

AGENDA

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2023

1.30 PM

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, FENLAND HALL,
COUNTY ROAD, MARCH PE15 8NQ**

Committee Officer: Linda Albon
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Although this is a public meeting, members of the public are encouraged to view the meeting via our You Tube channel: <https://youtube.com/live/UZHCV3hjuA?feature=share>

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Previous Minutes. (Pages 3 - 12)

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of 16 January 2023.
- 3 To report additional items for consideration which the Chairman deems urgent by virtue of the special circumstances to be now specified.
- 4 Members to declare any interests under the Local Code of Conduct in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting.
- 5 Update on previous actions. (Pages 13 - 16)

Members to receive an update on the previous meeting's Action Plan.
- 6 Update on CPCA Growth Service and impact on Economic Development in Fenland (Pages 17 - 42)

To provide the Overview & Scrutiny Panel with an update presentation on the CPCA's Growth Works Service and the impact on Economic Growth in Fenland.

7 Progress in Delivering the Economy Corporate Objectives to Include Planning 2022/23 (Pages 43 - 76)

To consider and note the progress in delivering the Economy Corporate Objectives to include Planning 2022/23.

8 Progress in Delivering the Transformation and Communication Portfolio 2022-23 (Pages 77 - 96)

This report sets out the Council's progress in delivering the Transformation and Communication portfolio.

9 Future Work Programme (Pages 97 - 100)

To consider the Draft Work Programme for Overview & Scrutiny Panel 2022/23.

10 Items which the Chairman has under item 3 deemed urgent.

Friday, 17 February 2023

Members: Councillor D Mason (Chairman), Councillor A Miscandlon (Vice-Chairman), Councillor G Booth, Councillor D Connor, Councillor A Hay, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor M Purser, Councillor R Skoulding, Councillor D Topgood, Councillor R Wicks and Councillor F Yeulett

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 16 JANUARY 2023 - 1.30 PM



PRESENT: Councillor D Mason (Chairman), Councillor A Miscandlon (Vice-Chairman), Councillor G Booth, Councillor M Purser and Councillor R Wicks

APOLOGIES: Councillor A Hay, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor R Skoulding and Councillor F Yeulett

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Linda Albon (Member Services & Governance Officer), Amy Brown (Assistant Director), Peter Catchpole (Corporate Director and Chief Finance Officer), Paul Medd (Chief Executive) and Mark Saunders (Chief Accountant)

GUESTS: Councillor C Boden, Councillor S Count, Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor S Hoy, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor S Tierney

OSC19/22 PREVIOUS MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of 5 December 2022 were confirmed and signed subject to the following comment:

- Councillor Booth said he had one point concerning the Wisbech to March railway. He had raised whether Government had changed the goal posts, but this was not captured in the minutes. Tim Bellamy did not give a direct answer so he had responded that on his interpretation it sounded like they have, so he would like that recorded as an observation.

OSC20/22 UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS.

Members considered the update on previous actions and made the following comments:

1. Councillor Booth said at the last meeting with Clarion there was an issue about the planning submission for 65 affordable homes not being progressed. He did ask if they had applied through a formal pre-application process to get advice; they were not sure at the time but said they would come back with an answer, however, we are still waiting for that.
2. Councillor Miscandlon asked if there is any update on the ongoing watching brief between FDC and Peterborough City Council regarding the review of planning. Councillor Mason advised there had not so this remains as an ongoing action.

OSC21/22 DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2023-2024

Members considered the Draft Business Plan 2023/24 report presented by Councillor Boden.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

1. Councillor Tierney commented that officers have done an exemplary job as always on the Draft Business Plan and he found the report to be clear and written in plain English with no jargon.
2. Councillor Mason commented that the Panel would review each section in turn, starting with Economy.
3. Councillor Mason said in respect of staffing levels, he was of the understanding that a

dedicated grant officer was going to be recruited this year which would relieve Phil Hughes of a very heavy workload. Paul Medd responded that there is a dedicated Economic Growth Team, and although it is fair to say that quite a bit of Phil Hughes' work contributes within that priority, his role is not dedicated to the economic priority and does not sit within that team. At one time FDC did have a dedicated grant funding officer but due to austerity there was a change in emphasis in terms of how external funding is pursued. So, although we do not have the luxury of a dedicated grants officer, this is now a function embedded into officers' roles in different teams. Since then, there has been a significant degree of success having embedded the pursuit of external funding into officers' daily activities. Councillor Mason thanked Paul Medd and stated he was not making any criticism. He added that Phil Hughes has done a very good job under a lot of pressure in many directions but just thought that having a dedicated grants officer would have helped.

