Agenda Item No:	7	Fenland
Committee:	CABINET	CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Date:	December 14 2020	CAMBRIDGESHIKE
Report Title:	DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2021-22	

1 Purpose / Summary

For Cabinet to approve the Draft Business Plan 2021-22 for public consultation.

2 Key issues

- Our Draft Business Plan 2021-22 identifies the key challenges and opportunities for Fenland. Its structure has been updated this year. As well as outlining our key Corporate Priorities (Communities, Environment, Economy and Quality Organisation), it introduces an additional cross cutting 'Council for the Future' section. This outlines the scope and progress of transformation projects chosen by our Cabinet members.
- The impact of Coronavirus has and continues to affect our residents, partners, local businesses and our workforce. Its unexpected financial impact is estimated to be £1.3million to us in 2020/21 alone. Our Covid-19 Recovery Plan and 'Council for the Future' projects will be crucial in supporting the organisation to adapt and reshape to be able to effectively respond to future needs, aims and challenges.
- Despite the challenges posed by Coronavirus and over a decade of continued public sector austerity, the Council remains committed to delivering high-quality services.
 We continue to lobby for investment to tackle important issues relating to skills, transport, affordable housing and regeneration, with some notable examples referenced within the Leader and Chief Executive's introduction.
- The Draft Business Plan 2021-22 will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 11 January 2021.
- The public will be invited to comment on the Draft Business Plan between 5 January and 2 February 2021 through an online survey. Feedback will be incorporated into the final version of the Business Plan that will be considered by Cabinet and Council on 23 February 2021.

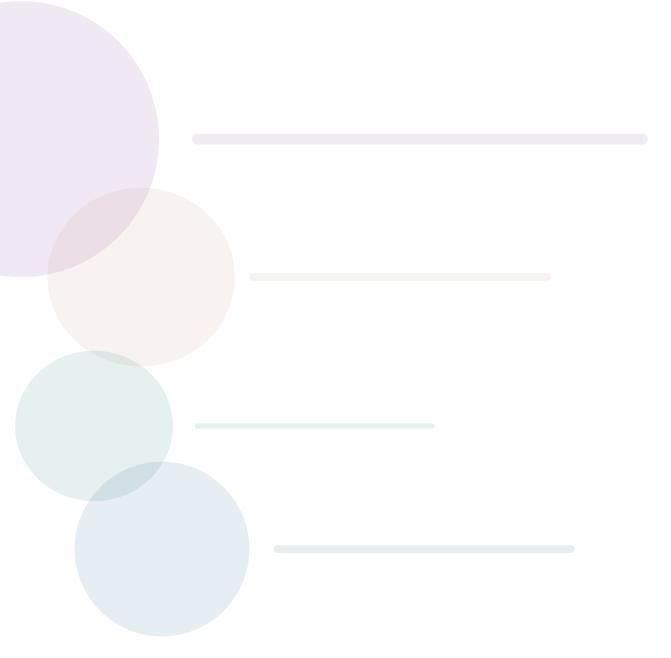
3 Recommendations

For Cabinet to approve the Draft Business Plan 2021-22 for public consultation.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Chris Boden, Leader of the Council
Report Originators & Paul Medd, Chief Executive	
Contact Officers	Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director
Background Paper(s)	Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

BUSINESS PLAN 2021/2022







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Introduction by the Leader and Chief Executive

Welcome to Fenland District Council's Business Plan for 2021/22.

As we write this introduction, we are living in unprecedented times. Since March 2020, Coronavirus has significantly impacted the world as we know it. Residents and businesses have needed, and continue to need, additional support to make sense of the ever-changing landscape and regulations. We've provided this to the best of our ability, working closely with partners and community groups to signpost residents to the most appropriate form of help.

Although it has proved challenging at times, as an organisation we have adapted well to the restrictions imposed by Coronavirus and have maintained 'business as usual' with minimal impact on performance. With little or no notice, we have created new services to respond to emerging needs. Examples include our multi-agency Covid-19 telephone support hub, which has supported around 2,000 vulnerable households, and the creation of a Discretionary Grants Scheme which has paid nearly £20million to local businesses. However, this has come at a significant and unexpected additional financial cost of £1.3million during 2020/21. This, alongside known budget deficits, means that we must save £4million over the next four years. Whilst financial austerity is not a new concept to us, having saved over £10million since 2010, this will require us to look at things a little differently.

