

Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

December 2020

(For performance in September & October 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 29 positive interventions in response to new requests for service for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) across the district.

The Council has also investigated 122 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	25	54
March	2	26
Chatteris	0	8
Whittlesey	0	10
Villages	2 Leverington = 2	24 Manea =3 Leverington =6 Guyhirn = 2 Wimblington =1 Murrow = 2 Parson Drove =2 Christchurch = 2 Coates = 1 WSM = 2 Tydd SG = 1 Fridaybridge = 1 Gorefield = 1

Private Sector Housing enforcement 01 April 2020 - 31st Oct 2020

	Served 01/4/20-31/10/20	Notice Amount	Final Amount (Post Review)	Income 1/4/20-31/10/20
Improvement Notices	14	£3,360	NA	£2,640
Prohibition Orders	0	0	0	0
Civil Penalty Notices	7	£69,000	£69,000	£25,508
HMO Applications	10	NA	NA	£7,500
Health Checks	4	£264	NA	£264

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

Since the officer came into post on 25th November 2019 the post has:

- Facilitated the bringing back into use of 90 properties that had been empty for 6 months or more through officer intervention.
- The number of empty homes that are empty for more than 6 months affects the finance that comes into the council on a yearly basis through what is known as the New Homes Bonus calculation. The financial return is finalised in October each year and as a result of this work has projected a net positive impact to FDC of £79,217.
- Since April 2020, 224 properties over 6 months empty have been brought back into use of which 56 was as a result of officer intervention.

In light of this, the project is to continue for another year with the following focus:

- Continued coordination of multi team work on high profile empty properties through problem property intervention group
- Expand on use of contact tracing at no extra cost to the Council. Through this approach the Council received £14,000 of unpaid Council Tax. The officer is likely to use this process with 15 more owners/properties
- Earlier engagement with 0-6months empty to try and prevent them moving into a qualifying property
- Develop an Investor list

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)

The Housing Options team has prevented 141 households from becoming homeless since April 2020. The target for the year is 300, but due to COVID-19 and the new Government rulings regarding notices and evictions, this target may not be reached. The team are still working closely with households and landlords to try and resolve issues before notices are served as there is concern about the demand for service for when the Government ruling ends.

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

Due to the pandemic, no events have been held this year. However, all Golden Age partners have received up to date messages particularly surrounding information for the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (previously referred to as shielded in the 1st lockdown). These messages have included key information for the over 60's ensuring they gain the access to all the support necessary for them to stay safe.

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

This year open spaces have played a larger role in a lot of people's lives than usual due to the lockdowns and pandemic. Tivoli have maintained an excellent level of service in Council managed open spaces, with work continuing throughout the year, uninterrupted by the pandemic.

Government, health partners and the Council's Active Fenland Team continue to promote the increased use of open spaces to maintain community health. Whilst activities in open spaces provided by the Active Fenland team have been paused by the two lockdowns, the team is using social media to get the message across that physical activity remains very important for physical as well as mental health.

National analysis suggests increased use of open spaces this year, particularly during the summer and lockdown. FDC does not monitor usage numbers within parks, so cannot specifically highlight levels of use locally.

See investment in our open spaces in the Environment section.

Other Projects:

Leisure Update (Cllr Sam Clark)

Freedom Leisure were doing an excellent job of managing the leisure centres, despite depressed demand and the reduced capacity due to COVID-19 secure guidance. Customer feedback since reopening has been overwhelmingly positive – despite the measures in place meaning that the experience has changed somewhat, especially when swimming.

The second lockdown meant the closure of the leisure centres once again. This is now a well—practiced procedure for the team and the centres are moth-balled once more, with staff checking plant and security on a daily basis. The Freedom Team is preparing to reopen in early December. Once again, the reopening will mean reduced opening hours that will increase as demand ramps up. It should be noted that December is a tough month for leisure in any case with the weather, dark nights and Christmas. This December is likely to be a particularly difficult month for leisure with income levels and attendances very suppressed. Freedom will be focussing hard on the January 'fitness boom', which will be rather different this year compared with previous years. Nevertheless, it will be important to generate as much interest in the new year to move membership income up as early as possible to promote the income recovery for the business.

Pride In Fenland Awards (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

Work is ongoing to organise a virtual Pride In Fenland Awards with aspirations to hold the event in December 2020.

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

During the continuing pandemic situation, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Outbreak Control Plan remains the key focus.

The document was reviewed in October as the regulatory and enforcement powers changed to include local actions for closing or stopping large events, businesses and gatherings. These powers have not been used in Cambridgeshire and the focus has been on prevention and guidance for event organisers and businesses to ensure

COVID-19 compliant practices are adopted.

The refreshed document can be found here:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-trace#local-outbreak-control-plan-5-0>

The Council's role in delivering the outbreak plan continues to focus on responding to workplace outbreaks offering support and guidance, reviewing business controls and offering advice in relation to COVID-19 compliance and continuing to deliver a community hub service for residents who have enquiries about financial support packages, self-isolation support and other funding, access to help and support with shopping or transport.

On November 19th a new Cambridgeshire and Peterborough contact tracing partnership will launch. This has been a complex project to pull together and has received support from the national track and trace service. It is modelled on the Peterborough contact tracing pilot which commenced in the summer. The team of staff has been resourced from all councils across the county and Peterborough and will focus on making contact locally with residents who have received a COVID-19 positive test result but have not responded to contact from the national track and trace service. It is evidenced from other areas that this more local approach achieves a better response than from the national system.

