

Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

August 2020
(For performance in April to June 2020)

Cabinet Members



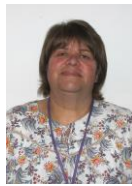
**Councillor
Chris Boden**

Leader of the Council
& Portfolio Holder for
Finance



**Councillor
Ian Benney**

Portfolio Holder for
Economic Growth



**Councillor
Sam Clark**

Portfolio Holder for
Social Housing &
Leisure



**Councillor
Susan Wallwork**

Portfolio Holder for
Communities



**Councillor
Mrs Jan French**

Deputy Leader of the
Council



**Councillor
Miss Sam Hoy**

Portfolio Holder for
Housing



**Councillor
Mrs Dee Laws**

Portfolio Holder for
Planning



**Councillor
Peter Murphy**

Portfolio Holder for
Environment



**Councillor
Chris Seaton**

Portfolio Holder for
Social Mobility &
Heritage



**Councillor Steve
Tierney**

Portfolio Holder for
Transformation &
Communication

Communities

Projects from Business Plan:

Work with landlords to improve housing conditions and management standards in the district's private sector, including using the Council's enforcement powers (Cllr Sam Hoy)

The Council has undertaken 7 positive interventions in response to new requests for service for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) across the district.

The Council has also investigated 54 complaints from tenants occupying privately rented accommodation in the same period. Council officers intervened to remove Category 1 hazards (serious faults) and Category 2 hazards (less serious faults) from properties to make them safe for the residents.

The geographical spread is as follows:

Town	HMOs investigated	Privately Rented Homes investigated
Wisbech	7	27
March	0	11
Chatteris	0	2
Whittlesey	0	0
Villages	0	14 Manea =3 Leverington =5 Guyhirn = 1 Wimblington =1 Murrow = 2 Parson Drove =1 Christchurch = 1

Private Sector Housing enforcement 01 April 2020 - 30 June 2020

	Numbers since 01 April 2020	Raised charge total £	Income received £
Improvement Notice	2	480.00	0
Prohibition	0	0	0
CPN (Intent)	2	24,000	0
CPN (Final)	6	57,500	11,201
Other	1	60.00	0
HMO applications	2	1,500	1,500

Support property owners to bring long-term empty homes back into use, helping to address the district's housing needs (Cllr Sam Hoy)

Over the last three months the Empty Homes Officer has focused on tracing and engaging with owners of empty homes and tasking them to prioritise their focus on bringing properties back into use; either by supporting them to sell their house, or referring them to local letting agents with a view to renting in the private sector. The officer has also established good links with partner agencies who can assist in tracing owners with no forwarding address; which has resulted in contacting owners and establishing action plans. The officer continues to work closely with benefit colleagues in ARP to help validate records and ensuring the Council Tax system is accurate in relation to empty homes.

Since the end of November 2019 when the officer commenced work 93 homes that had been empty for more than 6 months have been brought back into use. Of the 93, 42 were as a result of the proactive work of the officer. 22 homes have been brought back into use from April 2020.

Prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping through working with individuals, families, landlords, housing associations and providers to meet the housing needs of residents in crisis (Cllr Sam Hoy)

Housing Options Team and the Rough Sleeper co-ordinator work closely together to ensure anyone needing help due to homelessness or rough sleeping are given the best opportunity to find alternative accommodation. So far the Housing Options Team has prevented 52 households from becoming homeless since April 2020. 57 Rough Sleepers have also been found temporary accommodation of which 8 have subsequently been found permanent accommodation in the private rented sector. All rough sleepers are assessed for ongoing support needs to reduce any tenancy failure risk.

It has been hard to find accommodation due to the COVID 19 lockdown but the teams have worked extremely hard to achieve this result and will continue to do so over the coming months to reach the prevention target of 300 households.

Deliver four Golden Age Fairs across the district (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

As a result of the pandemic no events have been held.

The council is holding a virtual Senior Citizens Advisory Board meeting in September to explore the use of the brand and to work to support the community impact from Covid-19.

Increase the use of local open spaces and collaborate with local activity providers and other partners to address health inequalities

During the period of lockdown local open spaces have remained open and maintained so they may be enjoyed for exercise.

Although organised activities have not taken place skate parks and now play parks are open for use.

Other Projects:

Leisure Update (Cllr Sam Clark)

With Government advice changing, Freedom Leisure is now able to reopen our local leisure centres from Saturday 25th July.

The team has been working hard ensuring that the facilities are Covid secure, with appropriate policies, procedures and training, following Government guidance, being put in place ready to welcome back customers.

The reopening will happen in a phased manner as this will be the most financially efficient way of reopening for the Council. All leisure centres will open in the morning and afternoon / evenings, and be closed in the middle of the day. The closed period is when demand is usually lowest. As customers come back and demand rises we will revise opening hours wider.

The Covid Secure guidelines mean a different way of using a leisure centre and this means booking in advance for every activity, reduced capacity – for instance every other piece of gym equipment will be out of use to allow for social distancing and cleaning regimes have changed substantially. Initially, with demand below usual

levels, we don't believe this will be an issue and customers will be booking all sessions in any case so people will not be turned away. As Government restrictions change over the coming months, we expect changes of practice within the leisure facilities that will increase capacity per hour.

Freedom is contacting customers regarding the reopening, with social media posts happening on a regular basis and the Freedom Team being prompt with replies – raising customer confidence.

The Freedom centres in Fenland offer a great experience to customers. Covid has changed that slightly, but as confidence grows that the risk of Covid is receding, we expect membership numbers to rise accordingly.

Think Communities Update (including I Heart Wisbech) (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

A proposed partnership agreement has been drafted with the support of Supporting Cambridgeshire to create a collaboration of Public Sector and Community and Voluntary Sector partners to work together as one team to build capacity in order to capture inward investment from funding bodies to help develop opportunities and projects in the town.