Our Business Plan still sets out the core services and projects we will deliver across Fenland over the next year. However, we have also formally introduced the substantial 'Council for the Future' projects. These aim to tackle particularly important topical issues, transform the way we work and sustainably position ourselves for the future. This forms a separate element of our Business Plan and, like our 'Quality Organisation' priority, will underpin everything that we do.

Despite an ever-changing landscape, we remain an ambitious and forward-thinking organisation. We continue to lobby for investment to help tackle key issues – particularly relating to skills, transport, affordable housing and regeneration. Importantly, the challenges over the past year haven't prevented us from receiving additional funding for a variety of projects, including:

- £943,000 from Cambridgeshire County Council's Communities Capital Fund for eight community facility improvements across March, Wisbech, Gorefield, Christchurch and Friday Bridge.
- A £997,000 grant from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority towards the construction of a light industrial 'move on' space at South Fens Enterprise Park in Chatteris.
- £150,000 to support the new public health role in managing workplace Coronavirus outbreaks and providing local contract tracing.
- £90,000 from the European Regional Development Fund towards the Wisbech High Street Opening Project.

The adoption of our Commercial and Investment Strategy, and subsequently our trading company 'Fenland Future Ltd', is also another positive step towards delivering growth aspirations and future-proofing the organisation.

We hope that this introduction has provided a valuable context into the current situation and a high-level insight into our strategy for the future. We remain committed to working with all our towns, villages and rural communities to make Fenland an even better place to live and work.



Paul Medd Chief Executive



Chris Boden Leader of the Council



About Fenland

Fenland has strong community spirit and pride in its heritage. It is estimated that 101,850 people (ONS: 2019) currently live in the Fenland District, which covers 211 square miles within North Cambridgeshire. 75% of residents live within our four market towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech. Our beautiful rural landscape is home to 29 villages and attracts visitors from nationwide.

Fenland has the lowest house prices in Cambridgeshire, with the average house priced at £182,549 (UK HPI: 2020), along with plentiful availability of commercial land. As a result, our population is growing quickly. By 2036, it is predicted that the population will have increased by 9% to 110,700 (ONS: 2019). As outlined within this plan, we have plans in place to maximise the positive opportunities that growth could bring.

Our population is also getting older. 29% of our population are aged 60 or over; above average compared to Cambridgeshire and the UK (ONS: 2019). 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 80th (out of 326) most deprived area in the country, with some wards within the top 10% most deprived (IMD: 2019), Nevertheless, we continue to work closely with other organisations to positively overcome these challenges.



Coronavirus and Fenland District Council

The impact of Coronavirus has been significant for residents, businesses and partner organisations. Whilst aiming to deliver business as usual where possible, we are continuing to respond quickly to the ever-emerging challenges and to communicate effectively with our communities, businesses and workforce. Some high-level examples of help that we've provided since April 2020 include:

- Approximately 2,000 vulnerable households supported through our telephone Covid-19 Community Hub
- £19.9 million paid to 1,883 businesses as part of our Discretionary Grant Scheme
- Enabling people to apply online for Government's Self-Isolation payment
- Provided emergency accommodation to 57 vulnerable residents who were rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping

This has come at a significant cost to the Council, estimated to be over £1.3million by March 2021.

Coronavirus has also significantly impacted our workforce. Over 60% are now enabled to work remotely, with many redeployed or retrained to meet essential or emerging needs. This has prompted us to begin reviewing our accommodation needs and the most appropriate type of working practices.

We've responded to, and delivered, massive changes in legislation within days. We've quickly created brand new services to respond to residents' needs, as well as creatively providing existing services via digital or alternative channels. In some cases, we have moved to new operating models as our role has changed; moving from the service deliverer or commissioner role to offering referrals to third-party services. Supported by our Covid-19 recovery plan, we'll continue to evolve to meet the ever-changing needs and emerging priorities over the coming months.



Business Plan structure

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 our communities.

Our priorities are split into three headings: Communities, Environment and Economy. These priorities primarily focus on the statutory and wide variety of core services that we provide day-to-day. In a typical year we empty 3 million bins, clean 210 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!

The fourth priority, Quality Organisation, sits alongside everything we do. It aims to ensure that the Council runs effectively, transparently and sustainably. We invest in and support our workforce to ensure they have the skills and resources they need to work to the best of their ability. Our unique 'one-team' culture enables officers, elected members and partners to work effectively together without the constraints of traditional department silos. This approach results in excellent staff satisfaction, with a record 95% of staff saying they were proud to work for us in our latest Staff Survey (2020).

