

Agenda Item No:	7	
Committee:	Overview & Scrutiny	
Date:	8 February 2021	
Report Title:	Progress in Delivering the Environment Corporate Objectives 2020-2021	

1 Purpose / Summary

This report sets out the Council's progress in delivering the corporate objectives from April 2020 to December 2020. This is to ensure that members have the most up to date information possible.

2 Key issues

Particular successes are:

- In principle offer of £6.447m received for March Future High Street Fund project
- 32 Recycling Champions and volunteers have worked hard to promote recycling online and to send out activity packs to schools and local households
- Over 22,000 households signed up to the Garden Waste Service in its fourth year
- 96% of all rapid response or village response requests are being actioned either the same or next day
- 100% of inspected streets are meeting our cleansing standards
- The partnership between FDC and the grounds maintenance contractor remains strong and contract has been reviewed for a further 5 years
- Wisbech High Street project has continued to deliver and plan improvements despite challenging conditions
- Review of Civil Parking Enforcement commenced

3 Key Areas of Focus for 2020

- Begin delivery of March Future High Street Fund project
- Continuation of Wisbech High Street scheme project delivery
- Delivery of a competitive trade waste service
- Preliminary work linked to Civil Parking Enforcement review

4 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Panel considers the progress made by the Council in delivering the corporate objectives in the Business Plan.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	
Portfolio Holder(s)	<p>Councillor Peter Murphy, Portfolio Holder for Open Spaces, Street Scene & Waste Management</p> <p>Councillor Steve Tierney, Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Communication & Environment</p> <p>Councillor Ian Benney, Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth</p> <p>Councillor Andrew Lynn, Portfolio Holder for Licensing & Community Safety</p> <p>Councillor Jan French, Deputy Leader of the Council</p> <p>Councillor Chris Seaton, Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility & Heritage</p>
Report Originator(s) And Contact Officer (s)	Carol Pilson - Corporate Director cpilson@fenland.gov.uk
Background Paper(s)	Business Plan 2020-2021

Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Progress Against the Environment Priorities

For performance from
1st April to 31st December 2020

Portfolio Holders



**Councillor
Ian Benney**
Portfolio Holder for
Economic Growth



**Councillor
Mrs Jan French**
Deputy Leader of the
Council



**Councillor Andrew
Lynn**
Portfolio Holder for
Licensing &
Community Safety



**Councillor
Peter Murphy**
Portfolio Holder for
Open Spaces, Street
Scene & Waste
Management



**Councillor
Chris Seaton**
Portfolio Holder for
Social Mobility &
Heritage



**Councillor Steve
Tierney**
Portfolio Holder for
Transformation,
Communication &
Environment

Environment

Projects from Business Plan:

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

Between April and December 2020 many environmental offences have been reported and responded to, and proactive inspections completed.

Priority issues are waste accumulations, fly tipping, abandoned & nuisance vehicles.

The total amount of fly tipped incidents reported from April – December 2020 is 982 (lower than last year's total of 1,142). Household waste makes up the overwhelming majority.

As part of our commitment to tackle fly tipping across Fenland, officers have been very proactive in visiting fly tipped sites to look for evidence as to who may be responsible.

474 fly tipped sites have been investigated during this period. Where possible evidence is removed and followed up.

Due to COVID-19, we have had to approach enforcement slightly differently. Not being able to conduct a Face to Face interview, Fenland has led the way in developing an alternative through Formal Interview Under Caution Documents sent by post. This has enabled us to continue with our enforcement work and ensure tackling fly tipping remains a priority.

We have 'interviewed' 14 individuals who we believe may help us or have been responsible for dumped waste. Our investigations have been very successful and have resulted in:

- 7 x £400 Fixed Penalty Notices for small scale fly tipping offences. 5 were paid during the discounted rate of £300 time scale with 2 being referred to legal for consideration to prosecute for the offence. Of these actions 3 were in Wisbech, 3 in March and 1 for an offence in Chatteris.
- 8 Fixed penalty notices have been issued for cars parked on market days in March Market place during this time. All have been paid.
- 2 Littering Penalty Notices have been issued
- 1 Dog fouling Penalty Notice has been issued.
- 175 abandoned vehicles have been reported to us during this time and a

further 221 nuisance vehicles. This resulted in our contractor removing 19 vehicles.

