

Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

September 2021
(For performance in July 2021)

Cabinet Members

 <p>Councillor Chris Boden Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Finance</p>				
 <p>Councillor Ian Benney Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth</p>		 <p>Councillor Sam Clark Portfolio Holder for Health</p>		 <p>Councillor Mrs Jan French Deputy Leader of the Council</p>
 <p>Councillor Miss Sam Hoy Portfolio Holder for Housing</p>		 <p>Councillor Mrs Dee Laws Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>		 <p>Councillor Andrew Lynn Portfolio Holder for Licensing & Community Safety</p>
 <p>Councillor Peter Murphy Portfolio Holder for Open Spaces, Street Scene & Waste Management</p>		 <p>Councillor Chris Seaton Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility & Heritage</p>		 <p>Councillor Steve Tierney Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Communication & Environment</p>

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)

April 1st 2021 to July 31st 2021

The Council has undertaken 21 positive interventions in response to new requests for service for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) across the district.

The Council has also investigated 38 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	20	27
March	1	2
Chatteris	1	1
Whittlesey	0	3
Villages	0	5 Benwick =1 Doddington =1 Eastrea = 1 Elm =1 Manea = 1

Private Sector Housing enforcement 01 April 2021- 31st July 2021

	Numbers served	Raised charge total £	Income received £
Improvement Notice	0	0	480
Prohibition	2	480	0
CPN (Intent)	10	49,866	N/A
CPN (Final)	1	3,450	0
Other	0	0	0
HMO applications	7	5,250	5,250

In order to recover the outstanding Civil Penalty Notice debts, a new process has been finalised with the High Court Bailiffs, who are now in the process of transferring the oldest court order into a writ to be executed in order for the debt to be recovered.

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

The target for 2021/22 is to bring 70 properties back into use.

The Annual property questionnaires have been sent to all known empty properties requesting an update and the officer and ARP are currently working through the responses to update the council tax system.

The officer has received the first application for suspension of the premium council tax rate. The property was purchased as a renovation project with a view to placing it on the rental market. The owner is experienced in renovation and hopes to have the project completed and the property tenanted by the end of September 2021.

Properties brought back into use between 1 April 2021 and 31 July 2021

LTEP - Long term empty with premium charge (2yrs+)	LTE- Long term empty (6-23mths)
12	14

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 134 households from becoming homeless since April 2021. The target for the year is 200.

The service is anticipating a significant uplift in approaches once current financial support ceases along with the easing of the extended notice periods and court action resuming. These measures were imposed by Government amidst the pandemic. We have started to notice an increase in B&B use for both June and July.

The team continues to work closely with households, landlords and other partners to resolve issues before notices are served. We are also encouraging early engagement with a variety of partners as a commitment to refer alongside the statutory duty to

refer mechanism.

Number of enquiries Year To Date (YTD) – 590 (Q1 – 429)

Advice only given YTD– 342 (Q1 – 271)

Preventions achieved YTD – 134 (Q1 – 109)

The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing Options work (calculated as total preventions / prevention and relief duties owed) - 60% YTD = 134 out of 224. Target is 60% (Q1 - 63% [109/174])

Figures correct up to end of July 2021.

Deliver four Golden Age Fairs across the district (Cllr Sam Clark)

On 13th July we held our first Golden Age Partnership meeting online via Zoom with over 30 Golden Age partners in attendance including Alzheimer's UK, Living sport, NHS, Cam Sight, Citizen's Advice, Versus Arthritis, Breathe Easy, Care Network, Age UK, U3A, CPFT, Healthy You, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Bobby Scheme.

During the meeting, partners were split into 5 groups via breakout rooms and given opportunity to feedback about their experiences over the last 18 months during the pandemic, the lessons they have learned, how Golden Age can promote their organisation and feedback on the existing format of Golden Age Fairs.

Feedback was gathered from facilitators of each group and this information will now be analysed by the Golden Age Team to inform and shape the future of The Golden Age Fairs.

We look forward to our next event which is taking place at The Whittlesey Big Bash on Sunday September 12th between 2-4 pm at Whittlesey Manor Leisure Centre

Increase the use of local open spaces and collaborate with local activity providers and other partners to address health inequalities (Cllr Sam Clark)

Green social prescribing is being trialled in several areas across the UK. It is anticipated that this work will roll out in Fenland as part of a CCG / Public Health initiative in coming years. In the meantime, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Parks project will run some trail sessions across the County in coming months.

In Wisbech Park a living wall project is expected to use the wall of the public toilets to involve local people in a project where a framework of plant is attached to the building. This will enhance the park, whilst also involving people in a creative activity.

Other Projects:

Leisure Update (Cllr Sam Clark)

Freedom Leisure continues to provide an excellent service to local communities with friendly, clean facilities run in a Covid secure manner that are seeing a return of members and swimmers.

Current performance exceeds expectations. Whilst Fenland's contract is performing particularly positive when compared with other Freedom facilities, it appears that across the leisure sector recovery is taking place in a similar manner. Current membership levels are around 80% of pre-covid levels and slowly getting higher. The expected change to covid regulations on 19 July should see a slight increase in the rate of improvement, as fitness classes and swim pool use will return to normal capacities.

Where local managers have done a very good job is with junior swimming lessons. Fenland's Freedom Managers have used the pool as flexibly as possible and swim instructors have supported the changes. This means that the pent up demand of children to learn to swim has been maximised and income levels now exceed pre-covid levels.

One area of weakness across the sector is casual (pay and play) income. Income levels are still low due to capacity restrictions in place and the appetite of people to take part in indoor activities whilst the weather is good.

Freedom continues to make use of local feeds on Facebook and other social channels to encourage more users to take up sessions in the centres, or return to their old regime.