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	8	7.9	
ARP2	Housing benefit – days to process new claims and changes	8	8	5.2	
CELP1	Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	NEW	Baseline	151	
CELP2	Number of people prevented from becoming homeless	NEW	Baseline	141	
CELP3	Number of empty properties brought back into use (officer intervention)	NEW	Baseline	224 (56)	
CELP4	Amount of New Homes Bonus achieved as a result of bringing empty homes back into use	NEW	£43,618	£79,217	
CELP5	Customer satisfaction with Golden Age events (as per event)	NEW	80%		
CELP6	Number of Active Health local sessions per year that improve community health	602	400	151	
CELP7	Customer feedback across Freedom Leisure facilities in Fenland	390	300	141	

Key:	
	Within 5% of target
	5-10% below target
	10% or more below target

Comments
CELP5, CELP6 and CELP7 are not currently being measured due to COVID-19 restrictions
<p>CELP 6 and CELP 7;</p> <p>Due to the two lockdowns and on-going coronavirus restrictions, both of these targets cannot be met this year.</p> <p>CELP 6 sessions are recommencing on 2 December. Expectations for annual performance are a reduction of 35% – 45% in the number of sessions run.</p> <p>CELP 7 information will be available at year end. Again, expectations are a considerable drop in feedback due to the closures and reduced attendances following the re-opening. Expectations regarding the number of items of customer feedback are currently around 25% of the original total.</p>

Environment

Projects from Business Plan:

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

The main types of environmental offences reported continues to be; waste accumulations, fly tipping and abandoned vehicles. Since September, there have been 465 instances of fly tipping across Fenland. Officers ensure that they attend as many sites as possible to look for evidence. During this time, we have attended 70 of these incidents and have been able to follow up evidence found at 4 sites.

Due to COVID-19 we have not been able to carry out enforcement interviews face to face but have been using alternative resources available to us. We have successfully implemented documents which enable us to carry out interviews via the post.

4 Fixed Penalty notices have been issued for Fly tipping offences in this time.

2 of the tickets issued were for fly tipping offences in Wisbech and 2 for waste being dumped in March. To date 3 of the fines have been paid. We are now moving to prosecute the unpaid fine.

7 Fixed penalty notices have been issued for cars parked on market days in March Market place during this time. All but 1 have been paid.

119 abandoned vehicles have been reported to us during this time and a further 63 nuisance vehicles. Upon investigation this required our contractor to remove 11 vehicles from the highway.

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

The four seasons events programme continues to remain on hold.

The Wisbech Fayre committee have been keen to provide the community with an alternative and support the 'shop local' campaign, subject to current business restriction being lifted. The committee are pulling together the 'Wisbech Christmas Crackers' calendar, showcasing all the different festive events and activities due to take place throughout the town from December 1 through to Christmas Eve.

Deliver the Recycling Action Plan (Cllr Peter Murphy)

During November all households in Fenland received the Christmas calendar via their green bin. This set out the Christmas collection arrangements along with how to access collection reminders via the smart phone app, advice on improving the quality of recycling and advertised the coming season's garden waste service.

The recycling message has also been shared online and via social media. A planned series of posts have ensured that customers are provided with up to date recycling information and links to relevant online resources.



The quality of the recycling is increasing compared to last year along with tonnages of materials collected increasing by around 10%. Food waste remains the largest issue within the blue bins and communications within December will remain focussed on this issue to help customers continue to improve the materials they present.

Deliver a competitive trade waste service (Cllr Peter Murphy)

Commercial waste services have remained operational throughout the pandemic offering commercial waste and recycling services to more than 500 small to medium sized enterprises, including schools and charities, across Fenland. To support these businesses no charges have been raised where they have been required to close for any period and have been reinstated in the most appropriate manner once businesses reopen, whilst also attracting new business in some quarters.

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

Defra have postponed the second phase of the consultation on the proposed changes set out in the Resources and Waste Strategy until Spring 2021. Recap partners will be meeting over coming months to review the existing information in readiness for this next phase of consultation.

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

A paper for the implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) was presented and approved by Cabinet Members on 21st October. A number of recommendations were endorsed which included the appointment of a specialist CPE consultant to undertake CPE feasibility works to support the development of a detailed business case for an application to the Department for Transport (DfT). The scope of the works will encompass but not be limited to:

- 1) Undertaking a review of all FDC car park parking places orders for the implementation of a new district wide parking places order for all FDC car parks to enable CPE enforcement of off-street areas.
- 2) Obtain occupancy and user information associated with on and off-street areas with existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) in support of a CPE application.
- 3) Produce a CPE feasibility report for the Fenland area with a fully costed enforcement matrix for on and off-street areas for member determination.

Following receipt of the feasibility works report and detailed costings, a further report will be brought before Cabinet Members for consideration and a decision on whether to proceed with an application for a designation order to the DfT for the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement. The report will include a full cost estimate for the capital and operational/revenue costs, together with the costs of professional fees along with a proposed timetable for implementation.

The preparation and submission of an application to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to obtain Capital funding for the implementation of CPE shall be required as part of a joint application made by each of the four market towns under the Growing Fenland programme.

Pending the outcome of the application for capital funding, Member approval shall be sought for Cambridgeshire County Council to undertake a signing and lining review of all existing Traffic Regulation Orders in support of a CPE application to the DfT. This shall be accompanied by a programme of statutory consultation with the Police, neighbouring Authorities, and other interested parties.

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

The CCTV shared service has maintained its 100% service function across a 24/7 period – the CCTV service is the only Council service that is delivered across 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and even with the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic has been able to maintain this vital service delivery for both councils with no loss of service to date.

Since April 2020, the CCTV service has been able to respond to 750 incidents across our four market towns including incidents relating to criminal damage, violent crime, illegal drug use, possession of weapons and theft.

As a result, CCTV intervention and support has led to 58 arrests being made by Cambridgeshire Police. This highlights the work CCTV services do to support the Council and partners in responding to crime and disorder and helping to make our communities safer and reduce the fear of crime.

The CCTV service also continues to be proactive in delivering services that help reduce crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour by delivering regular camera patrols of our four market towns and other key locations. Since April 2020 the CCTV team have delivered 3,999 patrols. All patrols are conducted across the 24/7 period ensuring that no matter what time of day and night our local communities are being protected and that any issues or concerns are being identified as early as possible.