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

Due to COVID-19, the Four Seasons events programme for 2020 was postponed.

The Wisbech Fayre committee were keen to provide the community with an alternative event whilst supporting the 'shop local' campaign. They pulled together the 'Wisbech Christmas Crackers' calendar, showcasing all the different festive events and activities that took place throughout the town from December 1 through to Christmas Eve.

This included:

- online craft activities and a cracker colouring competition from Wisbech Library
- 'Countdown to Christmas Markets' operated by Wisbech Town Council
- static stands at supermarkets by Wisbech Lions where children could say a socially distanced hello to Santa

'Wisbech Christmas Crackers' was promoted via the Fayre's Facebook page. It was great to see that there was an increase in the number of 'likes' to the page, from members of the community who engaged with this alternative.

Deliver the Recycling Action Plan (Cllr Peter Murphy & Cllr Steve Tierney)

The pandemic has prevented the team from delivering some elements of the plan and forced us to adapt many of the usual means of communication.



The Fenland Bin App has proven to be popular with customers and was downloaded more than 100,000 times during 2020. We added links to key waste services including the [Getting It Sorted website](#), where customers can check what can be recycled locally.

The children's school competition moved online in the initial lockdown, with 800 downloads and the eventual 10 competition winners attracting a

large amount of interest online.

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 Getting It Sorted volunteers helped our teachers and home schoolers by developing a teacher pack for each of the Key Stages which have been sent to 41 schools and are available on the Council's website.

Overall, the quality of the recycling is increasing, but food waste remains the largest issue within the blue bins and communications remain focussed on this issue to help customers continue to improve the materials they present.

Deliver a competitive trade waste service (Cllr Peter Murphy & Cllr Steve Tierney)

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 (Cllr Peter Murphy & Cllr Steve Tierney)

DEFRA have postponed the second phase of the consultation on the changes set out in the Resources and Waste Strategy until Spring 2021. RECAP partners have been

meeting regularly 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)

Following approval of the Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) paper at Cabinet on 21st October, a specialist CPE consultant has been appointed to undertake detailed feasibility works in line with the report recommendations. The initial focus shall be on, but not be limited to:

- 1) Production of a CPE feasibility report for the Fenland area with fully costed enforcement options for on and off street parking areas for Member consideration.
- 2) 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 to off street areas.

Following receipt of the feasibility works report to include detailed costings (estimated January/February), 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 Department for Transport (DfT) for the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement. The report will include estimated capital and operational/revenue costs, together with the costs of professional fees along with a proposed timetable for implementation. The report would also be used to support the development of a detailed business case for an application to the DfT.

An application to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) for capital funding for the implementation of CPE was submitted in December under the Growing Fenland programme. The bid is due to be considered in January.

Pending the outcome of the CPCA application for capital funding, Member approval shall be sought for a 'signing & lining' review to be carried out of all the existing Traffic Regulation Orders in Fenland in support of a CPE application to the DfT. These works would be undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council in partnership with Fenland District Council.

Deliver the CCTV shared service with Peterborough City Council (Cllr Andrew Lynn)

Please see report for separate agenda item – Community Safety Partnership

Other Projects:

Future High Streets Fund (Cllr Ian Benney & Cllr Chris Seaton)

MHCLG announced in-principle funding for the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) Project on Boxing Day.

FDC bid for a sum of £9.3m to transform March, supported by £2m of additional funding from the Combined Authority. Realistically, given the very competitive nature of this fund, our expectation was a grant in the region of £5m - £6m from MHCLG.

The in-principle offer received from MHCLG is £6.447m - exceeding expectations. This sum will allow the Council to achieve most of the workstreams from our proposal including:

- Transformation of Broad Street
- Opening up the riverside area
- Market place redevelopment
- Vacant units activation programme
- Elements of Acre Road improvements

This will be the biggest transformation in March for generations, ensuring that the town remains vibrant for the future.

The next steps to secure the funding are to finalise project streams to fit them with the revised funding envelope, whilst also changing the delivery schedules (initially funding was expected to be confirmed in September). This work is progressing and, with support from MHCLG officials, moving the funding offer from in-principle to confirmed should take place in March.

FDC has submitted formal bids to the CPCA Board for confirmation of the £2m match funding support. The CPCA Board meeting to consider these bids takes place in late January.

