


Agenda Item No:	5	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	15 July 2021	
Report Title:	Annual Report of the Council 2021/21	

1 Purpose / Summary

To present the Annual Report of the Council for Cabinet to note the achievements made in delivering the Council's corporate priorities in 2021/21.

2 Key issues

- The Annual Report of the Council 2020/21 describes the performance of the Council over the last year, linking to the priorities detailed in our Business Plan. These are designed to deliver outcomes that improve the quality of life for Fenland residents and are listed under the key headings of Communities, Environment, Economy and Quality Organisation.
- The achievements listed in the Annual Report are not exhaustive but reflect some of our successful projects over the last year. Notable examples are given of how we have worked closely with the community and partners to tackle important local issues in a collaborative and efficient way.
- As like other local authorities, Fenland District Council faces significant financial challenges due to the impact of Covid and increased demand upon services. Nevertheless, we continue to provide high quality services whilst keeping our budget balanced.
- Our Cabinet members have selected a number of projects to contribute towards our 'Council for the Future' agenda. These projects have a variety of aims, from tackling areas of particular need within the district, to transforming services and the wider organisation sustainability to be fit for the future. Some of these projects are also interlinked with our Business Plan priorities.

3 Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Annual Report of the Council 2020/21.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Boden, Leader of the Council Cabinet Members
Report Originator(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Carol Pilson, Corporate Director Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director
Background Paper(s)	Business Plan 2019/20

1 Background / introduction

- 1.1 The Annual Report of the Council 2020/21 summarises key examples of the Council's performance against each of our corporate objectives over the past year. This document is published and circulated on an annual basis to provide a summary of performance for Councillors, customers and partners.
- 1.2 The Council continues to deliver high quality services and effective projects within each of its corporate priorities. Key examples include:

2 Communities - highlights

- 2.1 In March 2020 we launched our Covid-19 Community Hub to provide a lifeline to those most at risk during the outbreak. Since the Hub's launch, more than 2,200 requests for support have been received.
- 2.2 During the early stages of the pandemic, we provided emergency accommodation for 57 rough sleepers as part of the Government's 'Everyone In' initiative, supporting them to help them move on to safe, long-term homes as soon as possible. Our Housing Options team also prevented 242 households from becoming homeless.
- 2.3 Our Active Fenland team moved their activity online to help people of all ages stay active during lockdown. Online exercise videos received over 2,500 views on YouTube and there were 67 live exercise sessions on Zoom

3 Environment - highlights

- 3.1 More than 2.9 million bin collections were made across the district in all weathers, with recycling waste generating £490,000 of recycling credits to support services as a result. Our Cleansing and Rapid response team continue to provide an excellent seven day street sweeping and litter picking service. Last year they responded to over 1,400 service requests and undertook over 1,000 inspections.
- 3.2 Our Street Scene team spent over 3,200 hours on patrol in Fenland; working closely with the community to tackle environmental and anti-social behaviour problems.
- 3.3 Our shared CCTV service with Peterborough City Council maintained its 100% service function, 24 hours a day, 365 a year, despite the pressures of Covid-19. The service conducted over 6,000 pro-active camera patrols, detected over 1,000 incidents of crime and disorder across the district and supported our policing partners to make 86 arrests for offences, helping to make our towns and public spaces safer.

4 Economy - highlights

- 4.1 Our Finance and Business teams worked together to distribute £29.84million in Government coronavirus business grants in 2020/21. During this period over 6,800 grants have been given.
- 4.2 We secured a £997,000 grant from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to further extend our South Fens Business Enterprise Park in Chatteris with the construction of a new, light industrial 'move on' space.
- 4.3 Our Planning service processed over 700 applications and investigated over 300 cases of unauthorised development. In terms of meeting Government targets, our performance remains excellent (between 92% and 100% depending on application type).
- 4.4 Secured £8.4million of funding (£6.4m from Government, £2m from the CPCA) to deliver the March Future High Street Fund project. The scheme will see March town centre transformed through pedestrian, public realm and traffic flow changes to Broad Street, the Market Place and Acre Road area.

- 4.5 Supported by funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), a variety of projects continue to address transport connectivity in Fenland and beyond. These include: up to £25million towards improvements to the A47 Guyhirn roundabout, construction began on the £32 million A605 Kings Dyke crossing project, three highway schemes identified in Phase 1 of the Wisbech Access Strategy are now fully funded with construction due to begin in 2021, work on the Fenland Railway Station Masterplans project, to improve stations at March, Manea and Whittlesey and provide better railways for Fenland, and a full business case for a March-Wisbech Railway line approved and next-stage technical studies completed. Options for future funding being explored.
- 4.6 Following approval of our 'Growing Fenland' masterplans, £1million was earmarked for each of our market towns from the CPCA. Several bids for the funding have already proved successful, helping to deliver a range of regeneration projects across all four towns, and a district-wide Civil Parking Enforcement scheme to clamp down on poor parking

