

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2019 - 2.30 PM



**PRESENT:** Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor K Owen, Councillor Mrs K Mayor and Councillor S Tierney

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor M Humphrey (Vice-Chairman), Councillor G Booth, Councillor S Clark, Councillor S Count and Councillor D Hodgson

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Izzi Hurst (Member Services & Governance Officer), Sam Anthony (Head of HR and OD), Richard Cassidy (Corporate Director), Gary Garford (Corporate Director), Dan Horn (Head of Housing & Neighbourhood Services) and Aarron Locks (Community Safety Manager)

**GUESTS:** Councillor A Hay, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor D Oliver, Councillor C Seaton and PC David Arnold (Cambridgeshire Constabulary)

## **OSC38/18 PREVIOUS MINUTES.**

The minutes of the meeting of 14 January 2019 were confirmed and signed, subject to the following comments;

1. Councillor Boden said in reference to minute OSC33/18 point 2 (page 5 of the agenda pack) he had made an additional comment stating that on average, there had been a £400,000 difference historically between the estimated surplus and the final outturn figure.

## **OSC39/18 MATTERS ARISING - UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS.**

Members were provided with an update on the status of actions raised at previous meetings of the Committee.

1. The Contact Centre data will be circulated to members in the near future.
2. Councillor Boden suggested that consideration needs to be given on how complaints in relation to Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) are recorded as currently the Council only record the number of complaints that come in directly. Sam Anthony agreed to provide members with data relating to the complaints received by ARP directly as oppose to those received via the Council's 3Cs process.

## **OSC40/18 FENLAND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP.**

Councillor Boden agreed to consider this agenda item first to allow PC David Arnold (Cambridgeshire Constabulary) to leave the meeting and return to his duties.

Members considered the Fenland Community Safety Partnership (FCSP) report.

PC David Arnold explained that Inspector Ian Lombardo was due to attend today's meeting on behalf of Cambridgeshire Constabulary however had been called away on urgent police business and sent his apologies.

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

1. Councillor Boden stated that Councillor Mrs Laws had submitted a question in relation to this item. She asked why data on Whittlesey Food Bank had not been included in the statistics reported (page 98 of the Agenda Pack). Dan Horn agreed to investigate why this data was not included and report back to members.
2. Councillor Boden asked for further information on the amber status in relation to scam awareness (page 91 of the Agenda Pack). Councillor Oliver explained that an amber status means the action requires intervention to ensure the target is met. He stated that the work in relation to Cybercrime is relatively new, having only been subject to a strategic assessment at the FCSP meeting in October 2018. The action remained amber as the number of people who had completed the training course had not been confirmed. He confirmed that at the FCSP meeting in January 2019, the Police, Fire Services and the Council all confirmed they had completed the training therefore this action will change to green going forward.
3. Councillor Oliver added that they are now widening the scope of this training and teams within the organisations can complete the training online. He agreed to provide members with the link to the online training course. Councillor Tierney confirmed that he had completed the course and found it very useful.
4. Aarron Locks stated that the online course takes approximately 20 minutes to complete and he is hopeful that the knowledge gained from this will be passed on throughout the community.
5. Councillor Boden asked if the Council informs local businesses of the risks of Cybercrime. PC David Arnold explained that the Police have specially-trained officers and a dedicated Cybercrime department that deals with this crime. He confirmed that Cybercrime affects businesses as well as individuals in the community.
6. Councillor Boden suggested that the Council focuses on making businesses aware of the risks of Cybercrime. Aarron Locks explained that the strategic assessment carried out on Cybercrime focused on individuals in the community and those that are deemed most vulnerable. The Council engaged with the Police during this process and he agreed to feedback this suggestion to the Police and FCSP.
7. Councillor Owen asked which specific age groups are more likely to fall victim to Cybercrime. Aarron Locks explained that the assessment identifies parts of the community most at risk and higher-risk age groups. The most vulnerable members of the community are the older generation however the younger generation are also considered high risk as they are more likely to partake in high risk behaviour online and are the most connected.
8. Councillor Boden asked how widespread a problem Cybercrime is in Fenland. Aarron Locks explained that Cybercrime tends to be under reported and victims may find it hard to report due to embarrassment they may feel. He added that many of these crimes are not recorded, as bank fraud is not necessarily dealt with by the Police and it is believed that a large amount of Cybercrime is unreported.
9. Councillor Oliver agreed and stated that many Banks do not report Cybercrime fraud to the Police if the value falls under a certain monetary threshold therefore it is difficult to quantify the amount of victims of this crime.
10. Councillor Boden said that Cybercrime is becoming increasingly sophisticated and there needs to be more awareness on this.
11. Councillor Boden said that he was disappointed with the Police's response in relation to the number of female offenders in Fenland (page 98 of the Agenda Pack). He asked how statistically significant this is and whether there are any reasons why Fenland has such a high proportion of female offenders compared to the rest of region. Councillor Oliver confirmed that further research needs to be undertaken in relation to these statistics but unfortunately the Police have not had the resources available to complete this research. He confirmed that the FCSP had agreed that an analysis of female offenders in Fenland will be undertaken as part of the end of year review.
12. Councillor Boden asked if the findings of this analysis are significant, that they be bought