When both sets of funding are confirmed, FDC will work with the March Area Transport Study (MATS) team and CCC Highways to deliver the FHSF workstreams. The FHSF and MATS projects are closely aligned, with FHSF work taking place adjacent to public highways, and CCC being best placed to push this work forwards.

Wisbech High Street Project (Cllr Chris Seaton)

“High and Medium” Priority Properties

11-12 High St

Since acquiring the property from the previous owner in 2018, FDC Officers and the Wisbech High Street Project TH Officer have been working closely with a developer to ensure that this site is addressed as a priority and to ensure the maximum grant available from the National Lottery Heritage Fund is drawn down. The developer has funded the demolition of the dilapidated structures remaining on the site, including the façade, which was undertaken between March and December 2020. The demolition work was incredibly complex due to the presence of the historic buildings on both sides. Once the required documentation has been submitted to the NLHF and approved, building works on the new flats and retail units can commence. At this point the developer and the Council will enter into a Build Lease agreement which will see the transfer of the ownership of property to the developer on completion.



Rear of 11-12 High St 2017



Rear of 11-12 High St 2021

24 High Street

Following the resolution of a complex legal matter on this council-owned property, members agreed in early 2020 that the plans for the temporary structure known as The Gap should be replaced with plans for a permanent development of residential and retail on this site. Since then, a project manager has been appointed to oversee the delivery of the new scheme. Once a fully costed scheme is available an application will be made for funding from the NLHF.

13-17 High Street

Following unforeseen delays throughout 2020, legal agreements were finally exchanged in December. Clearance works commenced on this scheme before Christmas in preparation for a full programme of works in 2021.



13-17 High St, Site preparation - December 2020

18 and 19 High Street

An application was approved for 18 and 19 High St (two properties under the same ownership). These schemes will see essential roof repairs to both buildings, preventing further deterioration caused by damp issues. At No 18 the project is also

supporting replacement windows, entrance door, redecoration of the façade and new signage – all of which will improve the appearance and performance of the property. At No 19 (Evisons) in addition to the roofing works the project is supporting refurbishment of windows and redecoration of the façade.

Other Properties

The project is currently working with owners and tenants of two other properties who are in the process of applying for a grant for building improvements. Both are historic properties and the improvements being discussed will make a positive impact on the appearance of both the buildings and the High Street. The owners/tenants are in the process of gathering quotes, applying for statutory consents and completing their applications. There have been some delays due to COVID-19 restrictions and both businesses having to temporarily close.

Activities

As a condition of NLHF funding, the project must deliver a range of talks, events, activities and training programmes to encourage local residents to gain a better understanding and appreciation of their local built heritage.

Due to restrictions on meetings and public gatherings following the outbreak of COVID-19, most of the planned activities have needed to be amended or postponed. However, a number of very successful events still took place.

Wisbech Underground

This has been one of the most anticipated activities and has attracted a lot of public interest. Working with the University of Lincoln, we have recently undertaken 3D surveys of three underground locations in the town (The Rose and Crown Hotel, Market Place and the Sessions House). The surveys, which will be available to access via the project's website will allow virtual tours of these important historic locations which are ordinarily not open to the public. The project also commissioned the university to undertake some historic interpretation of these locations. Despite efforts, other popular locations have remained inaccessible, however there remains time and finances available to survey more locations.



Screen Capture from the 3D model of the Rose and Crown cellars

Gutter Clean

The annual Gutter Clean was undertaken in November 2020. This Activity offers cleaning of gutters, parapets and downpipes of all High Street properties free of charge. This aims to encourage good maintenance practices.

Construction Training

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on educational establishments, the College of West Anglia are not able to commit to their involvement in the conservation/repairs training programme. With the support of the NLHF an alternative activity has been approved which will involve a series of public training events (online and practical) to be delivered by an appropriately experienced external provider to be appointed in the new year following a competitive tendering process.

Window Wanderland

We were delighted to be able to work in partnership with the Wisbech and Fenland Museum to fund a Christmas event called "Wisbech Wanderland". This COVID-compliant event encouraged local residents and businesses to decorate their windows for an illuminated display over two evenings. The event was hugely successful and over 40 participants signed up to be included on the trail map. Local primary schools were involved in creating decorations for a display in Wisbech High Street, utilising an empty shopfront.



