

Fenland District Council

Business Plan
2022/23



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Welcome to Fenland District Council's Business Plan for 2022/23.

Every year we set out our ambitions and priorities for the coming year. We outline what we want to achieve and how we intend to do it – with one thing at the forefront of our minds. People. Residents, visitors, employees, employers, our workforce – people are at the heart of everything we do, no matter how we plan for the years ahead.

The outcomes we focus on, the actions we'll deliver through working collaboratively with our partners and communities are what change people's lives for the better and for the long-term. They help to improve opportunities for everyone and make Fenland an even better place to live, work and raise a family.

During the past few years, we have made significant progress towards unlocking Fenland's potential, raising aspirations, improving public services, and securing inward investment to help our communities grow and strengthen.

Looking ahead, we know that the human cost of the Covid-19 pandemic will be felt keenly across the district, both in terms of loss and in the inequalities it has further exposed. Its financial cost is likely to lead to a long and protracted restructuring of the UK economy, the impact of which will be felt for many years to come.

Against this backdrop, Fenland continues to experience deprivation that affects people's quality of life, their health and even their life expectancy.

But if the past 18 months – two years has taught us anything, it's that we work better when we're standing together. The pandemic has shown us what's possible when public bodies, businesses

and communities work together with a common aim. That's the spirit we're taking forward with our Business Plan. Through continued collaboration to deliver our ambitions, the greater the likelihood that we can recover, renew, and create firm foundations for a healthier, stronger, and more resilient future.

In this plan you'll see a series of actions that will support this recovery, including progressing key town centre regeneration projects, delivering major transport and connectivity schemes, transforming our council services, protecting our environment, and identifying further investment opportunities.

Alongside the ambitions and priorities which will underpin all the work of our members and senior leadership team, there's lots of opportunities to look forward to. Challenges lie ahead, no doubt about it, but there is much locally to be proud of and we're confident we can deliver for the people of Fenland.



Paul Medd
Chief Executive



Chris Boden
Leader of the Council

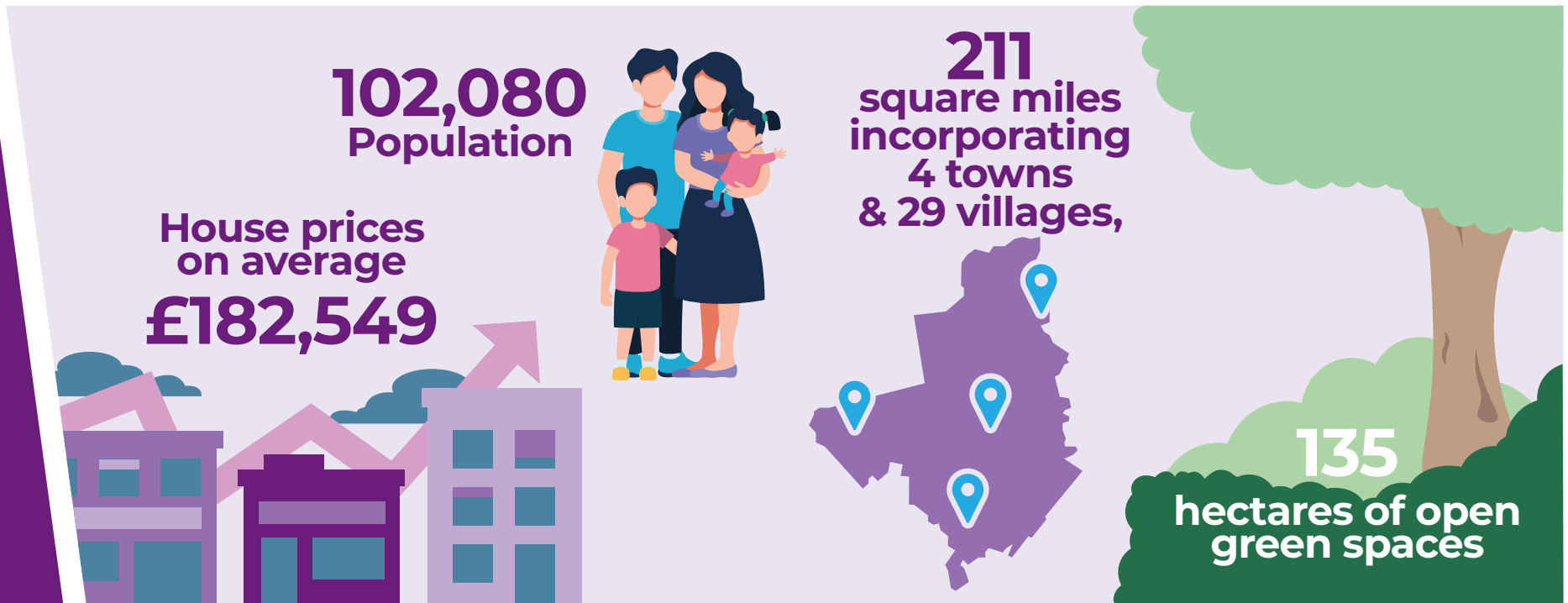
Fenland has strong community spirit and pride in its heritage. It is estimated that 102,080 people (ONS:2020) currently live in the Fenland District, which covers 211 square miles within North Cambridgeshire. More than 70% of residents live within our four market towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech. Our beautiful rural landscape is home to 29 villages and attracts visitors from nationwide.

