

Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Progress Against the Environment Priorities

14 July 2025

**For performance from
1 October 2024 to 31 May 2025**

Cabinet Members



Cllr Jan French

Deputy Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for ARP, Car Parks, Parking Decriminalisation and Parks & Open Spaces



Cllr Sidney Imafidon

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



Cllr Chris Seaton

Portfolio Holder for Funfairs, Fenland Inspire! Projects, Markets and Wisbech High Street Projects



Cllr Steve Tierney

Portfolio Holder for Communications, Decarbonisation, ICT, Streetsweeping, Street Bins & Dog Bins and Recycling & Refuse Collection



Cllr Susan Wallwork

Portfolio Holder for Cemeteries, Community, Safety, Emergency Planning, Freedom Leisure, Military Covenant, Policing, Street Pride, Street Naming & Numbering and Travellers Sites

Environment

Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

Diverting waste from landfill (Cllr Tierney)

During this past year, the teams have collected more than 39,000 tonnes of domestic and commercial waste from our customers. Given the property growth in the past 12 months, it is encouraging to see the total waste collected reducing. The Residual Waste (green bin waste) has increased slightly (267 tonnes 1% increase), but the good quality blue bin Dry Recycling waste collected has reduced by 6% (567 tonnes). There have also been 505 tonnes less Garden Waste collected because of differing growing seasons.

Collected Waste Tonnages (Quarters 1-4)	2023/24	2024/25	% Change
Overall tonnage	39,997	39,192	-2%
Residual Tonnage (green bins)	23,418	23,685	+1%
Dry Recycling Tonnage Actual (blue bins)	8,459	7,892	-6%
Compost Tonnage Actual (brown bins)	8,120	7,615	-6%
Dry Recycling & Compost Tonnage Total (blue and brown bins)	16,579	15,507	-6%

Collected Waste –		
Percentage Recycling excluding organics (blue bins to green bins)	26.5%	25%
Percentage Recycling (blue and brown bins to green bins)	41.5%	40%

Customers are producing very similar amounts of residual waste, which is good news against the background of property growth that Fenland has experienced.

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

These changes have resulted in increased levels of rejected materials at the sorting facility. During 2023/24, 824 tonnes of recycling collected in blue bins was classified as unsuitable for recycling, during 2024/25 it was 1,407 tonnes, an increase of 583 tonnes.

To protect the quality of recycling materials collected, the collection teams rejected 6,708 blue bins in the year. These customers are written to with information about how to get their recycling correct. Alongside the checks upon collections, supervisors performed inspections of 3,739 bins with properties receiving information directly from them encouraging best use of recycling bins. Of the 3,739 bins inspected, 5% contained incorrect materials (88).

By diverting this waste from landfill the Council has generated £470,500 of income from the County Council in recycling credits against their cost of landfill. From April this material also attracts Extender Producer Responsibility payments, which are initially forecast by Defra to be in the region of £1 million for Fenland.