4. Councillor Booth referred to the number of empty properties in the district and said that page 24 of the report should show a net decrease in the number of empty properties to make it clearer. He added that with communities, in the past there was, quite appropriately, emphasis on vulnerable members of the community, but the point he has been trying to make is for community support as a whole. He asked that any advice given in support to any community group holding an event is proportionate and that we do not over burden them with red tape.
5. Councillor Miscandlon said that he agreed with Councillor Booth regarding his comment on red tape, but equally we must be careful not to totally ignore it as potentially the Council could be open to legal action if something goes wrong. Councillor Booth said the key word is 'proportionate', making sure it is fit for purpose and not a one size fits all.
6. Councillor Mason said he feels the leisure centres are deteriorating; there seems to be no proper maintenance programme in place and Freedom Leisure does not appear to have the resources to maintain the centres to a standard he would expect. On a visit with the Leader to the Manor Leisure Centre he found it to be a disgrace; there was a hole in the roof, with water dripping down which is totally unacceptable. Councillor Mason said that it is all very well supporting Freedom Leisure financially but what is being done about maintaining the building?
7. Councillor Boden responded that he would trust the leak was reported and agreed the situation cannot be allowed to continue. Councillor Mason is correct that Freedom Leisure have faced financial difficulties, in part created by Covid. However, recovery has not been rapid and the increase in utility costs has not helped. However, Freedom Leisure must fulfil their contractual agreement and he agreed it is necessary to raise the matter with them as this cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely as FDC will potentially face liability.
8. Councillor Booth said was it not part of the agreement that FDC would still undertake an amount of maintenance? Councillor Boden agreed that there is a division of responsibility between the two parties. Paul Medd said he agreed with Councillor Booth's observation and will follow up with further information in respect of the differentiation in daily and bigger issues. Councillor Booth said this comes back to a point he previously raised; are we happy that we have a robust process to ensure items are dealt with in a timely manner? Paul Medd replied yes, there will always be ongoing repair and maintenance issues. Three of the leisure centres are old buildings already so inevitably there will be ongoing challenges with that, but swift reporting and corrective action is reasonable.
9. Paul Medd added that these are highly relevant questions in terms of the operation of leisure management, but the essence of the meeting today is to deal with priorities in the business plan rather than operational matters.
10. Councillor Mason referred the Panel to the section on Environment within the Business Plan.
11. Councillor Mason asked how anti-social behaviour is being tackled. There is a problem locally in Whittlesey which he believes is due in part to a lack of youth provision by this council. Councillor Count agreed there are areas in the district highlighted for anti-social behaviour, but it is not fair to say there is no youth provision. The role of the Community Safety Partnership, when hearing about problematic areas, is to put together a problem-solving group, in which they engage with relevant partners. Youth workers and the police work together to give educational talks in schools on subjects such as county lines and knife crime. Sometimes it is not a matter of enforcement but one of perception, and the reality is not the same as fear is

often a factor. Fenland crime rates and instances of anti-social behaviour are actually lower than perceived.

