

CABINET



FRIDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2025 - 2.00 PM

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor R Gerstner

CAB22/25 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 15 September 2025 were agreed and signed.

CAB23/25 FENLAND INSPIRE! - WISBECH PARK ORCHARD

Cabinet considered the Fenland Inspire! Wisbech Park Orchard report presented by Councillor Mrs French.

Councillor Mrs French said she would like to alter recommendation 3.4 slightly with Cabinet's approval. The CP Learning Trust has been in contact with officers and asked if they can work with the Council to transplant the trees to their Fenland Orchards Project in Lynn Road, Wisbech. This seems an ideal way of preserving some of the trees as well as enhancing the Orchard project.

Councillor Hoy asked if there is a timeframe for this as she would like the amendment to include that it be done by the end of the year. Councillor Mrs French said she would be happy to stipulate the end of January otherwise it would be too close to Christmas. Both the amendment and further amendment were accepted.

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

- **Note the content of the report**
- **Note that the local In Bloom group who began the orchard project no longer have the capacity to maintain it.**
- **Recognise that potential negative publicity regarding the removal of the orchard whilst also acknowledging the positive impact the orchard removal will have on reducing antisocial behaviour in Wisbech Park and enabling alternative use of the space.**
- **Instruct officers to work with the CP Learning Trust to remove the orchard within Wisbech Park due to the increasing antisocial behaviour taking place and to attempt to transplant the fruit trees to the Fenland Orchards Project by the end of January with any cost to the Council kept within the budget highlighted in paragraph 4.6.**

CAB24/25 EXTENSION OF THE NORFOLK STREET PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO)

Members considered the Extension of the Norfolk Street Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) report presented by Councillor Wallwork.

Councillor Tierney said whilst he will support this, he believes PSPOs are largely ineffective as Norfolk Street continues to have problems. However, he supports the police but would like them to be more visible and careful in how they use their resources. Councillor Wallwork said this measure

closes an alleyway and is therefore 100% effective.

Proposed by Councillor Wallwork, seconded by Councillor Imafidon and AGREED to approve the extension of the PSPO for a further 3-year period which prevents access through a passageway located between Norfolk Street and West Street in Wisbech.

CAB25/25 ACCEPTANCE OF £1.5M PRIDE IN PLACE IMPACT FUND ALLOCATION

Members considered the Acceptance of £1.5m Pride in Place Impact Fund Allocation report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Tierney stated it is important for the Council in its communications with the public to state the limitations of the Impact Fund Allocation, as otherwise they will be asking why it was not used to fix potholes etc. Councillor Mrs French agreed, she welcomes this and would like at every opportunity for members to get together to decide what the money can be spent on.

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

- **Approve the acceptance of the £1.5m Pride in Place Impact Fund allocation for FY 25/26 and 26/27 awarded to Fenland District Council**
- **Delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer to enter all relevant legal and financial arrangements necessary to bring the decision into effect and manage the funding in accordance with grant conditions.**

CAB26/25 FDC ENDORSEMENT OF PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS REGENERATION PLAN FOR WISBECH

Members considered the FDC Endorsement of Plan for Neighbourhoods Regeneration Plan for Wisbech report presented by Councillor Mrs French.

Councillor Count stated he welcomed this update for Wisbech. The CPCA Local Growth Plan includes both the March to Wisbech railway and investment in Wisbech, and he is pleased to see these recognised in this report. The Wisbech Town Board is recognised by Government for representing the views of local people and he fully endorses this report.

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

- **Endorse the Wisbech Town Board Price in Place Regeneration Plan for submission to Government by 28 November 2025.**
- **Delegate authority to the High Street Project Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder based upon recommendations of the Town Board, to make any necessary amendments to the Plan prior to submission, should local circumstances or ongoing consultation outcomes change.**
- **Authorise officers to enter all relevant legal and financial arrangements to bring the Plan into effect, subject to future Cabinet/Officer approvals as required.**

(Councillor Boden declared a conflict of interest as a member of the WTB and therefore would neither speak nor vote and that as Leader of the Council he would hand the Chair to Councillor Mrs French for this agenda item)

(Councillors Hoy and Wallwork each declared they are members of the WTB and would neither speak nor vote on this item)

(Councillor Tierney declared that he is a member of the Wisbech Town Board but as he was appointed by FDC he would speak and vote).