5. Quality Organisation - highlights

- 5.1 We collected over £57 million in Council Tax and £16 million in Business Rates. This plays a major part in funding the key services we provide to the community.
- 5.2 Following approval of the Council's Commercial and Investment Strategy, we established a new LATCo (Local Authority Trading Company), Fenland Future Limited, to help deliver our growth and regeneration aspirations and generate income to reinvest back into local public services. We bought our first commercial investment property in Wisbech in March 2021, which is already providing a financial return.
- 5.3 We implement our new My Fenland project, which aims to transform and significantly improve services available to residents. Key achievements to date include the creation of a new My Fenland team, with new Technical Champion roles answering more detailed enquiries to free up the capacity of specialist officers, and implementing PayPoint as a more convenient way for residents to pay Council bills.
- 5.4 We launched a new website (www.fenland.gov.uk) to provide residents and businesses with even better online access. The design, quality of content and search facility were improved, with more electronic forms to help more customers to self-serve. We received 969,000 visits in 2020/21 and 14,578 online form submissions across 50 different topics.
- 5.5 The Licensing team issued 373 licences for a variety of services, including Taxi, Premises, Alcohol, Scrap Metal and Animal Licensing, to help ensure such businesses are well managed and operating in a safe and legal way

6 Consideration

- 6.1 The Annual Report of the Council 2020/21 shows clear performance towards the achievement of our corporate priorities. It is only a summary document; many more projects are ongoing that aim to improve quality of life for Fenland residents.

7 Effect on Corporate Objectives

- 7.1 The Annual Report 2020/21 sets out the progress made in achieving the Council's corporate objectives.

8 Community impact

- 8.1 The projects detailed in the Annual Report 2020/21 illustrate how the Council is contributing to improving quality of life in Fenland.

9 Conclusions

- 9.1 The projects detailed in the Annual Report 2020/21 are some examples of how the Council has delivered successful projects - meeting corporate objectives and securing the best possible life chances for local people.

Fenland District Council Annual Report

2020/21





Chris Boden
Leader of the
Council



Paul Medd
Chief Executive

Introduction by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive

“Together we will overcome the impacts of Covid-19 and together we will prosper”

When the financial year 2020/21 began in April last year life as we knew it had changed in a way none of us could have predicted. The coronavirus pandemic had shocked the world, unleashing a global health and economic crisis which has impacted us all.

Our priorities, as a Council, have been to keep our residents safe and to support them through one of the most difficult years in recent history. We've been recognised as going “over and above” in our efforts to keep our core services running throughout, and we've created new services and solutions to meet residents' needs. We've responded to and delivered changes in legislation within days and adapted our working practices at a scale and pace unimaginable in a pre-pandemic era.

We have also worked closely with our partners, volunteers and communities to proactively signpost residents to a district-wide network of support services, and worked hard to support our vital local businesses, implementing business rates relief measures, offering advice and guidance on Covid secure measures and support available, and distributing almost £30million in Government coronavirus business grants.

And while there have undoubtedly been challenges and setbacks to overcome, the past year has also brought opportunities for transformation, regeneration, and future progress.

We embarked on our My Fenland project to transform and significantly improve the services available to residents at the start of the pandemic, implementing new technologies, new ways of working and improved digital channels at speed to meet ever-evolving demands. We created a new customer-facing team, implemented a new way to pay bills when cash offices closed in lockdown, and launched a new website to make it even easier for people to access our services online.

Millions of pounds of investment have also been secured to boost regeneration across the district and drive our post-Covid growth and recovery ambitions. This includes £8.4million for the March Future High Street Fund project, £4million for our Growing Fenland masterplans, £1million secured by local community groups from Cambridgeshire County Council's Communities Capital Fund, to fund eight community facility improvements, and £1million to further expand our South Fens Business Enterprise Park in Chatteris.

We also levered funding to build upon the great work with partners to rehouse homeless households during the pandemic. A total of £1.4million has been secured to provide more long-term homes and supported accommodation properties to help Fenland's rough sleepers off the streets for good.

Through our Commercial and Investment Strategy, we have also established a new LATCo (Local Authority Trading Company) and bought our first commercial investment property to generate additional income for our services and further aid our regeneration aspirations.

As we write this report, it is still not entirely clear what the long-term impact of the pandemic will be. But, supported by our Covid-19 recovery plans, we will continue to work with our communities to meet emerging priorities and support our economy to recover and renew. Together we will overcome the impacts and together we will prosper.