The National Leisure Recovery Fund grant that FDC received from the Government to use to support Freedom was split across 2020/21 and the current financial year. This total grant of £224,000 may be all that is required in the current year to support operational costs of the facilities, whilst recovery continues. This is a more positive situation than anticipated at the turn of the year.

Love Wisbech Update (Cllr Andrew Lynn)

The collaboration of statutory organisations, Voluntary Community Sector and business in Wisbech continues to explore opportunities to consider issues that need additional support and then what opportunities exist to secure new funding and inward investment into the town to address it.

Word of the group is getting to partners who are proactively asking to present information to the group and the group then agree what can be done to support.

Example projects have included:

- A mental health support project to work with residents suffering mental health issues whilst waiting for an appointment to secure a service to help them.
- Received some communication advice to help increase the awareness and impact of the work which includes changing the name from I love Wisbech to Love Wisbech.
- Exploring how the collaboration can assist in reducing the number of smokers during a pregnancy.

The partnership supported the 'Walk a Mile in Their Shoes' event...Both women and men can suffer from Domestic Abuse. The event took place in Wisbech park on the 8th August with the Wisbech Mayor leading the walk.

Pride In Fenland Awards (Cllr Sam Clark)

Pride in Fenland will be held online again this year in November 2021 and volunteers can be nominated for the following categories; young person in the community, community group and good friend. Pride in Fenland will be launched in the Fenland Citizen using photographs of winners of the 2020 awards and will take place week commencing 25th August.

There is no separate COVID-19 category, but each category will be open for COVID and non-COVID related nominations making sure that volunteers who continued helping others despite the pandemic, rather than because of the pandemic, are given the opportunity to be nominated and recognised. There will of course be a focus on volunteers during the pandemic at the event itself.

We would like to focus on villages and rural areas to begin with when leaflet dropping and a What's Breaking message will be sent in due course to all staff asking if they're able to deliver leaflets in their own area/street to help boost nominations.

Health & Wellbeing Update (including Covid-19 Outbreak Plan implementation) (Cllr Sam Clark)

Local covid outbreak management plan

During the Covid pandemic the Health and Wellbeing Board have suspended their usual meeting diary so resources may focus on the pandemic.

The Local Outbreak Engagement Board meets to support the outbreak management plan and the last meeting was 26th July 2021.

The meeting papers can be found on the County Council website here:
[Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](Document.ashx (cmis.uk.com))

The Board received an update about the current epidemiology, vaccination and testing statistics and noted the situation was stable.

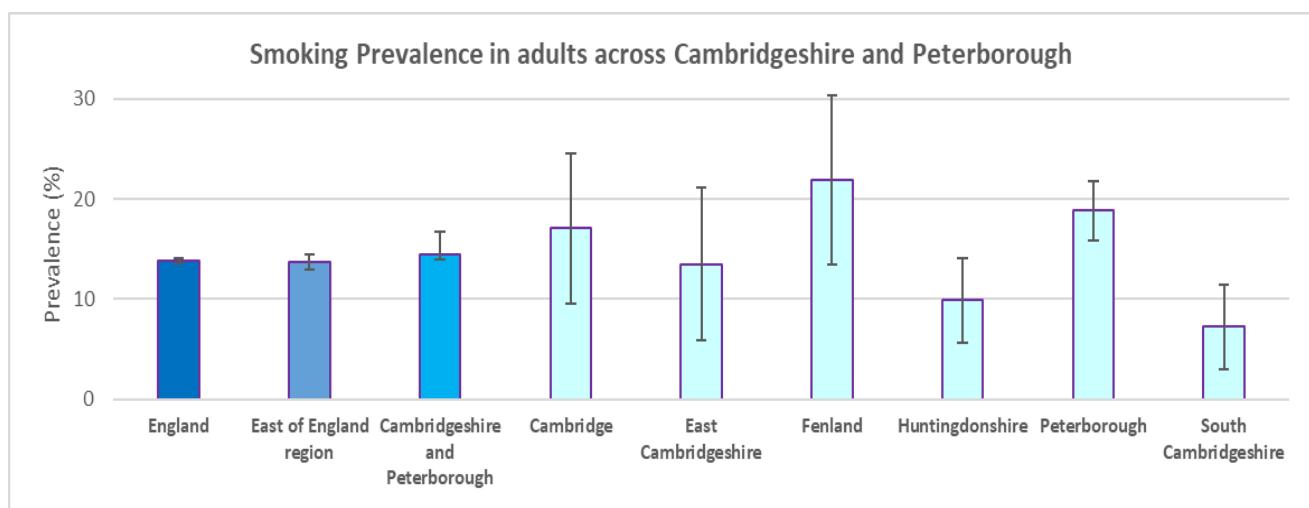
Vaccination levels in Fenland are good with increased levels of vaccination across all age groups.

Further information can be viewed here: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

Cases of Covid 19 in Fenland remain below the England and regional average however case numbers continue to rise. Planning for winter support is ongoing. Commitment to the outbreak management plan continues with its current workstreams.

Smoking cessation – a refreshed approach

The local tobacco control alliance for Cambridgeshire has refreshed plans to address the prevalence of smoking with an early focus on smoking in pregnancy. The local tobacco treatment programme has identified that smoking in Fenland remains high at more than 20% of the adult population.



The proposal is for the NHS to make a significant contribution to making England a smoke free society.