The agreement has been developed following 3 workshops to help build an understanding of the sort of partnership that would work in the context of the organisations working in Wisbech.

The collaboration will now start to meet to look at the potential investment opportunities and how best to work together to maximise the chances of being successful with submissions made.

Pride In Fenland Awards (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

The Pride In Fenland awards were postponed in March as a result of COVID 19 and will be rescheduled as soon as Government advice allows such an event to take place.

Health & Wellbeing Update (including Covid-19 Outbreak Plan implementation) (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

In April, Upper Tier local authorities and in particular Directors of Public Health were tasked by central government with the development of a Covid-19 Outbreak Plan.

In Cambridgeshire this plan was approved at the end of June by a newly developed Public Health Board. The plan is a public facing document and explains how Covid-19 will be monitored and how outbreaks will be managed in certain high risk settings (schools, workplaces, health and care settings and within more vulnerable communities).

The district councils, their environmental health service, community hubs and other front line staff (such as housing and communities) are an important part of this outbreak management plan particularly in settings such as workplaces and more vulnerable communities).

The plan focusses on Prevention, Surveillance and Response and specific protocols exist for cases identified in these high risk settings.

Examples of the Council's role include; support for those self- isolating through the community hub service, identifying contacts in vulnerable settings such as Houses in Multiple Occupation and day to day contact and support for workplaces who have more than 1 positive case reported. All of this work is done in close partnership with Public Health England and public health teams from the County Council.

Delivery of the plan is overseen by the Public Health Board and supported by the Programme Delivery Group, Local Resilience Forum Strategic Coordinating Group and the Member Led Engagement Board.

The plan can be found by clicking on this link:

[-https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Cambridgeshire-and-Peterborough-Local-Outbreak-Control-Plan-v12.pdf](https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/Cambridgeshire-and-Peterborough-Local-Outbreak-Control-Plan-v12.pdf)

Wisbech 2020 Update (Cllr Chris Boden)

Although the COVID-19 epidemic has impacted on the original timescales, plans are still in place to review the various Council projects being delivered in the town of Wisbech (including the Wisbech 2020 Vision) with a view to aligning them more closely. Discussions will be held with the Wisbech 2020 Core Vision Group in due course.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 20/21	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
ARP1	Council tax support – days to process new claims and changes	8 days	7.07	7.07	
ARP2	Housing benefit – days to process new claims and changes	8 days	4.18	4.18	
CELP1	Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	602	400	61	
CELP2	Number of people prevented from becoming homeless	390	300	52	
CELP3	Number of empty properties brought back into use	NEW	Baseline	22	
CELP4	Amount of New Homes Bonus achieved as a result of bringing empty homes back into use	NEW	Baseline	Annual	
CELP5	Customer satisfaction with Golden Age events (as per event)	298	200	None held due to C-19	
CELP6	Number of Active Health local sessions per year that improve community health	NEW	600*	None recorded due to C-19	
CELP7	Customer feedback across Freedom Leisure facilities in Fenland	NEW	80%	None recorded due to C-19	

Comments

These indicators are currently being met and are expected to achieve target at the end of the year, although an economic downturn could increase demand, thereby impacting processing performance.

Fenland has managed to spend 8.30% of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funds allocated by the DWP to assist tenants in the local area.

All Benefits staff continue to work effectively from home.

Vacancies have been advertised for Council Tax Billing Officers. This role also involves some Council Tax Support assessment. Depending on the location of candidates some successful recruits are likely to be based in Fenland Hall.

Environment

Projects from Business Plan:

Continue to deliver environmental enforcement using fixed penalty notices and the court process for serious offences (Cllr Peter Murphy)

During the period from April to June streetscene officers have continued to investigate reports of environmental offences.

The main types of issues have been fly tipping and abandoned vehicles.

Between April and June there have been 92 instances of fly tipping reported. Streetscene Officers attended more than 80 of these cases and followed up evidence found at 6 sites.

1 of these resulted in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to a male from March who admitted leaving 3 bags of household rubbish outside the March Household Recycling Centre when it was closed. This has now been paid.

35 abandoned vehicles have been reported to us during this time and a further 15 nuisance vehicles. Upon investigation this required our contractor to remove 5 from the highway.

All fixed penalty notices served by Kingdom Officers up to the end of January this year have now either been paid, cancelled (whereby the council incurs no cost) or referred through the court's single justice procedure for prosecution.

Deliver the Four Seasons events programme in partnership with our four market towns (Cllr Peter Murphy)

Due to the situation with Covid -19 all community events have been postponed. This included St George's Fayre, Chatteris Midsummer Festival and the Whittlesey Festival.

Community groups have remained in contact with their supporting officers and at present there are no plans to hold events this year. Community groups continue to plan for next year and officers will work with the groups to support their plans as and when the groups are ready to recommence the programme.

Deliver the Recycling Action Plan (Cllr Peter Murphy)

With emergency working arrangements for the Environmental Services Team significantly impacting on usual our waste and recycling communications and education these moved online; through emails, the website and via social media, in the first quarter of the year.

The increased amounts of waste and recycling initially in April also increased the amounts of incorrect materials. Continued work by collection crews checking bins and targeted posts online, supported by the Getting It Sorted network and social media, have resulted in incorrect materials returning to more typical levels in May.

Social media posts through the period have been really well received by customers and more widely shared than typically seen. The Fenland Bin Day App has also been promoted widely and now been downloaded more than 110,000 times.

Deliver a competitive trade waste service (Cllr Peter Murphy)

The Fenland Commercial Waste Service continued to operate as usual through April, May and June, although around half of our regular customers were partially or completely shut down for some or all of this time.

Income to the service has been affected by these closures and while a small number of new customers are coming to us, and we are supporting customers to adapt their waste collections in light of new working arrangements, overall income has been impacted in the first quarter.