OUR Communities

OUR Environment

OUR Economy

QUALITY Organisation

About Fenland



**Over 101,000
people live
in Fenland**



**Over 200 miles
of beautiful
waterways**

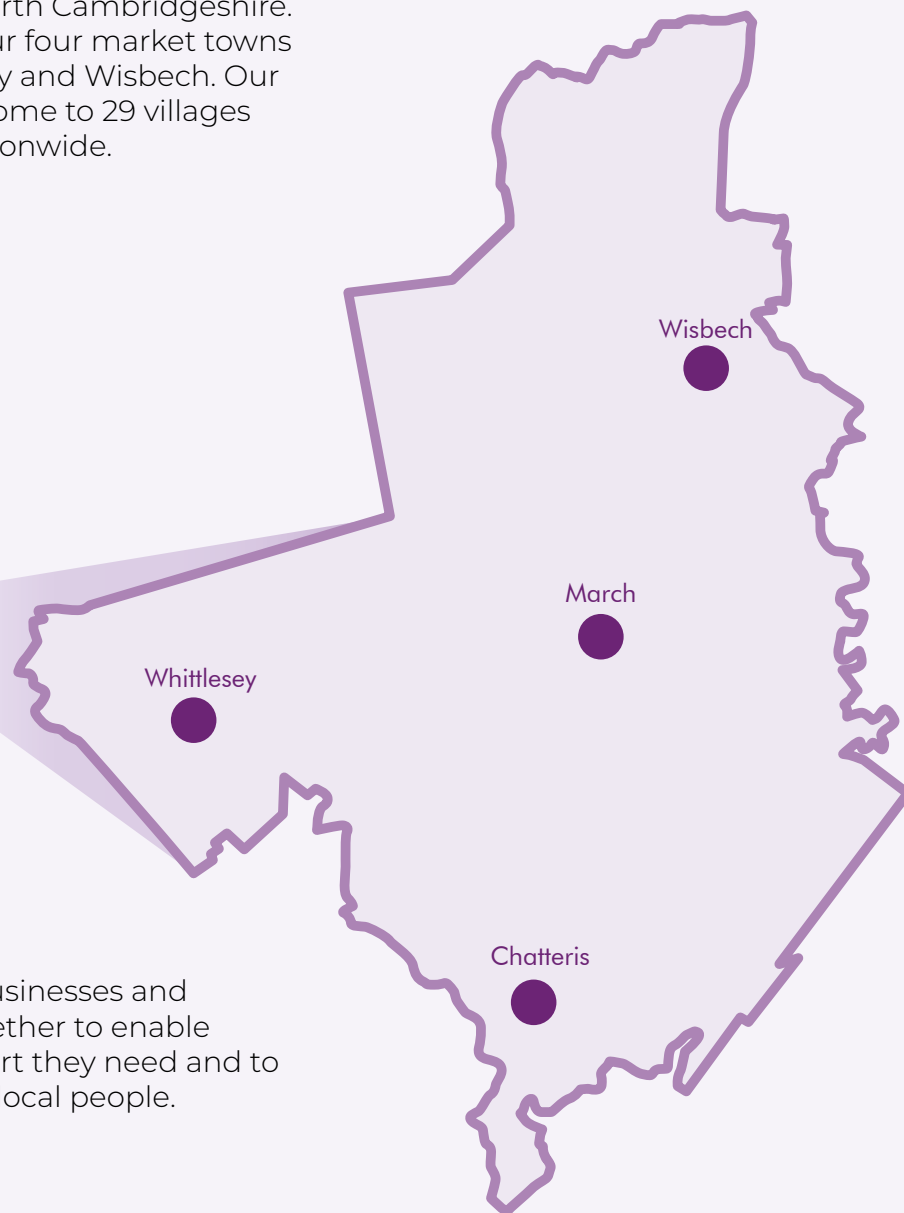


**Over 135 hectares
of open
green space**



**Fenland covers
approx. 211
square miles**

Fenland is a district within North Cambridgeshire. 75% of residents live within our four market towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech. Our beautiful rural landscape is home to 29 villages and attracts visitors from nationwide.



Alongside our community, businesses and partners, we are working together to enable residents to access the support they need and to improve the quality of life for local people.

OUR Councillors by Ward

Cabinet



Chris Boden
Leader of the Council
Bassenhally
(Whittlesey)



Jan French
Deputy Leader of the Council
March West



Ian Benney
Birch
(Chatteris)



Sam Clark
Roman Bank
(Wisbech)



Sam Hoy
Octavia Hill
(Wisbech)



Andrew Lynn
Clarkson
(Wisbech)



Dee Laws
Stonald
(Whittlesey)



Peter Murphy
Wenneye
(Chatteris)



Chris Seaton
Roman Bank
(Wisbech)



Steve Tierney
Medworth
(Wisbech)

Other Councillors



Alex Miscandlon
Benwick, Coates
and Eastrea



Bob Wicks
Benwick, Coates
and Eastrea



Anne Hay
The Mills
(Chatteris)



Daniel Divine
Slade Lode
(Chatteris)



David Connor
Doddington and
Wimblington



Maureen Davis
Doddington and
Wimblington



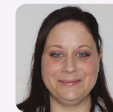
Michelle Tanfield
Elm and Christchurch



Will Sutton
Elm and Christchurch



Charlie Marks
Manea



Kim French
March North



Mike Cornwell
March North



Steve Count
March North



Fred Yeulett
March East



John Clark
March East



Mark Purser
March East



Rob Skoulding
March West



Simon Wilkes
March West



Gavin Booth
Parson Drove and
Wisbech St Mary



Sarah Bligh
Parson Drove and
Wisbech St Mary



Kay Mayor
Bassenhally
(Whittlesey)



Jason Mockett
Lattersey
(Whittlesey)



David Mason
St Andrews
(Whittlesey)



David Patrick
Kirkgate
(Wisbech)



Susan Wallwork
Octavia Hill
(Wisbech)



Nick Meekins
Peckover
(Wisbech)



Michael Humphrey
Roman Bank
(Wisbech)



David Topgood
Staithe
(Wisbech)



Andy Maul
Waterlees Village
(Wisbech)



Billy Rackley
Waterlees Village
(Wisbech)

Conservative 
Independent 
Green 
Liberal Democrat 

MONEY Matters

Where your Council Tax goes

In 2020/21, the Band D Council Tax bill was set at £1,924.38 (plus individual Parish amounts). In 2021/22 this increased to £1,981.35 (plus Parish amounts). Fenland District Council collects money through Council Tax on behalf of other authorities. A breakdown of this is shown in the graphic to the right.