Suggested initial prioritisation plan:

1. Maternity smoke-free pathways across acute providers
2. Mental Health and prioritised acute hospital pathways

3. Remainder of acute hospital pathways

Feedback will be provided through the usual routes including the health protection board.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 21/22	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP1	Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	226	250	59	
CELP2	NEW INDICATOR The proportion (%) of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing options work (%)	N/A	Baseline	60%	
CELP3	Number of empty properties brought back into use	87	70	27	
CELP4	Amount of New Homes Bonus achieved as a result of bringing empty homes back into use	£79,217	£50,000	N/A (December 21)	N/A
CELP5	Customer satisfaction with Golden Age events (as per event)	298	200		
CELP6	Number of Active Health local sessions per year that improve community health	NEW	600		
CELP7	Customer feedback across Freedom Leisure facilities in Fenland	NEW	80%		

Key:

Green	Within 5% of target
Yellow	5-10% below target
Red	10% or more below target

Comments

CELP 1 – still on target as the profile has more reactive complaints during winter period

Environment

Projects from Business Plan:

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

2 fixed penalty notices have been issued for cars parked on a market day. As the parking area becomes busier additional signs and information about the risk of a parking penalty have been put up in and around the market place.

Following evidence found at fly tipped sites in March, Whittlesey and Leverington, 5 formal interviews under caution have been posted.

A case is pending at Court for a fly tipping offence where the suspect failed to pay a Fixed Penalty Notice issued for fly tipping in Wisbech.

A Fixed Penalty Notice has been issued for a littering offence in Wisbech. The FPN was paid within the deadline to avoid this proceeding to court.

16 abandoned vehicles have been reported in July. This resulted in 2 vehicles being removed by our contractor. Both vehicles had significant damage so were removed immediately.

A new Tidy Fenland Campaign will start in August as part of our business support activities to ensure a successful progression through Step 4 of the government's roadmap. Businesses will be offered support to control litter outside of the premises and advice in relation to duty of care requirements.

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

This month both March and Wisbech event committees have met and taken the decision to resume the March Christmas Market and Wisbech Christmas Fayre which will be held this year on Sunday 5th December and Sunday 12th December respectively. There was enthusiasm by many volunteers including the Town Councils, Lions, Rotary, Horsefair, Wisbech Library, March Society and more to stage the best events yet; and plans were also agreed to stage some pre- events to encourage visitors back into the high street under the Welcome Back banner.

The Council will support these groups to rebuild the Fenland Four Seasons events and

to provide opportunities for businesses to trade again. Significant work has been done to ensure that we do so safely and within government guidelines. Bookings have been officially opened and will be further promoted in the Autumn.

Deliver the Recycling Action Plan (Cllr Peter Murphy)

Throughout the pandemic the amount of recycling presented in customers blue bins increased in line with other waste streams. Even with the additional materials the quality has been maintained well and 92% of the materials were suitable for recycling. Over the past year these materials have generated a total net income of more than £300,000 to support services.



Not everyone gets it right and the collection crews are rejecting blue bins where incorrect materials are obvious, and collection is not made. As a result, more than 1,200 blue bins have been refused since April. Each of these properties were supplied with a reminder letter advising of what can go in their blue bin and how to get more information.

Targeted positive campaign work from supervisors has seen 1,450 blue bins independently checked and information delivered. Of these 496 (35%) were very good, containing all the correct materials, and received a 'thank you' tag and 58 were found to contain incorrect materials.



The very popular Fenland Bin App has been updated and now alongside up to date information on collections, includes direct links to report missed collections, purchase a bulky collection and find recycling information on the Getting IT Sorted website; www.gettingitsorted.org.

The Getting IT Sorted volunteer's website has attracted 3,250 hits April - June, the top five enquiries were how to recycle "Shredded Paper", "Clothes", "Bubble Wrap", "Tin Foil" and "Yogurt Pots". Information on these materials will be included within future social media campaigns.

The Getting IT Sorted social media posts attracted 19,897 views and 1,244 reactions April - June. Many directed customers to the volunteer pages of the website where they can find a range of recycling information and pledge to recycle more. More than 1,600 customers have taken this pledge now and receive a regular email from the volunteers around all things recycling. Fenland District Council social media has also shared the Getting It Sorted recycling messages and over the last quarter these have reached more than 19,000 people.

The letters, targeted positive campaign work, bin app updates and social media work are all directed at targeting at providing customers with access to the correct information and to tackle the largest single issue of contamination, which is customers not washing and emptying containers prior to recycling them.

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

Many customers are returning to business as usual and we are supporting them by re-initiating their waste and recycling services a promptly and smoothly as possible.

The council wide My Fenland project has seen the commercial waste services move transactions to the Bartec in-cab system that will allow for improved information retention and accurate billing based on real-time metrics.

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

Alongside our Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste partners (RECAP), the Council has responded to the Defra consultations on Extended Producer Responsibility proposals, Consistency of Collection and Deposit Return Scheme proposals for England. These will be considered by Government alongside all the other feedback and will influence the final stages of the Environment Bill as it goes through parliament in the autumn.

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

The County Councils Highways and Transport committee met on 7th September and it was agreed that Fenland District Council could further progress plans for the introduction of CPE for the District. A full update will be taken to Cabinet in October.

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

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.

Since April 2021, the CCTV service has been able to respond to 497 incidents across our four market towns including incidents relating to anti-social behaviour, criminal damage, violent crime, illegal drug use, possession of weapons and theft.

As a result of CCTV intervention this has led to 30 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 pro-active in delivering services that helps reduce crime & disorder and anti-social behaviour by delivering regular camera patrols of our four market towns and other key locations. Since April 2021 the CCTV team have delivered 1,755 patrols. All patrols all 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 councils 'out of hours' telephone contact services for example, homelessness, stray and lost dogs, cleansing incidents, dangerous buildings and structures, environmental complaints, to name but a few areas. During April 2021, the CCTV service has responded to over 147 calls for services from our telephone contact service.

Other Projects:

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

Tivoli continues to deliver FDC's grass cutting service on schedule, with a good quality finish.

Despite a damp May and a sunny June meaning that grass has been growing very fast, Tivoli are on top of the contract and delivering as expected. Customer feedback has increased in recent weeks due to growing rates, however grass is being cut every two weeks, with our contractor having no capacity to increase this frequency, and FDC not being able to afford any frequency increase due to additional cost.