Each priority is underpinned by a series of performance indicators, which is reported to all Members at our Council meetings. These public reports are summarised to provide end of year performance updates in our Annual Report, which is available to download on our website. This explains what the Council has been doing over the previous financial year to achieve its objectives.

This year, we've also added a fifth cross cutting priority: Council for the Future. This priority is formed from a selection of transformative projects which aim to address the future needs of residents and our organisation as a whole.

Summary of our Corporate Priorities structure

Council for the Future Quality Organisation	on	Communities	 Support vulnerable members of our community Promote health and wellbeing for all Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture and Heritage
	Environment	 Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service Work with partners and the community on projects that improve the environment and our street scene Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting social cohesion 	
	Quali	Economy	 Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses in Fenland Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration across Fenland Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements across the district



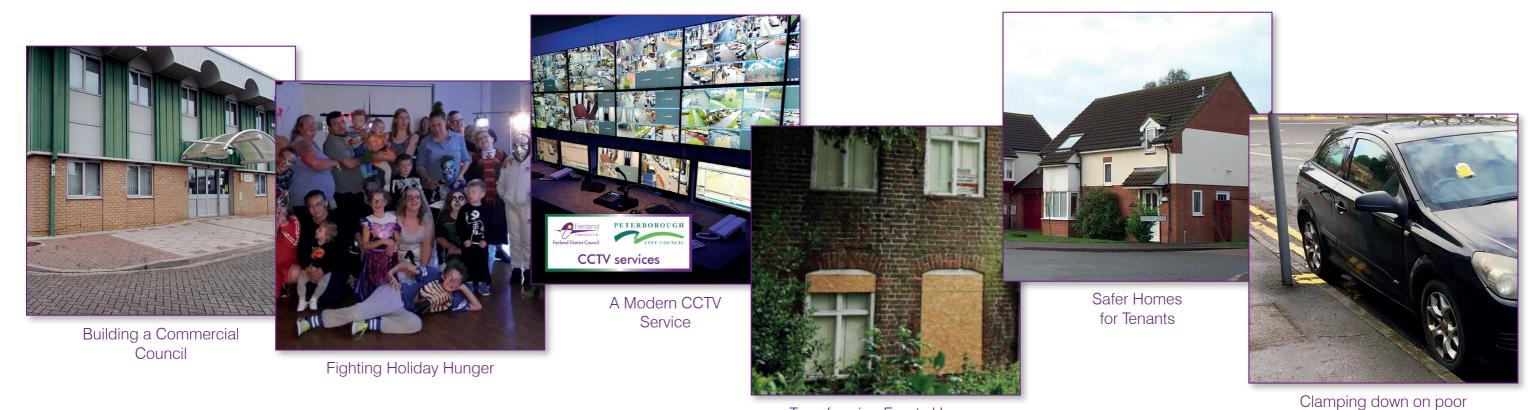
Council for the Future

Planning for the

Future

Environment

Our Cabinet members have selected a number of projects to contribute towards our 'Council for the Future' agenda. These projects have a variety of aims; from tackling areas of particular need within the district, to transforming services and the wider organisation sustainably to be fit for the future. Although these projects are influenced by external factors, most notably Coronavirus and national service disruption, the aim is to have a programme of projects completed by the end of the current Council leadership term.



Transforming Empty Homes

My Fenland

Competitive Trade Waste Service Better railways for Fenland Protecting our Better online access