Monitor and respond to the DEFRA Waste & Resources Strategy consultation with RECAP partners (Cllrs Peter Murphy & Steve Tierney)

We understand that Defra have delayed the detailed consultation on the future changes to waste collections in England until later in the year. Recap Board heard in July how the partnership plans to ensure Recap members are informed and best able to respond to this important consultation.

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

No update. Awaiting member steer.

Deliver the CCTV shared service with Peterborough City Council (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

The new shared service for CCTV went live from 1st January 2020 under the new control room location within Peterborough City.

The new shared service arrangement is performing well and has been able to maintain full service delivery and function even during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

During late January / early February 2020, the CCTV manager reviewed and prepared the CCTV shared service Business Continuity Plan (BCP) with a focus on virus / infectious disease control with a number of technical and staffing model work streams identified to support any future implementation of the CCTV BCP.

As such, a number of immediate changes were introduced, technical adaptations made and enhanced to allow the service to respond to any required risks or service impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In mid-March, due to the increase of virus infections in the UK, the CCTV service implemented its BCP plan to ensure services and the staff team were protected.

Key changes included the control room environment becoming locked down to any outside visitors including non-urgent police activity to further reduce staff risk and interaction.

As a result of these actions the CCTV service has been able to maintain its full 24/7/365 delivery of its services without any loss or disruption during the Covid-19 pandemic whilst ensuring staff continue to deliver services safely within the work place.

Other Projects:

Open Spaces and Grounds Maintenance Contract Update (Cllr Peter Murphy)

Tivoli has continued to provide the Council's grounds maintenance service throughout the lockdown period. Covid related issues have not impacted on the service and it has effectively been business as usual. Standards have been high and the sustainable

planting has come into its own this year, with our open spaces looking excellent since the start of summer.

Skate parks and now play areas are open once again, with the usual weekly safety checks ongoing to ensure the spaces are safe to use. Signage is up regarding precautions to take when using the play areas.

Street Lighting (Cllr Jan French)

Street Light Repairs & Maintenance

During the months of February and March 51 street light faults were reported to the EG&A Team and the necessary repair works were undertaken by FDC's street light contractor.

During April and May throughout the peak of the Coronavirus outbreak our street light contractor continued to maintain a reduced service provision for urgent and emergency works. 12 faults were reported to the EG&A Team during this time and passed to our street light contractor for rectification. During the month of June a further 8 street light faults were reported to the EG&A Team and passed to our street light contractor for rectification.

Collectively between 1st February and 30th June, 71 street light faults were reported to the EG&A which is approximately half the number of faults which would ordinarily have been reported during this period. This in part is likely to be attributed to the countrywide lockdown but also due to the current investment being made in FDC lighting assets.

Street Light Energy

FDC's new street light energy agreement commenced on 1st November 2019. Energy is supplied by the Councils chosen provider (total gas & power) via an ESPO energy framework. The agreement provides energy for street light assets owned or managed by FDC under a service level agreement. This currently includes assets owned by Clarion Housing Association and 6 of the Fenland Parish Councils. Officers continue to assist Elm Parish Council to enable them to implement alternative energy arrangements following their departure from FDC's repairs and maintenance contract in 2018.

Capital Street Light Replacement Works

Following placing the order last year for the replacement of 275 FDC category two defective street lights and having experienced a delay in obtaining the necessary materials, works commenced in March this year some 6 weeks later than intended.

The works are being undertaken in two sequential phases, with the first phase being aimed at replacing assets which are structurally defective or end of life and not

ornate in nature. The second phase will focus on those assets which have a low estimated remaining life, are ornate or require a site specific lighting design.

Whilst the replacement works got off to a flying start, unfortunately the Coronavirus outbreak and subsequent lockdown at the end of March meant that works were unable to continue at the rate or in the manner intended. However despite having a reduced workforce and having implemented a social distancing way of working, our street light provider continued to progress with the replacement works.

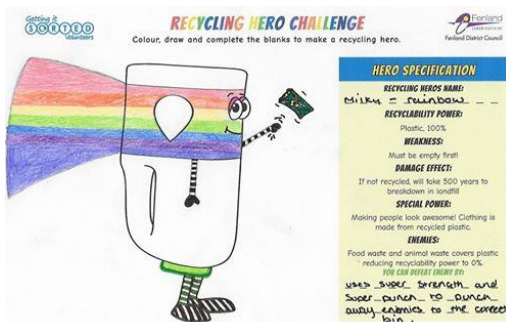
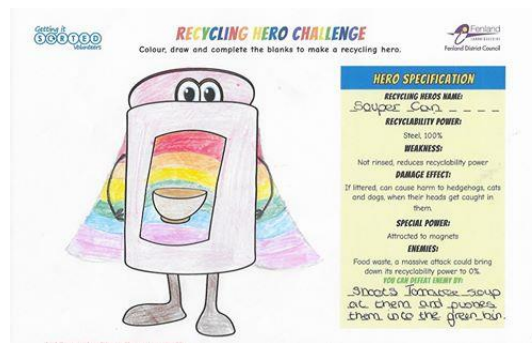
Since the commencement of the works in March 114 FDC street lights have so far been replaced and it is anticipated that phase one will be completed at the end of July. Phase two is anticipated to commence in August and shall be ongoing until October/November pending receipt of the associated materials.

Getting it Sorted Volunteers Update (Cllr Peter Murphy)

Updated during lockdown by our dedicated Getting IT Sorted Volunteers, this year's children's colouring competition was launched by Cllr Murphy early in lockdown to provide home schooled children with a little more to do.

This competition was also supported by activity sheets produced by the volunteers, available to download from the website

www.fenland.gov.uk/volunteers and these have already gone out in 400 Eco boxes organised by March based charity CCORRN.



Volunteers have also been involved in working on a virtual play week with The adventure play park, CCORN, 20Twenty productions with 'Rainbow boxes' going out in Wisbech to deprived families with ideas and supplies for crafting and learning.