Street Lighting (Cllr Jan French)

Street Light Repairs & Maintenance

During the months of June and July, 22 streetlight faults were reported to the

Economic Growth & Assets (Engineering Team) and forwarded onto FDC's streetlight contractor for rectification. The low number of reported streetlight faults is a reflection on both the time of year with the later nights and also the investment currently being made in the street lighting stock.

Elm Parish Council have now joined the FDC streetlight repairs and maintenance contract, and a site-based asset data capture exercise of their lighting stock has been undertaken. Arrangements are being made to rebrand Elm Parish Councils streetlights with updated contact information to aid future fault reporting.

Capital Street Light Replacement Works

The streetlight replacement works continues to make progress and to date approximately 570 street lights have now either been replaced or upgraded to LED since commencing the replacement works in March 2020.

The Engineering Team are also co-ordinating streetlight replacement works on behalf of Gorefield, Christchurch, Tydd St Giles, Parson Drove and Newton Parish Councils.

It is anticipated that the replacement works are likely to be ongoing until the end of the year.

Getting it Sorted Volunteers Update (Cllr Peter Murphy)

Volunteers continue to work on spreading the message of recycling, even in these difficult times. A video in cooperation with Cambridgeshire Skills has been prepared by the volunteers to help provide a means for new volunteers across Cambridgeshire to complete an accredited training plan. In cooperation with partners, 290 food parcels delivered across the district contained recycling games and information on how to reduce waste and recycle more.

The Getting IT Sorted social media posts attracted 19,897 views and 1,244 reactions in the first quarter of the year. Many directed customers to the volunteer pages of the website where they can find a range of recycling information and pledge to recycle more. More than 1,600 customers have taken this pledge now and receive a regular email from the volunteers around all things recycling.

Fenland District Council social media has also shared the recycling messages, including some bespoke videos, and over the last quarter have reached almost 19,000 people.

Garden Waste Service Update (Cllr Peter Murphy)

Throughout the pandemic, core services continued with specific Covid measures in place to keep the team safe. Even with waste tonnages increasing significantly, customer satisfaction with our Garden Waste services has remained high at 99 percent.

The garden waste service was maintained through the past year, and proved popular as a result, with subscriptions at an all-time high of more than 22,900 in 2020/21, ensuring that the service remained cost neutral for a further year by generating sufficient income to support the service.

Already this current year we have more than 23,500 customers in place and the service is running smoothly, although a small number of customers have seen delays to sticker delivery and at times new bin deliveries. We have worked to support these customers and resolve any issues presented by the delivery delays.

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

The Recap partnership have responded to the range of Defra consultations on the Waste and Resources Strategy that have published over the summer. These provide further detailed proposals on how packaging producers can expect to provide funding for the collection and treatment of packaging that they place on the market in future, along with how Defra anticipates the Environment Bill will affect local authority collections when it is considered by Parliament in the autumn.

Community Safety Partnership Update (Cllr Andrew Lynn)

Scams and Cyber Crime

On 13/05/2021 the partnership delivered a Scams and Cybercrime workforce development session via MS Teams. Charlotte Homent from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Against Scams Partnership (CAPASP) and Nigel Sutton, Fraud and Cyber Security Advisor from Cambridgeshire Constabulary delivered the session.

It was attended by 40 front line professionals including staff from third sector organisations. The training provided information and advice on current scams and cybercrime methods being used by criminals, advice on how to avoid becoming a victim, information on reporting and how to support potential victims they meet

through their work.

Modern Day Slavery Engagement Session

A Modern-Day Slavery engagement event was completed in June in partnership with Cambridgeshire Constabulary's exploitation team. This is available to view via the CSP webpage. [\(CSP\) - Fenland District Council](#)

Nick Webber from the exploitation team explained the most prevalent types of modern-day slavery that affect Fenland and how the police work closely with Fenland District Council and other agencies to combat this

Newsletter

The 8th edition CSP Newsletter is soon to be published, reporting on the activities of the CSP. This will be available on the CSP webpage and be distributed to partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors.

In this edition there will be updates on workforce development sessions, information about doorstep scams and rogue trading.

An update on the Loan Sharks awareness project with information about our partners and delivery activities.

Plus, COVID support, advice and reporting links on a range of concerns for the Fenland community to refer to.

Op Gripped – Loan Sharks Awareness Project June/July 2021



The CSP Loan shark awareness project was successfully delivered during June and July in partnership with the England illegal money lending team (IMLT).

Other partners who helped deliver this project were 3 Primary Schools, FDC cleansing team, the Horsefair, Taxi companies, Cambridgeshire libraries, Cambs police and Blackfield Creative.

Work with Primary schools

The project worked with yr. 6 children in Orchards, Ramnoth and Burrowmoor schools

delivering Loan Shark awareness assemblies, banner design competitions, and creative workshops. The children's artwork and IMLT information about the dangers of Loan Sharks are being displayed in libraries across Fenland.



Raising Awareness

Fenlands Community Safety team have increased community awareness of the dangers of Loan Sharks through a series of social media post, press releases and community initiatives.

The Horsefair



The Horsefair supported the Loan Shark awareness campaign with an awareness raising session in the Horsefair, delivered by Community Safety and IMLT. The Horsefair were also able to support by displaying AO sized posters in the main shopping areas.

Schools Design Competition

The Loan shark awareness project concluded with a design competition for Yr 6 pupils.

Entrants were tasked with designing a banner to warn of the dangers of loan sharks and raise awareness of the support that is available to victims through the Stop Loan Sharks Project.



The three winners of the competition received a prize and will see their designs displayed as banners in locations across Fenland.

Two runners up from each school also received prizes in recognition of their hard work. All the designs from the competition are set to be showcased this summer as part of a touring display in Fenland's libraries.

