

Agenda Item No:	7	
Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny	
Date:	14 January 2019	
Report Title:	DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2019-20	

## 1 Purpose / Summary

- For Overview and Scrutiny to comment on the Draft Business Plan 2019-2020

## 2 Key issues

- Our Draft Business Plan 2019-20 identifies the key challenges and opportunities for Fenland over the next year. It outlines our three Corporate Priorities which focus on Communities, the Environment and the Economy. A cross-cutting Quality Organisation priority also ensures that staff and resources effectively focus on the projects that matter the most to local people.
- The Council remains committed to delivering high-quality frontline services, despite the challenges posed by nearly 10 years of public sector austerity. Projects delivered to date through our Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and Efficiency Plan have supported the Council to sustainably make the required £9.5million savings (since 2010).
- We also continue to work closely with partners including ARP, CNC and Peterborough City Council to maximise the efficiency of local services. Parts of these services, where appropriate and applicable, have been developed to be sold commercially which would contribute to mitigate the cost pressures on the individual partners.
- Despite austerity we are an ambitious, forward-thinking council and continue to lobby for investment to tackle important issues. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has committed millions of pounds towards projects in Fenland. Examples include £6.5 million towards a feasibility study of Wisbech Garden Town and Wisbech to March railway link, £9.5 million towards Fenland Railway Station improvements and £10.5 million towards Wisbech transport improvements.
- We also work closely with other organisations to tackle complex issues. During 2017/18, we were awarded £1.1million of funding following nine successful bids to the Government's Controlling Migration Fund. This is supporting the delivery of a variety of projects to improve cohesion in the district. Best practice from the multi-agency £736,000 Government funded 'Trailblazer' homelessness prevention project is also being shared nationwide.
- The public consultation on the Draft Business Plan 2019-20 opened on 3 January and ends on 1 February 2019. Surveys will be available online and at our Fenland @ your service shops, Community Hubs and Business Centres. Polls will also run on our Social Media channels (Twitter and Facebook). Feedback will be incorporated into the final version of the Business Plan that will be considered by Cabinet and Council on 21 February 2019.
- Cabinet would welcome comments on the focus of the priorities and sub priorities of the Draft Business Plan.

### 3 Recommendations

- For Overview and Scrutiny to make comment on the Draft Business Plan 2019-20.

<b>Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Forward Plan Reference</b>	N/A
<b>Portfolio Holder(s)</b>	Councillor Chris Seaton, Leader of the Council
<b>Report Originators &amp; Contact Officers</b>	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Kamal Mehta, Corporate Director Richard Cassidy, Corporate Director Gary Garford, Corporate Director Amy Brown, Interim Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer
<b>Background Paper(s)</b>	Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

**Fenland District Council**

**Draft Business Plan**

**2019-20**

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## **Introduction by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive**

*Our aim: "To improve the quality of life for people living in Fenland."*

Welcome to Fenland District Council's Business Plan for 2019-20.

Our Business Plan sets out the services and projects we will deliver across Fenland over the next 12 months. It should be read alongside our Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy. These documents explain how we will manage our finances over the next few years and are available to view on our website.

We are now entering the tenth year of public sector austerity. Since 2010, we have made savings of £9.5million. The challenge remains to deliver good quality services that our residents need whilst making the necessary savings imposed by central government. Although the balance can be difficult to strike, we are working more effectively than ever before. Projects delivered as part of our own Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and Efficiency Plan have enabled us to make the savings whilst maximising income, thus remaining sustainable.

It's not just about making efficiencies though. We are an ambitious, forward-thinking council and continue to lobby for investment to help tackle important issues. Now in its second year, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority have committed millions of pounds towards projects in Fenland. £6.5million is funding a feasibility study of a potential Wisbech Garden Town and a Wisbech to March railway link. £10.5million has been committed for transport improvements as part of the Wisbech Access Study. Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech have each been awarded £50,000 to develop their own Markettown Masterplans. These are just a few examples of the projects underway to make Fenland an even better place to live.

