

- Following financial support from Arts Council England, we have appointed an officer to **work with local cultural and creative organisations and individuals to develop an action plan to amplify creativity and cultural opportunities in Fenland**, raising the profile of the many activities already taking place.

- We worked hard to **support the community by promptly re-establishing Fenland's Four Seasons events** providing opportunities for businesses to trade again. Christmas Markets were delivered in Wisbech and March, followed by March St George's Fayre. This had a bumper turn out and received extremely positive feedback. We also made use of **Government Welcome Back funding to bolster re-opening of Fenland's high streets** through a series of additional pop-up events, business support, shop local marketing and town centre aesthetic improvements including floral displays and enhanced cleaning.

Performance

	Target 2021/22	Performance
Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	250	277
Proportion (%) of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing Options work	New PI	57%
Number of empty properties brought back into use	70	77
New Homes Bonus achieved as a result of bringing empty homes back into use	£50,000	£93,099
Number of Active Health local sessions per year that improve community health	225	504
Customer feedback across Freedom Leisure facilities in Fenland	90%	85%*

* Performance/service impacted by COVID-19 restrictions

Our Environment

Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

- Core services continued without issue this year with over **2.9million bin collections** made across the district. Customers continued to recycle their waste well, generating £475,000 of income to support services as a result. Customer satisfaction with our Refuse and Recycling and Garden Waste (Brown Bin) services remains high at 96% and 97% respectively. The Garden Waste service has continued to grow with subscriptions at an all-time high of over 23,000 in 2021/22.

- Our trained '**Getting It Sorted**' volunteers supported recycling in Fenland with events, activities, education packs for schools to use, videos and online training courses. They also kept the Council's multi-lingual recycling website, www.gettingitsorted.org, up-to-date and regularly posted recycling messages on social media to help residents recycle right at home.

- Our Cleansing and Rapid Response team continued to provide the usual seven-day street sweeping, litter picking and fly-tipping removal service in our towns and villages. Last year they **responded to over 1,200 service requests**: 95% on the same or next day. Over **1,300 quality inspections** were made in areas of high footfall – 99% met cleansing standards first time.

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

- As Covid restrictions gradually eased we continued to **work with community environmental volunteering groups** as permitted, with many smaller litter picks still able to take place. This year saw Gorefield Street Pride celebrate their 10th anniversary and a growth in Street Pride group numbers, now totalling 18. **Over £37,000 was awarded** to community groups living within the vicinity of wind turbines to improve their local environment. Projects included switching to LED lighting, solar powered mobile vehicle activated signs and enhancements to green spaces.

- Our Street Scene team spent **3,400 hours on patrol**. They work closely with the community to help protect our environment with a focus on preventing fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling. Over the past year they have visited over **600 sites of reported fly-tipping** to try and gather evidence that will help identify who's responsible. They investigated **241 reports of abandoned vehicles**, undertook **352 dog related actions** (including speaking to dog owners, refreshing signs in reported areas for dog fouling and working with the Green Dog Walkers volunteers), made **3015 memorial safety inspections** and investigated **137 matters relating to litter**.



Work with partners to help keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting social cohesion

- Our **shared CCTV service** with Peterborough City Council maintained its 100% service function 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The service conducted **over 6,000 pro-active camera patrols, detected over 1,000 incidents of crime and disorder across the district** and supported our policing partners to make **86 arrests** for offences, helping to make the district safer.

- Working with internal and external partners, our Community Safety team have been involved in the **investigation of 211 reports of anti-social behaviour**, nuisance and other quality of life concerns. Examples include youth anti-social behaviour and crime in Wisbech and Chatteris, vehicle related nuisance in a public car park in Chatteris and concerns linked to highway obstruction and hoarding in Wisbech. The team is also part of the Fenland Community Safety Partnership, which have undertaken projects raising awareness of illegal money lending, loan sharks, domestic abuse and coercive control, modern day slavery, child exploitation and road safety. As well as engaging the community, training sessions were delivered to support the development of frontline professionals who work within the Fenland community surrounding domestic abuse, hate crime, cybercrime and substance abuse.