CAB27/25 MANOR LEISURE CENTRE - FENLAND INSPIRE! REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT UPDATE

Members considered the Manor Leisure Centre – Fenland Inspire! Redevelopment Project Update report presented by Councillor Count.

- Councillor Count said that this is the largest single project that FDC has committed to and he thanked officers, Sports England and members of the public for their engagement with this project.
- Councillor Mrs Laws commented that the Manor is well used but in a deteriorating state of repair and the growing population of Whittlesey needs a wider range of sporting facilities. She said the café area should be promoted and the addition of the air rifle range is welcomed, furthermore it is pleasing to see a catering kitchen being added which will encourage the site to be used as an events facility. She thanked the past and present portfolio holder and officers for their work to bring this forward.
- Councillor Tierney commented that it had been refreshing to see so much public engagement having followed discussions on Whittlesey social media; this is how it should be done and is a good sign going forward.
- Councillor Boden congratulated all involved in getting to this stage. He agreed there had been much healthy debate about the project and changes made based on community feedback. He pointed out one aspect of debate on social media and that was the suggestion that there could be mixed gender changing rooms, but he said that had never been proposed.
- Councillor Count advised that Sport England had made some design improvements which are included in the proposal but if they do not come up with the funding, then these improvements may not take place at all, or only in part. He said there will be no mixed changing rooms, but there would be private facilities for individuals, some two-person size for parent/child use, larger family spaces and the inclusion of two larger facilities for schools; all of which would be lockable and secure. However, the area is slightly changing, and the team are looking at increasing visibility from the poolside area, with some fine tuning such as the possibility of an all gender changing room covered in section 8.3 of the report. The proposal matches both the Sports England design specification and what is currently provided at the Hudson and George Campbell leisure centres. Further engagement is being undertaken, and information will be on the FDC website; if people submit an email address they will be given automatic updates rather than having to wait for a press release. He thanked Councillor Mrs Laws for her support and for drawing attention to the need for a commercial catering kitchen which has now been included.
- Councillor Hoy said this is an amazing facility for Whittlesey and the upgrade is well needed. However, the Council must listen to peoples' concerns regarding mixed gender changing rooms. Some people do not feel confident or comfortable in such an environment and concerns must be addressed as far as possible.
- Councillor Mrs Laws agreed that this is a difficult subject to address, one of the positive aspects of a village-style facility is that half could be closed for cleaning, leaving the other half open. The cleaning staff are mostly female, and in the evenings, they have to wait until late for the men to finish changing before they can enter the area to complete their work.
- Councillor Count agreed that cleanliness was the most commented upon element of the community engagement and steps are being taken to address all aspects of concern regarding the changing rooms as it is important to listen to and respect the views submitted. He repeated that this is the largest project undertaken by the Council, but it is also extremely complex, trying to keep facilities running at the same time and he would like to commend and highlight the work being undertaken by Phil Hughes as Head of Leisure and Open Spaces.

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

- **Note the report and the progress of this important community project.**
- **Note the significant financial situation that the Council faces and pay close attention to the financial assessment section of this report.**

- **Note and consider that potential cost mitigation measures that could be taken to reduce the overall project costs as identified in Section 11 of the report.**
- **Approve the footprint at Appendix 1 of the report in order that the substantive elements of the footprint remain fixed allowing the project to progress smoothly through RIBA stages 3 and 4 and the planning process.**
- **Note that the Council is working with Sport England to secure supportive funding that will offset design improvements required by Sport England that have enhanced initial designs.**

CAB28/25 WISBECH HIGH STREET UPDATE

Members considered the Wisbech High Street update report presented by Councillor Seaton.

Proposed by Councillor Seaton, seconded by Councillor Hoy and AGREED to note the report.

CAB29/25 DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Noted for information.

CAB30/25 PORT OPERATIONS UPDATE REPORT (CONFIDENTIAL)

Members considered the confidential Port Operations Update report presented by Councillor Christy.

Proposed by Councillor Christy, seconded by Councillor Hoy and AGREED to the recommendations within the confidential report, plus some additional recommendations in light of new information received.

(Members resolved to exclude the public from the discussion on this item of business on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended))

3.04 pm

Chairman