Fenland District Council froze its element of Council Tax in 2020/21 and again in 2021/22 (the sixth time our element has been frozen in ten years). Just 13% of each household's Council Tax bill goes to Fenland District Council, with the remainder going to the other authorities.

The numbers above relate to a Band D property. However, 83% of properties in Fenland are in Bands A-C. The average Council Tax per property in Fenland was £1,312.01 in 2020/21 and will be £1,351.16 in 2021/22.

Our finances

The Council's revised estimate for spending on services in 2020/21 was £12.9m. This sum is principally financed by the Council's share of Business Rates (£4.801m) and Council Tax (£7.652m). At the budget meeting in February 2021, a net deficit of £221,000 was forecast at the year-end.

Full details of the Council's Budget for 2020/21 and Medium Term Financial Strategy can be found at: www.fenland.gov.uk/finance

You may also wish to read our Business Plan. This explains our organisational priorities for the next financial year: www.fenland.gov.uk/businessplan



COUNCIL for the Future

Our Cabinet members have selected a number of projects to contribute towards our 'Council for the Future' agenda.

These projects have a variety of aims; from tackling areas of particular need within the district, to transforming services and the wider organisation sustainably to be fit for the future.

The aim is to have a programme of projects completed by the end of the current Council leadership term.

We update performance on these projects in our quarterly member briefing reports and regularly publicise achievements on our website:

www.fenland.gov.uk

Some Council for the Future projects are also interlinked with our Business Plan priorities.