12. Councillor Mason said youth engagement is key. He does not feel that there is a youth policy currently; there was funding at one stage in Whittlesey of £125k for youth provision with match funding but that was withdrawn, and the money diverted elsewhere.
13. Councillor Miscandlon said he agreed with Councillor Count regarding the issue of perception, however we do need to encourage young people to join the groups on offer.
14. Councillor Purser said that there are plenty of youth facilities in the area, for example Young People March. West End Park has a great play area for children which is always in use. Facilities are available in the district and there is plenty available for young people to do if they look.
15. Councillor Mrs French agreed and added that the BMX park has recently been refurbished, rugby at Longhill Road has youth participation of all ages; kick boxing, table tennis and boxing are all available and we also have the new addition of the water splash park in Wisbech. There is much out there when you stop and think about it but perhaps parents are not aware.
16. Councillor Count said it would be good to arrange some sort of mapping exercise if it does not already exist to make people aware of the whole range of activities available for young people in the district.
17. Councillor Mrs French said the County Council are currently trying to assist the owner of a kickboxing club with funding and there could be other help on offer.
18. Councillor Wicks commented that there are a number of very successful youth clubs in Whittlesey so there is some provision, but it should not be neglected. If any youth groups need funding, we should be able to help point them in the right direction.
19. Councillor Miscandlon said that with all these activities going on across the towns it would be good to have officers collate all that information. It should then be put on the FDC website and sent to the town and parish councils. Councillor Boden responded that is a very helpful suggestion and it would be appropriate for the draft business plan to be amended to ensure FDC acts effectively to provide better information to residents throughout the whole of Fenland. It is a superb example of what can be done to improve the Business Plan.
20. Councillor Tierney responded that the only difficulty would be in keeping the information up to date. This is a major job; he is not saying it should not be done but we need to think about how it might work before committing ourselves to a big ongoing task such as this. Paul Medd said that this is something that officers can review and see how it can operate practically.
21. Councillor Booth said that Councillor Count made the point about crime statistics but that is about reported crime. The issue is one of public engagement, some people do not report incidents of crime or anti-social behaviour so that needs to be borne in mind. He would observe that this is an item that sits under the Environment portfolio, but he thinks it should come under Communities. Councillor Count said there is a community safety element hence it came to him.
22. Councillor Wicks said that more needs to be done to highlight the issues of crime committed in the rural areas that is not experienced in urban areas; this is something that is often overlooked or neglected. Councillor Count agreed and said that one of the things he has been doing in meetings with the Police and Crime Commissioner is arguing for a breakdown in datasets to cover rural areas. Whereas a regular police force may place tractor theft low on their list of priorities, when we had a rural taskforce they were aware of and placed higher priority on tractor theft, recognising the significance of their high value, as well as for example the knock-on effects crimes such as hare coursing and all the associated behaviours linked to that. He will continue to bring forward discussions on rural crime being different to urban crime and to have these data sets broken down. He thanked Councillor Wicks for his comments and said he will keep up the work on that.
23. Councillor Boden said he was now able to provide an answer to the question regarding leisure centre maintenance. A CIPFA-planned preventative maintenance report was commissioned by FDC in late 2021 and this work replaces a prior report from 2018. FDC has set aside considerable sums in the capital budget over the coming two years to implement recommendations that are FDC's responsibility within the report. It should be noted that Freedom Leisure are responsible for day-to-day works including any works that are under

FDC's capital threshold of £10k. Some of the extensive works are already completed, including roofing works at the Hudson Centre and George Campbell, and guttering works at the Manor. Replacement of the Hudson fire alarm is a project that is underway with other projects due to start in Spring 2023 including electrical wiring works at the Hudson and changing room works at the Manor and George Campbell. Grant funding is usually available for larger capital improvement or new build projects but not maintenance works. Where such projects take place within leisure centres, funders will be approached to reduce costs to FDC where possible. Councillor Mason thanked Councillor Boden and said that was very reassuring.