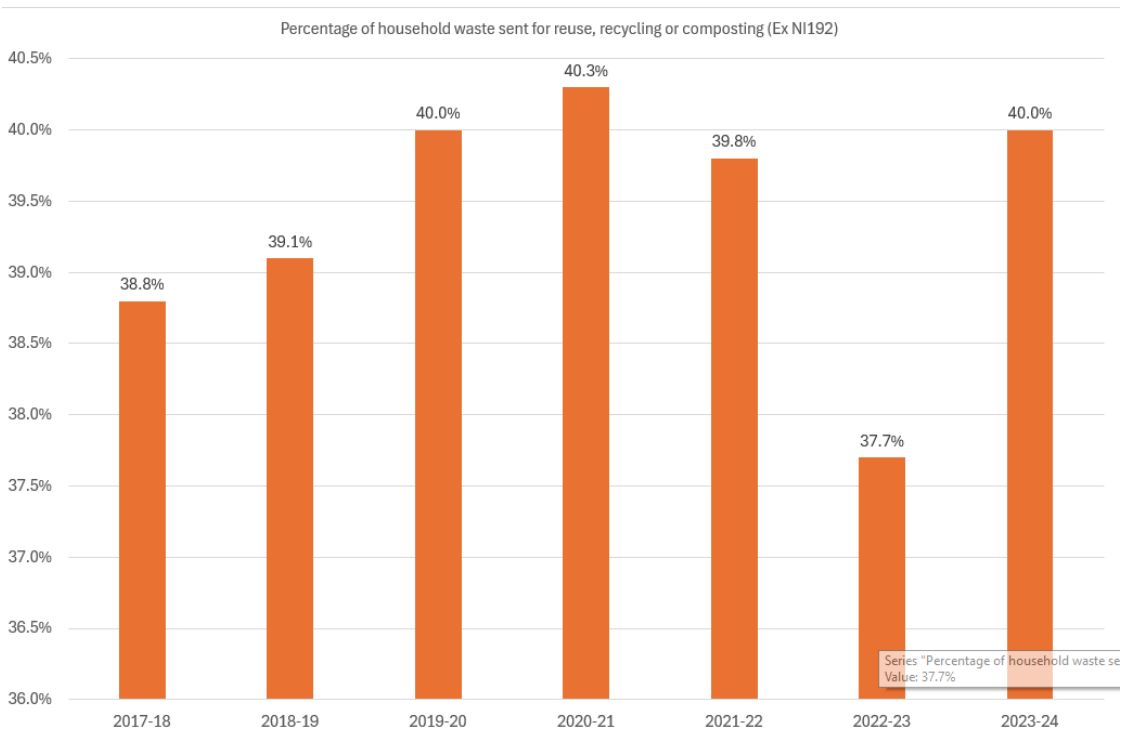
As a result, we will continue to support our customers to maximise their recycling efforts and to treat their waste as a resource to generate income and reduce overall costs.

Defra Initial Data for Local Authority Collected Waste 2023/24

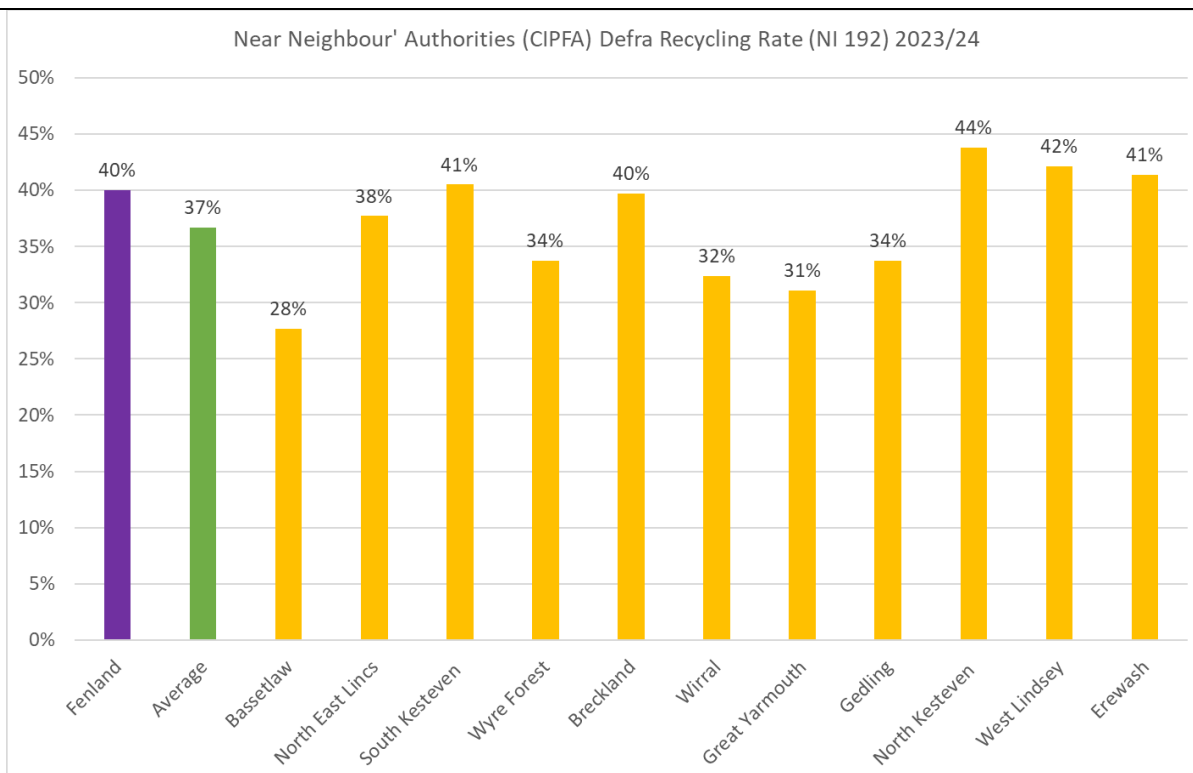
Using the former national performance indicator NI192 that includes street sweepings and litter, Defra has [published](#) initial data on household recycling for 2023/24, and Fenland has improved at 40%.