The Community Safety Partnership would like to say a big thank you to all our partners who have worked alongside us to deliver this project and make it a success in raising awareness of Loan Sharks and how to report and seek support.

Street Drinking Update (Cllr Andrew Lynn)

Our CCTV team are providing more detail in relation to street drinking data. Besides identifying the frequency of occurrences by time and day, they have also started to share information relating to behaviour which would require a police report to be made as there is ASB associated with street drinking.

The current number of reports relating to street drinking which are received by the police and FDC from the community is low and the need for CCTV to refer incidents to the police reflects this. A maximum of 4% of street drinking occurrences observed by CCTV required the police to be notified.

Partners are conscious of the impact the pandemic has had on both street drinking occurrences and community impact and will closely monitor the situation as well as supporting education and diversion.

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%	Green
CELP9	% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards (including graffiti and flyposting)	99%	93%	100%	Green
CELP10	% of household waste recycled through the blue bin service (1 month in arrears)	28%	28%	26.7%	Yellow
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	43	Red
CELP14	% of those asked who are satisfied with FDC's events (May, July, October, January)	96%	96%	N/A	N/A

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

Comments
CELP10: Using draft figures for June.
CELP13 due to covid restrictions events have been paused throughout most of the year.

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 Disposals and Estates Surveyor arranged for two sites to be entered for auction sale in July 2021. Unfortunately, neither of the sites sold on the day, but the Council expect to exchange contracts shortly with a purchaser on one of the sites, and the other site is to be re-entered in September's auction (August is a blank month for most property auctioneers). Of the other four sites which have previously been approved for disposal, subject to the Portfolio Holder's agreement, two sites may be entered for auction in October, and two sites need further work before they can be taken to auction. A further batch of sites will soon be the subject of a Cabinet Report requesting authority to be declared surplus and disposed of.

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

Wisbech Access Strategy

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

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

A Wisbech Access Strategy report was presented to CPCa Business Board and CPCa Board meetings in July 2021. The reports required a strategic decision on the way forward linked to timescales and budgets. The report sets out a range of different options and included a recommendation to fund the remaining detailed design work and complete land negotiation and land purchase. This is to ensure that the schemes are fully deliverable when funding is available. The CPCa Board approved the recommendation. A copy of the agenda, accompanying paper and minutes for the meeting 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

Kings Dyke Level Crossing

This project was conceived by and is being delivered by Cambridgeshire County

Council having secured significant further funding by the CPCA, who have also contributed significant funding. The Project is currently in its construction phase. The new road will be open to the public by the end of 2022.

The last update information paper went to the CPCA Transport and infrastructure Committee in early January 2021. This can be found at the website link below.

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabcid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1972/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

The above-mentioned paper included a latest update on the construction process in the form of a drone video. Here is a link to the video on You Tube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpfZkEtYRk&feature=youtu.be>

The County Council website includes significant detail about this project including technical reports and questions and answers. This webpage can be accessed from the following link. [Kings Dyke Crossing](#).

March Area Transport Study

There is no specific update on this project for May/June 2021

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. The Committee agreed to go forward to construction with the quick win schemes. The timetable for which is set out below as an extract from the CPCA paper. Outline Business Case work for the larger schemes that make up this project will be ongoing during 2021. 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/tabcid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1971/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

Table 1: Quick Win Construction Delivery

Quick Wins	Construction Start	Construction End
QW1A - Improve safety for pedestrians. Provide a zebra crossing	January 2021	March 2021
QW2 - Introduce gateway feature at edge of town, introduce 40mph speed limit buffer and revise deflections on Cavalry Dr roundabout	July 2021	August 2021
QW15 - Improve safety for school children. Provide a zebra crossing	November 2020	December 2020
QW16 - Improve signage for HGV drivers to reduce poor route choice	December 2020	February 2021
QW21 - Complete footway on southern side of Norwood Ave	February 2021	March 2021
QW22 - Introduce traffic calming on three sections of Norwood Rd	August 2021	August 2021
QW23 - Complete footway on eastern side of Hundred Rd including build out feature	March 2021	April 2021

Technical details and feasibility study work associated with this project can be found on the County Council website from the link below

<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 CPCPA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council.

The full business case was submitted to CPCPA 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/tabcid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1969/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

In March 2021 CPCPA gave an update to the Transport and Infrastructure Committee on the Wisbech railway project. This included a recommendation to draw down an additional £300,000 for further study work. The work will look to align the Wisbech Railway work with the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement project and in the short term a Wisbech to March service. The report will be completed by November 2021. A copy of the March 2021 CPCPA report can be found in the link below.

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabcid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1973/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

A47 Dualling (CPCA Project)

It was reported in late 2020 that the Highways England Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) announcement did not include the A47 dualling project. Discussions between CPCPA, Highways England and Government in early 2021 have since continued and negotiations are ongoing. In February 2021 Highways England agreed to undertake a

review of the stage 0 work completed by CPC. 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. It was also agreed that the work will also consider proposals from East Tilney to A47/A17 junction in Norfolk. This represents an important commitment from Highways England and a Project Manager has now been appointed. The work is expected to complete in October 2021

The above information was reported to the CPC Transport and Infrastructure Committee in March 2021. A link to the paper from that meeting is below.

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabcid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1973/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

A47 Guyhirn (Highways England Project)

This project is currently in its delivery phase. Work started on site in February 2021 with the scheme being open to traffic in late 2022/early 2023.

Full details about this scheme and the latest updates can be found on the [Highways England website](#). Highways England are due to hold an update meeting for the public and stakeholders at 7pm on 16 August 2021. This will be a virtual meeting and anyone can register to attend through the website link above. This will be an opportunity to meet the team working on the project and to receive progress updates.

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

The CPC has made funding available through their Market Towns Initiative to deliver the priorities outlined in the Growing Fenland town plans. The capital funding allocated to each of our market towns was £1m (£4m in total).