The CCTV service also provides the Council's 'out of hours' telephone contact services for homelessness, stray and lost dogs, cleansing incidents, dangerous buildings and structures, environmental complaints, to name but a few areas. Since April 2020, the CCTV service has responded to over 484 calls for services from our telephone contact service, including supporting our local community with COVID-19 advice and signposting for support where identified as vulnerable or shielding.

The CCTV service continues to operate under its business continuity plan, which has been in operation since mid-March, to ensure CCTV delivered services are protected as much as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic going forward.

Other Projects:

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

FDC's open spaces team and Tivoli have delivered an excellent service for our communities this year. Core works (the bulk of which is grass cutting) have been delivered on time and at a good level of quality. Complaints have been very low this year, with compliments coming in on a regular basis.

The Council has delivered the new skate park in West End Park, March and is currently replacing the play area at Snowley Park in Whittlesey. Projects in the pipeline include the play areas in Doddington, Parson Drove, Chatteris and Wisbech.

A number of successful funding bids will help to improve our Parks and Open Spaces areas. This includes funding from the CCC's £5m Capital Communities Fund as shown below:

- £75,000 for improvements to West End Park (improving the Park Run surface, tarmacking the path from park entrance to the bandstand, enhancing the junior play area and installing a skate park fence).
- £240,000 for the Wisbech Pavilion project in Wisbech Park.

The Council is also responsible for 5 open cemeteries. Throughout the initial pandemic crisis, burial rates remained at the usual rate with no concern about excess demand. FDC has a mitigation plan in place should burial rates rise or staff become infected.

Street Lighting (Cllr Jan French)

Street Light Repairs & Maintenance

During the months of August, September and October, 96 street light faults were reported to the Council and forwarded onto FDC's street light contractor for rectification.

The Council's street light contractor continues to maintain service provision for all street light emergency, urgent and routine repairs and maintenance works during the COVID-19 restrictions.

Collectively the number of street light faults reported to the Council throughout the summer and autumn months this year has been lower than ordinarily expected. This in part is likely to be attributed to local COVID-19 restrictions but also due to the ongoing capital investment being made by the Council to replace aging FDC lighting assets with modern equivalents.

Capital Street Light Replacement Works

The replacement of the Council's category two defective street lights continues to progress albeit at a slower pace than initially anticipated. This has mostly been attributed to the COVID-19 outbreak and the impact within the manufacturing and supply chain industry, which is operating a reduced and socially distanced workforce. This has subsequently seen material 'lead in' times increase significantly and it is anticipated that this position is unlikely to change during the remainder of this financial year.

Since commencing the replacement works in March this year, 126 of the 275 identified defective FDC street lights have so far been replaced. The works are being undertaken in two sequential phases, with the first phase being aimed at replacing those assets which are structurally defective and are not ornate in nature. The second phase will focus on those assets which have a low estimated remaining life, including ornate units or those requiring a site-specific lighting design.

It is anticipated that phase one will be completed by the end of the year. Phase two is

anticipated to commence in January 2021 and shall be ongoing until completion in the Spring/Summer of 2021.

Getting it Sorted Volunteers Update (Cllr Peter Murphy)

The volunteers have continued to encourage the local community to recycle, but throughout the pandemic this has had to be through virtual means. They developed online resources for parents and teachers, competitions, refined the Getting It Sorted website and created a series of social media posts and videos.

Since April, there has been: 11,000 new website hits to www.gettingitsorted.org; almost 30,000 contacts through social media posts; 1,100 orders for additional recycling sacks; regular emails to the network of 1,150 registered recycling pledgers; 1,060 activity boxes to local families; 2 online recycling tutorials; and more than 900 hours of volunteering completed to support all this.



Garden Waste Service Update (Cllr Peter Murphy)

The garden waste communications plan is in place to ensure that all customers are made aware of changes to the service and how best to purchase their subscription for the 2021/22 season.

This year, 77% of the 22,750 subscriptions were purchased by direct debit and will renew automatically in February 2021.

Community Safety Partnership Update (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

Community Safety Engagement Events

Community engagement events are taking place online due to COVID-19 social

distancing regulations. These engagement events raise awareness of key safety messages. Residents are invited to submit their questions to FDC via survey monkey and Facebook before the event. These questions are then answered by the panel of experts.

Information linked to reporting and support is also made available to residents through the video description.



Scams & Cyber Crime Online Engagement Event

A Scams & Cyber Crime engagement session was held on 18/08/2020 in partnership with Charlotte Homent from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Against Scams Partnership and Nigel Sutton, Cyber Protect Officer from Cambridgeshire Constabulary.

This panel provided a comprehensive response to the questions submitted from Fenland residents along with links to further information and advice.

To view the Scams & Cyber Crime video click on the link below.

- <https://youtu.be/UuyWTBStMYs> - 159 views to date

Student and Family Safety Online Engagement Event

A student and family online engagement event was held on 03/09/2020 in partnership with Nigel Sutton the Cyber Protect Officer.

The event welcomed questions from the community and provided advice on online security and scams aimed at school and university students including keeping safe online, student housing scams, money laundering scams, dating scams, sexting, student grant payments scams, secure networks, strong passwords and much more.

Back to School Cyber Safety



To view the Student and Family Safety video click on the link below

- <https://youtu.be/f2zHHzDTs3M>

Further information and advice about online safety and scams and can be found at

- <https://www.cambs.police.uk/information-and-services/Online-safety/Internet-safety>
- <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/community-protection/against-scams-partnership>

Hate Crime Awareness Online Engagement Event

The community safety partnership held a Hate Crime Awareness Event on 08/10/2020 in partnership with David Bailey the FDC diversity & traveller manager and Tiff Lane the Action Against Hate coordinator from Cambridgeshire Constabulary.





The hate crime panel answered questions about hate crime and raised awareness of the importance of also reporting hate incidents.

Links to further reporting and further support was made available through the video description.

The video was released as part of Fenland CSPs contribution towards the National Hate Crime Awareness week between the 10th - 17th October 2020.

To view the hate crime awareness video, click on the link below

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ztp7KnBun8k>

CSP Workforce Development Training

Training themes for CSP workforce development are linked to the priorities within the CSP action plan. Frontline staff from statutory and the voluntary sectors are invited to attend these free training sessions.