Fenland has the lowest house prices in Cambridgeshire, with the average house priced at £182,549 (UK HPI: 2020), along with plentiful availability of commercial land. As a result, our population is growing quickly. By 2036, it is predicted that the population will have increased by 13% to 115,140 (ONS: 2020). As outlined within

this plan, we have plans in place to maximise the positive opportunities that growth could bring.

Our population is also getting older. 29% of our population are aged 60 or over; above average compared to Cambridgeshire and the UK (ONS: 2020). Alongside partners, we are working to enable residents to access the support they need to live happily, healthily and independently.

We also face some challenges around deprivation, particularly around education and health. We are the 80th (out of 326) most deprived area in the country (IMD: 2019). Nevertheless, we continue to work closely with other organisations to positively overcome these challenges.



We've come a long way in our battle with coronavirus. At the start of 2021 we were in our second period of national lockdown, with fears about the impact it would have on jobs, businesses, and the economy, as well as people's mental health and wellbeing, at the forefront of our minds.

As a Council, meeting the demands of the Covid-19 pandemic have been vast. Whilst delivering business as usual, we have responded to, and delivered, changes in legislation within days, created new services to respond to residents' needs and communicated the latest guidance effectively with communities, businesses, and our workforce.

At the same time, we've accelerated the pace of our customer services transformation. Work to provide more modern, efficient, and flexible ways to access our services has been a Council priority for some time, but the rapid

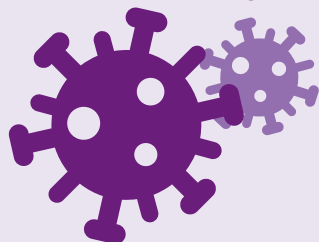
uptake of digital technologies during the pandemic meant we had to fast-track years of progress in a matter of months.

Not only have we significantly improved our online access, but we have increased the automation of our digital services and developed faster and more streamlined processes to make it even easier for people to interact with us, whilst ensuring that face-to-face services remain available for those that need them.

Meeting the challenges of Covid has also enabled even closer working with our partners, stakeholders and communities, and a greater pooling of our combined resources.

Now, as we continue to recover from the crisis, there is a great deal we can learn from our pandemic response. We have an opportunity to harness the innovation, collaboration and creativity which has flourished so much during the past almost two years and use it to evolve even further.

Over **2,350** requests for support to the Council's Covid-19 Community Hub



Distributed over **£30 million** in business grants to local businesses

Support for regulatory compliance made to more than **100** local businesses



Provided emergency accommodation for **57** rough sleepers



Over **620**

self-isolation payments made to local residents

*figures up to October 2021

Our Business Plan sets out the priorities we aim to deliver over the next 12 months. These priorities have been developed to address the most important needs of our communities.

Our priorities are split into three headings: Communities, Environment and Economy. These priorities primarily focus on the statutory and wide variety of core services that we provide day-to-day. In a typical year we empty 3 million bins, clean 210 square miles of town centres and open spaces, answer 78,000 telephone enquiries and determine 1,300 planning applications – and more!

The fourth priority, Quality Organisation, sits alongside everything we do. It aims to ensure that the Council runs effectively, transparently and sustainably. We invest in and support our workforce to ensure they have the skills and resources they need to work to the best of their ability.

Our unique 'one- team' culture enables officers, elected members and partners to work effectively together without the constraints of traditional department silos. This approach results in excellent staff satisfaction, with a record 95% of staff saying they were proud to work for us in our latest Staff Survey (2020).

Each priority is underpinned by a series of performance indicators, which is reported to all Members at our Council meetings. These public reports are summarised to provide end of year performance updates in our Annual Report, which is available to download on our website. This explains what the Council has been doing over the previous financial year to achieve its objectives.