Successful bids for the full £4m of CPC capital funding have now been approved and will be used for a range of projects across all 4 market towns. Updates on these projects will be provided in subsequent Portfolio Holder Reports.

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

The draft plan is being finalised so that it can be presented to members in time for its publication and public consultation in December 2021

https://www.fenland.gov.uk/media/17752/Fenland-Local-Development-Scheme-2021-Update/pdf/Fenland_LDS_July_2021.pdf?m=637620460576570000

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

Manea Station

Work is now due to commence on site in August 2021. Planning approval for the scheme was given in September 2020 and all but one of the planning conditions were discharged in June 2021. The maintenance and operational plan for the car park is being finalised and which will be submitted to planning for approval in due course. The land acquisition is complete. The project is expected to complete in late Summer 2021

March Station

Work commenced on site in July 2021. The winning contractor for the detailed design and build was appointed in March 2021. The ticket office at the station has been temporary moved to a portacabin in the car park area to allow work on the platform building to commence. The work is expected to be complete in late 2021/early 2022. Greater Anglia and their contractors are overseeing the delivery of this project

Whittlesea Station

A second ticket machine is now operational at Whittlesea Station on the Peterborough bound platform. The new ticket machine was installed in May 2021. Significant technical and study work has been undertaken to develop an approach to provide a car park, bus and taxi facilities and create an improved access to the station. Additional economic and growth work was undertaken earlier in 2021 to assess the value for money of all the options. There are opportunities to link with a Network Rail project to upgrade the level crossing in 2023. The Project Board reviewed all the information on this project at its meeting in July 2021. It has now been agreed that a new Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) is to be commissioned that will review the vision and objectives for the scheme, consider all possible options (in light of all the technical evidence and plans for growth in the emerging Local Plan) and provide high level costs for these options.

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 project team continues to focus efforts on the highest priority sites at 11-12 High Street and No 24. Regarding 11-12, colleagues continue to liaise with the developer's

solicitor to agree the terms of the Freehold transfer of the site and await the updated Schedule of Works to complete the Grant Agreement. The freehold transfer and the grant agreement (once agreed) need to be completed simultaneously and this will enable the development to commence.

At the council-owned site at No 24, planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of the site. Detailed constructional design is now progressing which is necessary for the tender process. Expressions of interest have been sought from contractors prior to the formal tender process.

No 13-17 continues to progress with external repair works to the brickwork on the parapet and internally the layout of the flats is starting to take shape.

Colleagues in planning enforcement continue to process formal action where necessary to secure external improvements and this is having a positive impact alongside grant investment in the High Street.

The Activity Plan continues to be delivered with a series of online talks and workshops in the subject of conservation and historic building maintenance. A programme of further events will be developed for the remainder of the project.

Following the departure of Taleyna Fletcher, day to day activity is being managed by Simon Jackson and Simon Machen until a new dedicated staff resource is in place in mid-September.

Other Projects:

Economic Growth Team Activity (Cllr Ian Benney)

- Community Renewal Fund (CRF) – the Team await notification from central government as to whether the CRF bids have been successful or not and this is expected in the autumn – the Team are actively engaged with three of the Cambridgeshire CRF bids submitted by the Combined Authority to central government – West Suffolk College/Metalcraft training centre, Opportunity Peterborough/PECT business support to help grow businesses and reduce environmental impact & early stage/micro business support
- Wisbech and Whittlesey Business Capital Grants – the first grant payments are being made to businesses
- Continuing strong interest in growth as evidenced by the number of enquiries the team is receiving, planning applications received and those we are aware of are to be submitted
- The team continues to engage on a one to one basis with a number of key businesses and visits to key businesses such as Aerotron have been scheduled
- Combined Authority Employment & Skills Strategy – a draft Fenland response has

- been created by the Team and has been discussed by CMT and shortly with relevant Members
- Wisbech High Street Project – the Team are providing interim support for the project until the replacement project officer is in place mid-September

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

Members have received a recent update as follows;

Please find a brief update on the progress of the March Future High Street Fund project below.

FDC is appointing a Project Manager shortly to focus on this important project. The new project manager will focus entirely on this project bringing much needed capacity during the delivery phase. Having a specific experienced lead is important to ensure we deliver as efficiently as possible, as well as developing a comprehensive comm's plan with the FDC Comm's team. This will ensure that FDC Members are fully informed, whilst also involving March Town Council in progress updates. Effective communication with local businesses on the designs and plans and the timeframes for work is critical, as is keeping residents up to date with how their town will change for the better over the next three years. It is anticipated that there will be an information hub developed within the FDC website to ensure that there is one up to date and accurate source of information for this project.

In summary, following receipt of FDC's revised grant sum from Government and their sign off of the revised project plans in May, current progress on the project workstreams are as follows;

Vacant Units Activation Programme:

FDC is altering previous grant documentation to fit with the vacant units activation approach. It is anticipated that the documentation will be in draft for senior officers in June, with Member sign off in July for the scheme to go live in July or early August. 2 business owners have already expressed an interest, although the scheme is yet to be publicised.

It is worth noting at this point that the scheme will focus on a tight geographical area around March Town Centre and will target small and medium sized enterprises.

Market Place / Broad Street / Riverside Projects:

FDC is working with the CCC Highways Major Infrastructure Delivery Team on an approach for delivering these three workstreams, as well as the Broad Street highway and roundabout that forms part of the March Area Transport Study. Expectations are that the Broad Street works will be delivered by the CCC as the highway authority as they are responsible for the Highway and pavements & the

public realm that will be developed. The Riverside and Market place elements have more flexibility and officers are considering options including the delivery of these elements by FDC.

Once a delivery approach is agreed, detailed design works will take place with Member input requested in the draft designs. Cost control is critical for these significant elements of the FHSF project as a small % change in costs will represent a significant sum.