24. Councillor Miscandlon asked what is being done to attract more businesses to Fenland. There is one particular business he is aware of, and he would like to know how it is progressing and growing. Councillor Boden advised that in the absence of Councillor Benney he was unable to answer as he does not know the business being referred to and it would not be appropriate to single it out at a meeting such as this. However, the Economic Growth team was appointed in 2020 and works closely with Councillor Benney as Portfolio Holder for Growth. The team is wedded to achieving economic growth and prosperity in the area. It is widely acknowledged that economic growth is likely to result from businesses already in the area rather than because of new inward investment. The team has refreshed the economic growth strategy which has subsequently been endorsed by Cabinet and Council reflecting the context we now have post pandemic, ensuring that the focus of the team is business engagement. We have also put in place various performance measures against the strategy which are reported via the portfolio holder update reports to Council to ensure the positive impact the team have is both measurable and quantifiable. The Economic Growth team have devised and implemented with member approval the discretionary business rate relief scheme, targeted at businesses considering moving into the Fenland area therefore providing an incentive to our area. In addition, the team have also launched a further business rate relief policy targeted at developers of industrial units to kick start developments in the district as we have a limited supply of these units locally, potentially limiting inward investment opportunities and expansion of existing businesses within the area. The Economic Growth team have worked with colleagues in Planning to devise and implement a fast-track planning application process for applications that will support employment in the area. The team has worked closely with the Combined Authority's 'Start Grow' initiative which provides grants to start-up and micro businesses across Fenland. The scheme concluded in December 2022 and the total grant award figures are currently being finalised and will be shared with the O&S panel during the next meeting in February. The team has run an external workshop event at the Boat House in relation to skills and recruitment as this has been a recurring theme identified by local businesses that they are finding challenging. The team works closely with the CPCA Growth Works inward investment team responding to queries and engaging with businesses considering a move into Fenland. One of the key notable successes in this regard has been the Turmeric Company that moved into Fenland in 2022 from outside the area resulting in additional local employment opportunities. The team played a key part in the Covid Business Grant project team, ensuring businesses were sustainable during the pandemic. Furthermore, FDC has also recently been successful in relation to the Shared Prosperity Fund bid by the Combined Authority from central government and a key aspect of that bid is in relation to business grants. More generally, the team engage with businesses both new to the area and those which are more established to identify any support required, acting as a conduit for external funding, energy advice and support, as well as skills and recruitment and take a very proactive approach ensuring that businesses continue to regard Fenland as a vibrant and supportive environment in which to be located.
25. Councillor Mason said he has been approached by people in the hospitality sector who are very fearful about going forward in 2023 and perhaps they are looking for concrete support and he thanked Councillor Boden for his statement.
26. Councillor Wicks said that having worked with the Business Development Officer and pointing him in several directions, it is not only Wisbech that needs help. He is continually being told about the lack of small business units within the area and it is against that background where we have got to encourage employment within Fenland to stop it becoming a more dormitory

area. He would like to know how much effort is going into making these small business units available.

27. Councillor Boden said that is a very valid and helpful question and Councillor Wicks has hit the nail on the head. There is a clear shortage in Fenland of small business units, particularly industrial units. There are only so many things we can do. Firstly, we can build more small industrial units ourselves. We had a plan to do so at Chatteris but unfortunately over the last 6-9 months, construction costs have soared so high that it is no longer economically viable for us to do this currently. As soon as the building industry returns to some degree of stability, we will come back to that. Secondly, we can give support to third parties who wish to build units. We have done several things in that respect. One is having the opportunity for any such development for business rates not to be levied upon any such development until the units are occupied. It takes some of the degree of risk away from the developers if they know that business rates will not be incurred until units are occupied. Thirdly, we can refer to our draft local plan where more opportunity is being given for business and industrial development to take place in all parts of the district to open areas so there is greater possibility for land use to be exercised in that way, whether brownfield or greenfield sites. Councillor Boden added that he is frustrated by the Council's own inability to build. The costs to do so have skyrocketed but should they come down, then he is sure a business case for doing that will be revisited.
28. Councillor Wicks thanked Councillor Boden for his answers which he found to be most valuable. He added that members will know he is passionate about the enhancement of infrastructure in this area, and in particular Ely north junction and the dualling of the A47. Members continually push this point, but now we as a council should be making representations to the higher parties of the effect on employment and prosperity of Fenland and the impact it is having.
29. Councillor Seaton agreed with Councillor Wicks. He stated that FDC is part of the A47 alliance, which is made up of several councils and business partners. A new task and finish group has recently been set up to coordinate a combined response and we are lobbying and having ministerial visits. National Highways have recently consulted on the section from Peterborough to Guyhirn, but unfortunately they have come back with a response to that consultation saying the business case does not stack up to dual the A47, one of the reasons being that there are not many accidents. In his view they are missing one of the fundamental points which is that dualling the A47 from Peterborough to Wisbech would open an economic corridor opportunity. We are still trying to open up business opportunities and housing growth within the Fenland area. The A47 Elm High Road roundabout is still in their plans, and it is hoped work there will ease congestion. In the meantime, we will continue to lobby for the dualling of the A47 and as he is on the transport committee of the CPCA will continue to push the case for it.
30. Councillor Miscandlon said equally we need to open a relief road around Whittlesey as growth there has been stifled. Councillor Seaton agreed and said there is a problem with heavy traffic running through the town, but this pressure would also be eased if we had the A47 dualling. This is not a problem exclusive to Whittlesey.
31. Councillor Booth said that at the last meeting there was a presentation by the Transport Officer from the Combined Authority, and we would be lucky to get a light railway between Wisbech and March in the next five to ten years, and from what he was saying about the A47 there is almost no chance of getting dualling, particularly if we are being told the business case does not stack up. Therefore, something needs to change at government level to be in with any chance. There is too much bureaucracy, red tape and wasted money on all these consultations when the work could have been getting done. People are fed up with all the delays.
32. Councillor Mason asked if there were any questions on the Quality Organisation section of draft Business Plan.
33. Councillor Booth said this section mentions Consultation and Engagement but what is missing is consultation engagement with parish and town councils and this should be added. Also, he would expect performance indicators to be on the first and not second page.
34. Councillor Miscandlon said that as many consultations are undertaken online he was pleased to see that the point he had raised previously about not everybody being online had been taken on board, and that people can still engage by other means. Councillor Tierney said of course