Partnership working continues to play an important role in service delivery, which is the bread and butter of what we do. Sharing our Council Tax and Benefits (with Anglia Revenues Partnership), Building Control (with CNC) and Planning (with Peterborough City Council) services have reduced operating costs without compromising on quality. We have also developed parts of these services to be sold commercially in competition with the private sector.

Working with other organisations also helps us to tackle complex issues that cannot be solved by one organisation alone. Following nine successful bids to the Government's Controlling Migration Fund over 2017/18, we have been awarded in excess of £1.1million to undertake a variety of projects to promote cohesion and reduce the impact of migration across local communities. A further example is our successful new multi-agency 'Trailblazer' approach to homelessness. Supported by £736,000 of Government funding, it has prevented hundreds of people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough from becoming homeless before their situation escalates into a crisis. Best practice from the project is being shared nationwide.

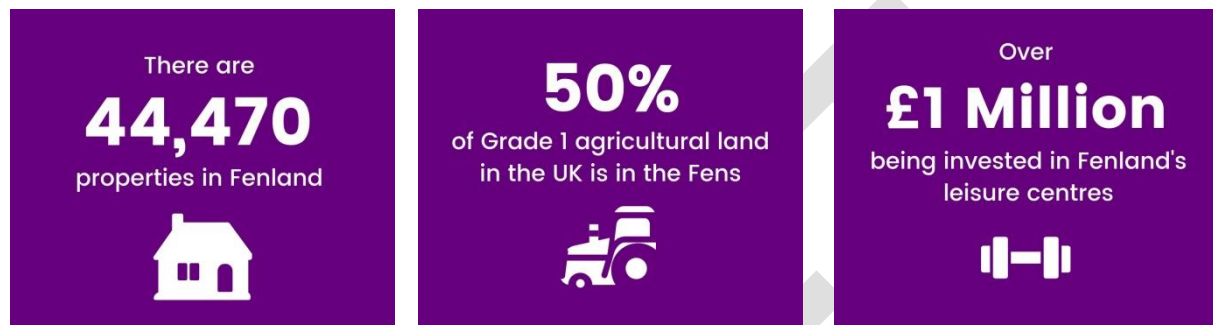
We hope this introduction has provided a valuable insight into just some of what we do and seek to achieve. We remain committed to working with all of our towns, villages and rural communities to make Fenland an even better place to live and work.

Councillor Chris Seaton – Leader of the Council  
Paul Medd – Chief Executive

## About Fenland

Our Business Plan is developed to meet the evolving needs of our residents. The text below provides a basic summary about the Fenland district and the communities that live here.

Fenland has strong community spirit and pride in its heritage. Over 100,700 people live in the district (ONS: 2018), which covers 211 square miles within North Cambridgeshire. 75% of people live in our four market towns of Chatteris (11,000), March (23,000), Whittlesey (13,000) and Wisbech (31,500). Our beautiful rural landscape is home to 29 villages and attracts visitors from around the country.



Fenland has the lowest house prices in Cambridgeshire and plentiful availability of commercial land. As a result, our population is growing quickly. In 20 years' time (2038), it is predicted the population will have increased by 11% to 111,512 (ONS: 2016). We have plans in place, some of which are explained within this plan, to maximise the positive opportunities that growth brings.

Our population is also getting older. 23% of our population are aged 65 or over; above average compared to Cambridgeshire and the UK as a whole. (ONS: 2017). Alongside partners, we are working to enable residents to access the support they need to live happily, healthily and independently.

We also face some challenges around deprivation, particularly around education and health. We are the 80<sup>th</sup> (out of 326) most deprived area in the country, with some wards in Wisbech within the top 10% most deprived (IMD:2015). Nevertheless, we work closely with other organisations to positively overcome these challenges.



## **Our Finances**

Once information is available, add 2 pie charts to summarise sources of income and spending by service.

