

Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

February 2022
**(For performance in October, November &
December 2021)**

Cabinet Members



**Councillor
Chris Boden**

Leader of the Council
& Portfolio Holder for
Finance



**Councillor
Ian Benney**

Portfolio Holder for
Economic Growth



**Councillor
Sam Clark**

Portfolio Holder for
Health



**Councillor
Mrs Jan French**

Deputy Leader of the
Council



**Councillor
Miss Sam Hoy**

Portfolio Holder for
Housing



**Councillor
Mrs Dee Laws**

Portfolio Holder for
Planning



**Councillor
Andrew Lynn**

Portfolio Holder for
Licensing &
Community Safety



**Councillor
Peter Murphy**

Portfolio Holder for
Open Spaces, Street
Scene & Waste
Management



**Councillor
Chris Seaton**

Portfolio Holder for
Social Mobility &
Heritage



**Councillor Steve
Tierney**

Portfolio Holder for
Transformation,
Communication &
Environment

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 November 30th 2021

The Council has undertaken 43 positive interventions in response to new requests for service for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) across the district.

The Council has also investigated 146 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	40	86
March	2	14
Chatteris	0	12
Whittlesey	0	22
Villages	1 Leverington - 1	12 Benwick = 1 Doddington = 2 Eastrea = 1 Elm = 1 Leverington - 3 Manea = 1 Parson Drove – 1 Wimblington – 1 WSM - 1

Private Sector Housing enforcement 01 April 2021 - 30th Nov 2021*

	Numbers served	Raised charge total £	Income received £
Improvement Notice	4	960	3200
Prohibition	2	480	160
CPN (Intent)	14	87,083	N/A
CPN (Final)	15	49,832	11,448.50
Other	1	144	144
HMO applications	10	7,500	7,500

* latest performance available

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

Data up to and including 31 December 2021.

	Long Term Empty (LTE)6-23MTHS	LTE 24MTHS +
Total Officer involvement	30	27
Total for the period	1.4.21 – 31.3.22	57

The officer sent letters to Estate Agents and Solicitors who have offices within Fenland. The purpose of this is:

- To make them aware of the empty homes premiums in Fenland.
- To demonstrate how the Council can support new owners with the suspension of the premium charge if they are going to renovate and can complete this within 6 months.
- To encourage the sale of the less desirable properties.
- To initiate a dialogue with both professionals and owners regarding empty homes. By offering to confirm how long a property has been empty they can ensure customer service is accurate and transparent.
- New owners can be given the officers contact details which helps to avoid delays and the right support offered where needed with the empty property.

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 successfully prevented 263 households from becoming homeless since April 2021. Housing advice has been given to 855 households with no duties being owed.

The number of approaches for assistance have increased by approximately 10% since Quarter 1. This has resulted in increased B&B use since the summer. The team actively tried to rehouse households as quickly as possible but this is increasingly difficult as a result of the current competitive rental market.

The team continues to work closely with households, landlords and other partners to resolve issues before notices are served. We currently have a short-term temporary officer undertaking a project that is specifically tackling rent arrears cases in the private sector. This is funded by grant received from central government.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Total
Approaches	429	467	474	1370
Advice only	271	328	256	855
Preventions	109	83	71	263

The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing Options work was as follows:

Q1	Q2	Q3	YTD
63%	58%	53%	58%

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

In December 2021, Chatteris Town Council organised a Christmas lunch for the over 60s at the King Edward Centre. The Golden Age Team were invited to attend where we were able to provide leaflets from our partnership organisations signposting them for help where they may need it. Each attendee received a Golden Age branded re-usable shopping bag which included items such as hot water bottles, gloves, hats, scarfs, thermal socks and Golden Age branded flasks to keep them all warm this winter. Each bag also contained a bag of goodies from The Bobby Scheme and leaflets from the following organisations:

- Fire service
- RAF Benevolent Fund
- Age UK
- Alzheimer's society
- Mental health foundation
- NHS
- Care line and community service
- Library service
- Public health England (active at home)
- Care network
- East of England ambulance service
- Camsight
- Nationwide

Other Projects:

Leisure Update (Cllr Sam Clark)

Freedom recovery since the lifting of restrictions has been excellent. Far, far better than anticipated. Fenland's learn to swim programme has performed in the top 10% of all Freedom swimming pools, with the membership sales for fitness sitting in the top quartile. The teams in the leisure centre are working very well to attract and maintain members.

Cabinet has agreed further financial support for Freedom Leisure by way of a deferral of the management fees between January and March 2022. This arrangement ends on 31 March 2022, when the Council expects the leisure contract to be at, or very close to, the original base trading account that Freedom submitted in their original bid documentation.

The impact of omicron during December will have been relatively small as leisure centres trade slowly in December. However, the concern was that omicron and public confidence would have a significant impact on the boom months for leisure centres in January, February and March.

Current sales evidence suggests that the centres are trading strongly, attracting new members and as of 16 January were on track to attain membership sales targets for January. In terms of learn to swim, Freedom is evaluating the use of swimming pool time and waiting lists for children's lessons. Where demand is evident, the Freedom team is aiming to increase capacity. Freedom is already running many more lessons since 2020, with an increase in the number of qualified teachers and more imaginative use of water space.

Freedom's membership sales up to 16 January sat at 56% of the target. On this date that was marginally ahead of target. Since then the roll back of Plan B has taken place and news regarding the pandemic is relatively positive. This being the case, it would be reasonable to expect continued performance at this trajectory.

Love Wisbech Update (Cllr Andrew Lynn)

The group is identifying key funding opportunities from which a collaborative funding submission can be made of organisations that form the Love Wisbech partnership for example accessing funding for community initiatives that support residents with a mental health condition.

Pride In Fenland Awards (Cllr Sam Clark)

The Pride in Fenland Awards took place in November 2021 and volunteers were judged in the following categories:

- Young person in the community,
- Community group,
- Good friend
- Community COVID Award
- Special Judges Award.

The event aired via YouTube in November 2021 which is still available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sdyvL-jcfAQ> to hear all the nominations and see the winners and runners up.

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

Between October and December, the main focus of health and wellbeing support for Fenland residents has continued to be focussed on COVID-19 and the local outbreak management plan.

Key activity during this time has been:

- Support for workplaces with activity to ensure COVID secure practices. This has helped with business continuity for many of our larger food/product producers and packers. Businesses are offered support to access testing for staff, support with risk assessments and mitigations, access to financial self-isolation support for staff and an offer of health and wellbeing visits by public health staff to discuss vaccination concerns and broader issues such as long covid.
- Self-Isolation support through the Enduring Transmission project has been provided to more than 200 Fenland residents with a total allocation across these residents of more than £57,000.
- Vaccination support for those wishing to access local services. Officers continue to provide support for vaccination centres including agreeing locations, monitoring uptake and accessibility. Doddington hospital reopened as a vaccination centre. In November, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough were part of an area of enhanced restrictions which focussed mainly on vaccination support and some additional support for schools. This included fresh materials advising of where vaccinations could be accessed and introduced a new scheme of paid for transport to vaccination centres by taxi. These taxis can be booked directly and are funded by the council's outbreak management funding.

In October the Local Outbreak Engagement Board met and reviewed current

epidemiology, communication plan and economic impacts of covid. Documents can be viewed here:

[Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

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	189	
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	138	
CELP3	Number of empty properties brought back into use	87	70	57	
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	Annual	N/A
CELP6	Number of Active Health local sessions per year that improve community health	NEW	600	441	
CELP7	Customer feedback across Freedom Leisure facilities in Fenland	NEW	80%	N/A - due March 2022	N/A

Key:

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

Comments

Environment

Projects from Business Plan:

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

During this time, we have recorded 254 incidents of fly tipping and officers have assessed the waste at 74 of these cases to try to determine who may be responsible.