Figures for England show an average recycling rate of 42.3%.

Fenland’s Defra (NI192) Percentage of Household Waste Sent for Recycling 2017-2024



When compared to CIPFA Near Neighbour authorities with similar services, Fenland's performance is above average.

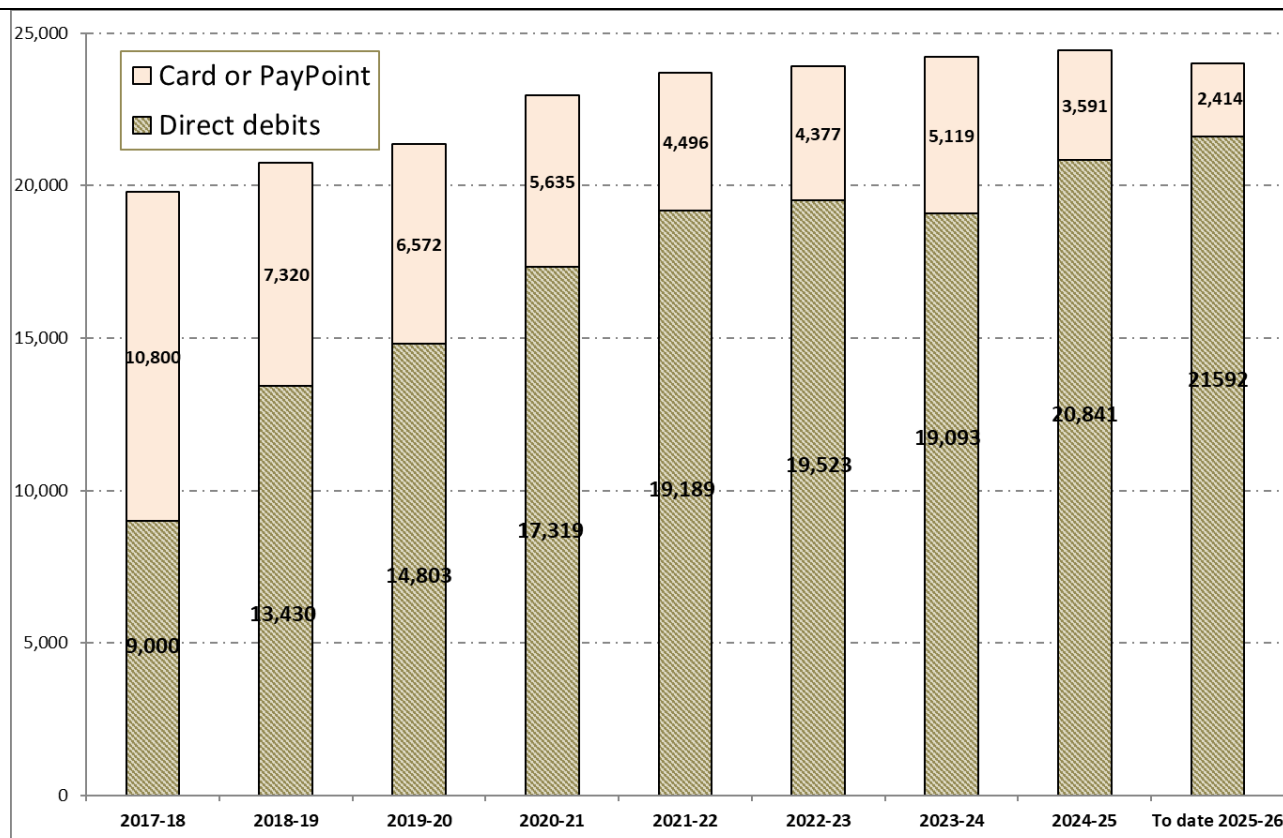


Garden Waste Collection (Cllr Teirney)

To date this year we have 24,006 subscriptions, with 90% direct debits and a total of £1,152,750 of income to cover the costs of providing the garden waste service. Last year there were a total of 24,432 subscriptions, with 85% direct debits, which generated an income of £1,114,509.