we must be able to reach out to everyone until such time, if ever, that everyone can access services online, but we are certainly not there yet.

35. Councillor Booth referred to page 4 of the draft Business Plan and said as an observation there is mention of there being a fifth priority around Council for the Future but there is no section on that. Councillor Boden responded that it is a cross cutting priority that cuts across the other four, but he agreed it would be helpful to expand on that for clarification.
36. Councillor Booth said he had one final point and that was relating to the page regarding investment across Fenland. Yet again there is not enough being done for the rural areas, and he keeps making this point. With the lack of public transport and mobility in the villages, they are identified as an area of rural isolation as people cannot get to facilities. How we are looking after rural communities needs to be looked at.
37. Councillor Boden said he was very grateful for all the comments which will be fed back so the final version of the Business Plan will reflect many of the comments made today.
38. Councillor Booth said he would ask that the Leader and Cabinet are open to the fact that the panel may be coming back with additional KPIs as a result of the forthcoming Task and Finish Group, which will make the Business Plan a dynamic and living document that we can make changes to as and when required. Councillor Boden responded that he is open to suggestions but would rather have replacement than additional KPIs so they do not become meaningless for being too many.
39. Councillor Mrs French said she was of the understanding some questions had been raised at the pre-meeting relating to March High Street and she would be happy to provide an update. The question was how March businesses will be supported to ensure their survival during the disruption caused by the development plan. Councillor Mrs French said the redevelopment of the marketplace, Riverside and Broad Street will bring some unavoidable disruption but the plan changes. This is far from the emergency actions that took place just before Christmas that had a considerable impact. The planned development work will ensure that a lane remains open north and south throughout the works so disruption will be kept as low as possible, although some disruption is inevitable. As part of the contract work, a liaison officer from the contractors will be in touch with local business weekly ensuring they know what is planned. There are three elements to the works, firstly to bring the infrastructure up to standard, with March having recently suffered ruptured gas pipes and burst water mains. There is the March Area Transport Study which has been ongoing since 2017, which has been broken into different elements, being the quick wins, and medium-term and long-term works. Some of the quick wins have been completed and the medium-term works are being done now, i.e., new zebra crossings in St Peters Road and Station Road. There are speed reductions in Upwell Road and Norwood Road and longer-term plans include the upgrading of the roundabout at Peas Hill Road, works to improve the Hobbs Lot junction due to the number of accidents and the installation of a northern link road. Councillor Mrs French added that FDC is also working on a walking, cycling and mobility strategy. Councillor Mason thanked Councillor Mrs French.

The Draft Business Plan 2023-24 was noted for information.

OSC22/22 BUDGET REPORT

Members considered the Budget Report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden paid tribute to the work done by Mark Saunders, stating his expertise and knowledge is second to none.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

1. Councillor Mason said in his presentation, Councillor Boden referred several times to the word 'assumptions' but there are realities in there such as core spending power, new homes bonus decreasing and business rates shortfalls. He said that Councillor Boden had indicated that over the years we have over budgeted so therefore assuming we have reserves, would he be

correct in saying that these would counter those shortfalls which are identified in the report as major risks?