Garden Waste Service Update (Cllr Peter Murphy)

The Garden Waste Service adapted to the impacts of the lockdown and Covid19 well with a continued service, with significantly increased amounts of garden waste collected, when other authorities were reducing or cancelling services.

Cllr Murphy extended the usual period of reduced price direct debit until the end of May and subscription levels have exceeded all previous years with more than 22,000 subscriptions by the end of June.

Customers appreciated the sustained garden waste service and crews received many thank you notes and other tokens of appreciation of their hard work and dedication.

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP) (Cllrs Peter Murphy & Steve Tierney)

Officers from with the Recap Partnership have jointly responded to issues created by Covid19 and assisted each other, along with creating communication routes for key contractors and suppliers, to ensure that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough waste services were able to react swiftly to situation changes and prepared to divert resources where required to keep waste moving through all stages of the system.

Community Safety Partnership Update (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

Impact of the pandemic on CSP activity

- The scheduled meeting of Fenland CSP in April was cancelled because of the social distancing requirements and the high demand being placed upon the partnership members. The next meeting is going ahead in mid-July using video conferencing facilities.
- The government lockdown measures and social distancing introduced during the Covid19 pandemic has resulted in cancelling 4 face to face community based engagement events for the period of April – June 2020.

During this time the community safety partnership has continued to provide key community safety messages through our own and partner's social media platforms with a focus on: Domestic Abuse, Mental Health well-being, COVID19 scams and government guidance on staying safe and well during the COVID19

pandemic.

As social distancing measures may stay in place for some time, the CSP is exploring alternative methods of delivering some form of community engagement linked with the priorities of the CSP.

- The Covid19 crisis resulted in the postponement of the Drug Harm Reduction Awareness training that was scheduled for March 2020. As with our engagement work we are looking at alternative methods of delivering this session to Fenlands front line professionals and volunteers.
- When the lockdown restrictions were introduced Fenland District Council, partner agencies and voluntary organisations from across Fenland came together to create the Fenland Community Hub. The objective of the hub was to help those most at risk during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Vulnerable residents were able to access practical support and advice via the Hub. The Hub focused on helping people with their food shopping, collecting medicines and other supplies, and friendly phone calls for those feeling lonely and isolated.

The Hub was also able to liaise with other statutory, voluntary and community organisations from across Cambridgeshire to ensure other needs, including health and social care, were attended to.

From the Hubs introduction in late March it has handled in excess of 1900 telephone contacts.

The CSP has supported the Hub by providing access to other organisations and their messaging to support keeping people safe. For example, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Against Scams because of the increased activity of internet based scams.

- The Covid19 pandemic and subsequent school closures and social distancing has resulted in the delivery of Safety Zones 2020 being cancelled. Opportunities for next year are being considered and we will continue to communicate with our partner agencies about the delivery of Safety Zone in 2021.

Street Drinking Update (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

COVID19 and the subsequent lockdown restrictions have had an impact upon the levels of observed and recorded street drinking and some of the associated problems. As well as the ability of partner agencies to continue to provide the level of support they were.

Street Scene Officers haven't observed as many occurrences as they'd expect and the Street Cleansing Team are reporting a reduction of alcohol related litter being recovered from the bins or found discarded.

As part of the Licensing enforcement action plan the Licensing Relevant Authorities Officer (RAO) & Street Drinking meetings have been combined. Combining these meetings will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of not only FDC resources but also that of partner agencies.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 20/21	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP8	Rapid or Village Response requests actioned the same or next day	95%	90%	96%	
CELP9	% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards (including graffiti and flyposting)	99%	93%	100%	
CELP10	% of household waste recycled through the blue bin service (1 month in arrears)	28%	28%	27%	
CELP11	Customer satisfaction with refuse and recycling services (quarterly)	99%	90%	N/A	
CELP12	Customer satisfaction with our garden waste service (quarterly)	94%	85%	N/A	
CELP13	Number of Street Pride, Green Dog Walkers, and Friends Of community environmental events supported	204	204	0	
CELP14	% of those asked who are satisfied with FDC's events (May, July, October, January)	96%	96%	0	

Comments
CELP13 Due to Covid 19 there have been no events therefore no data has been captured
CELP14 Due to Covid 19 there have been no events therefore no data has been captured

Economy

Projects from Business Plan:

Continue to review council land and property assets to ensure they are fit for purpose and optimised to deliver better public services, improve efficiency and release surplus land for residential and commercial development as outlined in our Commercial Investment Strategy (Cllr Ian Benney)

The surplus asset disposal programme will be reviewed in line with the now adopted Commercial & Investment Strategy. Whereupon sites with development potential will be evaluated against a set of criteria which will assess whether such sites are likely to produce greater returns if they are developed by the Council.

Of the surplus sites approved for sale by Cabinet there are 6 sites remaining to be sold either at auction or by private treaty. Currently these are on hold pending the appointment of an Officer resource. It is anticipated that a temporary appointment to this role will be made in August.

Continue to lobby for improvements to our transport infrastructure, including the A47 economic corridor (Cllr Chris Seaton)

Wisbech Access Strategy

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. The latest information about the project can be found on the County Council website from the following link:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-funding-bids-and-studies/wisbech-access-strategy>

A Wisbech Access Strategy Phase 1 delivery report is due to be presented to the County Council Highways and Transport Committee on 7 July 2020. A copy of the agenda and any papers can be found from the following link:

<https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1529/Committee/62/Default.aspx>

Key points to note are as follows:

- Projects at Broad End Road (BER2), Elm High Road A47 Roundabout (EH1) and Weasenham Lane/Elm High Road roundabout (EH7b) are fully funded
- Construction of the above three projects are due to start on site in late 2020/early 2021. The projects are due for completion in 2021 and 2022
- Land acquisitions and utility diversions are key current areas of work for the CCC Project team. Commencement of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) have been

give approval by CCC Highways and Transport Committee should they be needed.

Kings Dyke Level Crossing

This is primarily a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council.