As a result of these searches, we have sent out 11 'Contact Me' letters to addresses found which has resulted in a further 8 formal Interview Under Caution postal documents being sent out. Our investigations have resulted in:

- 2 Fixed Penalty Notices to householders for failing in their duty of care as waste was found in fly-tipping sites. Each paid the discounted fine of £250. The offences relate to fly tipping found in Whittlesey and March.
- 1 Fixed Penalty Notice for Littering has been issued to a male who was responsible in Wisbech. This is still within its payment deadline.
- 1 Fixed Penalty Notice of £400 issued to a male who a witness caught on camera fly tipping in March.
- 1 Fixed Penalty notice issued to a female dog owner who failed to pick up her dog's fouling in March. The fine of £100 was paid.

Additional enforcement work carried out saw a Parking Fixed Penalty Notice issued to a car for parking on the market in March on a market day.

57 vehicles have been reported as abandoned in October, November and December. All but 3 were removed by persons unknown following a notice being served. The 3 were removed by our contractor.

As part of our work supporting local businesses through our Tidy Fenland Voluntary Code of Practice, towards the end of 2021, we have been able to visit shops in key areas to give advice and support on disposing of commercial waste legally.

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

The last of Fenland's Four seasons' events took place in December which were very much welcomed by local businesses. Over 130 pitches were snapped up by traders for the first Market, which was held in March Town Centre. A huge range of quality gifts and produce was on offer and attendance levels remained consistently high. Traders and visitors alike travelled in from neighbouring areas. Additional safety measures were put in place to help prevent the spread of COVID infection.

Wisbech Christmas Fayre followed suit covering a wide outdoor event space including

the Horsefair, Market Place, Market Street, York Row and the High Street. Highlights this year included the introduction of an escape room which was very popular. Community organisations Twenty20 productions and Nine Lives Theatre were also instrumental in creating exceptional live entertainment programmes.

Plans are now well underway for 2022 Four Seasons Events and booking will open for stallholders by the end of January.

Deliver the Recycling Action Plan (Cllr Peter Murphy)

The team's efforts to maintain consistent refuse and recycling services throughout the pandemic have preserved the levels of recycling collected in Fenland.

Blue bin tonnages in 2021 are just below the peaks achieved in 2020, **with a total of 6,584 tonnes** of waste now confirmed as collected for recycling from April to November, against a total of 6,716 in 2020.

Customers are increasing what they choose to recycle, with increases in; glass; cardboard; office type paper; HDPE bottles (such as milk containers); PET clear bottles (water, cola bottles etc.); and plastic tubs, pots and trays.

From April to November, the contractor has confirmed that, of the materials collected, **5,972 tonnes were suitable for recycling**, against 5,999 for the peak of the pandemic in 2020.

Overall, the quality of materials has improved slightly from last year, with just over 9% of materials in blue bins being unsuitable for recycling both years.

The value of the materials collected remains positive and reduces the net costs to the authority of sorting and treating the blue bin materials because of the profit share in place in the Recap tendered Materials Recovery Contract.

Recent communications focus on the remaining single issue which is food waste (and liquids) within containers in the blue bin. We continue to promote emptying and rinsing containers with customers through regular communications such as collection calendars, adverts, social media and an insert in forthcoming Council Tax bills.

In addition, the well-used Fenland Bin App, now has a direct link to the Getting It Sorted website www.gettingitsorted.org where customers can check how to recycle different materials.

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

So far this year, the team have successfully recruited 35 new customers and expect to increase forecast income as a result by more than £20,000.

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

The Recap Partnership continues to await the response to consultations from Defra, now confirmed as being in the Spring, and will commence work on the Waste Strategy once there is clarity over the outcomes of the consultation and other guidance resulting from the Environment Bill.

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

The County Councils Highways and Transport committee approved the implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) on 7th September 2020, and subsequently FDC officers produced a CPE update paper for Cabinet on 21st October 2020.

In addition to FDC, both South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils have resolved to implement CPE. A joint working group has been set up with all three Districts and Cambridgeshire County Council to collectively move the project forward and track progress. To date more progress has been made on CPE in the Fenland and South Cambridgeshire Districts as Huntingdonshire DC want to conclude their agency agreement prior to undertaking the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) survey works.

FDC progress to date and current focus:

- 1) A specialist contractor has been appointed and has since undertaken a full Traffic Regulation Order survey for all On-Street parking and waiting restrictions within the Fenland DC administrative area. Approximately 210 existing TRO's have been surveyed and are currently being digitised with completion anticipated by the end of January. A list of all queries and anomalies will then be produced over the coming weeks for resolution by Cambridgeshire County Council and FDC over the next 6 months. This is an extremely important part of the CPE implementation process, and the works are likely to take 6-9 months to complete.
- 2) An initial site survey of all FDC managed Off-Street parking places has also been undertaken to inform the future enforcement boundaries. This information is currently being used to draft a new preliminary CPE Off-Street Parking Places Order (OSPPO) in preparation for the implementation of CPE.
- 3) FDC officers will be working with County Council officers over the coming weeks on drafting a preliminary FDC/CCC agency agreement for consideration by the CPE project team. The agreement will set out delegated authority to FDC and define responsibility for things such as sign and line maintenance, CPE surplus income and deficits along with resolution of contractual issues associated with CPE

enforcement and administration.

- 4) FDC officers are liaising with the CPCA to enable the funding agreement delivery timeline to be aligned with the CPE project implementation date.
- 5) Cambridgeshire County Council are compiling the information required for the preparation of the CPE application to the Department for Transport (DfT).
- 6) FDC officers are liaising with neighbouring local authorities to ascertain what enforcement and administrative services could be provided for the Fenland area.

Whilst the timeline required to implement CPE in Fenland is estimated to be approximately 2 years there are several factors which could inadvertently result in project slippage. However, currently the project is on track for the CPE designation order to be brought into effect in October 2023.

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, including full cover on Christmas day!

From 1st April to 31st December 2021, the CCTV service has been able to respond to 1,067 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.

CCTV intervention since April 2021 has led to 85 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 3,691 patrols. All patrols are conducted across the 24/7 period ensuring that no matter what time of day and night, our local communities are being protected and that any issues or concerns are being identified as early as possible.

The CCTV service also provides the 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. From April to December 2021, the CCTV service has responded to over 352 service requests from our out of hours telephone contact service.

Other Projects:

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

2021 has been another good year for the Grounds Maintenance team (Tivoli) now in their 7th year of partnership with FDC.

- A full programme of grass cutting was completed with very few complaints and any inadvertent areas that were missed corrected with 24 hours
- All hedge cuts under the contract were completed during November and December
- Numerous tree works have been completed across the district with a programme of new tree planting continuing over the winter

Both the FDC officer team and the Tivoli team are working very well together, with community concerns or issues generally actioned within 24 hours. This prompt correction of an issues allows ongoing consistently good performance from the Tivoli team as they can maintain a programmed approach to works, reducing future error counts.

Play area renovations and extensions have been completed at;

- Snowley Park (Whittlesey)
- West End Park (March)
- Parsons Drove

Further play area improvement work at Huntingdon Road and Larham way (both Chatteris), Burdett Grove (Whittlesey) and Robingoodfellows (March) is imminent in the coming months.

Tennis courts in Wisbech Park were resurfaced for summer 2021 and now look pristine.

A wildflower meadow has been planted at Manor Field (Whittlesey) and should be blooming from late spring this year.

Repairs from vandalism and undergrowth clearances have been instigated and completed at multiple addresses following issues raised by members of the public. FDC is also working with the community payback team to assist with some undergrowth clearance works.

Team performance has been good with low sickness levels, despite the prevailing climate and no formal contract defaults were issued in the whole year.

Street Lighting (Cllr Jan French)

Street Light Repairs & Maintenance

Seventy-one streetlight faults were attended to throughout October, November, and December by FDC's streetlight maintenance contractor on behalf of FDC, Clarion Housing Association and seven of the Parish Councils. Only thirty-one of the fault reports were associated with Fenland DC streetlights despite FDC having twice the number of assets as the combined Parish lighting stock. The relatively low number of fault reports associated with FDC assets clearly demonstrates the benefit now being

realised by the Council from the recent Capital programme investment.