Those attending include staff from housing providers, FDC teams, police, probation, traveller teams, young people workers, family workers, children centres, food banks, volunteers, schools, healthcare workers, faith groups, community organisations and Citizen's Advice.

Drug Harm Reduction Training

Following recommendations from the County Substance Abuse Delivery Board, the Community Safety Partnership coordinated a drug harm reduction training event on 30th September 2020.

The training was delivered by Bex Poyser and Tony Firth from Change Grow Live (CGL) and Joe Keegan from the County Public Health Directorate and was attended by 23 Front professionals using video conferencing facilities.

Fenland Op Grippled – Loan Shark awareness Project 2021

The Fenland Community Safety Partnership has been successful in its bid to the Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) and has been awarded funding to deliver a loan sharks awareness project in 2021. The IMLT have requested we use the funding to raise awareness amongst the community of Loan Sharks and complete some work within

educational settings.

Street Drinking Update (Cllr Susan Wallwork)

The Wisbech alcohol related Public Spaces Protection Orders were required by law to be subject of a review before the current orders expired in October 2020. The review would allow for the orders to be extended, varied or discharged.

The legislation laid out the requirements to be followed and this included consultation with police, the Police & Crime Commissioner, owners and occupiers of land within the area of the orders and community representatives. Community feedback gathered through the Fenland Community Safety Partnerships survey was also used.

Although there had been evidence of an improved situation in respect of street drinking and associated anti-social behaviour it was felt the orders were necessary to prevent recurrence or to prevent an increase in frequency or seriousness of those activities.

Following the review process the existing restrictions were left unchanged and the order extended for another 3 years.

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%	28%	
CELP11	Customer satisfaction with refuse and recycling services (quarterly)	99%	90%	TBC	
CELP12	Customer satisfaction with our garden waste service (quarterly)	94%	85%	TBC	
CELP13	Number of Street Pride, Green Dog Walkers, and Friends Of community environmental events supported	204	204	30	
CELP14	% of those asked who are satisfied with FDC's events (May, July, October, January)	96%	96%	N/A	

Key:	
	Within 5% of target
	5-10% below target
	10% or more below target

Comments
CELP11 & CELP12 – data will be available by the end of 2020 as this is an annual indicator
CELP 13 - Due to COVID-19 restrictions, volunteers have not been able to undertake many events. During July and August, a small number of family group litter picks were undertaken.
CELP 14 - The four seasons events calendar has been postponed so this indicator is not being measured.

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 continues to remain under review in line with the now adopted Commercial & Investment Strategy and the creation of Fenland Future Limited, the Council's development and regeneration company. Suitable 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 or its development company.

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 disposals are on hold pending the appointment of an Officer resource. Despite an extended recruitment campaign, no applications were received, and we are now seeking to appoint to this role via an agency.

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

Wisbech Access Strategy

There is no specific update on this project for November 2020

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/ccc_live/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 given approval by CCC Highways and Transport Committee should they be needed.

Kings Dyke Level Crossing

There is no specific update on this project for November 2020

This is a project primarily funded by Cambridgeshire County Council and the CPCA. It is being by Cambridgeshire County Council. In May 2020 Jones Bros Civil Engineering UK were appointed as the contractor to deliver the Kings Dyke Level Crossing scheme. Construction started in July 2020 with the new road expected to 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.

In early November 2020 a report was tabled at the CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee. This paper updated members on progress, specifically progress with the quick win projects. The Committee agreed to go forward to construction with the quick win schemes and recommended to the CPCA Board that it draw down £900,000 of the budget for this purpose. A copy of the paper which includes the quick win scheme details and a construction timetable can be found from the following website link:

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1971/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

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 can be found from the following website link

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

March to Wisbech Railway Line

This is a CPCA funded project.

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>

In November 2020 CPCA gave an update to FDC Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the Wisbech railway project. A copy of the report to support the meeting can be found in the link below.

<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/localgov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=2490&Ver=4>

Key points to note are as follows:

- The full business case concludes that the most commercially viable solution is a heavy rail service serving a station centrally located within Wisbech
- The CPCA Board agreed to continued engagement with the Department for Transport, and other central government departments to explore the future funding of this project through the Restoring Railways Fund
- In June the Mayor met with Chris Heaton – Harris, Minister of State for Transport, to highlight the importance of both Wisbech Rail and Ely Area Capacity Enhancement. The Mayor and Minister agreed that further work would take place between Combined Authority officers and departmental officials. The Mayor and the Minister are expected to meet again following that engagement between the Combined Authority and the Department for Transport (DfT)
- The Combined Authority has made representation to the Treasury as part of the Spending Review 2020 submission. This includes a case for funding Wisbech Rail as a priority.

Highways England Roads Investment Strategy (RIS)

In August 2020, an announcement was made by Highways England about their RIS2 (2020 – 2025) investment programme. This is essentially their scheme delivery plan for the next 5 years. There was no new announcement about A47 schemes as had been hoped. This has been met with considerable anger and disappointment including from the MPs whose constituencies are along the route. A meeting with the Transport Minister has been held and senior level representatives from Highways England attended the October 2020 A47 Alliance meeting. Confirmation has been given that they are listening and want to work with us in the future.

The RIS2 announcement included the commitment to deliver the A47 RIS1 schemes including the Guyhirn roundabout scheme. It also listed a series of pipeline schemes. These are projects which will undergo development work in RIS2 ready for delivery in RIS3. A47 Elm High Road roundabout is listed as a pipeline scheme.

The RIS2 plan can be found from the following website link:

<https://highwaysengland.co.uk/delivery-plan/>

A47 Dualling (CPCA Project)

Following the Highways England RIS2 announcement there was considerable disappointment that despite all the work completed by CPCA the A47 dualling programme was not included. Discussions between CPCA and Highways England have since continued and negotiations are ongoing. Highways England have agreed to undertake a review of the stage 0 work completed by CPCA. This review is to determine if there is any further work needed with a view to Highways England adopting the development work into their own programme.