**Transforming
Empty homes**

My Fenland

Better online access

**Commercial and
Investment Strategy**

Fighting Holiday Hunger

CCTV service

**Safer homes
for tenants**

**Clamping down on poor parking -
Civil Parking Enforcement**

Protecting our environment

Competitive trade waste service

**Better railways
for Fenland**



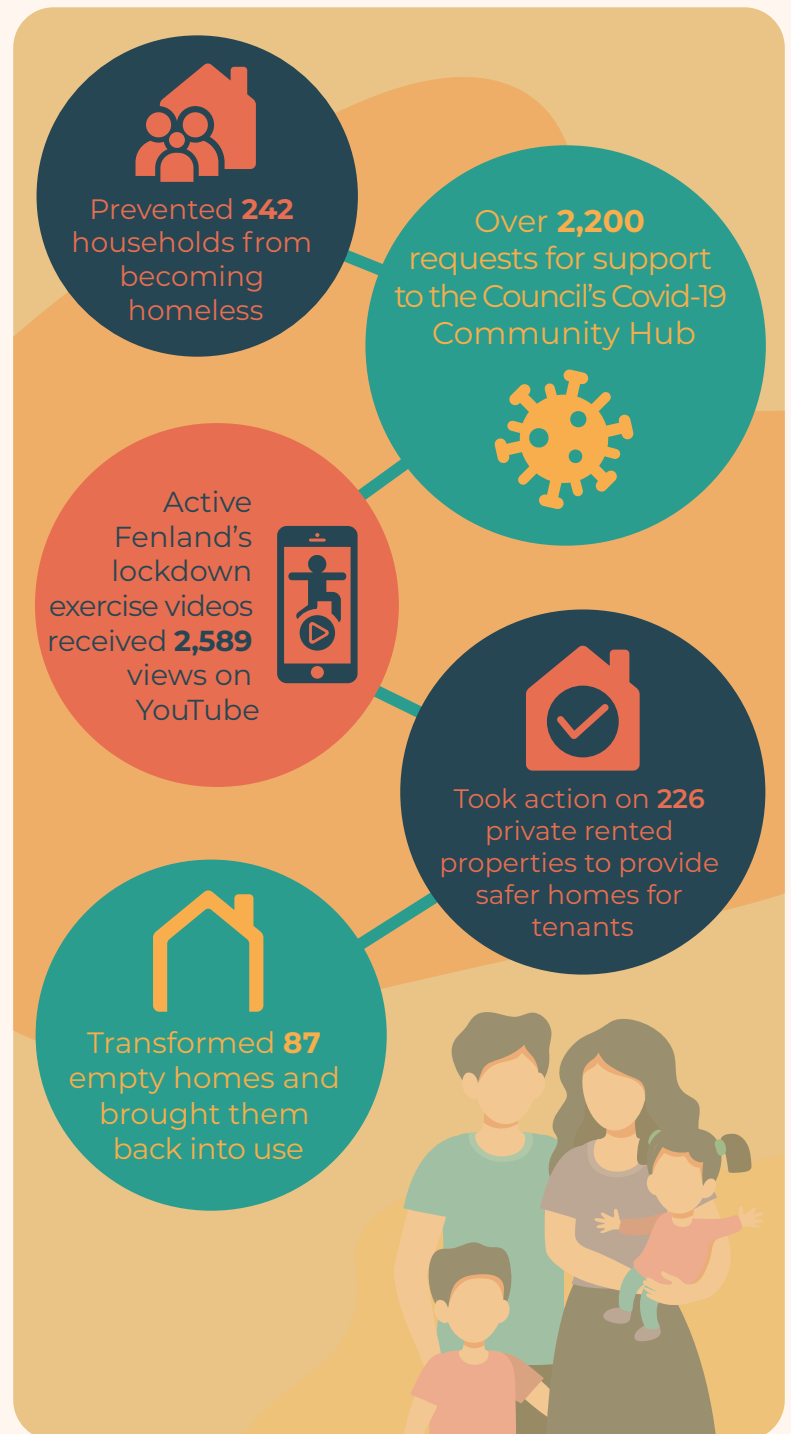
OUR Communities

Support vulnerable members of our community

- In March 2020 we launched our **Covid-19 Community Hub** to provide a lifeline to those most at risk during the outbreak. Co-ordinating the support available from over **80 different organisations**, the hub supports vulnerable residents with food shopping, medicine collection and general errands, as well as money and employment advice through a dedicated Citizen's Advice service. Since the Hub's launch, more than **2,200** requests for support have been received.
- We continue to work with the Ferry Project and Change Grow Live (CGL) outreach to tackle rough sleeping. During the early stages of the pandemic, we provided **emergency accommodation for 57 rough sleepers** as part of the Government's 'Everyone In' initiative, supporting them to help them move on to safe, long-term homes as soon as possible. We also levered in £1.4million of funding for a joint project with Clarion Housing, the Ferry Project and Amicus Trust which will provide long-term places and support for 40 rough sleepers. Our Housing Options team also **prevented 242 households from becoming homeless**.
- Due to the pandemic, the annual **Pride in Fenland awards** was postponed in March 2020. With ongoing restrictions into 2021, we took the event online to ensure the achievements of local unsung heroes didn't go unrecognised. To date the event has received over **700 views on YouTube**.

Promote Health and Wellbeing for all

- Together with other district councils and partners in Cambridgeshire, we helped to develop a **Local Outbreak Management Plan**, as required by Government, to set out how we will collectively **prevent and reduce transmission of Covid-19**. Our role in the plan is to respond to workplace outbreaks, review business controls and offer advice on Covid-19 compliance, a local track and trace service, identify contacts in vulnerable settings such as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), share regular communications, and provide support for residents through the Community Hub. We have also supported Covid testing facilities in our communities. To help support our plan, we secured just over **£690,000 in Test and Trace and Contain Outbreak Management Funding** for resources and community support projects.



● We expanded our work with community groups to support those most at risk from Covid-19. Supported by £97,000 of Government funding, our **Community Champions scheme** continues to deliver a range of measures to help support at-risk groups including older people, disabled people, and those from ethnic minority backgrounds. Measures include language and translation support, additional Covid-19 advice and guidance, telephone support for those who are digitally excluded, as well as the delivery of food and medical supplies to harder to reach communities.

● It has been a difficult year for our leisure provider **Freedom Leisure**, with forced leisure centre closures and reduced capacity when open to adhere to Covid-19 guidance. We agreed an emergency financial package to support them through the lockdowns and secured **£224,500 from Sport England's National Leisure Recovery Fund** to help ensure our leisure centres could provide a full range of activities to residents once again as coronavirus restrictions are lifted.

● Our **Active Fenland** team moved their activity online to help people of all ages stay active during lockdown. Online exercise videos received over **2,500 views on YouTube** and there were **67 live exercise sessions on Zoom**. As restrictions eased, in-person activity

sessions recommenced across the district. The team also created **Rainbow Activity Packs** for families during the summer holidays, as part of their Fit and Fed programme to help **fight holiday hunger**. The packs contained a pre-prepared lunch, a cookbook, a physical activity games pack and a children's book from Wisbech Reads.

● Our parks and open spaces have played an even larger role in people's lives than normal this year, providing **places to be active and socialise** while under lockdown restrictions. Tivoli, our grounds maintenance contractor, maintained an excellent level of service, with maintenance work continuing throughout the year, uninterrupted by the pandemic, so they can be enjoyed by all.

Performance

	Target 2020/21	Performance	Variance on target
Days taken to process new claims and changes for Council Tax support	8 days	7.06 days	+11.62%
Days taken to process new claims and changes for Council Tax benefit	8 days	4.28 days	+41.88%
Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	400	226	-43.50%*
Number of people prevented from becoming homeless	300	242	-19.30%*
Number of empty properties brought back into use	New PI	87	N/A
Amount of New Homes Bonus achieved as a result of bringing empty homes back into use	New PI	£79,217	N/A
% of attendees satisfied with Golden Age events	96%	N/A	N/A*
Number of active health sessions per year that improve community health	400	N/A	N/A*
% of those asked satisfied with our leisure centres (Net Promoter Score)	39	N/A	N/A*

* Performance/service impacted by COVID-19 restrictions

OUR Environment

Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

- Core services continued throughout the pandemic with more than **2.9million bin collections** made across the district. Waste tonnages collected increased significantly due to people staying at home, and **customers continued to recycle their waste well**, generating £490,000 of recycling credits to support services as a result. Customer satisfaction with our Refuse and Recycling, and Garden Waste (Brown Bin) services remains high at 96% and 99% respectively. The Garden Waste service was also maintained throughout the pandemic and proved popular as a result, with subscriptions at an all-time high of more than 22,900 in 2020/21.