Performance

	Target 2021/22	Performance
Rapid or Village Response requests actioned the same or next day	90%	95%
% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards (including graffiti and flyposting)	93%	99%
% of collected household waste recycled through the Blue Bin service	28%	28%
Customer satisfaction with Refuse and Recycling services	90%	96%
Customer satisfaction with Garden Waste service	85%	97%
Number of Street Pride, Green Dog Walkers and Friends of Community environmental events supported	204	191*
% of local businesses who thought they were supported and treated fairly	90%	100%
% of those asked who are satisfied with Fenland District Council's events	90%	N/A

* The number of events held is significantly less than in previous years due to the pandemic. Restrictions were in place at the beginning of April 2021 which either prohibited groups meeting at all or meant that only groups of 6 or 30 volunteers could meet.

Our Economy

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

- Our Finance and Business teams worked together to distribute **£7.094million in Government coronavirus business grants** in 2021/22. These have been paid to help businesses impacted by trading restrictions and the emerging Omicron variant. During this period over **1,300 grant payments** were made.
- We continued to **support businesses with COVID-19 guidance**, including reducing the risk of infection spreading in the workplace and compliance with the NHS COVID Pass regulations introduced in December 2021.
- **Following the closure of major employer** Alan Bartlett and Sons in Chatteris in June 2021, our Economic Growth team worked to ensure the site was reoccupied as soon as possible. It also helped new tenants, The Turmeric Co., with access to grant funding, recruitment, and business support opportunities.
- Our **Economic Growth Strategic Refresh** was approved by Cabinet in February. This sets out how our Economic Growth team, partners and wider Council teams will support local businesses to grow, local people to start a business and other businesses to relocate to the area. The **Start & Grow programme** is also underway, estimated to deliver around **£650,000 worth of business support and grants into Fenland** through a number of sources. The 'Start' programme is for individuals wanting to explore enterprise and offers intensive pre-start business information sessions, online learning, mentoring, networking and peer support. The 'Grow' programme aims to support existing early-stage micro-businesses to expand into new markets, create new jobs or increase profitability and productivity. The programme will run until July 2022.

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration across Fenland

- Our **Planning team determined over 750 planning applications** - between 72% and 92% of these were decided on time, depending on application type. Whilst not all internal performance targets have been met, we have continued to exceed national performance targets. We lost no major planning appeals over the last 24 months, and for non-major planning appeals our performance has not exceeded 0.5% (performance cannot exceed 10%). Our team dealt with nearly 900 other types of application (such as discharge of condition, general enquiries, pre-application and licensing requests) in addition to 'traditional' planning applications. **We investigated and resolved 218 cases of unauthorised development** reported to us.



- Work continues on projects outlined in our **Growing Fenland masterplans**, part of the CPCA's (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority) strategic Market Town Masterplans, including:
 - Installation of interactive highways flooding signs in Whittlesey
 - Progress on the Whittlesey Heritage Walk
 - Improvements to Wisbech Market Place
 - Funding for local skills development in Chatteris
 - Match funding to progress the March Future High Streets Fund project
- Work continues on the £8.4million **March Future High Streets Fund** project, funded by the Government and the CPCA. Together with the March Area Transport Study (MATS), the project will transform March town centre through pedestrian, public realm and traffic flow changes to the Broad Street, Riverside and Market Place areas.
- Our **Wisbech High Street Project**, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, continues to make progress. Highlights from 2021/22 include:
 - Major regeneration works completed at 13-17 High Street with grant funding
 - Extensive repairs carried out at 18 High Street with grant funding
 - Series of free online traditional construction and heritage skills training sessions launched
 - Local heritage book, 'Lost Images of Wisbech' published

Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements across the district

- Supported by CPCA funding, work continues to improve transport connectivity in Fenland. Progress is being made on the:
 - £32million Kings Dyke Crossing Project, due to open by the end of 2022
 - £25million A47 Guyhirn roundabout
 - Fenland Railway Station Masterplans project, aiming to improve stations at March, Manea and Whittlesey and provide better railways for Fenland
 - March Area Transport Study (MATS) infrastructure improvements

Performance

	Target 2021/22	Performance
% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks (or with extension of time)	75%	92%
% of minor applications determined in 8 weeks (or with extension of time)	80%	72%*
% of other applications determined in 8 weeks (or with extension of time)	90%	84%*
% occupancy of our Business Premises estate	92%	91%**
% occupancy Wisbech Yacht Harbour	85%	94%
Number of local businesses supported and treated fairly	90%	100%

* The reduced performance was as a result of rising workloads and resource challenges. It should be noted that performance remains above the national performance target of 70%

** Business unit occupancy has fluctuated during Covid. However, as we emerge from Covid we continue to see a steady uptake in occupancy.