Considering the above mentioned RIS2 announcement, a progress update was provided to the CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee in early November 2020. A link to the paper from that meeting is below.

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1971/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

A47 Guyhirn (Highways England Project)

As part of the RIS2 announcement Highways England have confirmed that the Guyhirn roundabout scheme will be the first of the A47 RIS1 schemes to commence on site. The latest information we have been provided with confirms a start on site in the early part of 2021 with the scheme being open to traffic in 2022. Highways England and their consultants are meeting with FDC later in November 2020 to discuss the start of works and further information should then be available. More detail about this scheme and the latest updates can be found on the [Highways England website](#).

Fenland Walking, Cycling & Mobility Strategy

During November 2020 FDC Cabinet approve £21,335 towards the development of a Walking and Cycling Strategy for Fenland. This will be delivered in partnership with the Hereward Community Rail Partnership (CRP) who are contributing £7,500 towards the project. The development of this strategy which will ensure that the Council is best placed to bid for substantial funds that are expected to be available in due course from Government. The Strategy will consider links to employment, education and public transport interchanges. The strategy is intended to be complete by the Summer 2021. £3,000 of the funding will be used immediately to develop 3 priority schemes all of which link to the Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 63 at March and Whittlesea.

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

The Growing Fenland project continues to attract funding for projects linked to our four market towns. Bids for up to £1m can be submitted to the CPCA for each of our

market towns to help deliver projects that will to boost economic growth and promote recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

An update for each town is shown below:

Chatteris

PROJECT	CPCA FUNDING REQUESTED	STATUS
Chatteris Town Centre Renaissance Fund A fund to improve the appearance of the town centre through improvements to street furniture and grants for retail properties.	£100,000	Funding approved
Chatteris Skills Development Provision of ICT equipment for the new training centre being built in Chatteris	£36,178	Due to be submitted to the CPCA Board meeting on 27.01.21

March

PROJECT	CPCA FUNDING REQUESTED	STATUS
March Future High Street Fund Match funding for the £9.3m Future High Street Fund bid which has been submitted to MHCLG	£900,000	Application will be submitted to CPCA when further information is received from MHCLG

Whittlesey

PROJECT	CPCA FUNDING REQUESTED	STATUS
Whittlesey Interactive Flood Signs Interactive highway signs to help redirect traffic at times of flooding and other road emergencies	£56,500	Funding approved
Whittlesey Heritage Centre A new visitor centre to showcases local artefacts and tell the story of Whittlesey, and Fenland more generally, from the Bronze Age to modern day.	£500,000	Funding approved
Whittlesey Heritage Walk A walk starting and ending at the planned	£218,169	Funding approved

Heritage Visitor Centre (with alternative start & finish points in the town) providing residents and visitors with background information on key landmarks in the town.		
Business Capital Grants Scheme A capital grant scheme for the local business community to help mitigate against the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic	£124,331	Due to be submitted to the CPCA Board meeting on 27.01.21

Wisbech

PROJECT	CPCA FUNDING REQUESTED	STATUS
Wisbech Market Place Enhancements Additional funding to deliver improvements to Wisbech Market Place	£200,000	Funding approved
Wisbech Water Park A water play space providing a permanent fun activity for families from Wisbech and the surrounding area, whilst also enhancing Wisbech Park, a key open space in the town	£147,500	Due to be submitted to the CPCA Board meeting on 27.01.21
Wisbech Footfall Counters Provision of additional footfall counters to monitor footfall in Wisbech Market Place	Circa £50,000	Due to be submitted to the CPCA Board meeting on 27.01.21
Wisbech Replacement Shopwatch Radios Replacement of existing Shopwatch radio scheme with digital system	Circa £60,000	Due to be submitted to the CPCA Board meeting on 27.01.21
Business Capital Grants Scheme A capital grant scheme for the local business community to help mitigate against the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic	Circa £200,000	Due to be submitted to the CPCA Board meeting on 27.01.21

District Wide

PROJECT	CPCA FUNDING REQUESTED	STATUS
Civil Parking Enforcement A bid for the capital costs involved with delivering a district wide Civil Parking Enforcement Scheme	Circa £400,000	Due to be submitted to the CPCA Board meeting on 27.01.21

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

Following the second call for sites, these are currently being assessed by statutory partners and town and parish councils to be assessed with the first call for sites to determine which sites will be included in the new plan.

The 5 year land supply report has been published on the Council's website. This shows that we have 5.98 years supply, an additional supply of 551 homes.

We have recently provided 2 consultation responses to government on 'Changes to the current planning system' – consultation closed 1 October and 'Planning for the Future White Paper' – consultation closed on 29 October. The White Paper sets out longer term changes to the planning system and would take 18 months to be adopted into legislation. The first consultation does not require any change in law and concerned a number of matters including a proposed formula to calculate housing numbers allocated to local areas. The calculation would increase Fenland's housing growth target from 550 homes per year to 844 per year. The Council's response to this consultation was publicised in a press release:

<https://fenland.gov.uk/article/15462/Council-joins-forces-with-MP-over-objections-to-planning-system-changes>

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

Manea Station

- Car Park – approval for the scheme was given by FDC Planning Committee in September 2020. The detailed design work to enable work to start on site is nearing completion and discussions are finalising the procurement route. The land acquisition is expected to be complete by the end of November 2020. Work is expected to commence on site to build the scheme in January/February 2021.

March Station

- Car parking and platform 1 building – Greater Anglia are working on the tender pack for a design and build contract which is expected to be complete during November 2020. The tender process will be ongoing through December and work is expected to start on site in late January 2021.

Whittlesea Station

- Car Park – Greater Anglia and their consultants are working on a revised

scheme design for the car park. This is expected to be a phase 1 scheme and will use existing railway land. A revised single option design is expected in December 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

A project manager has been appointed to deliver the redevelopment of this site on behalf of the Council. An initial site meeting was held and a press release issued relating to the appointment of Pick Everard as project managers.