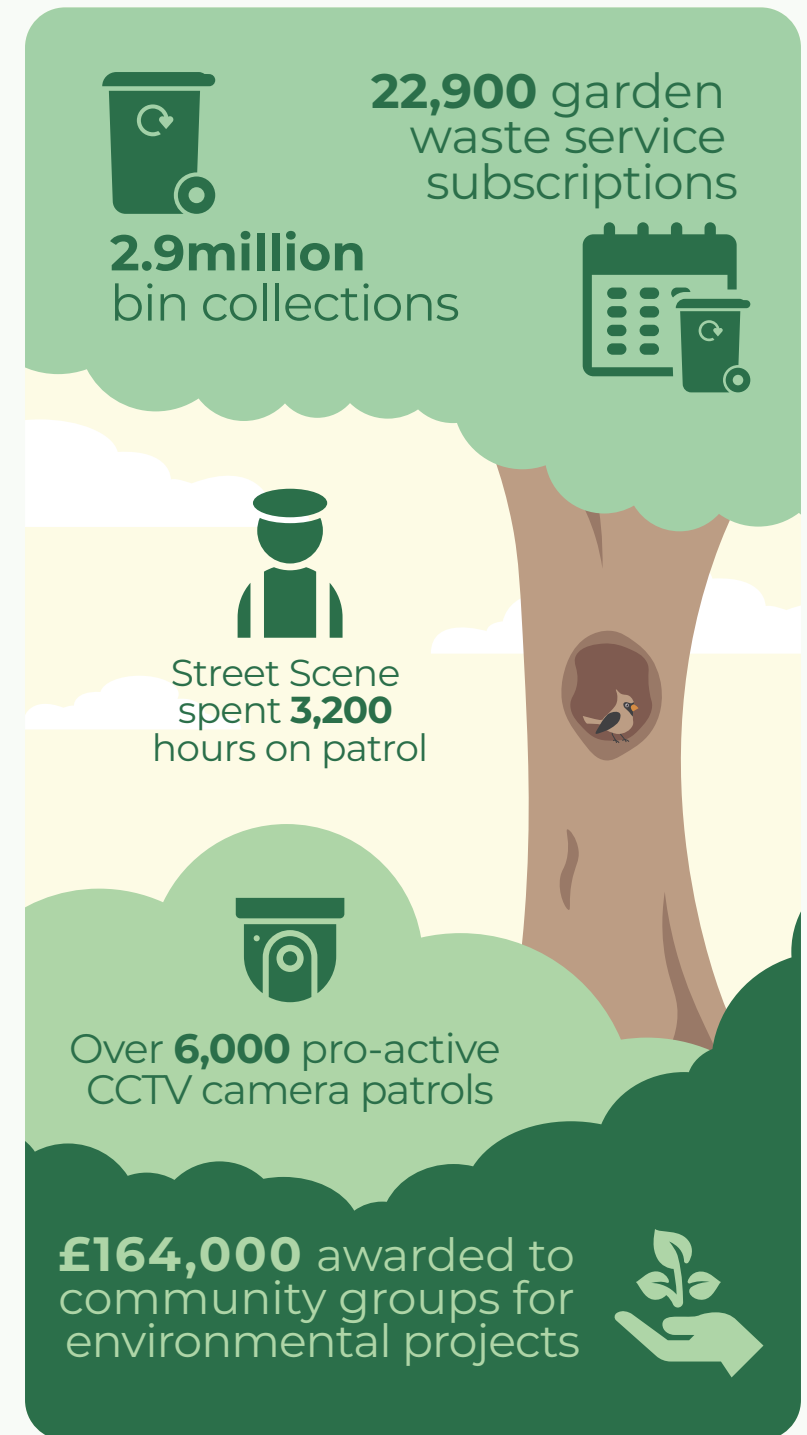
- Our trained 'Getting It Sorted' volunteers adapted how they volunteered this year, producing **home schooling packs and teacher packs** for schools to use, videos and online tutorials. They also kept the Council's multi-lingual recycling website, www.gettingitsorted.org, up-to-date and regularly posted recycling messages on social media, to help residents recycle right at home.

- Our Cleansing and Rapid Response team continued to provide the usual seven-day street sweeping, litter picking and fly-tipping removal service in our towns and villages. Last year they responded to over **1,400 service requests**; 96% on the same or next day. Over **1,000 quality inspections** were made in areas of footfall and more than 99% met cleansing standards first time.

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

- Supported local community groups in securing **£943,000 from Cambridgeshire County Council's Communities Capital Fund** for eight community facility improvements across March, Wisbech, Gorefield, Christchurch and Friday Bridge. The funding included £240,000 for the Wisbech Pavilion project in Wisbech Park and £75,000 for improvements to West End Park, March, including an enhanced junior play area, a skate park fence and improved Park Run surface.

- Our Street Scene team spent over **3,200 hours on patrol**. They work closely with the community to help **protect our environment**, with a focus on preventing fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling. Four people were issued with a £400 Fixed Penalty Notice for



fly-tipping, and one business received a £300 fine for failing to dispose of trade waste properly.