2. Councillor Boden said there are two different types of reserves. The first is the general reserve but the reserve he was talking about is budget equalisation which is kept separate because it is specifically related to systemic budgeting issues where the outturn ended up being a surplus, even if on occasion we were budgeting for a deficit over the year. He cannot give a positive answer to the question because he cannot guarantee what will happen in the coming years. It is possible that there will be substantial business rates changes in 2025/26 or that fairer funding will come in which may harm district councils as opposed to county councils in two-tier areas. Lots of things will change and risk is not always a one-way thing, i.e., it will not always be negative. We should bear in mind that as a council we are in a much better financial position than many other district councils across the country because we have been prudent over the last 14 years. Councillor Boden said he has confidence about how we will be able to address the future because we are not in control of the way government makes changes to do with regulations which affects the way we receive money, but central government will not go out of its way to bankrupt local government and they will change regulations to ensure councils can continue to operate financially. Since we are in a better position than many, Councillor Boden said he is confident they will be sufficient for us to continue.
3. Councillor Mason asked for more clarification on core spending power because it appears we are well down on the national average, and he would like to know why. Mark Saunders replied that core spending power is the measure the government uses to determine what resources and funding authorities have and compare for one year to the next. This includes all the items listed on page 31 of the report. Historically what is also included is the level of council tax increases. Because FDC has not increased its council tax over the last five years, we have not increased our core spending power as have those that did.
4. Councillor Mason asked if that meant that FDC was being penalised as a result. Mark Saunders responded that was not the case. Councillor Boden said it is good that FDC has kept spending down whilst still maintaining services. Peter Catchpole added that for clarity, it is assumed that every council is going to raise their council tax by their permitted amount and that is why the league tables can look different. Councillor Mason thanked Peter Catchpole for that information.
5. Councillor Booth asked in that case, what is the purpose of that indicator? Councillor Boden responded that we often question the purpose of a lot of the numbers that government produce for us or that we produce for them. It does give an idea to central government about what is likely to be in their accounts for the forthcoming financial year, but he had to agree that they do not have a great deal of use.
6. Councillor Booth said it looks like we are getting additional funding from central government through the budget settlement so is it correct that the shortfall would be about £109k taking the two figures together? Councillor Boden said there have been many other amendments to the projected budget for 2023/24 and they are still coming through. He is hoping that ARP will come up with the NNDR1 number and he thinks that may produce a significant positive sum; overall he would be disappointed if we do not end up with a surplus figure rather than a deficit based on the numbers and information received so far.
7. Councillor Mason asked for assurance that in order to balance the books we are not going to cut services next year. Councillor Boden replied that there is no intention to cut front line services to balance the books. It is appropriate however, for the new council to take its own view about what services there should be and at what level. They may wish to spend more money or less money on services, and it is totally appropriate for them to do what they need with the mandate they will have as a result of the election. Councillor Boden repeated that there is no intention to cut services to balance this budget. Councillor Mason thanked Councillor Boden for the reassurance.
8. Councillor Booth observed that the Fairer Funding Review should have been introduced about two years ago and asked if this is going to be the new equivalent of the revaluation where the Government keeps kicking it into the long grass. It brings uncertainty for local government and the issue it creates when trying to balance budgets. Councillor Boden said the fairer funding

issue has been in abeyance for some six or seven years; the idea behind it is to change the balance of where money goes but he cannot say when that will be resurrected. As far as business rates are concerned, we are told that change will take place in 2025/26 but this is a difficult issue. If he could, he would abolish the whole business rating system, including the valuation office agency and put in a corporation tax increase to give a greater opportunity for business premises operating from physical premises to be more competitive as opposed to those operating online. It would also remove an enormous amount of complicated administration. Councillor Boden said Councillor Booth was right in that we cannot tell when they are going to happen, we have been promised some for years but whatever happens, ultimately central government will not allow local government to go bankrupt and we are more resilient than many other councils.