We also have a fifth cross cutting priority: Council for the Future. This priority is formed from a selection of transformative projects which aim to address the future needs of residents and our organisation as a whole.

Summary of our Corporate Priorities structure	
Council for the Future Quality Organisation	Communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support vulnerable members of our community ● Promote health and wellbeing for all ● Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture and Heritage
	Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service ● Work with partners and the community on projects that improve the environment and our street scene ● Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting social cohesion
	Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses in Fenland ● Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration across Fenland ● Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements across the district

Our Cabinet members have selected a number of projects to contribute towards our 'Council for the Future' agenda. These projects have a variety of aims; from tackling areas of particular need within the district, to transforming services and the wider organisation sustainably to be fit for the future. Although these projects are influenced by external factors, the aim is to have a programme of projects completed by the end of the current Council leadership term.



	Modernising Council Services Cllr Steve Tierney	Transforming council services to improve customer experience and make it even easier for people to interact with the Council.
	Bringing Empty homes back into use Cllr Samantha Hoy	Working with property owners to bring empty properties back into use as much-needed new homes for the district.
	Better online access Cllr Steve Tierney	Developing the Council's website to provide residents and businesses with even better online access.
Wisbech	A more commercial outlook Cllr Chris Boden & Cllr Ian Benney	Identifying external investment opportunities and developing our own sites and assets in order to generate additional income for our services and help deliver our growth and regeneration aspirations.
	Healthy You Cllr Sam Clark	Working with partners to provide sports and physical activity sessions in community settings across Fenland and supporting residents to lead more physically active and healthier lifestyles.
	CCTV service Cllr Andrew Lynn	Operating a shared CCTV service with Peterborough City Council to help reduce crime and disorder, increase community safety and public reassurance, and assist the police in investigating crime.
March	Safer homes for tenants Cllr Samantha Hoy	Working with property owners, landlords and letting agents to raise standards within the private rented sector, ensuring that tenants are provided with safe, warm, and healthy homes.
Whittlesey	Clamping down on poor parking Cllr Jan French	Developing plans for Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) in order to assume responsibility from the police and enforce against poor and dangerous parking across the district.
	Protecting our environment Cllr Peter Murphy & Cllr Samantha Hoy	Delivering and developing a wide range of environmental services to help protect our open green spaces, tackle environmental nuisances and issues, and improve air quality – ensuring a clean, safe, and healthy environment for all.
	Competitive trade waste service Cllr Peter Murphy	Developing services to better support our commercial waste customers.
Chatteris	Planning for the Future Cllr Dee Laws	Developing a new Local Plan for Fenland, which will set out the strategic priorities for development in the future, covering housing, commercial, public and private development, including transport infrastructure, and protection for the local environment.
	Corporate Building Review Cllr Chris Boden & Cllr Ian Benney	Undertake a strategic review of the Council's property portfolio to ensure most effective use; adapting, investing in, and reducing the existing estate where a strong and clear business case exists.
	Better railways for Fenland Cllr Chris Seaton	Delivering on our Fenland Railway Station Masterplans to upgrade and improve facilities at March, Manea and Whittlesea railway stations, on behalf of the Hereward Community Rail Partnership, and pushing forward ambitions for the March to Wisbech railway line.

Support vulnerable members of our community

- Enable residents to claim the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support they are entitled to through our shared service (Anglia Revenues Partnership; ARP)
- Support residents to manage the effects of welfare reform changes and Universal Credit
- Use our housing powers to prevent homelessness, reduce rough sleeping, meet housing needs, improve housing conditions and keep homes safe and accessible
- Help residents to build capacity and resilience so that they can support themselves and their community
- Encourage a range of partners to support the delivery of the Golden Age programme to support older people

Promote health and wellbeing for all

- Support our local community by delivering our Leisure Strategy in partnership with Freedom Leisure
- Work collaboratively with partners to deliver our Health and Wellbeing Strategy in order to tackle local health priorities and help people to be healthier
- Create healthier communities through activities developed by Active Fenland and community partners

Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture and Heritage

- Work with local stakeholders to develop a Creativity and Culture Statement for Fenland
- Support community groups to hold safe and successful public events

Performance Indicators

- Days taken to process new claims to changes for Council Tax Support
- Days taken to process new claims and changes for Housing Benefit
- Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues
- The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through housing options work
- Number of empty properties brought back into use
- Number of Active Fenland sessions delivered per year
- Customer satisfaction: Net promoter score for Freedom Leisure Centres

Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

- Work with partners, the community and volunteers to divert at least 50% of Cambridgeshire's household waste from landfill
- Maximise the value of materials collected for recycling, including through Getting It Sorted Recycling Champions
- Deliver our effective, self-funding Garden Waste collection service
- Deliver clean streets and public spaces as set out in the national code of practice
- Work with key stakeholders to deliver an effective waste partnership and update the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Strategy

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

- Use education, guidance and Council powers to fairly enforce environmental standards and tackle issues such as fly tipping, illegal parking, dog fouling, littering and antisocial behaviour
- Ensure well maintained open spaces by working with our grounds maintenance contractor and through supporting community groups such as Street Pride, In Bloom, Green Dog Walkers and Friends of Groups
- Work with Town Councils and the community to provide local markets, market town events and Four Seasons events
- Support the Combined Authority in developing and delivering a people focussed Climate Action Plan

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

- Deliver projects through the Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime, hate crime and anti-social behaviour
- Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland-wide Community Cohesion Action Plan

Performance Indicators

- Rapid or Village response requests actioned the same or next day
- % of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards
- % of household waste recycled through the blue bin service
- Customer satisfaction with our Refuse and Recycling services
- Customer satisfaction with our Garden Waste service
- Number of Street Pride, Green Dog Walkers and Friends of Community Environmental Events supported
- % of those asked satisfied with events

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

- Work with external stakeholders , local businesses and the Combined Authority to attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities
- Provide responsive business support to encourage business growth, job diversity, skills development and increased grant applications
- Promote and develop our Business Premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and Light Industrial Estates to encourage investment, business development, job creation and skills diversification

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration

- Enable appropriate growth, development and infrastructure through delivering a proactive and effective Planning service
- Drive forward the development and delivery of new homes and commercial space by using our surplus property and land assets to deliver sustainable economic and residential growth
- Identify and bid for external funding that aligns with and supports our housing, economic and growth objectives

Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements

- Promote sustainable road, rail and concessionary transport initiatives to improve access to employment and local services
- Engage with the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council on the feasibility and delivery of major road and rail infrastructure projects
- Work with the Combined Authority to influence how housing and infrastructure funding is used to stimulate housing development and economic growth in the district

Performance Indicators

- % of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks
- % of minor applications determined in 8 weeks
- % of other applications determined in 8 weeks
- % occupancy of Business Premises estates
- % occupancy of our Wisbech Yacht Harbour
- Local businesses supported and treated fairly

Governance, Financial Control and Risk Management

- Maintain robust and effective financial standards, internal controls and organisational management
- Comply with data protection and General Data Protection Regulation requirements

Transformation and Efficiency

- Sustainably deliver required savings whilst pursuing transformation and commercialisation opportunities to ensure the organisation is fit for the future
- Engage with the Combined Authority's Public Service Reform agenda

Performance Management

- Set relevant and robust performance targets to ensure the effective delivery of Business Plan priorities
- Report regularly on service performance to the Corporate Management Team, Councillors and the public

Consultation and Engagement

- Appropriately consult with residents about our service and proposals as outlined in our Consultation Strategy

Excellent Customer Service

- Maintain our Customer Service Excellence accreditation to ensure we continue to deliver the most effective service to our communities
- Help residents to self-serve and access our services digitally to allow us to provide greater support for vulnerable customers and complex queries

Equalities

- Meet our Public Sector Equality duty by delivering the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act and 1998 Human Rights Act through our core service delivery and publication of a statutory Annual Equality Report

Asset Management and Commercialisation

- Ensure our asset base is sustainable, suitable and fully utilised to maximise income opportunities and financial efficiencies
- Deliver our adopted Capital Programme in line with our Corporate Asset Management Plan to maintain the integrity and safety of our assets
- Work jointly with public, private and third sector partners to improve access to our services, including from co-located facilities
- Continue with our Commercial Investment Strategy to make informed decisions about the purchase and management of property assets through Fenland Futures Limited

Workforce Development

- Equip our workforce with the right skills to effectively deliver our priorities
- Support and empower our staff to make effective decisions

Enforcement


- Use a fair and proportionate approach to improve living, working and environmental standards as set out in our Enforcement Policies

Health and Safety

- Maintain effective Health and Safety systems to comply with relevant legislation and local requirements
- Deliver all aspects of the Council's Health and Safety action plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our workforce, partners and wider community

Performance indicators

- % of customer queries resolved at first point of contact
- Contact Centre calls answered within 20 seconds
- Contact Centre calls handled
- Council Tax collected
- Council Tax net collection fund receipts
- NNDR collected
- NNDR net collection fund receipts
- Number of visits to our website

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