Elm Parish Council joined the FDC streetlight repairs and maintenance contract during the Summer, and the first repair works were undertaken to Elm Parish Councils lighting stock in September. New streetlight ID plates have since been procured and installed on Elm PC streetlights displaying 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 600 FDC streetlights have now either been replaced or had the existing lanterns upgraded to LED. A further 25 units are currently on order and are scheduled to be installed over the coming months and it is estimated that these works will be concluded in March/April 2022. Following completion of the capital programmed works, LED streetlights will account for approximately 70% of the Councils own lighting stock.

In addition, the Council are currently co-ordinating streetlight replacement works on behalf of Gorefield, Christchurch, Tydd St Giles, Parson Drove and Newton Parish Councils and are likely to co-ordinate defective streetlight replacements for Elm Parish Council going forward.

Seven of the Parish Councils and Clarion Housing Association who had previously entered into a 3 year streetlight service level agreement (2018-2021) with FDC have been contacted in respect of extending the SLA for a further two years to coincide with the end of the current streetlight repairs and maintenance works contract in July 2023. Responses from five of the eight organisations have so far been received with three responses still awaited. All organisation responses received to date have elected to remain with FDC for this service provision.

FDC Car Park Maintenance (Cllr Jan French)

A number of routine repairs and maintenance works have been undertaken within several FDC managed Car Parks throughout the District. Works have included gully cleaning along with pothole and fence repairs.

Further programmed maintenance and minor improvement works will be scheduled for 2022 over the coming months for FDC managed Car Parks.

The complete relining and reconfiguration of the parking bays in Chapel Road car park, Wisbech was undertaken in October as much of the existing bay markings had worn away. The opportunity was also taken to implement a number of operational and safety improvements to the overall layout whilst incorporating a white lined pedestrian footpath along with some additional parking bays.

The works were undertaken in stages in order to minimise the impact on loss of available parking and the mobile COVID testing unit was also accommodated and

continued to operate throughout the works. The improvements have been well received by car park users.

The Council continues to support the COVID mobile testing units at four FDC car park sites throughout the district.

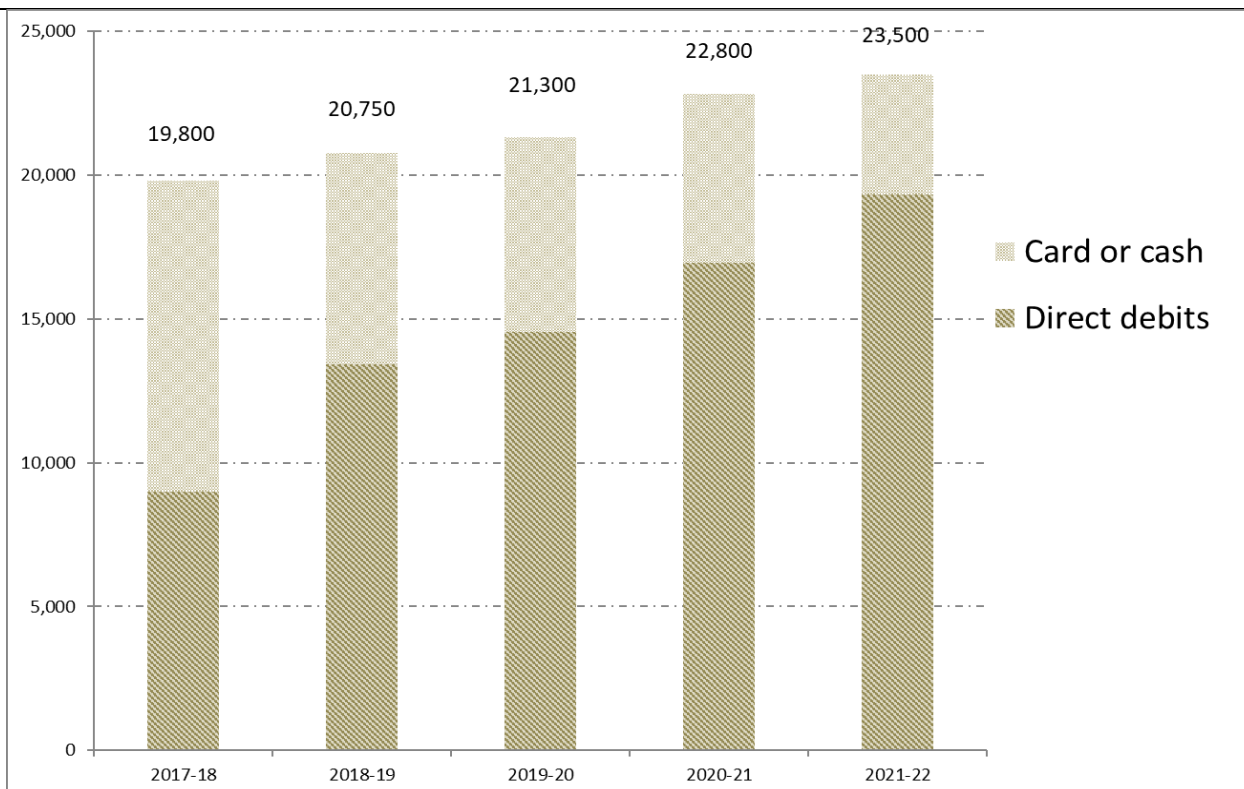
Getting it Sorted Volunteers Update (Cllr Peter Murphy)

Fenland's 35 trained recycling champions have worked around the restrictions placed upon them at different points in the year volunteering a total so far of:

- **550** hours,
- attended **24 groups**,
- creating a [landlord/HMO pack](#) for **100** landlords so far,
- **1,643** recycling enthusiasts who receive regular emails about recycling,
- **8,347** public visits to the www.gettingitsorted.org website about what to recycle,
- **571** hits to the Fenland education webpage www.fenland.gov.uk/education and online [teachers' resources](#)
- **77,829** views of social media posts shared
- Launched the online volunteer training package for Cambridgeshire with Cambridgeshire Skills

Garden Waste Service Update (Cllr Peter Murphy)

It has been another successful season for the garden waste service, with more than **23,500 subscriptions**, **83%** of whom chose to pay by direct debit.



As demonstrated in the graph above, both the number of subscriptions and the percentage of direct debits has increased year on year since the service commenced in April 2017.

The growth in subscriptions this season has allowed the Council to again provide a cost neutral garden waste service and allowed the subscription to be maintained at £38 for direct debit and £45 for card and cash.

With support from the Council's **My Fenland** transformational work, this season saw the first opportunity for customers to make use of the **PayPoint** option to pay for their subscription by cash or card at their local shop or Post Office. In 2021, more than **800 customers** chose to pay for their subscription this way.

This year's communications have been similar to previous years and have the aim of encouraging new and remaining customers to sign up early for a direct debit where they do not already, with bin tags, bespoke webpages, parish news adverts, along with letters and emails directly to existing subscribers and non-subscribers.

For all customers, the Christmas calendar, delivered on around **45,000** green bins from mid-November were supported with social media and adverts in local Discovery magazines.

Direct debit customers will start to receive their new subscription stickers for the coming season during February.



Customer Satisfaction 2022.

Initial results from the recent customer satisfaction survey hosted on the Council website shows that **97% of the 416** people who responded to the survey were satisfied with the service provided. The survey was sent by email to 3,000 of our garden waste customers.

Many of the responses thanked the frontline team for continuing again this year to reliably provide the service when other authorities were unable to maintain similar services.

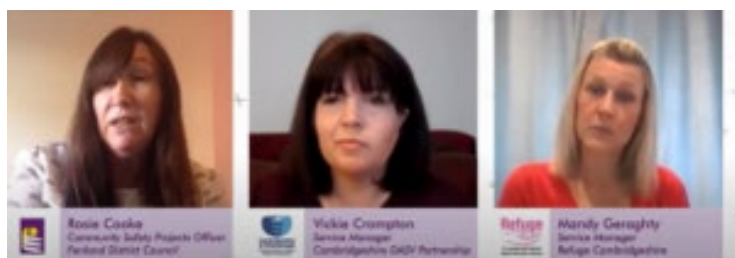
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP) (Cllrs Peter Murphy & Steve Tierney)

The partnership has a series of member workshops planned in preparation for the outcomes of the Environment Bill and Defra's responses to the 3 consultations of summer 2021. These will all result in changes to the waste strategy for the region and country. The partnership's ambition is to approach these changes in a collaborative manner that benefits all partners as we improve the services offered to customers.

Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Update (Cllr Andrew Lynn)

CSP Workforce Development – Domestic Abuse & Coercive Control

On 11/11/2021, the CSP held an online Domestic Abuse (DA) & Coercive control training session. This was delivered via teams in partnership with Refuge and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) Partnership and highlighted the recommendations from a recent Domestic Homicide Review. The training was delivered to 59 front line professionals and third sector partners.



Further dates now available

Due to the interest this training and the high volume of requests for additional dates; the CSP has been working with the DASV Partnership and Refuge to provide another DA & Coercive Control awareness training session on 24/03/2022. Working with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG, we are hoping to encourage attendance from those who work in primary health care.

Non-Fatal Strangulation Awareness Training

A recent Domestic Homicide Review highlighted the need for awareness raising in frontline professionals on Non-Fatal Strangulation (NFS). The CSP has now coordinated a new training session on 03/02/2022 in partnership with DASV to raise awareness of NFS within domestic abuse situations.

For further information on any of the above and for training places, contact the Community Safety Project Officer Rosie Cooke: rcooke@fenland.gov.uk

Fenland Domestic Abuse Campaign September 2021 – March 2022

The Fenland CSP has been working closely with Refuge, Change Grow Live (CGL) and The County Domestic Abuse Partnership (DASV), to develop a project to raise awareness of Domestic Abuse and Coercive Control with a focus on the Eastern European section of our community.

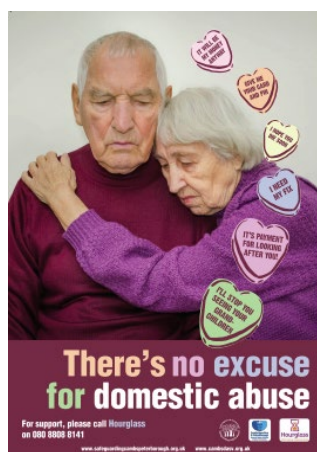
- Training and empowering professionals in domestic abuse and the referral process

This has been supported with three bespoke DA training sessions in 2021–22, delivered in partnership with DASV and Refuge as well as promoting access to training available through the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Board.

- Increase community awareness of domestic abuse including confidence to report and options to report

A community awareness campaign across Fenland, with targeted work to reach out to the Eastern European community, including Polish Saturday schools, Lithuanian social media. Awareness resources have also been shared with leisure centres, libraires and community centres.


Below are examples of the type of information that has been shared including this A5 card aimed at friends and families, which were produced in Russian, Lithuanian, Polish and Czech. Translated posters also included Romanian






• Support from the Fenland Community

We gained support from major employers, community organisations, faith groups and pubs in order to display posters and stickers in a range of languages on the back on toilet doors.




***Are you scared of your partner?**
***Does your partner do anything that hurts you or your children?**
***Does your partner prevent you from seeing your friends and family?**
***Does your partner control your finances or take money from you?**
***Does your partner force you to do things which make you feel uncomfortable?**

If you have answered YES to any of these questions and would like to speak to someone in confidentiality,
 please call National Domestic Abuse Helpline Freephone 0808 2000 247,
 Outreach Support 07787 255821 or in emergency call 999.



*Czy boisz się swojego partnera?
 *Czy Twój partner robi co , co rani Ciebie lub Twoje dzieci?
 *Czy Twój partner powstrzymuje Cię przed spotykaniem się z przyjaciółmi lub rodziną?
 *Czy Twój partner kontroluje Twoje finanse lub bierze od Ciebie pieniądze?
 *Czy Twój partner zmusza Cię do robienia rzeczy, z którymi czujesz się niezręcznie?

Jeżeli odpowiedział na którekolwiek z tych pytań i chcesz porozmawiać z kimś w zaufaniu, zadzwoń pod: 07736 727097 (pracownik mówiący po polsku),
 Opoka Helpline Freephone 0300 365 1700 lub nagłych wypadkach zadzwoń pod 999.



*Ar jūs bijote savo partnerio?
 *Ar jūsų partneris daro ką nors kas skaudina jus ar jūsų vaikus?
 *Ar jūsų partneris neleidžia jums matytis su savo draugais ir šeimos nariais?
 *Ar jūsų partneris kontroliuoja jūsų finansus arba atima pinigus iš jūsų?
 *Ar jūsų partneris verčia jus daryti tai, ko nenorite daryti?

Jei atsakėte teigiamai į bet kurį iš šių klausimų imonėtume apie tai pasikalbėti su kuo nors konfidencialiai, prašome skambinkite Nacionalinei Smurto Pagalbos Linijai nemokamu numeriu 0808 2000 247, 07787 255821 (kalbėti Rusų) ar skubios pagalbos šikvietimo tel 999.

Over 40 Companies, including Nestle Purina, Fountain Frozen, Cube 6, Premier Choice, Princes and ALS have given their support, as have many from the hospitality sector, including The Griffin, The George, The Cross Keys Hotel, The Oliver Twist, and Weatherspoon's.

The awareness raising campaign has also been supported by social media posts in both English and EE languages. Through partners and FDC & CSP comms.

https://twitter.com/cambs_dasv/status/1468535860362629123?s=20

https://twitter.com/cambs_dasv/status/1468535339371450368?s=20

https://twitter.com/cambs_dasv/status/1468537039473807360?s=20

[Cambs DASV | Facebook](#)

Other subject areas included within the work were domestic abuse links to substance abuse, housing issues and support, and the wider health sector.

Community Safety Newsletter

The 10th edition CSP Newsletter is due to be published in February 2022, reporting back

on the activity of the CSP. This will be available on the CSP webpage of Fenland District Council's website as well as distributed to partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors. Hard copies are available in local libraires.

Loan Sharks Project Phase Two

Following the success of our Loan Shark project in 2021, the CSP is working on delivering a second project with the support of the Illegal Money Lending Team. This project will build upon the engagement with the same schools with a focus on encouraging saving and help to break the cycle of crisis money management and the dependency on payday loans and loan sharks in later life.

Street Drinking Update (Cllr Andrew Lynn)

Street drinking reports to authorities by the community continues to be low and there continues to be very little adverse comments on social media channels.

During November and December 2021, Cambridgeshire Constabulary received 2 reports linked to street drinking, both of which were reported in November for the Medworth area. On both occasions there were no observed problems following either attendance at the location or through CCTV monitoring.

The Police have had cause to arrest one person in November for being drunk & disorderly.

For the same two months, CCTV has recorded only 17 and 9 observations respectively of suspected street drinking across Wisbech. Of the 17, none were reported direct to police as there wasn't associated ASB. St Peters church gardens remains the primary location for CCTV observations.

One area that did result in some community concern was Carlisle Gardens. Up to three people had set up camp in Carlisle Gardens and they attracted daytime visitors. The occupation of the gardens and the daytime gatherings did begin to cause some reported community nuisance in addition to a wider environmental impact from litter, urination, and defecation. With the support of partners from housing and substance abuse teams, support was offered, and guidance given. Staff from streetscene and Environmental Services monitored the location and encouraged the proper disposal of litter, providing refuse sacks at the same time. Not all of those using the location to sleep were willing to work with support agencies and their continued occupation meant much needed maintenance work had to be postponed. Subsequently the location became unoccupied which allowed for the site to be secured in advance of the maintenance work. At the same time a court order was obtained preventing re-occupation of the land by specified person(s).