The next step is for the project manager to work with an architect to create a suitable and viable design to comprise a mixed retail and residential development. Once approved by the project team, a fully costed scheme can be prepared as part of the grant application to be submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. It is expected that a planning application will be ready for submission in the new year.

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 developer's tender appraisal. Once the application for funding has been agreed, the build lease can be signed. The demolition of the existing structure and façade is expected to be complete in early December.

13-17 High Street

A formal funding agreement has been sent to the applicant to sign. Once returned to us and the appropriate authorisations have been made the contract can be sealed and the applicant can instruct their contractors to make a start on the improvement works.

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. The grant agreement has been signed relating to no 18 and a press release is due to be issued relating to this news. Once amendments are made to the ownership details of No 19 (Evisons), agreements can be signed, and similar press release issued. Works are expected to commence in the Spring.

Other Properties

The project is currently working with owners and tenants of a further 2 properties who are in the process of applying for a grant for building improvements. Both of these are historic properties in need of repair. 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. A second lockdown as a result of COVID-19 has obviously impacted on operations and the ability to obtain quotations.

Other Activity

Letters regarding intention to pursue action against some property owners/tenants who are not maintaining their properties have been issued. Our legal team have been advised of those owners/tenants who have failed to respond and therefore instructed to take the next steps in terms of legal action.

Activity Plan:

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 many events in the Activity Plan have needed to be reviewed, changed or postponed. Digital events have been a popular way of maintaining the activity plan and the projects profile. An online exhibition of old photographs never before seen from the engineer's archives was delivered as part of Heritage open Days in September along with display boards in the window of a vacant High Street store. The project has secured the continued use of this window and has continued to refresh and update the display.

Events planned include: "Wisbech Winter Wanderland" in partnership with the Wisbech & Fenland Museum in December, Annual Gutter Cleaning Day in late November and release of a photo book generated from the recent exhibition.

The College of West Anglia are no longer able to guarantee delivery of the largest of our activities – the traditional repairs skills using the Council's chapel building on Mount Pleasant Road. Following discussions with the NLHF it has been agreed that we can look at amending this activity to deliver a series of public events/short courses. We are in the process of preparing a brief for this.

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

A red poster for the 'Wisbech Window Wanderland' event. The title 'WISBECH WINDOW WANDERLAND' is in large white letters at the top, flanked by white snowflake icons. Below the title, the text 'Transform our streets into a magical walking trail for all to enjoy!' is written in a smaller white font. The event dates and times, '*Friday 11th & Saturday 12th December 5.30pm to 8.30pm', are listed in white. A line of text says 'For information on how to take part visit the website:' followed by the URL 'www.windowwanderland.com/event/wisbech-2020'. The bottom section of the poster is white with red text stating 'A FREE EVENT ORGANISED BY THE WISBECH & FENLAND MUSEUM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WISBECH HIGH STREET PROJECT, SUPPORTED BY THE NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND'. At the very bottom are three logos: 'W&F Wisbech and Fenland Museum', 'WISBECH HIGH STREET 1838', and the 'HERITAGE FUND' logo with a hand icon.

WISBECH WINDOW WANDERLAND

Transform our streets into a magical walking trail for all to enjoy!

*Friday 11th & Saturday 12th December
5.30pm to 8.30pm

For information on how to take part
visit the website:
www.windowwanderland.com/event/wisbech-2020

A FREE EVENT ORGANISED BY THE WISBECH & FENLAND MUSEUM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WISBECH HIGH STREET PROJECT, SUPPORTED BY THE NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND

W&F Wisbech and Fenland Museum **WISBECH HIGH STREET 1838** **HERITAGE FUND**

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

The High Street Support Officer has worked with a further 180 businesses since the last report. Businesses were asking for support with COVID-19 compliant processes and risk assessments. The feedback from businesses has been very positive.

More recently, the focus of this work has been to assist local high street stores to understand and implement the new business closures requirements and to work as a point of contact with those businesses.

In order to ensure a consistent approach in the interpretation of new regulations and guidance, a county wide group formed earlier this year where queries are referred and officers from all councils can agree a consistent response to queries which often affect similar business types or national companies across our council areas.

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.

The BBFA group meet virtually, as regularly as is necessary, but 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

Following the Government's announcement regarding a national lockdown it has created two new grants, Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRSG) and Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG).

These schemes, all delivered through local authorities, are to support local businesses during the 5 November to 2 December 2020 national lockdown and during periods of local restrictions.

The national restrictions from 5 November to 2 December 2020 require businesses to close in order to manage the spread of coronavirus and save lives. Businesses in other sectors that aren't required to close will also be affected by the restrictions.

Two of the funds, the LRSG (Closed) and the ARG, are available to support businesses throughout this period of national restrictions.

LRSG (Closed), businesses required to close due to national 'lockdown' restrictions will receive grants of up to £3,000 per 28-day period under the LRSG (Closed).

The ARG provides additional funding for local authorities in areas with Local COVID Alert Level Very High, to support businesses that have had their trade affected by the restrictions. This includes:

- closed businesses that don't pay business rates
- businesses that have not been required to close, but are still severely impacted

Each local authority has the discretion to establish business grant schemes or other business support as best fits their area.

LRSG (Closed) provides grants to businesses in the highest band of local restrictions – Local COVID-19 Alert Level 3 (Very High) – which have been required to close during periods of local restrictions. Funding of up to £3,000 per 28-day period is available. During the period of national restrictions this grant is superseded by Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed)

LRSG (Open), where local authorities have been subject to Local COVID Alert Level High and / or Local COVID-19 Alert Level Very High restrictions, this grant allows local authorities to make discretionary payments to support businesses that were impacted by the restrictions, but not required to close.

Earlier in the year there was a significant collaborative effort across a range of Council Teams to process and make grant payments. The team has been brought back together to manage this round of grants. The Economic Growth team will again lead on the creation of the ARG application process, assessment of applications and where required engaging with applicants.