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## Our Priorities

Our Business Plan sets out the priorities we aim to deliver over the next 12 months. These priorities have been developed to address the most important needs of local people. They have been split into three headings: Communities, Environment and Economy. The fourth priority, Quality Organisation, sits alongside each priority.




Despite austerity challenges, our 382 employees are proud to deliver a variety of high-quality core services for local people. In a typical year we empty 3 million bins, clean 210 million square miles of town centres and open spaces, answer 78,000 telephone enquiries, determine 1,300 planning applications, enable 75,400 people to vote in elections – and more!

As an organisation, our unique ‘one-team’ culture supports the effective delivery of our priorities and enables officers, members and partners to effectively work together without the constraints of traditional department silos. We support and invest in our workforce to give them the skills they need to work effectively within their roles. This has been recognised through Investors in People (IiP) and Customer Service Excellence (CSE) re-accreditations. In our latest Staff Survey (2018), 84% of staff told us that they were proud to work for us.

### Summary of Corporate Priorities

The table below gives a summary of our corporate priorities. These are explained in more detail over the next few pages. Some priorities relate to our ‘core’ services that we deliver day to day. Others explain the specific projects we will deliver within 2019/20.

Each priority is underpinned by a series of performance indicators. Performance is reported to our elected members in monthly Portfolio Holder reports. The public can also view end of year performance in our Annual Report. This explains what the Council has been doing over the financial year to achieve its priorities and set objectives.

<b>Quality Organisation</b> Supporting effective delivery of our priorities and services	<b>Communities</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support vulnerable members of our community</li> <li>Promote health and wellbeing for all</li> <li>Work with partners to promote Fenland through culture and heritage</li> </ul>
	<b>Environment</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service</li> <li>Work with partners and the community on projects that improve the environment and our street scene</li> <li>Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting social cohesion</li> </ul>
	<b>Economy</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses in Fenland</li> <li>Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration across Fenland</li> </ul> <p>Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements across the district</p>

# Communities



## Support vulnerable members of our community

- We will continue to support our residents to maximise their income by accessing the benefits they are entitled to. We will do this by processing all applications for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support effectively and accurately through our shared service (Anglia Revenues Partnership; ARP)
- We will support residents in managing the effects of welfare reform changes by working with partners including Jobcentre Plus and the Rural Citizens Advice Cambridgeshire, and helping them access Universal Credit online
- Prevent homelessness, meet housing needs, improve housing conditions and keep homes accessible through our housing duties
- Work with partners to build capacity and resilience so that residents can support themselves and the community, including young people
- Encourage a range of partners to support the delivery of the Golden Age programme to support older people
- Work with partners and the community to deliver the Wisbech 2020 Action Plan across the themes of Education and Skills, Health, Wellbeing and Cohesion, Infrastructure and the Built Environment and Local Economy

## Promote Health and Wellbeing for all

- Support our local community by delivering the Council's Leisure Strategy in partnership with Freedom Leisure
- Reduce inequality and deprivation by working collaboratively with others & deliver the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy to tackle our local health priorities, including mental wellbeing
- Facilitate housing development that will deliver healthy environments and promote wellbeing

## Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture and Heritage

- Work with local stakeholders to develop a Culture Strategy for Fenland; strengthening links between the wider Fenland communities as well as promoting the area to people outside the district, including supporting the development of Must Farm in Whittlesey.
- Support communities to celebrate through resilient community groups by providing advice and access to training through our safety advisory partnership

### Key projects for 2019/20

- Deliver four Golden Age fairs across the district
- Deliver the Four Seasons event programme in partnership with our four market towns
- Increase the use of local open spaces and collaborate with local activity providers to address health inequalities



**Performance indicators for 2019/20**

- Council Tax Support – days taken to process new claims and changes
- Housing Benefit – days taken to process new claims and changes
- % of attendees satisfied with Golden Age events
- Number of paid visits to our leisure centres
- % of those asked who are satisfied with FDC leisure centres