Display at 9-10 High St

Heritage Open Days (Sept 2020)

An online exhibition of photos from the Borough Engineers archives was incredibly popular and a physical display in the window of the former Bon Marche shop on High Street attracted a lot of interest. The exhibition comprised around 50 images from a photo album which we believe have never been published or publicly available before now. The photos were taken by the Wisbech Borough Engineers between the 1940s and 1960s and include war damage and new housing development schemes. Dozens of messages were received from residents who wanted to share their stories and memories, making this a really successful event. NLHF were very pleased with the outcomes.

[Photo Book](#)

Following on from the popularity of the photo exhibition, it was decided that there was enough interest to publish these images in a book. The book, which contains around 85 images will be available for sale in the new year. This activity has replaced another event which was undeliverable in the current climate and achieves the same objectives of celebrating local heritage and making it available to residents as well as potentially further afield.

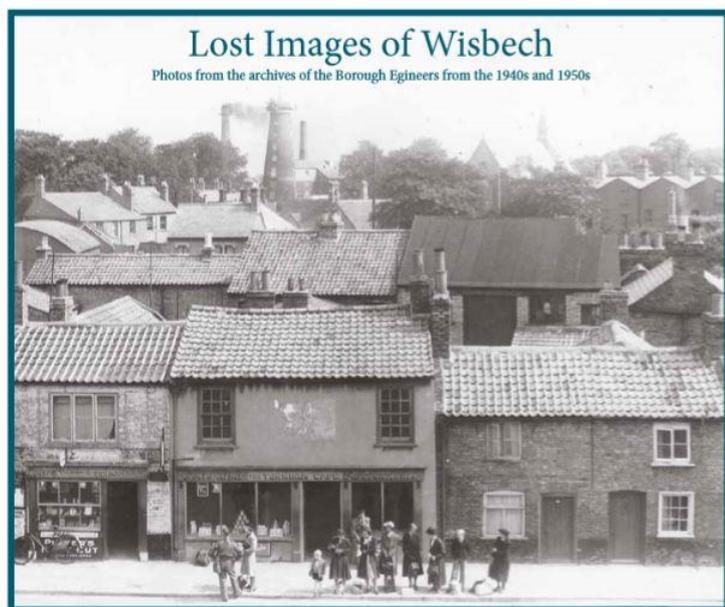


Photo Book "Lost Images of Wisbech"

FDC Car Park Maintenance (Cllr Jan French)

Throughout 2020, a number of routine repairs and maintenance works have been undertaken within several FDC owned Car Parks throughout the District. Such works included tree and vegetation maintenance, gully cleaning, surface patching and sign replacement.

The volume of maintenance works required within the Councils car parks over the last 9 months has been noticeably lower in 2020 than in previous years. Whilst capital investment in the car parks has played a big part, lockdowns and local restrictions associated with COVID-19 in 2020 has also seen lower occupancy levels.

Further repair and maintenance works are currently being look at for 2021 to include relining works within several car parks and industrial estates.

Capital funded resurfacing and road marking works were undertaken in August within Church Lane Car Park in Chatteris. The tendered works were undertaken in two days

and, despite excessive rainfall and encountering some poor ground conditions, the works were still completed on time and within budget.

The completed works now provides users with a safe and aesthetically pleasing facility whilst helping to reduce the financial liability on the revenue maintenance account.

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

FDC's open spaces team and Tivoli have continued to deliver a full service for our communities this year. Core works, the bulk of which is grass cutting (Mar-Oct), have been delivered on time. Quality and standards have been good and the level of complaints from the community are at an all-time low.

Substantial amounts of new trees have been planted in Whittlesey and March cemeteries, along with much clearance of vegetation and hedge-lines.

Play areas, apart from one enforced period during lockdown have remained open.

In November the contract with Tivoli was renewed for a further 5 years.

The Council has also delivered a new and popular skate park in West End Park, March and recently opened the extended play area at Snowley Park in Whittlesey. Projects in the pipeline include 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 include 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). Tenders were received in December and work commenced in January 2021.
- £240,000 for the Wisbech Pavilion project in Wisbech Park.

Burial rates in the Council's 5 open cemeteries have remained relatively stable but additional resources have been acquired in the event of a possible spike due to COVID-19.

FDC remains a member of the Cambridgeshire Future Parks Scheme. Useful work from this project includes Open Space information to assist with the Local Plan preparation, with more nuanced information expected in the coming months.