parking



Council for the Future

Project(s)	Cabinet Lead	Summary	Progress to date
Building a Commercial Council	Cllr Chris Boden Cllr Ian Benney	To maximise efficiency and ensure organisational sustainability, we must look for opportunities to maximise our assets and diversify beyond traditional Council functions. Although this is not a new concept, adopting a Commercial Investment Strategy will enable us to pursue appropriate commercialisation and property investment opportunities. This will also support wider growth, housing and regeneration objectives.	We adopted our Commercial Investment Strategy in 2018, followed by our LatCo (Local Authority Trading Company) Fenland Future Limited in April 2020. We have begun the process of disposing of unwanted assets, with income generated contributing towards investment projects.
Fighting Holiday Hunger	Clir Sam Clark	To control the holiday hunger of school children who would usually receive free school meals during term time. In 2019, Fenland District Council ran a 'Fit and Fed' Physical Activity and Nutrition project to support parents and children during holidays with sessions combining physical activity, nutrition education, healthy cooking and a meal whilst bringing communities together. Supported by funding from the Department of Education, the aim is to extend the project's scope across a wider area (Fenland, Peterborough and South Holland).	231 participants benefitted from Fit and Fed sessions in 2020. Although some half term sessions had to be cancelled due to Coronavirus, we offered a 'takeaway' model during the summer holidays. We were unsuccessful in a funding bid to the Department of Education, which sought to deliver four sessions a week across a wider area.
A Modern CCTV service	Cllr Susan Wallwork	Our CCTV service is important to the community. However, it is a non-statutory service and requires changes to ensure it can continue to be sustainably delivered in the future. The focus of this project is to make the service more commercial to increase income whilst reducing the cost of service delivery, with the aim of it being cost-neutral at the end of the Council term.	We have been operating a shared CCTV service in partnership with Peterborough City Council since January 2020, which is estimated to save £55,000 per annum. The service is performing well and has maintained full functionality during the Coronavirus pandemic.
Transforming Empty Homes	Cllr Sam Hoy	Empty homes are a wasted resource and, if left in poor condition, can be a blight on the local community. As an initial one-year trial, resource is being dedicated to fully understand the numbers in Fenland and bring them back into use. It is anticipated this will generate a financial benefit outweighing the cost of the post and provide much needed local accommodation.	We have recruited an officer to work exclusively on bringing empty homes back into use. From November 2019 to November 2020, 91 properties that have been empty for 6 months or more have been brought back into use as a direct result of our intervention. Owing to the success of the project, we have extended the officer's post for another year.



Project(s)		Summary	Progress to date
Safer homes for tenants	Cllr Sam Hoy	Whilst many landlords provide good quality housing, some do not, leaving tenants to live in unacceptable conditions. Two-year Government 'Controlling Migration' funding supported us to increase our housing enforcement approach with some success, resulting in 2,121 property inspections and 905 interventions. Despite additional prevention and intervention work, and the introduction of HMO (Houses in Multiple Occupation) licensing, a tougher approach is now needed to tackle non-compliance.	management and condition of the district's housing stock and has enabled us to extend our two Housing Enforcement officer posts. Between April and
Clamping down on poor parking	Clir Jan French	There are many instances of poor parking in Fenland, specifically when people park where they shouldn't in town centres and breach regulations in privately owned car parks. The parking system is very complex. The Police regulate onstreet parking but are often diverted to more pressing matters. Introducing Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) could enable the County Council or ourselves to take over enforcement and issue Penalty Charge notices for parking contraventions.	In October 2020, Cabinet agreed for a specialist consultant to be commissioned to review the current situation and many implications of achieving CPE powers. They also agreed for a joint capital funding request to be put forward to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority as part of the wider 'Growing Fenland' project.
Planning for the Future	Cllr Dee Laws	By law, each local authority must have a 'Local Plan' which sets out growth aspirations and the development permitted across its towns and villages. Our current Local Plan was adopted in 2014 and reviewed in 2019, where it was decided that work should commence to develop a new one. This is substantial piece of work, requiring significant public consultation and policy development.	February 2020. A second call for sites exercise was carried out in summer
Protecting our Environment	Cllr Peter Murphy	Fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling are just a few examples of behaviour that spoils green spaces and public areas. By reviewing our wider environmental enforcement approach and the way we work with communities, we plan to adopt a new approach to proactively manage these issues.	We launched a new dog control PSPO in October 2020. Our Street Scene team continue to investigate environmental issues. We are in the process of considering the suitability of various environmental enforcement approaches.
Competitive Trade Waste Service	Cllr Peter Murphy	We deliver a competitively priced Trade Waste collection service. By increasing the income we generate through improving the range of recycling services for our network of 500 small to medium enterprises, we would reduce pressure on our budgets and the need for Council Tax rises. This work will be supported by the new developing National Waste and Resources strategy.	customers and plans are in place to offer to further support during Covid with an improved range of services.