Open For Business

In response to the previous national lockdown, 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. The Open for Business service will be promoted to provide support for business in the current 2nd national lockdown.

Business Database

A database with over 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.

Major Projects

The Economic Growth team continue to engage with two of the major commercial development projects progressing in the district to understand timescales and issues and any barriers to ensure that the required support is in place to enable successful delivery.

Combined Authority COVID-19 Dashboard

The Council are represented by the Economic Growth Team as a member of the Combined Authority Economic Recovery Team (CAERT). The CAERT has created a "dashboard" of key indicators on the impact of Covid-19.

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

FDC continues to await funding decisions from MHCLG. The latest position is that MHCLG has confirmed that these are currently due in autumn.

To match fund the bid, March's Growing Fenland fund has added £900k to the project, with the CPCA adding another £1.1m. This matched funding, along with the compelling bid and good value for money assessments, is hoped to put the March bid in a strong position when assessed by MHCLG.

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 impact of COVID-19 on the industrial portfolio has been relatively limited and due to new lettings, the occupancy rate in October 2020 is 91% compared with 89% in April. A tenant at South Fens Enterprise Park has served notice and will vacate in January.

There is one property which is proving difficult to re-let and that is our 2,770 sq. ft office building on our Venture Court estate in Wisbech. There has been very little interest from the market and what interest we have received was deterred by the onset of COVID-19. The building is suitable for internal sub-division, but as an office property, these are proving less attractive at this time.

Our office premises have started to show a decline in numbers and we anticipate further reductions in occupancy over the next few months. Both business centres have remained open to tenants but conferences have ceased. At both business centres a small number of tenants continue to operate from their offices, but the majority have

not been in attendance as staff continue to work from home, even before the latest lockdown was imposed.

At South Fens Business Centre two tenants vacated in August and unfortunately one of these occupied 3 offices. In the past few weeks, a further 4 tenants have served notice and will vacate in November and December. One office is to be let in December and legal team have instructions. Occupancy peaked in August at 69% but as at October has dropped back to the long-term trend of 60%.

At The Boathouse one tenant surrendered a double office in October but another tenant has taken on the space, releasing a single office. In the last few weeks another tenant has given notice to terminate, although they will retain another office. Current occupancy is at 93% and began declining from 97% in September. One office is under offer and legal team have been instructed.

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.

Port Update (Cllr Ian Benney)

An audit of Nene Ports Port Marine Safety Code – Marine Safety Management System Manual (MSMSM) was conducted on the 13th and 14th October 2020 by Captain C.N. Hallam of Strategic Marine Services Ltd appointed as independent Designated Person for the Harbour Authority. The audit assessed the level of compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) by establishing the level of conformity with the various 'measures' and requirements of the MSMSM.

By assessing the level of conformity with the achievable 'measures' within the MSMSM a score of 96.12% compliance was achieved (95.15% in 2019).

It was confirmed that all recommendations identified in the previous annual audit had been procedurally closed out.

Affordable Homes (Cllr Sam Hoy)

Platform registered provider have confirmed that they have purchased the site at Elm High Road, Wisbech and will be on site shortly to deliver 137 affordable homes. 97 will be for affordable rent and 40 will; be for shared ownership.

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

Since March 2020 the statutory food safety service plan has been either on hold due to episodes of lockdown or being delivered differently through telephone-based assessments and questionnaires.

The Food Standards Agency has continued to update councils throughout the year with how they expect our regulatory role and responsibilities should be delivered.

The food safety service plan set out the annual inspection programme and categorises businesses from category A to E based on the type of business and the level of risk presented.

The inspection programme sets out the number of inspections to be completed each year and this is based on the risk rating which includes the type of food prepared and sold.

The inspection programme was recommenced in September and was again put on hold in November due to the fresh business closure regulations.

Since September this year, 20 inspections and food safety interventions have been completed. A large proportion of the inspections from this point forward will be completed by questionnaire with a follow up as necessary. This is mainly due to the coronavirus closure regulations and the need to protect COVID-19 secure working environments. All open high-risk food preparation businesses will receive an officer visit so customer safety is not compromised.

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%	94%	
CELP17	% of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks (or within extension of time)	99%	90%	96%	
EGA1	% occupancy of the business premises estate	87.8%	89%	87.9%	
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)	85	85	95%	
CELP18	Number of local businesses supported and treated fairly (quarterly)		96%	100%	

Key:

	Within 5% of target
	5-10% below target
	10% or more below target

Comments

EGA1 Cumulative figures not recorded. Historically reported as a year-end figure. For June 2020 the figure is 87.8%

EGA2 Annual figure based on survey Oct 2019

Performance re the speed of determination of planning applications is exceeding target. In respect of the national 24 month rolling tracker performance indicators, we achieved 100% for majors (60% target), 96% for Minors etc (70% target). With regard to appeal performance (again against the Government 24 month rolling tracker) we achieved 0% (of major appeals

allowed) and 1.3% (minor etc appeals allowed) and so we are performing well within target.
CELP18 – Due to COVID-19 restrictions the inspection programme commenced in September 2020. This data is being collected and will be reported in the January report.

Quality Organisation

Projects from Business Plan:

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

The Investment Board has met twice now and further work is being carried out on the potential to develop the Nene Waterfront as requested. A further paper is being researched on residential property investment and will be presented to the next meeting in the New Year.

The first board meeting for Fenland Future Ltd is in the process of being arranged and resourcing requirements are being reviewed to support this activity.

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

The Contact Centre remains open on Saturday mornings and customers are increasingly making use of the Saturday Morning Contact Centre facility, with call volumes exceeding the numbers of customers previously seen face to face during the same time.

During August, following the initial national lockdown resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, we successfully resumed the face-to-face service in all 4 locations via an appointment scheme initially, to ensure we were able to successfully evidence COVID-19 compliance to customers and staff. The payment machines in all locations remain closed at present.