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 21/22	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP8	Rapid or Village Response requests actioned the same or next day	95%	90%	96%	
CELP9	% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards (including graffiti and flyposting)	99%	93%	99%	
CELP10	% of household waste recycled through the blue bin service (1 month in arrears)	28%	28%	27.3%	
CELP11	Customer satisfaction with refuse and recycling services (quarterly)	99%	90%	TBC	N/A
CELP12	Customer satisfaction with our garden waste service (quarterly)	94%	85%	97%	
CELP13	Number of Street Pride, Green Dog Walkers, and Friends Of community environmental events supported	204	204	126	
CELP14	% of those asked who are satisfied with FDC's events (May, July, October, January)	96%	96%	97%	

Key:

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

Comments

CELP13 – Groups have continued to meet as restrictions allowed during this time and many smaller litter picks have been able to take place. Street Pride group numbers continue to grow, as do new groups coming forwards.

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 Council continue to review assets and on 20/01/22, Cabinet approved fifteen parcels of land to be disposed of. Work has recently begun on a strategic review of FDC's holding at the Port Estate and a review of FDC's Surplus Asset Register. The Council secured vacant possession of 6 North Street in Wisbech on 04/01/2022, which allows future options to move at pace for this property and FDC's adjoining land holdings. The Council will be receiving a Planning Appraisal for the North Street land holdings in early February, from the Planning Consultants who are undertaking master planning work for FDC in Wisbech – this will inform decisions on FDC's future options for these lands.

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

Wisbech Access Strategy

There is no specific update for this report. The land acquisition work and full business case project is ongoing until end of March 2022 as already reported.

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 in July 2021 and CPCA Board in September 2021. The report required a strategic decision on the way forward linked to timescales and budgets. It was agreed that funding would be made available to complete the detailed design and the land acquisition for the 3 schemes by December 2021 with the full business case being completed by Spring 2022. A copy of the main accompanying paper for the meetings can be found from the following link:

<https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1529/Committee/62/Default.aspx>

Kings Dyke Level Crossing

This is primarily a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. The Project is currently in its construction phase. The new road will be open

to the public by the end of 2022. The project remains on target.

The last update information paper that 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/tabid/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=JpfZkEtIYRk&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](#).

In Jan 2022 media information was released setting out current progress and next steps. This can be found from the website link below

[King's Dyke level crossing project enters key phase | Cambs Times](#)

March Area Transport Study

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council.

The Outline Business Case (OBC) work for the larger schemes was completed in October 2021 including its assessment by the CPCA independent evaluators. In November 2021 the CPCA Board confirmed the outcome of the OBC work and supported the recommendation to draw down £1.5million funding for detailed design and the final business case.

A copy of the OBC report can be found on the County Council website from the following link:

[Council and committee meetings - Cambridgeshire County Council > Meetings \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

A copy of the CPCA November 2021 Board Meeting where the OBC was discussed and the recommendation to approve the full business case and detailed design stage can be found from the link below:

[CMIS > Meetings](#)

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

There is no specific update in respect of this project for this report. We are waiting for the outcome of the latest study work. CPCA Officers are due to give a progress update to FDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2022.

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council.

The full business case was submitted to CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee for its 1 July 2020 meeting. The papers relating to the business case can be found from the following website link. Item 2.7

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1969/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

In March 2021 CPCA 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 expected completion of the report was November 2021. A copy of the March 2021 CPCA report can be found in the link below.

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

A47 Dualling (CPCA Project)

There is no specific update in respect of this project for this report. We are waiting for the outcome of the latest study work.

It was reported in late 2020 that the Highways England Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) announcement did not include the A47 dualling project. Discussions between CPCA, 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 CPCA. This review is to determine if there is any further work needed with a view to Highways England adopting the development work into their own programme. 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 with formal review and launch by the end of 2021.

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

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

A47 Guyhirn (National Highways Project)

Please note that Highways England have recently been rebranded and are now known as National Highways.

The Guyhirn roundabout project is currently in its delivery phase. Work started on site in February 2021 with the scheme due to be open to traffic in 2022/2023. Work to resurface and repair the existing surface commenced in January 2022.

Full details about this scheme and the latest updates can be found on National Highways Website

[A47 Guyhirn junction - Highways England \(nationalhighways.co.uk\)](https://nationalhighways.co.uk)

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

All £4m of CPCA funding has now been allocated to Growing Fenland projects. Updates on the projects are shown below:

Chatteris

Chatteris Town Renaissance Fund (£92k)

The Chatteris Town Renaissance Fund project is progressing well and continues to consider and process applications for business grants as a result of the continued promotion of the scheme.

A total of 90% of all street furniture refurbishment work is now complete.

Chatteris Skills Development (£36,179)

The scope of the project has been agreed by all stakeholders and quotes for the ICT equipment have been received. Orders for the ICT equipment are likely to be placed in February 2022.

Chatteris Museum & Community Space (£771,821)

Chatteris Town Council are working towards purchasing the freehold and leasehold of 2 Park Street (the former Barclays Bank) and the existing tenants.

Planning permission has been granted for the conversion of the former Barclays Bank (2 Park Street) into a museum and it is hoped the application for permission to extend and convert 14 Church Lane will be considered by Fenland's planning committee within the next month.

The architect is making minor amendments to the plans for 2 Park Street and will then be drawing up a schedule of works and obtaining quotes from local builders.

March

Match funding for March Future High Street Project (£900k)

Please see update for March Future High Street Project on page 34.

Whittlesey

Whittlesey Interactive Highway Signs (£57,500)

Project complete (please [click here](#) for further information)

Whittlesey Heritage Walk (£218,169)

Work is progressing well with the Whittlesey Heritage Walk project, overseen by the steering group, with completion expected by end of June 2022. Updates include:

- Love Exploring have been commissioned to develop the Whittlesey Heritage Walk Mobile Phone App.
- Highway improvements have been commissioned through CCC Highways. This includes surface improvements, dropped kerbs and replacement fencing/railings.
- Design is underway for the 22 no. information boards.
- Quotes for the supply and installation of the information boards have been confirmed.
- Brochure/Leaflet design for the route is underway.
- 7 no. additional public benches are on order, expected delivery February 2022.

Whittlesey Heritage Visitor Centre (£500k)

The Whittlesey Town Council Property Working Group continue to drive this project forward, although a decision has been made to delay completion of the project by 6 months in order to secure additional funding. However, work continues on securing planning permission for the agreed design and negotiating the lease of the site with land owners.

The new projected opening date of the Whittlesey Heritage Visitor Centre is now May 2023.

Whittlesey Business Capital Grants Scheme (£124,331)

Please see update on page 32.

Wisbech

Wisbech Market Place Enhancement Scheme (£200k)

Negotiations are continuing with the preferred contractor. A revised plan, quotation and a draft contract are expected from the contractor within the next few weeks. Once documents are approved by the Town Council's Market Place Management Committee, materials can be ordered. It is hoped that work will start in early May 2022.

Wisbech Footfall Counters (£19,500)

Footfall counters are now installed and the Town Council has been receiving data since 13 December 2021. It shows that in the first 5 weeks of operation, in excess of 220,000 people walked through Wisbech Market Place area. Work is ongoing with the supplier, Springboard, and the Horsefair Shopping Centre (which has its own footfall counters via the same supplier) to not only have separate reports for both the Town Council and the shopping centre but a report which combines both sets of data.

Wisbech Replacement Shopwatch Radio Scheme (£33,800)

A meeting between the Wisbech Town Council Clerk and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce is scheduled for 1 February 2022, for the purpose of developing a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in relation to the council "handing-over" the radio scheme to the Chamber of Commerce. Once the SLA is in place, money from CPCA will be drawn-down and purchase of equipment will then take place, for transferring to the Chamber of Commerce to operate.

Wisbech Water Park (£147,500) & Wisbech Park Community Hub (£299,200)

FDC has appointed a project manager for the Hub project who is also supporting the installation of the splash pad. Initial works have included

- Assessment of power / water / waste requirements for both facilities
- Application to power network and Anglian Water for new suppliers for both facilities
- Location discussions have taken place with both planning and conservation teams
- Affordability analysis of the Hub to determine room sizes
- Early thoughts on how each room will work is informing what sort of structure could be used.
- Proposals will be discussed with local elected Members and the Love Wisbech group prior to further, more significant, design work being carried out.

The Hub should be past design and at planning application stage in late spring, with construction starting in autumn.