Project(s)		Summary	Progress to date
Better railways for Fenland	Cllr Chris Seaton		Railway Station Masterplans (for March, Manea and Whittlesea) are in the process of being delivered. This has generated around £15million in external investment into Fenland and has resulted in station improvements including new waiting shelters, lengthened platform and an improved car park.
Better online access	Cllr Steve Tierney	Our website is well used by our residents, receiving over 680,000 hits per annum and 10,300 form submissions (excluding Garden Waste subscriptions). It was last significantly updated in 2012 and requires some work to improve the customer journey and support residents to access services digitally through better integrated online forms. A similar piece of work is needed for the Council's intranet staff site. We also manage a number of external subsites which need to be brought back into house to improve consistency and realise efficiencies of scale.	We launched Fenland District Council's new website in August 2020. Its design, content and structure has significantly improved and is receiving positive user feedback. In November 2020, we launched a fully integrated 'Missed Bin' reporting form, with information passed seamlessly to our back-office bin management system without the need for human intervention.
My Fenland	Cllr Steve Tierney	The My Fenland project focuses on modernising the way we deliver all aspects of our services. By reviewing our offer and service delivery, we can look to drive efficiencies through appropriate re-engineering of our processes and organisational structure. Throughout this process, we are putting the customer journey first and will support residents who may find accessing digital services more challenging. As part of its first phase, the project has focused on transforming operational customer facing services through streamlining processes and maximising the use of technology.	As well as making website improvements (see previous project), we have implemented PayPoint. This enables residents to pay their Council bills in cash at Post Office branches and participating shops and garages. Early usage figures are very encouraging, with over 1,450 payments since its launch in July. We have also developed a 'My Fenland' delivery team, encompassing staff previously within our Customer Services, Environmental Support, Economic Growth and Asset Management teams. The My Fenland team are safely co-located in one location, improving intra-team communication and resilience. Process mapping of priority service tasks is underway to understand resourcing needs and areas for improvement. Many of these tasks have been streamlined and are now managed by the My Fenland team.

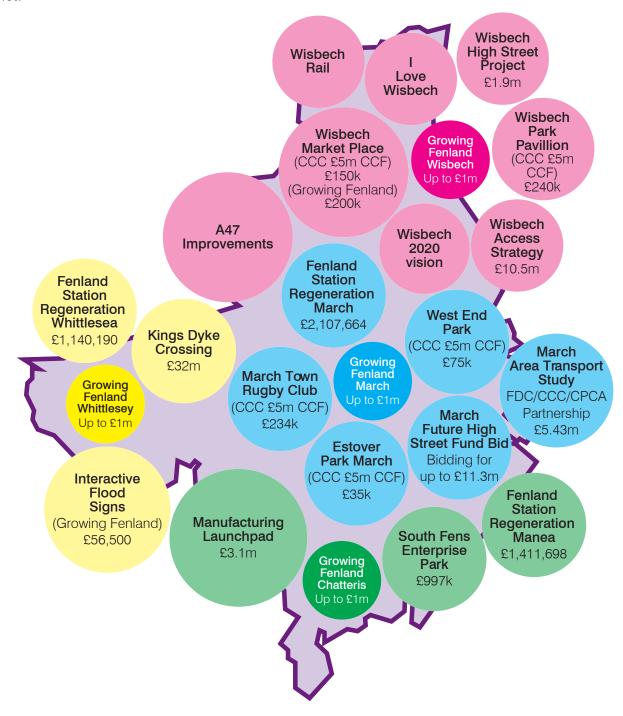


Place Shaping in Fenland

What is Place Shaping?

Place shaping simply means looking at our area as a whole; listening carefully to everyone's views and then working together to deliver the most important services that make people's lives safer and better.

We're working hard to attract the crucial external funding needed to deliver local service improvements and regeneration projects. The diagram below shows some of the projects in progress across the district:



Although many of these funding schemes are focused on our four market towns, our local villages will also benefit from the schemes. Improvements to our rural communities are equally as important and are included in our place shaping work.