Quality Organisation

- We **collected over £61million in Council Tax and £21million in Business Rates**. This plays a major part in funding the key services we provide to the community. A large share of this money is also passed onto the Police, Fire Service, County and Parish Councils – see the 'Money Matters' section for more information.
- Our My Fenland team has been transformed, bringing together **5 admin services and 29 members of staff** have new roles, including the development of technical officer roles to answer specialised, more detailed queries. In addition to the team answering more than **63,000 phone calls and resolving 99.5% of customer queries at first point of call**, the transformation team have also **completed 136 process mapping tasks**, including redesigning 33 processes. These benefit either the staff, our customers, or both. We have had **15,450 payments** made via PayPoint, with over £1.84m in payments.
- Our website received **849,000 hits** and a record number of **23,000 online form submissions** across 48 different topics. As part of our ongoing work to improve our digital services and user journeys, we launched a suite of improved online forms. Our **new missed bin and environmental service request forms** (covering issues including dog fouling, fly-tipping, litter, abandoned vehicles and graffiti) are now easier to use and automatically transfer information received directly to teams on the ground and into back-office systems. This gives teams real-time notification of issues so that they can respond quickly and save hours of resource in processing time. Six new online forms have also been developed as part of our licensing service, enabling residents to be able to complete new tasks online including applying for a taxi license and premises licence.
- Our **Social Media** channels remain popular, with **8,768 Twitter followers and 5,800 Facebook followers**. Over the past year we have used our social media channels to quickly publicise and signpost the latest Covid information, including changing restrictions and availability of business grants and support. We have also increased our use of video on our social media channels to develop our online engagement with residents.
- The Licensing team **issued 461 licenses** for a variety of services including Taxi, Premises, Alcohol, Scrap Metal and Animal Licensing, to help ensure such businesses are well managed and operating safely and legally. They also worked closely with partners during the pandemic through a variety of channels to support businesses to operate safely and take enforcement action when required.
- We **consulted with residents, stakeholders and partners about a wide range of topics** to help us understand local people's priorities and shape our service. Consultations included the concept of a Broad Concept Plan to shape future development in West March, development of a heritage walk in Whittlesey, plans for a new Community Hub in Wisbech Park and improvements to cycling, walking and mobility access across the district.



• **We were recredited with the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) award** last year. This is a Government standard that recognises the high quality, customer focused services that we provide. The independent assessor said the Council had continued to meet the **'gold standard' for customer service delivery** and that our ongoing transformation programme is clearly delivering significant benefits to customers.

• As Covid restrictions started to lift, our **Environmental Health** team focused their Public Health role to **support the Covid vaccination programme** reaching communities. As businesses could get back to normal, they supported the registration of new food businesses and the inspection of existing food businesses, whilst catching up on postponed inspections. They also visited and risk assessed all of Fenland's high risk food premises (Approved Premises). All Environmental Permitted sites were also inspected, and new operators supported through the application process. In addition, all skin piercing businesses – including tattooing, acupuncture, botox and eyebrow blading – were inspected and licensed. The team continues to deal with a wide range of **statutory nuisance and public health issues**, from noise and pest control to infectious diseases.

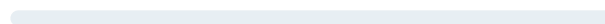
Performance

	Target 2021/22	Performance
% of customer queries resolved at the first point of contact	85%	99.5%
% of customers satisfied by our service	90%	91.3%
% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	46.5%	30.45%*
% of contact centre calls handled	80%	75.94%**
Days taken to process Council Tax Support new claims and changes	8.0 days	5.6 days
% of Council tax collected	96.77%	96.7%
Council Tax net collection fund receipts	£61,172,317	£61,692,720
% of NNDR Collected	97.25%	96.04%***
NNDR net collection fund receipts	£18,341,776	£22,579,308
Number of visits to our website	825,000	849,000

*The dip in performance was anticipated due to the implementation of a major change initiative resulting in a new structure with new job roles, more efficient processes and more effective use of technology. The Team were also adversely affected by the COVID pandemic as this resulted in higher than predicted call volumes but also an increase in staff absence due to Covid. The new working practices are now well established and performance is consistently improving.

**Performance in relation to the percentage of contact centre calls handled was achieved within 5% of the target figure, which is testament to the hard work of the team when dealing with both the direct impact (in terms of staff absence) and indirect impact (in relation to higher than predicted call volumes) of the COVID pandemic.

*** Whilst the NNDR Collection fund continues to meet targets, the in-year collection rate is below target due to the backdated large assessment which created a large debt to be collected within the last quarter of the year.



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