Skills Update (Cllr Chris Seaton)

We have applied to take part in the Kickstart Scheme, which is a new government scheme aiming to help and encourage the employment of young people (specifically those aged between 16 to 24) currently on Universal Credit.

This is particularly key for the Fenland area due to unemployment rates and opportunities being lower than the national average.

This scheme is a pathway for some young people to build the skills and confidence to apply for apprenticeships, particularly beneficial for this group of young people following the impact of the pandemic.

The scheme requires the Council to provide a contract of employment for a minimum of 25 hours per week for a 6-month fixed term contract, which must not replace any existing vacancy or cause any employee or apprentice contract to end.

The placement must help a young person become more employable and develop in the workplace enabling them to apply for longer term work.

The posts are fully funded at 100% of the National Minimum Wage for 25 hours per week for a total of 6 months, and any associated employer National Insurance contributions, any relevant workplace pension contributions plus £1,500 funding per job (This should be spent on setup costs and supporting the young person to develop their employability skills)

We are hoping to offer 8 such placements.

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 new, improved marketing material on Rightmove and the Council's website, along with the addition of video tours for the Council's Business Centres has

generated a good level of letting enquiries and viewings recently, several of which have converted to new lettings at the Business Centres, particularly at South Fens Business Centre. Two light industrial units will be available for lease shortly, and a high level of interest for both of them has already been received.

Affordable Homes (Cllr Sam Hoy)

The pipeline forecast for new affordable homes in 2021/22 has reduced from 154 homes to 127 homes, with 27 completions slipping into 2022/23 for completion.

We have enabled a pipeline schedule of affordable homes being pursued by a named Registered Provider (RP) of 1003 affordable homes. This forecast fluctuates depending on the negotiations etc.

We are also looking at a further potential of 748 homes without a named RP that we are looking to encourage an RP to negotiate development.

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

The food safety and health and safety inspection programme continues. Due to staff absence and vacancies the inspection programme is being delivered by an agency 'Buckingham Futures' who have a contract to deliver the programme on behalf of the council.

During July 10 food businesses have received a supportive visit and 4 businesses have received a health and safety visit, these are close contact services including tattooists and body piercing establishments.

When contacted 5 businesses have responded to say they were happy with the visit and reported it was supportive and fair.

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%	Green
CELP16	% of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks (or within extension of time)	94%	80%	75%	Yellow
CELP17	% of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks (or within extension of time)	99%	90%	91%	Green
EGA1	% occupancy of the business premises estate	87.8%	89%	86.4%	Green
EGA2	% of customers satisfied with our business premises estates (annual)	100%	95%	Annual	Grey
MS1	Number of berth holders / occupancy of berths at Wisbech Yacht Harbour (85 berths)	85	85	78	Yellow
CELP18	Number of local businesses supported and treated fairly (quarterly)	96%	96%	100%	Green

Key:

Green	Within 5% of target
Yellow	5-10% below target
Red	10% or more below target

Comments

EGA1 – Occupancy is expected to increase during September and October 2021 due to completion of new leases.

Quality Organisation

Projects from Business Plan:

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

The Commercial and Investment Strategy is operational and we purchased our first investment under this heading in March 2021. The commercial property purchased in Wisbech was subject to the full due diligence process and was approved by the Investment Board at their March meeting.

Further work is being carried out on Council owned sites and detailed appraisals are being completed for presentation at a future Investment Board meeting. Regular updates on these sites are provided to the Investment Board.

At its last meeting, the Investment Board approved recommendations to recruit a fixed term resource to drive forward the development of Council owned sites.

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

My Fenland is the first major corporate transformation programme under the Council for Future priority that focusses on modernising the way we deliver all aspects of our services to our customers. It has involved updating and streamlining our processes to improve consistency and efficiency across the organisation, investing in new IT solutions and technology to improve the process for both staff and customers.

The key focus has been ensuring we are putting the customer journey first and providing the best possible customer experience.

Why?

There are so many benefits and reasons for going through this transformational programme, such as:

- Improved customer experiences and smarter ways of working
- The opportunity to explore and introduce new technology to streamline the customer journey
- Bringing together a range of discreet/defined services as a single point of contact and delivery, providing a more joined-up approach across the Council
- Reducing the number of staff handling customer data, which reduces error and the potential GDPR risk

- Better resilience in teams, and so a more consistent and effective customer service
- Improving our talent pipeline and succession planning for the My Fenland resource but also the wider Council.
- Improving service, driving down costs

So far....

We have delivered Phase 1, with the creation of the My Fenland team that has been successfully working as one newly formed team since July 2020.

Phase 2 is nearly complete, with a focus on customer interactions, opportunities for our customers to self-serve as a wider range of services and activities are consolidated in to the 'My Fenland' team. This involved process mapping a large number of new activities from the 'legacy' teams.

We have had some Key Successes.....

- Creation of new MF team
- Implementation of Paypoint – over £1 million payments made
- Launch of the Council's new website.
- Development and implementation of the Technical Officer role to free up the capacity of specialist officers.
- The upgrade to the Telephony switch to enable Web chat, enhanced call routing and use of a CRM
- The development of new forms to enable customers to self-serve via our website (e.g. missed bins; removing the need for back office intervention. These requests will be sent from our website into Bartec's in-cab technology
- Process mapping of tasks and activities identified as a priority and agreed by the project team
- New structure and roles implemented, supported by a detailed and comprehensive training plan
- MF Management team recruited (Welcome to Rosie – our new Supervisor who joined us yesterday)
- Transformation Officer and Business Improvement officer successfully recruited.
- All 'at risk' staff have been through recruitment process for the new structure.

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

The list of projects is identified in the Business Plan and updates are given elsewhere in this report. These include My Fenland, Website, Empty Homes and Private Sector Housing Enforcement.