Procurement of the Water Pad has been completed with this facility being delivered in advance of the Hub as it is a more simple project and does not require planning permission and any real level of design. The successful contractor, Ustigate, has fitted many similar facilities. When the power and water companies have confirmed a date for supply, FDC will place an order for the construction of the water play area. An artist's impression of the new facility can be seen below. It is anticipated that the water play facility will be ready for this summer. This will attract people into Wisbech to use the park, as well as visit the town centre supporting the local economy.



Wisbech Business Capital Grants Scheme (£200k)

Please see update on page 32.

District Wide

Civil Parking Enforcement (£400k)

Please see update on Civil Parking Enforcement on page 12.

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

The Local Plan timetable has been revised and is now scheduled to go out to consultation in June 2022.

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

Work commenced on site in late Summer 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 final condition relating to the maintenance and operational plan for the car park was discharged in January 2022. Lead times for items such as the security gates are taking longer than expected due to COVID19. Poor weather and an outbreak of COVID19 has now delayed the completion of the car park. A revised project plan is in development with an expected completion in Spring 2022.

March Station

Work commenced on site in July 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 come forward. The new platform 1 building is expected to open to the public in February 2022.

The new and extended station car park has been delayed due to extension drainage matters requiring a new drainage system. Work has recommenced on site following a delay to produce the new design and the project is expected to complete in Spring 2022.

Greater Anglia and their contractors are overseeing the delivery of this project

Whittlesea Station

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. This work has highlighted technical matters which are challenging to resolve e.g drainage and the presence of protected species on the site. The Project Board response after some minor additional work being inconclusive has requested a new Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the site and a new Options Appraisal report. This will allow a full assessment of the work today and will demonstrate the value of existing and new options to develop the station. A scoping phase to ensure key stakeholders have early input was completed in September 2021. The SOBC and

Options Appraisal are expected to be finalised in May 2022. This project remains on target.

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)

There has been continued positive progress with the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) Programme for Wisbech High Street. Through the months of September to December 2021 the programme has seen continued progress regarding ongoing property projects, new property improvements starting on site and some larger projects nearing completion.

Following regular contact with the NLHF regarding progress on the projects, the NLHF have confirmed in writing that they are willing to extend the project deadline into 2023 to ensure project completion.

Following an ongoing communications plan, the programme has also seen further property owners come forward to enquire regarding the final year of the grant being available for property improvements. Two further properties within Wisbech High Street have now come forward and are now at early-stage development of their projects.

The two major projects regarding 11-12 High Street and 24 High Street have moved forwards to a position whereby each project has now undertaken and completed a formal competitive tender process for a contractor to develop the properties, as permitted with the current planning permission. This point in the process has solidified contractor market costs for the time being and a Cabinet decision regarding option for each project is scheduled for the 3rd February.

Property No 4 Wisbech High Street:

Following a pause in progress last year, this property is now expecting to progress to delivery of a renovated shop front through utilisation of the grant. The owner has received and submitted quotes and the project will be progressing in early 2022.

Properties No 13 to 17 Wisbech High Street

An excellent example of an owner utilising a high-level intervention from the NLHF grant to deliver high quality historic shop fronts, supported by the creation of town centre residential properties located within the conservation zone. This project will complete in January 2022 and will significantly add to the streetscape of Wisbech High Street.

Property No 18 Wisbech High Street

Number 18 started delivery of their project in November 2021. Scaffolding was erected with works started and phase one now completed. The owner is anticipating the replacement of windows during February 2022 with completion following this date.

Property No 19 Wisbech High Street

NLHF are satisfied that works on the property can begin upon completion of the appropriate legal formalities. Works are planned to begin in Spring this year, this property will see a full repair and restoration of the already historic shopfront as an anchor point of the High Street.

Property No 21 Wisbech High Street

Following a recent communication drive, the owner of number 21 has come forward with an expression of interest in the grant. The High Street Project Officer will work with this owner throughout 2022 to deliver a scheme on the property.

Property No 31 Wisbech High Street

Following a recent communication drive, the owner of number 31 has come forward with an expression of interest in the grant. The High Street Project Officer will work with this owner throughout 2022 to deliver a scheme on the property.

11-12 and 24 High Street, Wisbech

These two projects form the largest capital elements of the programme and are expected to have the most significant impact upon the streetscape and vitality of the town centre in general. Over the past few months, significant progress has been made with the opportunity for the building work for both properties having been advertised and bidding contractors submitting their formal tenders. Despite this and the NHLF's continued commitment to working with Fenland District Council to overcome the impact of the pandemic, there are resultant financial implications which need to be considered.

An important note is that costs for both 24 and 11-12 have dramatically inflated which has resulted in a high risk that the private sector developer may abandon 11-12. A cabinet report discussing these options has been drafted and a decision on the best path to progress is scheduled for the 3rd February.

Activity Schedule Update

The Wisbech High Street Project activity programme was restarted in December 2021. Two events were held as part of the project: one physically on location in the town and one remotely online. Both were well-attended, and we received positive feedback from those involved.

The Wisbech Christmas Fayre on Sunday 12th December was a very busy, much anticipated, day. Lots of people were in the town enjoying what was on offer. Through the High Street Project, we held a special Christmas memories themed event partnering with the newly formed Etcetera Community Hub. Local people kindly participated in the important oral history project for conversational interviews recording their best memories about the Wisbech High Street and Christmas shopping in years gone by.

The latest in our series of free educational, expert heritage talks in collaboration with Lincoln Conservation happened online in December. It was a really engaging presentation with lots of questions from guests, the next in the series is due to happen on 25th January and we currently have doubled the attendee's numbers from last month. It has been great to see fans of the talks returning for each event, but more

recently there has been a wealth of interest from people that had not been involved previously which is fantastic. There are already a further two planned for February and March.

Other Projects:

Economic Growth Team Activity (Cllr Ian Benney)

Fenland Economic Growth Strategic Refresh 2022-2025

The Council's Economic Growth Strategic Refresh will be presented to Cabinet in February. The refresh sets out how the Council's Economic Growth Team (EGT), other Council Departments and partners will help support local businesses to grow, support businesses not currently located in Fenland who are considering a location here and support those local people who are looking to create a business.

Start & Grow

The Start & Grow programme is now live in Fenland providing business support, advice and grants to anyone looking to start a business and any early-stage business looking to grow. Funding for the project was secured through bidding into the Government's Community Renewal Fund project and the District Council is investing £200k of funding provided by Government via the Additional Restrictions Grant. It's expected that the project will deliver around £650k worth of support and grants into Fenland.

Expansion & Relocation Projects

As part of the ongoing business engagement programme, the Economic Growth Team continue to meet with targeted individual businesses to discuss their plans and how the Team can support them. The team continue to be actively involved with a number of local businesses and their expansion/relocation projects. Working closely with the Economic Growth Portfolio Holder, Cllr Benney, the Team are targeting supermarket, restaurant (including fast food), hotels and pub chains to understand their growth requirements and how Fenland might be able to help to fulfil them.

The team are responding to an increasing number of enquiries from the Department of International Trade via Growth Works Inward Investment, ranging from international businesses looking to locate into the UK and expansion plans of UK companies. The current supply of either existing premises or land for commercial development is heavily constrained. The team continue to work with local landowners and developers to bring forward potential sites to service these enquiries in the future.

Stakeholders

The EGT continue to build relationships with a number of business support organisations including the various Growth Works teams. Meetings have taken place with Growth Works – Coaching (marketing), the Director of Growth Works, Barclays Small Business Development Manager and Department for Work and Pensions.

Growing Fenland Wisbech & Whittlesey Capital Grants

All of the grant payments have now been made in Wisbech and only one remains in Whittlesey. A small amount of funding remains for each of the grant schemes and the Team will be making recommendations to both of the Growing Fenland Teams on how best to allocate these funds. Evaluation of the impact of the schemes and publicity will commence in March.