Key points to note:

- In May 2020 Jones Bros Civil Engineering UK were appointed as the contractor to deliver the Kings Dyke Level Crossing scheme.
- Construction is expected to commence in late 2020 with the new road open to the public by the end of 2022.

The County Council website includes all the study information, technical details and progress information relating to the [Kings Dyke Crossing](#).

March Area Transport Study

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. A virtual room public consultation was held from 15 May to 28 June 2020. Copies of the project reports and technical information which make up the consultation

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-funding-bids-and-studies/march-transport-study>

A progress update was submitted to CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee for its 1 July 2020 meeting. Item 2.6. The paper updates on the progress of the public consultation and recommends taking Outline Business Case work forward.

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1969/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Key points to note:

- The results of the public consultation are being assessed by the County Council and will be made available in due course
- CPCA has confirmed the drawdown of additional funding to commence the Outline Business Case work and the preliminary design process for the schemes in the programme linked to the outcome of the public consultation.

March to Wisbech Railway Line

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. The full business case was submitted to CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee for its 1 July 2020 meeting. The papers relating to the business case can be found from the following website link. Item 2.7

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1969/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Key points to note:

- The CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee have approved the full business case for Wisbech Rail subject to the CPCA Board later in the month
- The full business case supports a heavy rail option for the Wisbech to March line scheme. It confirms that this option would be value for money
- A GRIP3B technical study was also completed alongside the full business case this confirms the single heavy rail option for the project, the station location and an alternative means for crossing the level crossings
- Options for additional funding are now being explored. The Restoring Railways Fund offers the best opportunity for national funding. CPCA Officer discussions are ongoing with Network Rail and the Mayor has been invited to meet the Railway Minister

A47 Dualling (CPCA Project)

This is a CPCA led project.

This project was last discussed by CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee during its March 2020 meeting. This was Item 8. A link to the paper for this meeting is below.

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/890/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Key points to note:

- The Combined Authority along with Cambridgeshire County Council and in collaboration with Highways England produced a Highways England Project Control Framework (PCF) Stage 0 report in 2019
- The above PCF Stage 0 report underwent a Stage Gate Assessment Review technical assessment. It successfully achieved green status in December 2019. This means that it can progress to stage 1 options identification
- CPCA and the Mayor are continuing to lobby Highway England and DfT for the A47 dualling scheme to be included in the Roads Investment Strategy (RIS) 2 (2020 – 2025) or RIS 3 (2025 – 2030)
- The CPCA are also intending to take the road scheme forward in line with parallel flood defence projects which can in turn support Wisbech Garden Town.
- CPCA have asked suppliers to cost PCF1 an PCF2 stages this will help to support ongoing decisions around funding of stage 1 and from which programme e.g. CPCA or Government.

A47 Guyhirn (Highways England Project)

There is no specific update in respect of this project. The latest information we have been provided with confirms a start on site time of 2021 with the scheme being open to traffic in 2022.

This is a Highways England Scheme that is part of the Roads Investment Strategy 1. More detail about this scheme and the latest updates can be found on the [Highways England website](#).

Support the delivery of interventions listed within the four market town 'Growing Fenland' socio-economic masterplans (Cllr Ian Benney)

The CPCA are committed to unlocking economic opportunities in each of our market towns. They have providing financial assistance to draw up masterplans and recently announced that each town will now be able to bid for up to £1m of capital funding to turn these plans into a reality.

Following approval of the four 'Growing Fenland' masterplans at a number of Council meetings in late 2019 and early 2020, Town Teams are now meeting to prioritise projects to be taken forward to bid for funding from the CPCA.

With the bidding process expected to open imminently, business cases will need to be produced in line with the guidance provided. A level of match funding is also likely to be required.

Continue to prepare a new Local Plan document, which will determine how the district will grow in the future (Cllr Dee Laws)

Cabinet, on 28th July, considered the Local Development Scheme which is the timetable which governs the preparation of the Local Plan. This was to take account of delays due to Covid-19 but also to allow the opportunity for a second call for sites exercise to take place in August and September. This means the Draft Local Plan consultation will take place in February 2021.

Deliver railway projects with CPCA support through the Manea, March and Whittlesea Stations Project Boards (Cllr Chris Seaton)

Manea Station

- Shelters – the new waiting shelter has now been installed.
- Car Park – the planning application has been submitted and is expected to be determined in the coming weeks. Greater Anglia have appointed consultants to finalise the single option design work that is expected to be complete in September 2020.

March Station

- Car parking and platform 1 building – all feasibility study and design work is ongoing. Final single option design work is expected to be complete in

July/August 2020

Whittlesea Station

- Shelters – the new waiting shelters have now been installed
- Cycle parking – the existing cycle parking has been moved to access road close to the ticket machines and information screens
- Lighting – new lighting has been installed on the access way and on the platforms.
- Car Park – Greater Anglia have appointed consultants to finalise the single option design work that is expected to be complete in September 2020.

Work with partners to deliver property improvements and the activity plan as part of the National Lottery Heritage Funded Wisbech High Street Project (Cllr Chris Seaton)

The Gap – 24 High Street

We have received confirmation that the restrictions on the legal title of this property have now been removed following 2 years of work by Officers and the Legal team. This will allow for a scheme and programme of redevelopment for the site to be finalised and presented to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for approval. A press release and communication plan was scheduled for 30th June. Demolition works of the dilapidated structure at the rear were completed in late March and the site is now completely clear and ready for redevelopment.

Further updates can be found on the Wisbech High Street Project Website:
www.highstreetwisbech.org.uk/content/new-contributions/updated-plans-for-no-24-high-st-the-gap

11-12 High Street

The developer has received the return of tenders for the main build contract and is currently assessing these before submitting a formal funding application. Officers await the outcome of the developers tender appraisal. Once the application for funding has been agreed, the build lease can be signed. The developer plans to commence demolition works in July (again delayed due to Covid-19) and scaffolding has been erected this week in readiness.