Garden Waste Subscriptions by Year and Payment Type 2017-2025

The fees charged for the garden waste service increase as costs for providing the service increase, however with the lower priced direct debit fee, Fenland remains one of the lowest priced garden waste services in the Eastern Region.



Delivering clean streets and public spaces (Cllr Tierney)

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

This past year the team have received 1,651 requests from the public to resolve environmental issues, such as litter, broken glass, flytipping, drug related litter or similar. 87% (1,441) of these were attended and dealt with the same or next working day.

The scheduled cleansing and Rapid Response service, with support from Fenland's active local volunteers, including Street Pride groups, deliver clean streets and public open spaces in Fenland. The standard of cleanliness is monitored by Street Scene officers using Keep Britain Tidy surveying methodology across a range of land use types and all wards. Since April, officers have completed 1,022 surveys for litter and street sweeping and found 1,009 to be of a suitable standard (98.7%).

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

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

Deliver a competitive trade waste service (Cllr Tierney)

The Council's commercial waste service offers residual, recycling and food waste collections for small to medium sized enterprises across Fenland via wheeled bins and sacks.

The service has 612 customers at present generating just over £506,000 of income during the past year. The team have collected a total of 1,025 tonnes of commercial waste, of which 213 tonnes was recycling or food waste.

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

The Council has received more than £1 million of capital funding from Defra to commence the work developing the food waste services as set out in The Environment Act for April 2026. A cross departmental team will shortly be created to design and manage this project with support from relevant portfolio holders and regular updates to Cabinet and Council.

Work with partners and the community on projects to improve the environment and streetscene**Use education, guidance and Council powers to fairly enforce environmental standards and tackle issues such as fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles, dog fouling, littering and antisocial behaviour (Cllr Imafidon)**

Fly tipping continues to be a priority for our communities and streetscene officers work proactively to investigate reported fly tipping, working closely with cleansing colleagues and other agencies to ensure swift removal of fly tipping, particularly where this presents a hazard, and to try and ascertain who is responsible.

During this time the Council has removed 790 fly tips. The main locations affected continue to be Wisbech and its surrounding villages.

Month	Total	Chatteris	March	Whittlesey	Wisbech	Villages
Oct-24	176	6	31	9	71	59
Nov-24	107	6	9	6	57	29
Dec-24	85	3	11	5	42	24
Jan-25	167	7	22	26	56	56
Feb-25	124	4	19	9	49	43
Mar-25	134	5	16	20	47	46
April -25	69	3	14	6	26	20
May-25	101	6	13	11	50	51

The most commonly tipped items are household related, such as DIY waste and rubbish and bulky items. We have attended more than 400 of these incidents, looking through the waste searching for any evidence. This has resulted in the following enforcement actions:

- 9 x £400 & £600 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued for individuals we believe

have either been responsible for fly tipping or those who have failed to employ the services of legitimate waste carriers. (resulting in waste being dumped)

- 1 x £150 fixed penalty notice for littering.
- 1 further £300 fixed penalty notice has been issued to a business for a duty of care offence, resulting in waste being dumped in Wisbech.
- A further 4 formal written warnings for fly tipping offences where the level of evidence was not sufficient to prosecute.
- 22 formal interviews under caution have been carried out to those we suspect are linked to fly tipped instances.

Intervention work has continued with visits to address locations where bulky items are left outside properties or in community areas where there are issues with refuse.

In response to Wisbech being the most affected location, streetscene officers delivered a special project to raise awareness of fly tipping in the South Brink area of Wisbech. The location chosen links to the main road of the A47 and suffers repeatedly from fly tipping. During the first part of 2024 - 2025 there were 21 fly tips consisting of household waste, bulky single items such as broken furniture and commercial waste.

The area was cleared of historic waste – using external funding- and a tidy up of the vegetation took place. The Council will also install anti fly tipping signs and create soil bunding to prevent access for fly tippers.

A similar project carried out in New Drove in 2024 saw fly tipping incidents reduce by as much as 70% and we hope to see similar results at South Brink.

The area will continue to be monitored by the Councils Street Scene Team. Work took place on the 12th and 13th March which saw over 15 tonnes of historic and new waste removed.

Illegal Parking (March Market) and Abandoned/Nuisance vehicles

Additional enforcement work has been taking place on March Marketplace as the parking area returned to normal following enhancement works.