back to Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Dan Horn agreed to provide this information to members when it is available.

13. Councillor Tierney stated that the Police have other areas to prioritise over statistical analysis. Councillor Boden agreed but said it would be useful for members to receive further information on the extent of this issue in Fenland.
14. Councillor Boden asked how the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) priorities are managed within Fenland. Dan Horn explained that discussions are ongoing with the PCC in regards to this and place-based action plans will be undertaken to ensure that the district feeds into the countywide priorities set by the PCC.
15. Councillor Boden asked for further information on the effectiveness of the FCSP. Councillor Oliver explained that the partnership works well and all priorities are either completed annually or escalated to the next level. He added that in the future the FCSP is interested in working closely with the PCC.
16. Councillor Tierney stated that whilst the FCSP does undertake positive work, there are issues within the community such as homelessness and street drinking that need to be resolved further. Dan Horn agreed that multiagency issues such as these can be difficult to tackle and the FCSP discussed at length the issue of street drinking at their meeting in January. He explained that the FCSP are considering other solutions to this issue.
17. Councillor Boden explained that the view of the community is that they do not feel as safe as Fenland's low crime statistics suggest. The perception is that Fenland has a higher level of crime than it actually does and asked how we can change this perception in the community. PC David Arnold explained that people do not see the presence of the Police as much as they would like. Whilst the Police cannot be seen all the time, they are keen to promote that they are there for people and offer reassurance to the public. He explained that one of the ways they can achieve this is by taking 10-15 minutes out of their shift to patrol areas which improves the public perception of Police presence in the community.
18. Aaron Locks agreed and said the Police had increased their social media presence over the past 12-18 months releasing 'good news' stories which should assist with reducing the public's fear. PC David Arnold added that the Police have reached a lot of people via the use of social media. Officers are also engaging in public Q&A sessions too.
19. Councillor Boden highlighted that whilst social media can be used to promote positive stories, negative stories are also circulated online which gives the impression to the public that crime is more prevalent than it actually is.
20. Councillor Boden said that the presence of the Police in the community has reduced over recent years and asked how the FCSP balance their resources between safeguarding work and crime reduction. Dan Horn responded that the FCSP form a work programme from the annual strategic assessments and try to balance both of these areas with the resources available.
21. Councillor Boden highlighted that one of the key areas in Fenland that frustrates residents is parking related issues. Councillor Oliver agreed and said this is a national problem. One of the main issues is that it is very difficult to solve as many agencies are involved. He confirmed that the PCC and Cambridgeshire County Council are in discussions with how this can be rectified and a collective approach is required. He welcomed any suggestions from members.
22. Councillor Tierney said there were options available to enforce parking contraventions but agencies are not always willing to support and fund it. He suggested that one of the options available is reintroducing Traffic Wardens into the community. Councillor Oliver reiterated that this is a complex issue that would involve multiple agencies.
23. Councillor Mrs Mayor stated that she had read an article recently in a national newspaper, about residents funding private security patrols to tackle parking contraventions. She asked if Kingdom's enforcement powers could be expanded to include this area as the Council's Streetscene officers are limited in what they can do. Councillor Oliver confirmed that this is one option available but this would require the Police to transfer powers over to these agencies. He explained that the main issue is funding, as if enforcement agencies are used any fines generated are paid back to Central Government and not retained by local

authorities.