Street Lighting (Cllr Jan French)

Street Light Repairs & Maintenance

From April to December 2020, 182 street light faults were reported to the Economic Growth & Assets (EG&A) Team and forwarded onto FDC's street light contractor for rectification. In addition, 72 street light quotation requests were received from various Parish Councils for street light replacement or upgrade works.

The Council's street light contractor has continued to maintain a service for all street light emergency, and routine repair and maintenance works during the COVID-19 restrictions. A reduced service was however in place for a 2 week period during the Christmas holiday period whereby attendance was limited to emergency call outs.

Collectively the number of street light faults reported to the EG&A team over the Spring, Summer and Autumn months has been lower than ordinarily expected. This is likely to be attributed to both the local COVID-19 restrictions and the ongoing capital investment being made by the Council to replace its end of life lighting assets with modern equivalents.

Capital Street Light Replacement Works

The replacement of the Councils defective streetlights has been ongoing; however, progress has been much slower in recent months than anticipated or than would ordinarily be expected. The Coronavirus outbreak has certainly played a big part in this as manufacturing and supply chains have been forced to operate with a reduced workforce and in some cases, they have furloughed staff. This has subsequently seen material lead-in times increase significantly as production rates have reduced. In addition, more recently Brexit transition arrangements has also impacted on manufacturers who are awaiting luminaire components from Europe.

Whilst these extraordinary circumstances have impacted greatly on both the delivery of materials and the way in which the installation works are being undertaken, fortunately there has been little impact so far financially or in terms of operative health and safety. It is anticipated that this position is unlikely to change until the furlough scheme comes to an end and the vaccine roll out enables all of the manufacturing industry's workforce to return.

Since commencing the replacement works in March, 135 of the 275 FDC life expired streetlights have now been replaced and a further 60 replacements are scheduled for completion before the end of March. It is anticipated that the replacement works will be ongoing until the Summer.

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, the 32 volunteers have worked hard to continue to promote recycling and as a result there have been:

- 64,000 contacts through the programmed social media posts;
- 13,000 new website hits to www.gettingitsorted.org;
- 2,600 orders for additional recycling sacks;
- regular emails to the network of 1,450 registered recycling pledgers;
- 1,060 activity boxes to local families;
- 800 downloads of the summer recycling competition;
- teacher recycling lesson packs shared with 41 local schools;
- 2 online recycling tutorials;
- started working with Cambridgeshire Skills on accredited recycling training;
- and completed more than 1,200 hours of volunteering completed to support all this.



Garden Waste Service Update (Cllr Peter Murphy & Cllr Tierney)

The garden waste service continued in a reliable and consistent fashion throughout the pandemic, creating higher than ever waste tonnages at times and the highest levels of subscribers, at just over 22,750.

As a result, the recently performed customer satisfaction survey shows that 99% of the 642 customers responding (from the 3,300 contacted), said they were satisfied with the garden waste service provided this year.

This year, 77% of the 22,750 subscriptions were purchased by direct debit and these will

renew automatically in February 2021. Customers who have in previous years paid by cash have been supported with direct communications as part of the annual communications plan to make their payment at their local shop or Post Office, via the PayPoint system, this year. Card payments and direct debit remain available online and by telephone to allow customers to pay in the most suitable fashion for them.

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

The RECAP Partnership has worked together through the pandemic to ensure continuity of waste collection and disposal across the area, diverting resources to key areas and coordinating communications to assist customers and deliver these key services in the most appropriate and responsive way.

Regular member board meetings have taken place virtually and business has continued to progress, including shared marketing via social media and the development of a [local circular economy](#) project.

Community Safety Partnership Update (Cllr Andrew Lynn)

Please see report for separate agenda item – Community Safety Partnership

Street Drinking Update (Cllr Andrew Lynn)

Please see report for separate agenda item – Community Safety Partnership

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%	96%	
CELP12	Customer satisfaction with our garden waste service (quarterly)	94%	85%	98%	
CELP13	Number of Street Pride, Green Dog Walkers, and Friends Of community environmental events supported	204	204	65	
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
CELP 13 - Due to COVID-19 restrictions, volunteers have not been able to undertake many events. From June-Oct, a small number of group litter picks / work parties were undertaken. Solo litter picks have also been undertaken by many volunteers across the district
CELP 14 - The Four Seasons events calendar has been postponed so this indicator is not being measured.