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# Environment



## **Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service**

- Work with partners, the community and volunteers to divert at least 50% of Cambridgeshire's household waste from landfill
- Maximise the value of materials collected for recycling including through Recycling Champions
- Deliver an effective, self-funding Garden Waste collection service
- Deliver clean streets and public spaces as set out in the national code of practice
- Work with key stakeholders to deliver an effective waste partnership and to update the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough waste strategy

## **Work with partners and the community on projects to improve the environment and streetscene**

- Support improvements to Fenland's streetscene and heritage
- Use education, guidance and Council powers to fairly enforce environmental standards and tackle issues such as fly tipping, dog fouling and littering
- Work with a private enforcement partner to tackle littering and associated anti-social behaviour
- Ensure well maintained open spaces by working in partnership with Tivoli and supporting community groups (such as Street Pride, In Bloom and 'Friends of')
- Work with Town Councils and the community to provide local markets, market town events and Four Seasons events

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

- Work with partner organisations to reduce crime, hate crime and anti-social behaviour through the Community Safety Partnership
- Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland-wide Community Cohesion Action Plan and project resourced by the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF)

### **Key projects for 2019/20**

- Bid for Government 'High Street' grant and implement any resulting action plans
- Work with partners to deliver the property improvements and activity plan as part of the Heritage Lottery Funded Wisbech High Street enhancement project
- Lead on the delivery of the redevelopment of the 'High Risk' High Street properties of Numbers 24 and 11/12 High Street to improve the streetscape and economy of the Town Centre
- Work with partners to improve or replace our bus shelter facilities at Kings Dyke, Mount Pleasant Road, South Green and Broad Street
- Replace 300 street lights with LED luminaries to improve energy efficiency,

performance and public safety

- Undertake surface, drainage and lighting improvement works within Church Terrace Car Park to provide a safe and user-friendly town centre facility
- Work with the Town Council, Partners and the community to reduce anti-social behaviour within Furrowfield Car Park by improving lighting, signage and speed reducing features

#### **Performance indicators for 2019/20**

- Rapid or Village response requests actioned same or next day
- % of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards
- % of collected household waste – Blue Bin recycling
- Customer satisfaction with Refuse and Recycling services
- Customer satisfaction with Garden Waste service
- Street Pride and Friends of community environmental events supported
- Local Businesses supported and treated fairly
- % of those asked who are satisfied with events
- % of those asked who are satisfied with open spaces

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# Economy



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

- Working with our partners, local businesses, and the Combined Authority to attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities
- Provide responsive business support to encourage business growth, improve job diversity, skills and increased grant applications to support jobs and economic growth
- Promote and develop our Business Premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and our Light Industrial Estates to encourage investment, job creation and skills diversification
- Run a proactive and effective Marine Service to meet statutory obligations and promote business opportunities for the River Nene environment

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

- Enable appropriate growth, development and infrastructure through the delivery of a proactive and effective Planning Service
- Identify sites and interventions the Council should make to deliver development
- Work with partners to further develop and help deliver a viable holistic regeneration and growth proposition of Wisbech Garden Town
- Use the Council's surplus property assets to provide new development opportunities to support and deliver sustainable economic and residential growth
- Identify and bid for external funding that aligns with and supports our housing, economic and growth objectives

## **Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements across Fenland**

- Promote sustainable transport (infrastructure and community) initiatives within Fenland including road, rail and concessionary travel to improve links to employment and access to services for the community
- Engage with the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council on the feasibility and delivery of major infrastructure projects across Fenland including road (Wisbech and March Access studies, A47 Economic Corridor and A605 Kings Dyke improvements) and rail (Rail Strategy, improvements to railway stations and the March to Wisbech link)
- Promote and influence how housing and infrastructure funding is used to stimulate housing development and economic growth in Fenland through working with the Combined Authority