- During this time, we have issued 9 parking fines.
- A total of 163 vehicles have been reported as abandoned. All were investigated and only 5 was deemed abandoned and later removed by our contractor.
- We have also received a further 93 reports of nuisance parking which have been referred to the Police.

Markets and funfairs

During this time, we have welcomed the March and Wisbech funfairs. The new location in Wisbech was well received by the public and the Guild.

We have also welcomed a new food and Avon stall to our Whittlesey Market and a clothing, candle and craft stall to March Market and a catering stall and flower stall to Chatteris Market. All traders are settling in well. We have also refreshed our markets promotional materials with a support and shop local design.

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

The Council's open spaces contractor, Tivoli, is having an excellent year so far, aided by the warmer weather that inhibits grass growth. Issues have been limited, reflecting the firm contract management approach from the Council's open spaces team. Where issues have been raised action has been prompt to ensure that our open spaces are attractive, inviting and make Fenland a great place to work and live in.

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

There are currently 23 Street Pride Groups working across Fenland. Between October 2024 and May 2025 there were 188 events delivered by volunteers. The groups all have key priorities which include:

- Enhancing volunteer growth and engagement.
- Strengthen community and youth involvement:
- Prioritise tangible projects that improve the local environment, such as creating pollinator habitats, developing community gardens, increasing recycling efforts, and undertaking clean-up initiatives.
- Promote sustainable practices and resourcefulness:
- Continue to build strong networks among street pride groups and with external partners, facilitating the sharing of best practices, innovative ideas, and resource to maximise collective impact.

Many groups have delivered very different projects during this time including litter picking and other environmental enhancements.

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

November and December were extremely busy for Fenland events. Significant work took place to organise March and Wisbech Christmas events, which take place 1 week apart. Over 200 local businesses booked to attend many of which make and sell their own products. Town centre businesses were very pleased to see March Christmas Market back in the town centre following the Broad Street improvement works, as the event day is one of the best in the year for their takings.

Highlights from March included gaining corporate sponsorship to offer free children's rides and Santa's grotto which was welcomed by many families. March library also opened to the public offering an indoor winter wonderland in the newly refurbished space.

Regrettably Wisbech Christmas Fayre was cancelled this year owing to storm Darragh. The Council worked hard to arrive at a decision as early as possible, notifying stallholders promptly to reduce complaints and retain custom. Many of the stallholders agreed with the decision as they too had safety concerns and were happy to carry their booking to 2025. Following consultation with the Council, Wisbech Museum and Wisbech Library did proceed with their planned indoor festive activities and the committee were pleased to learn that these events were still very well attended.

There were many activities planned for 2024 that the volunteer committee are keen to still deliver in 2025 including an art installation of scarfs and exciting street performances. We are looking forward to bringing them to fruition in 2025.

Prior to St George's Festival, which took place on Sunday 27th April, the volunteer committee worked in partnership with Market Place Arts, who are investing in the region of £15,000 of resource, to deliver a series of workshops leading up to an impressive community parade involving 15ft puppets, as part of this year's fayre. A full programme of arts demonstrations on March Market Place was planned as part of the arts focus too.

The event took place back in the town centre, utilising the newly refurbished Broad Street but, due to the success and growth of the fayre it will extend as far as West End Park, March Library and St Peter's Church. Many community partners including 20Twenty Productions, March Town Council, March Society, March Museum and Cambridgeshire Libraries are involved in bringing this event together following many months of planning.

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

The council's carbon reduction plan focuses on supporting communities to save energy, finance and become more energy resilient. In December 2024 the council accessed Net Zero Villages Grant funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. The project aims to support rural communities with capital projects that deliver reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Applications were welcomed from:

- A parish council within Fenland district,
- A voluntary, community or social enterprise sector organisation, with the applicable asset to be improved being located within the Fenland district or,
- Other public sector bodies applying on behalf of a Fenland district community.

The minimum single grant award was £4,000 and the maximum, £25,000. The application window closed in February 2025 with successful applicants awarded in March 2025.

Four successful grants have now been paid and work on their projects commenced.

Maximum amount of grant approved payable to FDC	£93,208 10% to fund administration costs / officer time.
Total expected project cost	£93,208
Project breakdown	Project 1 £25,000 Project 2 £17,000 Project 3 £10,000 Project 4 £9,198.41 Total allocated £61,198.41 Administration costs £9,320.80
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Total remaining	£20,987.85 for project 5 (award planned for summer 2025).
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Successful projects:

Project 1 -Gorefield Playing Field Association secured £25,000 towards a project to install a solar energy system for the community hall and sports pavilion, in Wolf Lane.