24. Gary Garford confirmed that CCC as Highway Authority would need to decriminalise on street parking to empower districts to take their own action.
25. Councillor Tierney highlighted that if parking enforcement was profitable, the Police would still undertake this function. He suggested that Town Councils may be interested in discussing the options available with the relevant agencies.
26. Councillor Boden agreed that there are alternative routes that can be explored in relation to parking enforcement.

Councillor Boden thanked PC David Arnold for his attendance at today's meeting.

## **OSC41/18 PROGRESS IN DELIVERING THE ENVIRONMENT CORPORATE OBJECTIVES 2018-2019.**

Members considered the Progress in Delivering the Environment Corporate Objectives 2018-19 report.

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

1. Councillor Boden suggested that the report is not in a suitable format as the emphasis appears to be on the Council's successes rather than areas of improvement or failures. He asked consideration to be given to this recommendation for next year's report. Richard Cassidy and Member Services agreed to consider this.
2. Councillor Mrs Mayor asked what influences the areas of focus in the report, as this seems unclear. Councillor Oliver confirmed that these are influenced by the Business Plan priorities along with what opportunities and challenges there are ahead. Richard Cassidy highlighted that the grounds maintenance contract was identified as a key area of focus, as there were issues with this during the previous year.
3. Councillor Mrs Mayor asked if the remit of Kingdom enforcement officers could be an area of focus. Richard Cassidy confirmed that Kingdom had been awarded the enforcement contract following a successful tender and members had had the opportunity to view the specification of this tender. He confirmed that their focus will be hot spot areas as identified by the Council and through consultation with the community.
4. Councillor Tierney asked if Kingdom have reduced their patrols as they have not been as visible recently. Councillor Murphy confirmed that as Kingdom's patrols become more effective, there is less need for them to patrol certain areas.
5. Councillor Boden stated that Councillor Count had submitted a question in relation to 11-12 High Street, Wisbech. He asked if the agreed back-to-back sale has fallen through and does this expose the Council to financial risk. Gary Garford confirmed that a confidential report was agreed by Cabinet in relation to the purchase of the property but did not include a back-to-back purchase and sale. The first step was the Council purchased the property (which has recently been completed) and the second was to attempt to get a developer interested in the project. Once a developer agrees, a build lease contract will be signed and the freehold will transfer to the developer on completion of the works. It must follow this process as the property is subject to an HLF grant which must be protected and the Council's interests must be protected.
6. Councillor Tierney stated in regards to the Wisbech High Street Project, a large amount of funding was used to employ a Project Manager. The perception of the project is that there have been many issues and problems. Gary Garford confirmed the cost of the Project Manager post was paid for by the HLF funding but highlighted that a lot of work has gone into securing grants for over 12 buildings with 20 activities ongoing. Councillor Tierney thanked Gary Garford for the clarification. Gary Garford explained that the projects are very complex and owners have not taken the grants on offer as the Council had hoped. He said the Council are working hard to encourage more owners to take part in the scheme.