Combined Authority Economic & Business Recovery Sub-Group (EBRS)

The Local Economic Recovery Strategy Sub-Group has now been expanded to include stronger representation from businesses and has been renamed the Business Advisory Panel (BAP). The BAP is currently creating the Combined Authority's (CA) Economic Growth Strategy with a draft available for consultation in February and presentation to the CA Business Board in March. The Team will ensure that Fenland is well represented in the strategy and receives the required level of resources to support economic growth in the district.

Growth Hub

Any Fenland business that has operated for three years or less and employs three people or fewer and wants to grow their current business to ensure future success may be assisted by our partner Growth Hub's new support programme. The high-quality support available aims to increase confidence, knowledge and skills, secure growth finance, improve sales, marketing, and growth strategies, and ultimately increase turnover and profitability and the business could also be eligible for grant funding. More details at www.fenlandforbusiness.co.uk

Peer Networks

Peer Networks is a national peer-to-peer networking programme for SME leaders that want to grow and develop their organisation for future success. Businesses can attend six group sessions with fellow owner-managers, and three individual mentoring sessions, developing an action plan to prepare their business for the post-COVID, post-Brexit world through interactive action learning.

There is no cost to join Peer Networks and more information can be obtained by emailing the Team at business@fenland.gov.uk - <https://cpcagrowthhub.co.uk/peer-networks/>

Growth Works Coaching

Growth Works Coaching is working with Fenland businesses to accelerate their growth and unlock their potential to scale effectively:

<https://www.growthworkskoaching.uk/fenland-district-council-lets-get-started/>

Growth Works are also offering grant funding to enable businesses to access expertise from professional services or make critical capital purchases that will unlock their growth potential.

Help to Grow

This new subsidised management programme is aimed to help businesses grow with 50 hours of training and by joining other business leaders at the University of Leicester School of Business. The programme is 90% subsidised by the government. Further details are available at www.le.ac.uk/helptogrow or through ulsb.business@le.ac.uk

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

Work has progressed significantly with CCC partners to progress to the preliminary design stage (imminently).

The Member steering group, led by Cllr Seaton, have been fully engaged in decision making around direction and scope of the project with regular monthly update meetings taking place to provide key decision gateways as well as to review and signoff work to date.

To date key pieces of work that have been completed are as follows:

- Following production of an artist's impression for the Riverside area, outline feasibility designs for all elements were agreed with FDC Members.
- Atkins, the preferred design consultant begun undertaking works on site for the preliminary design in December.
- 'Heads of Terms' agreement was sent to the Cllr Chris Seaton (Portfolio Holder – FDC) for review.
- FDC have met with Stagecoach a second time to discuss removal of Broad Street u-turn movement. Outcome of the meeting was to progress with the current general arrangement, maintaining dual bus capacity in both directions.
- FDC have provided all information requested by CCC to date
- A fee proposal for the accelerated Market Square investigations, preliminary and detailed design has been received for review by CCC colleagues ahead of being reviewed by FDC.
- Following engagement with designers and engineers it was agreed not to progress with Electric Vehicle (EV) ducts due to costs of investigation works and suitability of car park arrangement. Alternative EV charging is to be located within the town.
- Local Members' input into the precise siting and construction of the public toilets will inform our final decisions, and we will learn from FDC's prior experience of maintenance and repair issues affecting public toilets in March and elsewhere.

Images of the proposals for Broad Street and the Riverside project can be found below (source documents available upon request):

Broad Street:

Vacant Shop Grants:

Grant set up has progressed significantly with two specific vacant space grants proposed as part of the wider future highstreets fund programme:

- The Living Over The Shops Scheme (LOTS)
- The Vacant Unit Activation Scheme (VUAS).

Both grants comprise of funding for private owners of up to £25,000 to convert disused space above retail premises into flats or to reinstate vacant units to a more lettable quality respectively.

The guidance documentation for these grants is currently under review by members. A launch of the Vacant Unit Activation Scheme is scheduled for February 2022 with the Living above the shops grant re-scheduled for Summer 2022.

Web Pages:

Initial web pages with information relating to the projects have been set up and can be found here:

[March Future High Streets Fund - Fenland District Council](#)

These pages will be kept up to date with news and project updates to ensure members of the public are kept informed of progress.

Ministerial Tour:

On 21st of January 2022, the Council hosted a tour for members, including the CPCA Mayor and the MP of this area, outlining the specific interventions planned. Officers intend to undertake this again once works have begun.

Skills Update (Cllr Chris Seaton)

We continue to support a range of apprenticeships within the Council in Planning, My Fenland, HR & Payroll, ICT, Business Administration and GDPR, Leading a Team and Accountancy. We are hoping to begin offering apprenticeships within Environmental Health and Marine Service within the next year.

Growth Works Skills in conjunction with Turning Point, are offering businesses the opportunity to secure £5,000 per internship created in their organisation for a 12-week role. Businesses can register their interest at skills@growthworks.uk. Further information is available at <https://www.growthworkswithskills.com/employer-hub/all-information/>

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)

Work continues in this area with highlights outlined below:

- Venture House in Wisbech is now occupied on a ten year lease by a Vets' Practice
- Following the Council forfeiting the lease of a tenant in voluntary liquidation at 3 Venture Court in Wisbech on 11/11/2021, terms have been swiftly agreed for a new tenant to take occupation in early February 2022.
- The Light Industrial Estates have a high level of occupancy, with only one unit at Prospect Way, one unit at Boleness Road, and one unit at South Fens Enterprise Park currently being marketed. All are receiving significant levels of interest.
- In terms of the Business Centres, the Boathouse is 100% full and South Fens Business Centre is seeing occupancy levels picking up.

South Fens Business Park Expansion

The planning application for the additional light industrial units was submitted in November and is currently being processed by the Council's planning service. An evaluation of the commercial value of constructing this phase and the 2nd phase of development at the same time has been commissioned to help enable an investment decision to be made.

Affordable Homes (Cllr Sam Hoy)

The Council is on target to have enabled 130 new affordable homes this financial year. Cllr Hoy and Cllr Boden attended an opening of a new affordable housing scheme in Elm where 27 new affordable homes (14 shared ownership and 13 affordable rented) have been built through Cross Key Homes.

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

During 2020 and late 2021, the business support and regulatory service visits were delivered differently due to the COVID pandemic. The guidance to councils from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Health and Safety Executive changed regularly and affected performance against our planned inspection programme as it required some work to be put on hold.

The FSA recovery framework has provided for an extended period within which certain categories of premises may be inspected. The recovery plan is risk based and requires higher risk premises (high risk due to the type of product being produced or served or due to previous poor management practices) to be inspected first.

In November and December 2021, FSA conducted a desk top audit of the Council's planned inspection and business support programme. This included an audit of resource committed to deliver the plan.

The FSA approved the Council's interim food service plan and agreed the resourcing allocation proposed to ensure all inspections would be completed within the recovery period of March 2023 for lower-risk premises. The recovery plan is based on the equivalent of 2.25 full time officers committed to this work.

The programme of inspections to be completed for 2020 to December 2022 was 585. Currently there remain 114 lower risk visits to be completed by December 2022. This does not take account of the inspection programme for 2022-2023.

During October to December, the business support programme was able to deliver 174 supportive visits and inspections in line with both food safety and health and safety guidance. This includes 4 category A, 20 category B and 150 category C and D premises. Four larger approved premises (businesses who produce large amounts of product often for export) were also visited which resulted in 2 reviewed and refreshed approvals, 1 approval being voluntarily revoked as the company were no longer producing products and 1 conditional approval being confirmed as a full approval.

Following these visits approximately 20% of businesses are contacted to ask for feedback on the inspection and advice given. This data is published annually.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 21/22	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP15	% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks (or within extension of time)	100%	75%	100%	
CELP16	% of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks (or within extension of time)	94%	80%	76%	
CELP17	% of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks (or within extension of time)	99%	90%	87%	
EGA1	% occupancy of the business premises estate	87.8%	89%	93.83%	
MS1	Number of berth holders / occupancy of berths at Wisbech Yacht Harbour (85 berths)	85	85	80	93%
CELP18	Number of local businesses supported and treated fairly (quarterly)	96%	96%	100%	

Key:

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

Comments

Speed of Determination of Planning Applications: The performance for minor and other applications is below the PI but within tolerance. The reduced performance is due to validation backlogs (reducing) and high officer caseloads due to an increase in applications being received. A workflow and processes review is underway under the My Fenland transformation project. Notwithstanding the reduced performance against the local PIs, the team are exceeding the national performance requirements which are 75% for major applications and 70% for minor and other applications.