13-17 High Street

Some initial works have commenced at this property to implement the planning permissions which were due to expire in mid-June. The applicant is now awaiting the approval of the extension to the project grant expiry date before signing the grant agreement in order that works can commence.

18 and 19 High Street

A grant has been agreed for these two properties to assist with extensive roof and brickwork repairs, window repairs and appropriate replacement of some windows and

doors as well as a full redecoration of the facades and new signage. We are currently awaiting the return of the signed legal agreement from the owner prior to commencement of the works.

Other Properties

The project is currently working with owners and tenants of a further 3 properties who are in the process of applying for a grant for building improvements. All of these are historic properties and two are listed buildings. With a generous grant proportion available to assist with the repairs, the owners/tenants are in the process of gathering quotes, applying for statutory consents where applicable and completing their applications. Covid-19 has obviously impacted on operations and the ability to obtain quotations but we are seeing contractors returning to normal and returning quotes. With shops now re-opening, face to face meetings with property owners and tenants will be made easier.

Other Activity

Letters regarding intention to pursue action against some property owners/tenants who are not maintaining their properties have been issued. Although the deadline for communications was extended due to Covid-19 additional letters will now be issued. The initial letters have already resulted in property owners making contact.

An extension to the project end date has been requested which reflects the disruption caused by Covid-19 and dialogue so far with the NLHF has been positive.

Activity Plan

Due to the outbreak of Covid-19 the Activity Plan has been on hold since March and all events and activities postponed. There is an intention to participate in national Heritage Open Days event in September- although this will be a digital event, with an online exhibition of old photographs never before seen from the engineers archives.

It is hoped that the CWA will be able to resume the training scheme we launched prior to March in which several students were learning traditional repairs skills using the Council's chapel building on Mount Pleasant Road. More will be known in September.

Project updates available on the website: www.highstreetwisbech.org.uk

Support local businesses to achieve regulatory compliance through a 'better business for all' approach (Cllr Sam Hoy & Cllr Ian Benney)

The Better Business for All (BBFA) group was established before the Covid-19 crisis and its purpose is to bring Compliance Teams (Environmental Health & Licensing) together with Economic Growth/Development Teams within Councils across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough to engender closer working relationships and improve the interface with businesses.

During April to June the Better Business for All (BBfA) group have continued to work together in order to maintain a consistent approach with regard to regulatory service across Cambridgeshire.

At this time as guidance for business compliance has been changing almost daily the group have been able to share approaches and best practice using the knowledge hub shared group. This has been a successful approach with businesses across Cambridgeshire all receiving the same advice and support.

The BBfA group has not met this quarter; the next meeting is planned for July 2020 and will focus on discussions about membership of the steering group as Growth Hub representation ceased in June due to changes with the delivery of the Growth Hub and its move to an outsourced Growth Company.

Although the BBfA group hasn't met recently, they continue to share important intelligence and trend information, enabling FDC teams to respond where issues are identified.

Other Projects:

Economic Growth Team Activity (Cllr Ian Benney)

Government Grants

The Government announced a number of support schemes to assist businesses as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Within this package of measures Local Authorities were required to administer two Business Grant schemes which included:

1. Small Business Grant Fund and Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant Fund and;
2. Discretionary Grant Fund.

There has been a significant collaborative effort across a range of Council Teams to process and make grant payments, with the Economic Growth team creating the application process for both grants, assessing applications and where required engaging with over 250 applicants. Undertaking the approval or rejection decision process for the vast majority of applications.

Open For Business

In promoting wider business support to Fenland businesses, the Economic Growth Team created the 'Fenland Open For Business' webpages on the Fenland for Business website (www.fenlandforbusiness.co.uk) with over 120 businesses registering and promotion of the pages via Press Releases and social media and word of mouth. A database with in excess of 2,000 Fenland businesses has been created to use in continuing direct mail campaigns to promote the initiative and provide information on national, regional and local Covid 19 support.

Town Centres Reopening

As the relaxation of lockdown closures continue, the Economic Growth Team has been supporting the reopening of the streets. The Team has created a database of town centre businesses to who were contacted and asked to complete a re-opening survey. The Economic Growth Team worked with colleagues across the authority to develop the town centres re-opening plan.

Major Projects

Engaged with two of the major commercial development projects to understand timescales and issues and any barriers to ensure that the required support is in place to enable successful delivery.

Combined Authority

The Council are represented by the Economic Growth Team as a member of the Combined Authority Economic Recovery Team, which has supported commissioning of Hatch Regeneris report into the impact of Covid-19 on local economy that will help with insight to support a recovery plan. The Economic Recovery Team continue to meet fortnightly to share intelligence and information to aid the recovery of their respective parts of the County.

Inward Investment

During this time Officers have been engaged with Department International Trade regarding Foreign Direct Investment company engagement and with Greater Peterborough Economic Development Officers regarding the CPCA Inward Investment contract. There remains a strong relationship with Job Centre + and the Growth Hub to ensure that all stakeholders are working together to support Fenland Businesses. There have been some smaller, tentative relocation enquiries and the Economic Growth Team has worked with those companies, initially providing property information.

Future High Streets Fund (Cllrs Ian Benney and Chris Seaton)

A full business case has been submitted to MHCLG for March High Street for the Future High Street Fund. Results are expected this summer.

Skills Update (Cllr Chris Seaton)

Internally, the Council offers a range of apprenticeship qualifications out to our workforce, and are currently developing a wider apprenticeship offer to maximise apprentice posts being offered by the Council. We already have:

1 x HR Apprentice;
3 x Management Apprenticeship;
1 x Accountancy Apprenticeship (Finance);
1x ICT Apprentice;
1 x GDPR Apprentice (Member Services);
2 x Planning Apprentices

In addition to this, we are actively seeking apprenticeship opportunities in a number of teams, such as Project Management, Leadership and Management.