- Over **£164,000 was awarded to community groups** living within the vicinity of wind turbines to improve their local environment. Projects included electric vehicle charging points, solar panels and air source heat pumps for community buildings, environmental education in schools, switching to LED lighting and enhancements to green spaces.

Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime and antisocial behaviour and promoting social cohesion

- Our **shared CCTV service** with Peterborough City Council maintained its 100% service function, 24 hours a day, 365 a year, despite the pressures of Covid-19. The service conducted **over 6,000 pro-active camera patrols, detected over 1,000 incidents of crime and disorder** across the district and supported our policing partners to make **86 arrests** for offences, helping to make our towns and public spaces safer.

- Working alongside both internal and external partners, our **Community Safety** team was involved in 196 reports of anti-social behaviour or other quality of life concerns. Examples of the partnership work include the **successful introduction of 3 Closure Orders**, 2 in Wisbech and 1 in Chatteris, to mitigate the impact of criminal and anti-social behaviour in the local communities.

The team is also part of the **Fenland Community Safety Partnership**, which, due to the pandemic, adopted online methods to maintain its public engagement and workforce development activities. Using the Council's YouTube channel and Microsoft Teams, the partnership delivered **community engagement sessions** on topics including Domestic Abuse, Home Security, Scams and Cybercrime, and **workforce development sessions** on Domestic Abuse, Scams and Cybercrime and Substance Abuse.

Performance

	Target 2020/21	Performance	Variance on target
Rapid or Village response requests actioned the same or next day	90%	96%	+6.67%
% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards	93%	99.9%	+7.42%
% of collected household waste – Blue Bin recycling	28%	28%	0%
Customer satisfaction with Refuse and Recycling services	90%	96%	+6.67%
Customer satisfaction with Garden Waste service	80%	98.75%	+23.44%
Number of Street Pride and Friends of Community environmental events supported	204	44	-78.43%*
% of local businesses who thought they were supported and treated fairly	90%	100%	+11.11%
% of those asked who are satisfied with events	90%	N/A	N/A*

* Performance/service impacted by COVID-19 restrictions

OUR Economy

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

- Our Finance and Business teams worked together to distribute **£29.84million in Government coronavirus business grants** in 2020/21. Grants ranging from £1,000 to £25,000 from 9 different schemes have been paid to help businesses impacted by lockdown and restrictions. During this period over **6,800 grants** have been given.
- We worked closely with businesses and partners to help enable the **safe and successful reopening of the district's high streets** following lockdown. Supported by £90,000 from the European Regional Development Fund, we introduced Covid signage throughout our town centres and open spaces, installed hand sanitiser points and increased town centre cleaning. Officers also **supported businesses ahead of reopening** with advice on being Covid compliant and carried out monitoring and compliance checks to ensure measures were in place to keep staff and the public safe.
- We secured a £997,000 grant from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to further **extend our South Fens Business Enterprise Park** in Chatteris with the construction of a new, light industrial 'move on' space.

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration across Fenland

- Despite the challenges posed by remote working, our Planning **team processed over 700 planning applications**. Our performance against Government targets remains excellent (between 92% and 100% depending on application type), making us one of the top performing Councils in the country. Our success rate at appeal also remains excellent, with between 0 and 1.2% of appeals (depending on development type) allowed (as a percentage of applications determined). We have also **investigated and dealt with over 300 cases of unauthorised development**.
- We secured **£8.4million of funding** (£6.4m from Government, £2m from the CPCA) to deliver the **March Future High Street Fund** project. The scheme will see March town centre transformed through pedestrian, public realm and traffic flow changes to Broad Street, the Market Place and Acre Road area.

Processed
700 planning
applications



Distributed
£29.84 million
in business grants



Secured **£8.4million** for
the March Future High
Street Fund project

Secured **£4 million**
(£1m for each market town)
to deliver our
Growing Fenland
projects



● Following approval of our ‘**Growing Fenland**’ masterplans, £1million was earmarked for each of our market towns from the CPCA. Several bids for the funding have already proved successful, helping to deliver **a range of regeneration projects across all four towns**, and a district-wide Civil Parking Enforcement scheme to **clamp down on poor parking**.

● Our **Wisbech High Street Project**, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, continues to make good progress. Highlights from 2020/21 include:

- Plans for a **permanent retail and residential development at No 24** are progressing after legal barriers previously preventing a permanent building were successfully resolved by officers and Members.
- **Structural demolition works at No 11-12 completed**, allowing work on a new retail and residential complex to commence.
- **Grants agreed** for extensive repairs at No 18-19 and significant repairs and residential conversion works at No 13-17.
- Although Covid-19 restrictions put paid to most of the project’s planned activities for 2020, a number of successful events took place including **Wisbech Underground**, the annual **Gutter Clean** and an online **Heritage Open Days photography exhibition**.
- Worked with Planning Enforcement to **issue Section 215 and Enforcement Notices** on properties in need of repair which were causing an adverse visual impact on the High Street or where unauthorised works have taken place.

Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements across Fenland

● Supported by CPCA funding, **work continues to improve transport connectivity** in Fenland:

- Construction began on the £25million **A47 Guyhirn roundabout** scheme.
- Construction began on the £32million **Kings Dyke Level Crossing** project.
- Three highway schemes identified in Phase 1 of the **Wisbech Access Strategy** are now fully funded. Construction due to begin in 2021.
- Work on the Fenland Railway Station Masterplans project, to improve stations at March, Manea and Whittlesey and provide **better railways for Fenland**.
- Full business case for a **March-Wisbech Railway line** approved and next-stage technical studies completed. Options for future funding being explored.
- Programme of Quick Wins in the **March Area Transport Study** agreed, with many of the improvement schemes either completed or under construction.

Performance

	Target 2020/21	Performance	Variance on target
% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks	75%	100%	+33.33%
% of minor applications determined in 8 weeks	80%	92%	+15%
% of other applications determined in 8 weeks	90%	97%	+7.77%
% occupancy of our Business Estates	87%	88%	+1.15%
% of customers satisfied with our Business Estates	92%	N/A	N/A*
% occupancy Wisbech Yacht Harbour	85%	95%	+11.76%

* Performance/service impacted by COVID-19 restrictions

QUALITY Organisation

- We collected over **£57million in Council Tax and £16million in Business Rates**. This plays a major part in funding the key services we provide to the community. A large share of this money is also passed onto the Police, Fire Service, County and Parish Councils – see the ‘Money Matters’ section for more information.
- Following approval of the **Council's Commercial and Investment Strategy**, we established a new LATCo (Local Authority Trading Company), Fenland Future Limited, to help **deliver our growth and regeneration aspirations** and **generate income to reinvest** back into local public services. We bought our first commercial investment property in Wisbech in March 2021, which is already providing a financial return.
- Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we began to implement our **My Fenland** project, which aims to **transform and significantly improve services** available to residents. Key achievements to date include the creation of a new My Fenland team, with new Technical Champion roles answering more detailed enquiries to free up the capacity of specialist officers; implementing PayPoint as a more convenient way for residents to pay Council bills and the launch of a new Council website (see below).
- We **launched a new website (www.fenland.gov.uk)** to provide residents and businesses with even **better online access**. The design, quality of content and search facility were improved, with more electronic forms to help more customers to self-serve. We received **969,000 visits** in 2020/21 and **14,578 online form submissions** (excluding Garden Waste subscriptions) across 50 different topics. Our coronavirus webpages to signpost to government support, business grant information, self-isolation support and rapid testing received over **103,000 hits**.
- Following the outbreak of coronavirus in March 2020, more than **60% of the Council's workforce were enabled to work remotely**. Many members of staff were also redeployed or retrained to meet essential or emerging needs.
- Our **Social Media following continues to grow**, with 8,655 Twitter followers and 5,246 Facebook followers, with the latter having increased by 55% in a year. Our Social Media channels have proved particularly effective in engaging with residents and businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic, offering us the ability to quickly publicise and signpost emerging information.



Answered **78,000** telephone enquiries



Over **£1 million** in payments made via PayPoint since launch



Received **969,000** visits to the website



Issued **373** licences for a variety of services, including taxis, premises and alcohol licences



97% of customer queries resolved at first point of contact



● The Licensing team **issued 373 licences** for a variety of services, including Taxi, Premises, Alcohol, Scrap Metal and Animal Licensing, to help ensure such businesses are well managed and operating in a safe and legal way. The Licensing team also played a key role in the Council's Covid response, including introducing **temporary emergency procedures** for the taxi trade in line with Government safer travel guidance and providing advice and support to licensed hospitality venues.

● We continue to consult with residents, stakeholders and partners about Council proposals to help us understand residents' priorities and shape our services. Although unable to hold public consultation events last year due to the pandemic, we **consulted online on a variety of topics** including our Business Plan, our Council Tax Support Scheme, and the Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Improvement Strategy.


● We were **reaccredited with the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) award** last year. This is a Government standard that recognises the high quality, customer focused services we provide. The independent assessor said the Council had continued to meet the **'gold standard' for customer service delivery** and gone "over and above" in its efforts to maintain services during the coronavirus pandemic.

● In addition to their new public health role in managing workplace coronavirus outbreaks, supporting local businesses with Covid measures, and providing local contract tracing, our Environmental Health team continues to provide a range of **regulatory services to support businesses and protect the public**. This included undertaking a variety of **nuisance investigations** which involved monitoring noise, assessing odours, and resolving drainage issues. Many regulatory business inspections were put on hold due to lockdown closures but a recovery plan is in place following Government guidelines.

Performance

	Target 2020/21	Performance	Variance on target
% of customer queries resolved at the first point of contact	85%	97.3%	+14.47%
% of customers satisfied by our service	90%	75%	-16.67%
% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	46.5%	74.81%	+60.88%
% of contact centre calls handled	80%	96.44%	+20.55%
In year % of Council Tax collected	96.92%	96.76%	+0.17%
Council Tax net collection fund receipts	£57,913,023	£57,863,954.67	-0.08%
In year % of NNDR collected	98.3%	97.51%	-0.80%
NNDR net collection fund receipts	£17,069,917	£16,182,693	-5.20%
Number of visits to the FDC website	718,000	969,144	+34.98%

* Performance/service impacted by COVID-19 restrictions

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page consists of several overlapping, rounded rectangular shapes in various colors: a large purple shape at the top, followed by orange, light green, magenta, and dark purple shapes below it.

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