7. Councillor Boden asked if there is a financial risk to the Council as a result of the project at 11-12 High Street, Wisbech. Gary Garford said whilst there is always a risk with a project however the Council have minimised this by engaging with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) who are willing to assist with additional funding if the Council need to complete the works themselves, subject to repayment terms agreed. He clarified that Cabinet had considered a confidential report which contained information on the risks and agreed this option. Councillor Boden agreed to pass this information on to Councillor Count.
8. Councillor Boden stated that the update in relation to the Council's car-parks is descriptive and the report does not provide numerical data on the effectiveness of car parking in the district. He asked how the Council measure the effectiveness of their carparks. Councillor Murphy explained that the report provides members with an update on carpark related maintenance activities. He confirmed that wider strategic assessments have been carried out in the past which provided data on usage, capacity and trends. This information was reported to both Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the time; however no studies have occurred recently that could inform this year's performance report.
9. Councillor Boden asked if the Council would benefit from repeating a study into their carparks. Gary Garford explained that the last study was carried out approximately 10 years ago and showed that Fenland benefited from an adequate level of car parking at that time. He informed members that if they wish to undertake a study into carparks usage, it would be helpful for officers to better understand members objectives so a suitable brief could be agreed.
10. Councillor Boden asked for a timescale for this potential study. Gary Garford responded that the study would take around 6 months once a brief is agreed as a provider would need to be procured prior to the assessment taking place.
11. Councillor Mrs Mayor asked for further information on the works carried out on the bus shelter in Pondersbridge (page 32 of Agenda Pack). Councillor Murphy explained that although this is the Council's bus shelter, it no longer supports a publically scheduled bus service. The Council have previously worked with local residents and removed the graffiti however as the shelter is no longer used for its intended purpose, it has been recommended not to replace it and to remove the asset. He added that the Council have offered to undertake suitable repairs and gift the asset to the Town Council as the shelter is being used by a private education transport service and provides transport to a local school.
12. Councillor Owen disagreed with this approach as the shelter is still being used by school children and they should not be penalised because of this. Councillor Murphy clarified that the Council has no use for this shelter anymore as it is only being utilised as transport to the school. He reiterated that they have offered the asset to Whittlesey Town Council however they are not willing to take on the maintenance.
13. Councillor Boden queried why the Council still maintain certain bus shelters as the Council is not responsible for public transport therefore whether they operate a scheduled or non-scheduled bus service is irrelevant. Gary Garford explained that many of these assets were inherited when the district had regular bus services and routes. When the routes and services stopped, local members were consulted and asked if the Council should maintain these shelters with some saying the Council should and others saying not.
14. Councillor Tierney stated that the Council should have carried out the works on the Pondersbridge bus shelter. Councillor Murphy confirmed that the Council did offer to fix it and transfer it to Whittlesey Town Council however they did not accept this offer.
15. Councillor Tierney stated that if the Council continue to transfer responsibility to other authorities, there will be no requirement for the Council. Gary Garford explained that the Council constantly review and manage their asset base and consult with members in relation to this as it relates to the agreed reduction of costs approach to achieve budget savings.
16. Councillor Boden asked which local members were advised of this and when. Gary Garford suggested it was carried out on a case by case basis. Subsequent to the meeting in relation to the Pondersbridge shelter, Gary Garford has confirmed that all Whittlesey District

members were consulted along with the Portfolio Holder and Whittlesey Town Council.

17. Councillor Boden asked if the correct approach is being taken in relation to street light maintenance as only 6 out of 12 parish councils have entered into the agreement (page 33 of the Agenda Pack). Councillor Mrs Hay explained that the street lights belong to each of the parish councils and the Council have offered to carry out the management and maintenance of these in return for funding from the parish councils. As a result of this, some parish councils have chosen to remain with this agreement via new Service Level Agreements and some have agreed to manage their own lighting assets.
18. Councillor Mrs Mayor highlighted the success of the Green Dog Walker campaign in Whittlesey however the report does not highlight this enough. She confirmed that in Whittlesey, they will be visiting local primary schools to build awareness and this will also be attended by the Council's Streetscene officers. Councillor Murphy stated that he believes the campaign is very successful in providing support to responsible dog owners who wish to tackle dog fouling within their local communities.
19. Councillor Mrs Mayor added that there is still an issue with dog fouling and by engaging with local schools, this should build awareness amongst the younger generation who may then be able to educate their parents on this issue. Councillor Murphy agreed in this approach and said that he has noticed in Chatteris that dog fouling has reduced in the last 18 months and dog owners are becoming more conscious.
20. Councillor Boden highlighted the disproportionate fixed penalty notice (FPN) statistics (page 37 of the Agenda Pack). He asked if the balance of Kingdom patrols is correct as the figures suggest a serious issue in Wisbech compared to the other Market Towns. Councillor Murphy explained that whilst patrols are undertaken in the other Market Towns, officers do not detect the volume of offences. He suggested Wisbech has a higher offence rate due to the size of the town and number of residents. He reminded members that as part of Kingdom's new contract with the Council, town and parish councils will be able to influence patrols in specific locations dependent on their needs.
21. Councillor Tierney agreed that as Wisbech is larger and has more residents, the number of offences will be higher. He said he would like to see more patrols in Wisbech as these seem to have reduced in recent months.
22. Councillor Boden reiterated that 15 times as many FPNs were issued in Wisbech compared to Whittlesey and this seems disproportionate.
23. Councillor Owen said he was not surprised to see a higher level of offences in Wisbech as the town does have a higher crime rate than other parts of the district.
24. Councillor Boden queried the overall payment rate for FPNs issued by Kingdom as the figures reported do not seem correct. Councillor Murphy agreed to provide members with this information.
25. Councillor Mrs Mayor asked if fly-tipping offences have increased or reduced in the last year as the report does not give a clear indication of this. Councillor Murphy explained that nationally fly-tipping is increasing and the total number of recorded 'flytips' in Fenland has increased by more than 20% from the previous year. Whilst the number of incidents has increased, the amount of waste collected remains similar. The Council will continue working on education and enforcement of this offence and the Peterborough Waste Partnership (Recap) have recently recruited a fly-tipping coordinator to implement a shared approach to this with partner authorities.
26. Councillor Owen highlighted that it is common on social media for people to advertise personal waste collection services. He suggested that the Council should release information to the public informing them of the licences required to carry out this service. Councillor Murphy agreed and confirmed that the Council are running a campaign in Spring 2019 which will address this issue and raise awareness.
27. Councillor Tierney highlighted that many legitimate companies advertise their services on social media and therefore we should not assume that all of these are not authentic.
28. Councillor Tierney explained that Cambridgeshire County Council are trying to ensure that company waste is not being disposed of at the Household Waste Recycling Centres and they are now challenging individuals with commercial-style vehicles in an effort to stop this.