Promote and develop our Business Premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and Light Industrial Estates to encourage investment, business and job creation and skills diversification (Cllr Ian Benney)

The outbreak of Covid19 occurred during this reporting period and the effects of lockdown are continuing. Many of the businesses operating from our industrial portfolio have continued to trade and remained open throughout the period. Any periods of closure seem to have been short-lived. Two business tenants thought they would need to serve notice but have since decided to remain. One business tenant has served notice on a double unit but following negotiations has since decided to stay in the larger unit, releasing a smaller one. We anticipate that the smaller unit will be easier to re-let than a larger unit.

Our business centres were closed during lockdown and conferences have ceased. However as the buildings were designed so tenants can have unimpeded access we have kept a reception presence in each building. At both business centres a small number of tenants continued to operate from their offices, but the majority have not been in attendance as staff worked from home.

At South Fens business centre two tenants served notice, but both did so independent from Covid19. Also during the period one business moved into South fens and a further 3 offices are 'under offer'. At The Boathouse we have two tenants who occupy 3 offices and have served notice to leave, as a result of Covid 19. Both will retain an office so they are in effect downsizing. Another existing business at The Boathouse wishes to take one of the units being given up but they will release a smaller unit. Generally occupancy remains more buoyant at The Boathouse compared with South Fens.

Across the whole estate we cannot anticipate whether or not more tenants will decide to serve notice. By the nature of the tenancies which promote 'easy in and easy out terms', we are always at risk of tenants leaving on 2 or 3 months' notice.

Many of our tenants were able to qualify for the small business rates relief grant of £10,000 and whilst we could not dictate how they used that money we did

encourage take up of it and also reinforced it could help their business through a difficult period as despite the pandemic, rent was still due if a property remained occupied. Officers will continue to closely monitor occupancy and income, seeking to mitigate any effects from the loss of either.

Sail the Wash Partnership Update (Cllr Ian Benney)

Construction update Cross Keys Marina

This stage of the scheme has now been deferred until April 2021 to coincide with Marine management construction MMO window that is placed on this section of the scheme.

Construction update Kings Lynn Marina

FDC engineers are now finalising the pre-construction design and handover to external contractor for construction September 2020.

Hydrographic survey program

The final surveys are expected to be completed by July 2020, the information will be quality check and processed before handing over to the Sail the Wash scheme, the updated information will be shared with the UK hydrographic office for the update of nautical publications.

Affordable Homes (Cllr Sam Hoy)

The Council has enabled through working with Registered providers a funded programme of 153 affordable homes to be completed this financial year. However due to the COVID 19 pandemic there may be some shift of these units being completed into the next financial year.

There is also further negotiation and discussions ongoing for a further pipeline of affordable homes estimated at 1 100 units. This number fluctuates as sites fall in and out of the programme.

Environmental Health inspection and business support programme (Cllr Sam Hoy)

In March 2020 the Food Standards Agency wrote to all local authorities requiring a stop to all inspection plans. This meant the inspection programme for 2020, which started in April, has not yet commenced.

In April detailed guidance was released to councils setting out which inspections could be completed, and how.

Since 18th April only very high risk food businesses, where there is a likely risk to public health (such as poor management or high risk foods being produced), are to be inspected and the majority of the inspection must be over the telephone. The inspections do not count towards the annual inspection programme targets.

This has meant no inspections have been completed since April. The inspection programme will likely recommence in quarter 2 with some constraints.

Many businesses (except for take away, delivery or food producers) have been closed throughout this period and the environmental health service has focussed very much on providing support to those businesses who remain open, assisting with safety and compliance matters and the implementation of guidance, signposting those who were closed to access grants and other support. Guidance has been shared directly with businesses as soon as it is released.

In addition to directly supporting more than 100 businesses to meet Covid-19 compliance officers have responded to reports of breaches in relation to business closures and health and safety matters reported by the public or employees themselves. More than 200 reports were received between April and June of potential contraventions. Only two businesses were found to be breaching the closure regulations and asked to close, one was a Barber shop the other a licenced premises allowing customers inside.

Feedback in relation to the support work being offered has been very positive.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 20/21	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP15	% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks (or within extension of time)	100%	75%	100%	
CELP16	% of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks (or within extension of time)	94%	80%	96%	
CELP17	% of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks (or within extension of time)	99%	90%	98%	
EGA1	% occupancy of the business premises estate	87.8%	89%	87.8%	
EGA2	% of customers satisfied with our business premises estates (quarterly)	100%	95%	98%	
MS1	Number of berth holders / occupancy of berths at Wisbech Yacht Harbour (85 berths total)	85	85	96%	
CELP18	Number of local businesses supported and treated fairly (quarterly)	96%	96%	100%	

Comments

CELP15-CELP17 – Planning application performance: Revised methods of working (needed due to covid restrictions) have meant that the team is less productive but the applicants and agents have supported the team and agreed extensions of time. The number of incoming applications remains very high and due to reduced resources (non covid sick leave and shielding requirements) we currently have a backlog on new applications requiring validation.

With regard to the quality of decision making (against the Government 24 month rolling tracker - appeals lost as a % of all decisions):

Majors – 0% (we can perform as badly as 10%)

Minors - 1.5% (we can perform as badly as 10%)

EGA2 Annual figure based on survey Oct 2019

Quality Organisation

Projects from Business Plan:

Launch our Commercial Investment Strategy (Cllrs Chris Boden & Ian Benney)

The Commercial and Investment Strategy is now in operation and Fenland Future Ltd has been created to help facilitate the implementation. We are currently working towards the inaugural Investment Board meeting in July which will then be followed by the first Board meeting of the new Company.

Deliver the 'My Fenland' project to modernise customer service arrangements across the district (Cllr Steve Tierney)

The My Fenland project focuses on modernising the way the Council delivers all aspects of our services to our customers. Current processes, wherever possible, will be streamlined to improve consistency and efficiency across the organisation. Technology will be utilised to improve the process for both staff and customers. The key focus will be ensuring we are putting the customer journey first and providing the best possible customer experience.