Quality Organisation

Projects from Business Plan:

Launch our 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.

Following approval from the Investment Board, a fixed term resource has now been recruited and is helping 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 discrete/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 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 including the implementation of a new structure and roles, supported by a detailed and comprehensive training plan
- Implementation of Paypoint – over £1.8 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 across the organisation.
- The upgrade to the Telephony switch to enable, enhanced call routing and use of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) functionality as well as web chat.
- Reviewed and amended options for customers presenting by phone to simplify choices and reduce waiting times, including an appointment option.
- Implementation of an appointment scheme for customers wishing to access Council services face to face, enabling us to provide an enhanced individualised service to customers providing them a convenient time for them with a member of staff trained to deal with their query.
- 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
- The integration work with Bartec (in cab technology) and Agresso (corporate accounting system) is now complete and invoices are now being generated automatically without the need of manual input for officers. As well as maximising the use of technology, improved automation between software is also enabling us to concentrate more resources on answering phone calls and allowing more time to spend on in depth customer queries within the My Fenland team. This in turn frees up professional officer capacity, which is one of the key principles of this transformation approach
- Implementing a digital journeys package for Licensing and Environmental services. For example, Customers can supply information, such as reporting broken glass or dog fouling as well as apply for a new or to renew a licence, via our website, removing the need for Council staff having to duplicate data entry, improving accuracy whilst speeding up delivery time to our customers. Customers are also able to access these services 24/7
- Process mapping of tasks and activities identified as a priority and agreed by the project team, work is currently underway in relation to process mapping Planning Services, Tree Management, Cemeteries and Private Sector Housing. These projects will inform the transformation programme for 2022/23

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)

Electoral Registration

The Annual Canvass was reformed in 2020, but the purpose of Canvass remains the same, to identify everyone who should be on the electoral register. The Electoral Canvass period takes place from August to November ensuring that we can fulfil our statutory obligation to republish the Electoral Register on 01 December every year. The reformed canvass process incorporates a data matching step at the start in which registered electors are compared against National datasets to see if they match. The team also compare data against local datasets to match as many unmatched properties as they can and in 2021 moved a further 5128 properties into the matched property route. These steps inform us whether electors living in properties are likely to have changed allowing us to concentrate resources on the properties where data does not match.

Households of matched properties are allocated to Route 1 and receive a Canvass Communication A (CCA) letter. This route does not require a response, unless the household have a change to let us know about. Households of unmatched properties are allocated to Route 2 and receive a Canvass Communication B (CCB) this route follows a more traditional canvass process.

In 2021 we sent 38,347 CCA letters to matched properties and 7,606 CCB letters to unmatched properties. We received 6,108 responses to the CCB letters resulting in an 80% response.

The Register of Electors was successfully re-published on 1 December 2021 and the current total electorate figure is 76,112.

Postal Vote Refresh 2022

The law requires Electoral Registration Officers, by 31 January each year, to send to every absent voter whose signature on the personal identifiers record is more than five years old a notice in writing requiring them to provide fresh personal identifiers (signature)

This year we wrote to 1838 electors who had initially submitted their postal votes in 2016/2017 inviting them to provide a fresh signature. Reminders will be sent on 11

February 2022 and those who fail to respond will have their absent vote cancelled on 4 March 2022.

Those electors who have their postal votes cancelled on 4 March 2022 are still able to apply for a fresh postal vote in the future should they require one.

3Cs Update (Cllr Steve Tierney)

Sept – Dec 2021	Total received	Total within time frame	%age within time frame
Correspondence	16	16	100%
Stage 1			
Community Environment Leisure and Planning (CELP)	47	39	83%
Growth and infrastructure (GI)	1	1	100%
Policy Resources and Customer Services (PRCS)	21	20	95%
Stage 2			
CELP	6	6	100%
GI	1	1	100%
PRCS	2	1	50%
Stage 3			
CELP	4	4	100%
GI	0	0	NA
PRCS	2	1	50%

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:

- October = 9
- November = 11
- December = 8

Monthly update on FDC social media sites:

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

October:

- Twitter = 107
- Facebook = 110

November:

- Twitter = 135
- Facebook = 142

December:

- Twitter = 164
- Facebook = 153

We currently have 4,788 likes on Facebook and 8,710 followers on twitter.

Consultation Summary:

- Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Proposals – 25 Oct to 5 Dec 2021
- Have your say on a new political map for FDC – 26 Oct 2021 to 10 Jan 2022
- Walking, Cycling and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy – 22 Nov 2021 to 28 January 2022

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.

We have been promoting the Gov.uk and Cambridgeshire wide Covid- 19 materials.

Key Cambridgeshire wide communication campaigns which are currently live include: Rapid Testing information and sites, Vaccination Centre and free Transport information, Self-Isolating rules, and Housing Support Fund.

We continue to promote key communications as above to residents, local Community and Housing groups, Town and Parish Councils, and local Businesses.

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 133,000 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.

Other Updates:



Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) update (Cllr Chris Boden)

Information relating to the CPCA can be found on their website:

[Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority \(cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk\)](http://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)

Mayoral decisions can be found [here](#).

Office decisions can be found [here](#).

The papers for recent meetings can be found by clicking on the links below:

CPCA COMMITTEE	DATE OF MEETING	LINK
Combined Authority Board	24.11.21	CMIS > Meetings
Combined Authority Board	26.01.22	CMIS > Meetings
Audit & Governance Committee	17.12.21	CMIS > Meetings
Audit & Governance Committee	28.01.22	CMIS > Meetings
Employment Committee	16.06.19	CMIS > Meetings
Housing & Communities Committee	10.01.22	CMIS > Meetings
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13.12.21	CMIS > Meetings
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	24.01.22	CMIS > Meetings
Skills Committee	17.01.22	CMIS > Meetings
Employment & Skills Board	14.12.21	CMIS > Meetings
Transport & Infrastructure Committee	12.01.22	CMIS > Meetings

Forthcoming CPCA meetings include:

CPCA COMMITTEE	DATE OF MEETING	LINK
Combined Authority Board	23.02.22	CMIS > Meetings
Combined Authority Board	30.03.22	CMIS > Meetings
Audit & Governance Committee	11.03.22	CMIS > Meetings
Employment Committee	None scheduled	N/A
Housing & Communities Committee	09.03.22	CMIS > Meetings
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	21.02.22	CMIS > Meetings
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	25.03.22	CMIS > Meetings
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	28.03.22	CMIS > Meetings
Skills Committee	16.03.22	CMIS > Meetings
Employment & Skills Board	22.02.22	CMIS > Meetings
Transport & Infrastructure Committee	14.03.22	CMIS > Meetings

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%	99.5%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (March 2021)	90%	Recorded annually in March	N/A	N/A
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	Rolling monthly target rising to 46.5% by March 2021	37%	29%	
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	Rolling monthly target rising to 80% by March 2021	70%	77%	
ARP1	Days taken to process Council Tax Support new claims and changes	8.0		7.02	
ARP 2	Days taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and changes	8.0		7.95	
ARP3	% of council tax collected	96.8%	83.43%	83.50%	+0.07%
ARP4	Council Tax net collection fund receipts	£61,172,317	£52,062,693	£52,134,820	+£72,127
ARP5	% of NNDR collected	97.51%	80.28%	79.94%	-0.34%
ARP6	NNDR net collection fund receipts	£21,998,313	£18,106,158	£18,696,649	+£590,491
PRC5	Number of visits to our website	825,000		623,622	

Key:

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

Comments

In relation to NNDR collection, there will be a fall in collection rate and arrears collected due to the large Pretoria Energy RV being moved from East Cambs to Fenland (this was due to a valuation office error).