29. Councillor Mrs Mayor highlighted that Streetscene officers are able to deal with nuisance vehicles however many of these involve parking issues too (page 39 of the Agenda Pack). Councillor Murphy agreed that this is a district wide issue and explained that on-street parking is instigated by the Highways authority with enforcement being the responsibility of the Police. Decriminalisation of such parking powers across the district would be required to be enabled by Cambridgeshire County Council and relevant enforcement management and funding would need to be established.
30. Councillor Boden agreed that the current approach in parking enforcement does not work. He suggested Fenland District Council, town and parish councils should give consideration to the other options available to them.
31. Councillor Tierney said the Police need to be encouraged to reinstate traditional traffic wardens.
32. Councillor Oliver agreed to pass members discussions surrounding parking issues back to the PCC.
33. Councillor Mrs Mayor asked for the type of queries received in relation to funfairs (page 39 of the Agenda Pack). Councillor Murphy confirmed that the majority of these were in regards to car parking arrangements, parking obstructions and information on the funfairs.
34. Councillor Mrs Mayor asked if any memorial inspections had been carried out in Whittlesey (page 39-40 of the Agenda Pack). Councillor Murphy confirmed that only 6 inspections have been carried out in the Whittlesey lawn section this financial year as the majority of memorials in the town have already been tested and are not scheduled to be re-tested yet.
35. Councillor Mrs Mayor endorsed the Council's new sustainable planting scheme (page 44 of Agenda Pack) and said the new team seems to be working very well.
36. Councillor Mrs Mayor asked why Burnthouse Windfarm at Turves was not included in the report (page 46 of the Agenda Pack). Councillor Murphy explained that the Burnthouse Windfarm fund is not administered by the Council as it is not subject to a Section 106 agreement. He confirmed that the fund is administered by Cambridgeshire Community Foundation.
37. Councillor Boden stated that the number of incidents recorded by CCTV in Wisbech is a lot higher than the other Market Towns. He asked if this is due to a higher level of anti-social behaviour or a higher number of cameras in Wisbech. Councillor Oliver explained that the more cameras in operation, it is expected that more incidents will be recorded. CCTV data reflects that Wisbech does have the highest incident demand with the town requiring 50% of Fenlands total police demand. Councillor Oliver said that as a local resident of Wisbech he does not believe crime is higher there than anywhere else in the district and he has always felt safe. He believes that Wisbech is perceived as an unsafe place even though the crime statistics are very low compared to national averages.
38. Councillor Tierney suggested that although statistics are helpful, they sometimes take away consideration from the underlying issues. Wisbech does have a street drinking problem which does create a feeling of lack of safety amongst residents however each town needs to assess their individual problems and work towards changing these.
39. Councillor Boden asked for the number of CCTV cameras in each of the Market Towns. Councillor Oliver confirmed that there are 6 CCTV cameras in Whittlesey, 15 in Chatteris, 14 in March and 40 in Wisbech. He clarified that not all of these are the property of the Council with some owned by Housing Associations, the Port and Car Parks. Whilst these cameras are not the property of the Council, we do monitor them.

Councillor Boden thanked officers and members for their contributions to today's meeting.

#### **OSC42/18 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME.**

Members agreed the Future Work Programme.

The Draft Work Programme for 2019/20 was tabled at the meeting. Izzi Hurst informed members that the dates for the next Municipal Year will be circulated shortly.

4.30 pm

Chairman