We have made significant progress with the project, despite the current Covid-19 restrictions.

We have process mapped a number of activities from a number of customer facing and administration teams, including our Licensing functions, our Corporate 3cs process (complaints, compliments and correspondence), our Freedom of Information request (FOI) process, environmental service requests (e.g. how we process Missed Bins reports, to name just a few. We have streamlined and automated these processes to make them more efficient and customer focused.

We are on the process of consolidating the staff in these areas into one central team to help increase and build on knowledge, skills and resilience.

We are also undertaking a full update and relaunch of our website and access points for customers.

We will also be implementing a telephony upgrade within the next month, which will enable us to provide a web chat service to our customers, and the implementation of Pay Point functionality across the district, which will allow our customers to pay their Council bills at an increased number of locations, such as Post Offices, garages, convenience stores and so on.

Develop and launch a new website design to improve content, navigation and online transactions (Cllr Steve Tierney)

More people are using our website than ever before. We received nearly 685,000 visits in 2019/20 and nearly 10,000 online form submissions across 50 different topics.

Work is currently underway to develop a brand new corporate website that we are looking to launch this year.

The front page will feature 'top tasks' and will provide quick links to apply, pay, and report functions. Improvements have also been made to the 'Find My Nearest' functionality which has been extended to include 'Find My Councillor'. We have worked with Goss, our website provider, to make improvements to the design, which will launch meeting new accessibility guidelines.

The quality of content across each service area has vastly improved and is now written consistently. On average, each page has had its reading age reduced by between 3-4 years, enabling it to be understood by a wider audience.

Using insight from the Customer Services team, text has also been optimised to answer the most frequently asked questions which will support the reduction of avoidable contact. The number of documents (which impacts the speed and effectiveness of search functionality) has also been reduced by about 70%.

We are currently working towards a communication plan to ensure that all key stakeholders, staff and residents are aware of the new website.

Once the website is launched we will also introduce further links to back office systems that will allow customers to self-serve, via applying, booking and online payment forms.

Identify and deliver projects that support us to become a 'Council For the Future' (CFF) (Cllrs Chris Boden & Steve Tierney)

There are several projects that fall under the "Council for the Future" programme and these include "My Fenland", Empty Homes, Private Sector Housing Enforcement, Active Fenland and CCTV commercialisation.

Other Projects:

3Cs Update (Cllr Steve Tierney)

	May 2020
To answer 90% of Correspondence within 10 working days	100%
Answer 90% of Complaints by the agreed deadline	95%
Dealt with 90% of complaints at Stage 1	90%
Progress less than 10% of complaints to Stage 2	10%
Progress less than 5% of complaints to Stage 3	0%
Number of Ombudsman complaints upheld	0

Communications Update (Cllr Steve Tierney)

News update

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media:

- April = 21
- May = 13
- June = 13

Monthly update on FDC social media sites:

The number of social media updates added to the FDC twitter and Facebook Accounts:

- April Twitter – 170
Facebook - 147
- May Twitter – 174
Facebook – 132
- June Twitter – 108
Facebook - 99

We currently have 3,708 likes on Facebook and 8,581 followers on twitter.

Consultation Summary

Consultations that have taken place include:

- March Railway Station Consultation – 15 April to 9 May 2020

- PSPO (Dogs) consultation – 1 May to 28 May 2020
- Garden Waste Satisfaction Survey - 1 May to 31 May 2020

COVID-19 comms update

We continue to follow and publicise national Government and Public Health England (PHE) advice and guidance in respect of COVID-19.

The latest information is being shared through our Council's COVID-19 web page at: www.fenland.gov.uk/coronavirus and the Council's social media accounts. In total, we have had 30,000 Coronavirus web page views since their launch.

We are also publicising press releases for all key Council news and service information relating to COVID-19.

We also continue to circulate comms to staff on a daily basis via our What's Breaking emails and the intranet.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 20/21	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries resolved at first point of contact	95%	Rolling monthly target of 85% per month	94.6%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (March 2021)	96%	90%		
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	64%	Rolling monthly target rising to 46.5% by March 2021	91.47%	
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	92%	Rolling monthly target rising to 80% by March 2021	99.37%	
ARP3	% of council tax collected	96.76%	97.3%	91.7%	
ARP4	Council Tax net collection fund receipts	11,650,572	11,650,572	10,693,401	
ARP5	% of NNDR collected	96.84%	98.3%	99.98%	
ARP6	NNDR net collection fund receipts	3,076,767	3,076,767	3,128,741	
PRC5	Number of visits to our website	684,190	718,000	199,077	
PRC6	% of staff who feel proud to work for FDC (every 2 years)	84%	82%	84%	

Comments

ARP3 & ARP4 - Council Tax collection is behind target by £957,171, this is due predominantly to the current Covid-19 situation. The Government have announced a hardship scheme which will provide up to £150 to each LCTRS recipient of working age. When this is posted to accounts the collection position will be improved and provide a true reflection of the current position.

Further recovery action in 2020/21 has resulted in collection of £1,550 compared to £7,840 at the same point last year. Enforcement action in 2020/21 has resulted in collection of £46,532 compared to £90,510 at the same point last year. Charging Orders have been obtained to secure £191,550 debt.

NNDR collection is on target for the current financial year.

There have been claims by NHS Trusts for charitable rate relief which were subject to a High Court appeal. If successful this could result in a backdated refund of £1.464M. The High Court have rejected the claim that the NHS Trusts are charities, however the NHS trusts are now seeking leave to appeal.

Further recovery action in 2020/21 has resulted in collection of £104,514 compared to £86,593 at the same point last year.

Enforcement action in 2020/21 has resulted in collection of £9,994 compared to £34,176 at the same point last year.