During the second national lockdown which commenced on 5 November, we remain open to customers wishing to make urgent appointments and a press release and postings on social media and the FDC website has communicated this to our customers. To date from August (as of close of play on 06/11) we have had 64 requests for appointments and have approved 35 of those requests as the other 29 queries were able to be resolved over the phone or by offering a telephone appointment.

Appointments at each location so far have been:

March 12, Wisbech 14, Whittlesey 9 and Chatteris 0.

The PayPoint functionality has been live since 13 July, enabling customers to pay a Council bill via cash or card at any of the PayPoint locations either locally or nationally. This reduces the need for Customers to utilise one of our Customer Service Centres or Community Hubs in order to make payments for Council services. Since go live, up to 9 November, 2,377 payments were successfully made utilising PayPoint with a combined total value of £332,789.

The My Fenland project continues to progress, with all customer facing teams becoming part of the amalgamated My Fenland Team as of 27 July. Work is well underway to build resilience across all services and implement revised processes to increase efficiency where possible. Training has successfully taken place in relation to Cemeteries processes and there are further plans for training in relation to Trade Waste, Business Centre reception duties, invoicing as well as Assets and Projects admin functions.

Enhanced email functionality has now gone live in the Contact Centre. This functionality routes calls as well as emails to My Fenland Advisors via the telephony software. This will enable Advisors to swap between calls and emails as they arise rather than having to designate an officer to deal with customer emails separately. This functionality will ensure that we are able to respond to emails in a more timely manner, as well as being more efficient in our approach to the allocation of staffing resources.

The revised online missed bin form has also gone live, enabling customers to report a missed bin on line as well as receiving an electronic response about why the bin was not collected (if appropriate) or when the bin will be collected if it was missed. This will reduce the amount of time required to resolve these requests from customers as well as enabling customers to self-serve where possible.

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

Several projects under this heading are underway including My Fenland as detailed above. Other projects include Empty Homes work, Private Sector Enforcement, CPE,

Other Projects:

Elections Update (Cllr Chris Boden)

This year's annual canvass is almost complete. Visits have taken place to households where electoral registration forms have not been completed and submitted. All canvassers were trained to undertake the visits ensuring both their own and local resident's safety, during the global COVID-19 pandemic. The republication of the Electoral Register will be delayed this year from 1 December to January 2021. The option for delaying the republished register was introduced to reflect the COVID-19 backdrop to the annual canvass this year.

A Polling District Review is currently underway. Fenland residents are being asked to have their say on where they can cast their vote during elections, as preparations get underway for the May 2021 Local Election polls.

A consultation has been launched by Fenland District Council as part of a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations for the Fenland area of North East Cambridgeshire constituency.

The review is being carried out to prepare for the Local Elections in May next year and to give the Council an opportunity to ensure the district's busiest polling stations are COVID-19 secure and electors can cast their vote safely. The public consultation closed on 13 November with the final report being submitted to December's full Council meeting.

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 in September = 15, and October = 13.

Monthly update on FDC social media sites:

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

September;
Twitter = 124
Facebook = 110

October;
Twitter = 122
Facebook = 101

We currently have 3,951 likes on Facebook and 8,579 followers on twitter.

Consultation Summary:

- Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Proposals – 28 September – 20 December 2020
- Licensing Public Consultation – 20 October to 3 & 5 November 2020
- Polling Districts and Polling Places Review – 20 October to 13 November 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 39,000 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 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	95.9%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (March 2021)	96%	90%	N/A	
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	64%	Rolling monthly target rising to 46.5% by March 2021	87.20%	
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	92%	Rolling monthly target rising to 80% by March 2021	98.87%	
ARP3	% of council tax collected	96.84%	97.3%	64.90%	-1.07%
ARP4	Net council tax receipts payable to the Collection Fund	£53,286,255	£53,608,303	£37,721,321.82	£1,115,151*
ARP5	% of NNDR collected	97.7%	98.3%	64.42%	0.30%
ARP6	Net business rates receipts payable to the Collection Fund	£23,969,262	£24,663,273	£11,279,721	£693,702
PRC5	Number of visits to our website	684,190	718,000	475,359	
PRC6	% of staff who feel proud to work for FDC (annually)	84%	82%	95%	+13%

Key:	
	Within 5% of target
	5-10% below target
	10% or more below target

Comments

***Amended to reflect changes due to Covid**

COUNCIL TAX - Across the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) at the start of the month there were 5458 outstanding processes, and this has increased to 8066 at the end of the month. This is due to an increased number of moves notifications being received 5454 (last month 4572) now that people are able to move to a new house. This back log will be tackled by a 'challenge day' where ARP intend to concentrate on Mmves to bring the total number down and subsequently reduce the outstanding work.

Council Tax collection is below target, but this is as result of the ongoing Covid-19 situation. However, the position at the end of October has improved compared to end of September (-1.19%).

Summons have now been issued for a Court date on 2 December. Debtors will be encouraged to engage with us before the court date with a view to entering into payment arrangements and avoid actual appearances at court given the restrictions in place on the proceedings to meet COVID guidelines.

Focus will continue to be on encouraging and achieving payments arrangements that customers can keep to.

Given the volumes it is likely to be a very busy time for the recovery team over the months leading up to Christmas, which is being resources appropriately.

BUSINESS RATES - There has been a reduction in work outstanding. Now 98 items of post outstanding for Fenland (1225 across ARP) However with the recent announcement of further business closures for further lockdown it is anticipated that the number of enquiries will rise and, added to the correspondence generated by recommencing recovery action this number is likely to increase.

A new Grants scheme was announced at the end of October with new regulations and guidance being made available at the end of the first week in November.

Once received a list of potential qualifying accounts will be made available for the Fenland Scheme. There is also a

discretionary scheme which the authority will be able to utilise to support other local businesses which may not necessarily fall into the statutory scheme but may be suffering from the knock-on effects of other businesses closing.

Summons have been issued for a Court date on 2 December. Debtors will be encouraged to engage with us before the court date with a view to entering into payment arrangements and avoid actual appearances at court given the restrictions in place on the proceedings to meet COVID guidelines.

Collection remains on track.