### **Key projects for 2019/20**

- Prepare four Market Town socio-economic masterplans (under the banner of Growing Fenland) by the summer of 2019
- Work with the Combined Authority to prepare bids to the CPCA as a direct result of the Growing Fenland masterplans. If successful, work with partners to deliver the

programme of interventions

- Commence review of our Local Plan to ensure the District can meet its Housing and Economic Growth targets and aspirations

**Performance indicators for 2019/20**

- % of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks
- % of minor applications determined in 8 weeks
- % of other applications determined in 8 weeks
- % occupancy of our Business Premises Estate
- % of customers satisfied with our Business Estates
- % occupancy of Wisbech Yacht Harbour

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# Quality Organisation



Our 'Quality Organisation' priorities are in place to support effective service delivery. They contribute to the strong foundations of the Council; making sure it runs smoothly day-to-day delivering our priorities.

## **Governance, Financial Control and Risk Management**

- Maintain robust and effective financial standards, robust internal controls and effective management. Evidence this in our Annual Audit Letter, Risk Management Strategy, Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

## **Transformation and Efficiency**

- Engage with the Combined Authority's Public Service Reform agenda
- Pursue transformation and commercialisation opportunities, including co-location of services, to support effective ways of working and deliver additional income or cost savings
- Deliver required savings (as outlined in our CLG Efficiency Plan and Comprehensive Spending Review) whilst remaining a stable and sustainable organisation

## **Performance Management**

- Set challenging performance targets to ensure effective delivery of our Business Plan priorities
- Report regularly on service performance (both in-house and shared) to the Corporate Management Team, Councillors and the Public

## **Consultation and Engagement**

- Appropriately consult with residents about Council services and proposals as outlined in our Consultation Strategy. Use feedback to improve service delivery

## **Excellent Customer Service**

- We will maintain the Council's CSE accreditation to ensure we continue the most effective service to our communities, including through our Fenland @ your service shops and Community Hubs
- Help residents to access our services digitally and self-serve (as outlined in our Channel Shift strategy) to allow us to provide more support for vulnerable customers and complex queries

## **Equalities**

- Meet our Public Sector Equality duty by delivering the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act and 1998 Human Rights Act through our core service delivery. Publish an Annual Equality Report to demonstrate how we do this.

## **Asset Management and Commercialisation**

- Ensure our asset base is suitable, sustainable, fully utilised and maximises income opportunities and financial efficiencies
- Ensure the adopted Capital Programme is developed and delivered in line with our Corporate Asset Management Plan to maintain the integrity and safety of our assets
- Work jointly with public, private and third sector partners to improve access to our services and those provided from co-located facilities
- Develop and deliver a sustainable commercial investment strategy

## **Workforce Development**

- We will ensure that our workforce are effective and that we equip them with the right skills to deliver Council priorities
- Support and empower staff to make effective decisions within a pleasant working environment

## **Enforcement**

- Use a fair and proportionate approach to improve living, working and environmental standards

## **Health and Safety**

- Maintain effective Health and Safety policies and systems to comply with relevant legislation and local requirements
- We will deliver all aspects of the Council's Health and Safety action plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the Council's workforce, partners and wider community
- We will ensure the health and wellbeing of our workforce by providing them with effective support mechanisms to ensure they deliver for our communities

### **Key projects for 2019/20**

- Develop and launch a new website design to improve content and navigation
- Implement the PAS (Planning Advisory Service) review Action Plan
- Support District and Parish Council all out elections across the whole of Fenland, ensuring confidence in and the integrity of the election process

### **Performance indicators for 2019/20**

- Customer queries resolved at first point of contact
- Customers satisfied by our service
- Contact Centre calls answered within 20 seconds
- Contact Centre calls handled
- Council Tax collected
- Council Tax net collection fund receipts
- Number of visits to the FDC website
- % of staff that feel proud to work for FDC