Project 2 - Wimblington Parish Council awarded £17,000 towards a replacement of the roof on the parish hall, in Addison Road, with a 'green roof'.

Project 3 - Tydd St Giles community centre low energy lighting scheme awarded £10,000.

Project 4 - Wisbech St Mary Parish Council secured £9,198.41 for the installation of a solar energy system for Guyhirn Community Centre.

Project 5 should be confirmed in summer 2025 and this will complete 100% of the funding allocation for Fenland.

Warm Homes Grant

In March 2025 the Cambridgeshire Energy and Retrofit Partnership (of which Fenland Council is a partner) received confirmation from Department for Energy Security and Net Zero of the 2025- 2028 allocation of Warm Home Grant.

The grant is available for homeowners to apply for to fund retrofit energy saving works.

The fund for Cambridgeshire has been confirmed as **£8,568,050** over the 3 years.

Cambridge City Council facilitate the grant on Fenland's behalf and the grant funds a part time project officer to support Fenland residents with their applications.

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

No further progress has been made on the implementation of civil parking enforcement (CPE) since the estimated cost of the works were last calculated in November 2023. This highlighted a significant shortfall in the available funding at the time in the region of £500,000.

This figure would certainly now have increased due to associated annual construction price increases but more importantly the scope of works would also now likely have increased due to additional sign and line corrective works being required since the estimated costs was based on a survey undertaken 3-1/2 years ago.

A further CPE update paper is anticipated to go to Cabinet in July; however it is likely that only estimated costs will be available at that time as updated target costs would likely attract a sizeable cost to produce and would require member approval.

Street Lighting (Cllr French)

A total of fifty-six streetlight faults were reported and have been attended to during the months

of April and May 2025 by Fenlands streetlight maintenance contractor. Forty-seven of the reported faults related to District Council streetlights during this period.

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

Fenland DC -	47 Fault Reports
Clarion -	1 Fault Reports
Parishes -	8 Fault Reports

The bulk of the electrical and structural testing works associated with Council owned or managed streetlights was undertaken between September and February however, some additional testing works was commissioned in March, and approximately 300 streetlights required a return visit to site associated with restricted access and vegetational overgrowth. Approximately 40 units currently remain outstanding and are being programmed in.

This has delayed the receipt of the testing data which will be collated and analysed by the Engineering Team prior to sharing with third party asset owners. Details of streetlights that are known to have failed the structural test have already been shared with the relevant asset owners and communications are ongoing in relation to asset removal or replacement. It is hoped that the testing data will be shared with the Parish Councils in July following receipt of the outstanding works data.

Capital Streetlight Replacement Works

Following receipt of the structural and electrical works test data, the Engineering Team will undertake an analyse to determine the next phase of capital streetlight replacement or upgrade works. It is known that a number of streetlights have failed either the structural or electrical test and replacement or upgrade works will be prioritised in order of severity.

FDC Car Park Maintenance (Cllr French)

Car park inspections are undertaken every 6 months and are scheduled in April and October each year. The next asset inspections for FDC's car parks are due to take place in October and any associated defects shall be quantified and actioned. Works that were identified following the April inspections are currently being undertaken or have been programmed. The inspection information is also used to inform minor improvement, and maintenance works for the Councils public car parks.

The Engineering Team are responsible for around 6500 highway related assets. The majority of these assets are either streetlights or street furniture items.

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

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 25/26	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP7	% of Rapid or Village Response requests actioned the same or next day	87%	90%	91%	
CELP8	% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards	99%	90%	97%	
CELP9	% of household waste recycled through the blue bin service (1 month in arrears)	25.0%	25.0%	23.5%	
CELP10	Customer satisfaction with refuse and recycling services	97%	90%	N/A (March 2026)	N/A
CELP11	Customer satisfaction with garden waste service	97%	90%	N/A (March 2026)	N/A
CELP12	Number of Street Pride, In Bloom, Friends Of Groups and Green Dog Walkers community environmental events supported	282	204	255 (April 2024 to May 2025)	
CELP13	% of those asked who were satisfied with community events	100%	96%	97%	

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

Comments