Communities

Support vulnerable members of our community

- Enable residents to claim the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support they are entitled to through our shared service (Anglia Revenues Partnership; ARP)
- Support residents to manage the effects of welfare reform changes and Universal Credit
- Use our housing powers to prevent homelessness, reduce rough sleeping, meet housing needs, improve housing conditions and keep homes safe and accessible
- Help residents to build capacity and resilience so that they can support themselves and their community
- 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

Promote health and wellbeing for all

- Support our local community by delivering our Leisure Strategy in partnership with Freedom Leisure
- Work collaboratively with partners to deliver our Health and Wellbeing Strategy in order to tackle local health priorities and help people to be healthier
- Create healthier communities through activities developed by Active Fenland and community partners

Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture and Heritage

- Work with local stakeholders to develop a Creativity and Culture Statement for Fenland
- Support voluntary and community groups to hold public events safely

Performance Indicators

- Days taken to process new claims to changes for Council Tax Support
- Days taken to process new claims and changes for Housing Benefit
- Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues
- The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through housing options work
- Number of empty properties brought back into use
- Satisfaction at Golden Age events
- Number of Active Fenland sessions delivered per year
- Customer feedback across Freedom Leisure facilities in Fenland



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 Getting It Sorted Recycling Champions
- Deliver our 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 update the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Strategy

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

- Use education, guidance and Council powers to fairly enforce environmental standards and tackle issues such as fly tipping, illegal parking, dog fouling, littering and antisocial behaviour
- Ensure well maintained open spaces by working with our grounds maintenance contractor and through supporting community groups such as Street Pride, In Bloom, Green Dog Walkers and Friends of Groups
- 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 antisocial behaviour and promoting social cohesion

- Deliver projects through the Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime, hate crime and anti-social behaviour
- Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland-wide Community Cohesion Action Plan

Performance Indicators

- Rapid or Village response requests actioned the same or next day
- % of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards
- % of household waste recycled through the blue bin service
- Customer satisfaction with our Refuse and Recycling services
- Customer satisfaction with our Garden Waste service
- Number of Street Pride, Green Dog Walkers and Friends of Community Environmental Events supported
- % of those asked satisfied with events



Economy

Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses

- Work with external stakeholders, local businesses and the Combined Authority to attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities
- Provide responsive business support to encourage business growth, job diversity, skills development and increased grant applications
- Promote and develop our Business Premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and Light Industrial Estates to encourage investment, business development, job creation and skills diversification

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration

- Enable appropriate growth, development and infrastructure through delivering a proactive and effective Planning service
- Drive forward the development and delivery of new homes and commercial space by using our surplus property and land assets to 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

- Promote sustainable road, rail and concessionary transport initiatives to improve access to employment and local services
- Engage with the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council on the feasibility and delivery of major road and rail infrastructure projects
- Work with the Combined Authority to influence how housing and infrastructure funding is used to stimulate housing development and economic growth in the district

Performance Indicators

- % of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks
- % of minor applications determined in 8 weeks
- % of other applications determined in 8 weeks
- % occupancy of Business Premises estates
- % of customers satisfied with our Business Premises estates
- % occupancy of our Wisbech Yacht Harbour
- · Local businesses supported and treated fairly



Quality Organisation

Governance, Financial Control and Risk Management

- Maintain robust and effective financial standards, internal controls and organisational management
- Comply with data protection and General Data Protection Regulation requirements

Transformation and Efficiency

- Sustainably deliver required savings whilst pursuing transformation and commercialisation opportunities to ensure the organisation is fit for the future
- Engage with the Combined Authority's Public Service Reform agenda

Performance Management

- Set relevant and robust performance targets to ensure the effective delivery of Business Plan priorities
- Report regularly on service performance to the Corporate Management Team, Councillors and the public

Consultation and Engagement

 Appropriately consult with residents about our service and proposals as outlined in our Consultation Strategy

Excellent Customer Service

- Maintain our Customer Service Excellence accreditation to ensure we continue to deliver the most effective service to our communities
- Help residents to self-serve and access our services digitally to allow us to provide greater 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 and publication of a statutory Annual Equality Report

Asset Management and Commercialisation

- Ensure our asset base is sustainable, suitable and fully utilised to maximise income opportunities and financial efficiencies
- Deliver our adopted Capital Programme 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, including from co-located facilities
- Begin implementation of our Commercial Investment Strategy to make informed decisions about the purchase and management of property assets through Fenland Futures Limited

Workforce Development

- Equip our workforce with the right skills to effectively deliver our priorities
- Support and empower our staff to make effective decisions within a pleasant working environment

Enforcement

• Use a fair and proportionate approach to improve living, working and environmental standards as set out in our Enforcement Policies

Health and Safety

- Maintain effective Health and Safety systems to comply with relevant legislation and local requirements
- Deliver all aspects of the Council's Health and Safety action plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our workforce, partners and wider community

Performance indicators

- % of 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
- NNDR collected
- NNDR net collection fund receipts
- Number of visits to our website