Other Projects:

Elections Update (Cllr Chris Boden)

Elections were successfully completed on 06 May 2021 in respect of the Police and Crime Commissioner, County Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Mayoral elections. In addition by elections also took place in respect of Lattersey ward of the District Council, Lattersey Ward of Whittlesey Town Council, Stonald Ward of Whittlesey Town Council and Octavia Hill Ward of Wisbech Town Council. The elections were particularly complex on this occasion due to the combination of electoral events but also due to the requirement to ensure COVID compliance in all aspects of the electoral process including postal vote issuing and opening, within Polling stations and also at the verification and count venue. In spite of the complexities the elections were successfully administered.

The total number of votes recorded for the County Council elections represented 29.95% of the registered voters

The total number of votes recorded for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Mayoral elections represented 29.69% of the registered voters

The total number of votes recorded for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections represented 29.72% of the registered voters

The total number of votes recorded for the by election of the Lattersey ward of Fenland District Council represented 33.19% of the registered voters.

The total number of votes recorded for the by election of the Lattersey ward of Whittlesey Town Council represented 33.19% of the registered voters.

The total number of votes recorded for the by election of the Octavia Hill Ward of Wisbech Town Council represented 28.75% of the registered voters.

The total number of votes recorded for the by election of the Stonald ward of Whittlesey Town Council represented 38.49% of the registered voters.

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 July = 10

Monthly update on FDC social media sites:

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

Twitter = 147
Facebook = 138

We currently have 4,653 likes on Facebook and 8,640 followers on twitter.

Consultation Summary:

- Whittlesey Heritage Walk – 1 August to 31 August 2021

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.

Key Cambridgeshire wide messaging includes the vaccination roll out programme, rapid testing information and financial support available for businesses and households.

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 over 110,000 Coronavirus web page views since their launch.

We are 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.

Annual Report 2020/21

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.

The Annual Report was approved at Cabinet on 15 July 2021.

[Link to Full Annual Report 2020/2021](#)

Fenland District Council Annual Report



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Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Target 21/22	Cumulative Target	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries resolved at first point of contact	Rolling monthly target of 85% per month	85%	99.4%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (March 2021)	90%	90%	75%	
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	Rolling monthly target rising to 46.5% by March 2021	22.5%	24%	
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	Rolling monthly target rising to 80% by March 2021	52.5%	73%	
ARP1	Days taken to process Council Tax Support new claims and changes	8.0		7.21	-0.79
ARP 2	Days taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and changes	8.0		7.32	-0.68
ARP3	% of council tax collected	96.8%	38.33%	38.62%	0.29%
ARP4	Council Tax net collection fund receipts	£61,172,317.00	£ 23,351,957.30	£23,454,913.03	£102,955.73
ARP5	% of NNDR collected	97.51%	32.73%	34.43%	1.7%
ARP6	NNDR net collection fund receipts	£21,998,313	£7,349,233	£7,885,927	£536,694
PRC5	Number of visits to our website	969,000	825,000	67,275 (July) 278,550	

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

Comments

The customer satisfaction survey undertaken during February 2021, took place during the COVID 19 pandemic and therefore was undertaken during unprecedeted times and on this occasion during a second national lockdown period. The satisfaction survey ordinarily tends to reflect customers experience and level of satisfaction with the overall service delivered by the District Council rather than as a direct result of their experience with Customer Services. Customer feedback, whilst an optional element of the satisfaction survey and therefore was not completed by all participants, reflected customer frustration with national Covid restrictions. This factor may have impacted overall satisfaction scores

The time taken to assess Council Tax Support new claims/changes Target 1 has been achieved this month and exceeded. The target for year to date has also been exceeded.

The time to taken to assess Housing Benefit new/claims Target 2 has been achieved this month and target has been exceeded. The target for year to date has also been exceeded.

The team have continued to develop on the good start made to this financial year.

Fenland has managed to spend 19.80 % of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funds.

Most staff continue to work from home and maintain high performance and productivity levels.

COUNCIL TAX - The time taken to assess Council Tax Support new claims/changes Target 1 has been achieved this month and slightly exceeded. The target for year to date has also been exceeded.

The time to taken to assess Housing Benefit new/claims Target 2 has been achieved this month and target has been also been exceeded. The target for year to date has also been exceeded.

Across the partnership at the start of the month there were 7,454 outstanding processes, and this has increased to 8,409. We continue to see a large volume of moves being received each week; we have received 5,768 moves in July. Year to date we have received 22,991 moves compared to 14,380 for the same period last year, an increase of 59.88%

Council Tax Collection Fund remains above target as does the % collected.

Total reminders issued in July was 1,351 with a value of £718,611.67

Total Finals issued in July was 683 value of £572,658.43

Fenland has managed to spend 30.4% of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funds. However, the funding method has changed this year. DWP may pay another amount after quarter two. An estimated value as to this second payment has been provided by the DWP. Based on the estimate Fenland has spent 21.6% of the actual and potential funding combined

BUSINESS RATES - At end of July there are 201 items of post outstanding for Fenland (2278 across ARP). NDR Collection continues to meet targets.

During July the following recovery documents were issued:

Reminder notices issued 1: 189 with a value of £174,215.77

Final notices issued: 56 with a value of 163,846.75

There were no summonses issued as there is no court date for August. Next summons run due on 23rd August for 22 September court

The team continue to achieve call answer rates in excess of 95%

While the number of processes outstanding remains similar the age of work is reducing. Further steps to reduce this are planned which will include a focus day for processing early in August.

We still await guidance for the Material Changes of Circumstance (MCC) grants that Government proposed that will require a local scheme. It is unlikely that this will be received prior to the legislation preventing the MCC claims which, due to the summer recess is unlikely to happen until September 2021.