9. Councillor Mason asked if a contingency plan is in place should the worst happen, and Freedom Leisure go to the wall. Councillor Boden said that it would be a matter of FDC taking a considered opinion at the time. There was a time when this looked likely and that is why we and other authority customers provided support. There is no reason to believe now that Freedom Leisure is in a position where that outcome is likely, but it is possible and if so FDC will be obliged to take on the responsibility for those leisure centres. Ultimately, it will be a matter for the new administration to decide what to do; however, it is not in our interests or in the interest of the leisure centre customers to allow Freedom Leisure to go to the wall. Councillor Mason said he is not suggesting we are but just wants to see that contingency plans are in place.
10. Councillor Wicks queried risk registers and mitigating factors within the corporate register and asked if they exist. Councillor Boden said they do exist however members and members of the Audit & Risk Committee only see the top level of the risk management system which exists. The value of the risk management procedure that we have is not in what we see but what happens at a lower level. They are fully supported by a whole raft of risk analysis at operational level monitored carefully by a group of senior offices and managed by individual operational departments. It is thorough and substantial. Paul Medd said that there is a corporate risk methodology for everything that we do in order to be proactive in terms of how we quantify risk and mitigate against it. Whilst it is thorough, we can never entirely capture all the risks that exist, for example the pandemic. When confronted with issues that we are unable to predict, it is about the robust systems we have in place to respond accordingly and to have agility to react and deal those unseen risks if and when they occur in the future.
11. Councillor Booth raised the issue of the Planning Department and its resources. He gets the impression that statistically there is a delivery failing and so he asked if more resources need to be put into that. Councillor Boden said there is a high level of demand on the planning service, and we have been looking at a root and branch analysis of work being done with a view to a significant reorganisation within the planning team. There are clear opportunities for efficiency savings which means we will be able to get more from the same number of staff we have currently. For example, we have some senior, highly qualified members of the team spending too much of their time on administrative work. Changes in processes will make a difference and lead to a significant potential saving, spending less on planning and getting better results. Paul Medd agreed and said essentially we have a substantive structure fit for purpose. However, the key issue is that there is a national skills shortage of planners. However, we have a good name and a good track record and are working hard to retain the talent we have.

The Overview and Scrutiny panel AGREED to:

- 12. note the revised General Fund Budget and Capital Programme for 2022/23**
- 13. send the Draft General Fund Budget Estimates 2023/24 and the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28 for consultation**
- 14. approve the Capital Programme 2023-2026.**

OSC23/22 FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24

Members considered the Review of Fees and Charges 2023/24 report presented by Councillor Boden.

Members made comments, asked questions, and received responses as follows:

1. Councillor Purser said he is asked on a regular basis if it can be guaranteed that car parking will remain free in the district. Councillor Boden said it is ever possible that central government can force us to charge in the future and we cannot change that, but in the meantime there will be an election taking place in four months' time and this will be a decision for the new administration. Overwhelmingly, most councils charge for car parking, and they make a nice surplus from it and use it to subsidise the rest of their operations. However, as long as Councillor Boden remains Leader of the Council, there will be no charges for car parking unless forced by central government.
2. Councillor Booth said that is the policy of this council, but we are getting to a situation where it is not the only thing we need to do. We need to come up with a better offering to keep our market towns viable. Ultimately we need better shops and services.
3. Councillor Boden said that generally the amount of money needed for changes are considerable and we are depending on opportunities provided to us by the Combined Authority. We have the current March High Street funding works for example. He cannot give a definitive answer, however, to the future of the High Street. Experts are currently saying that people are now requiring experiences. As a council we do need to be aware of the need for flexibility within our high streets and to allow them to change, we have to facilitate that change even if it is for something we do not want to see ourselves.
4. Councillor Mason asked if there is a large demand for room hire at the Boat House and South Fens. Councillor Boden responded that there is significant demand, but we have to be aware of the competitive position and so we have applied a general inflationary increase. We could increase it by more but do not want to create problems for current tenants. It is not just a matter of maximising council income but the impact on the very businesses we are trying to support. Councillor Mason suggested a decrease could attract more tenants.
5. Councillor Booth referred to the proposed changes at Section 3.2 of the report on mini-factories, South Fens Business Centre and the Boathouse and said there had been discussion in the past that these should be considered as breeder units. He asked if that had been fully considered, particularly if we are increasing some of the fees by about 40%. He asked if we are satisfied it will drive the right outcomes we are looking for as it is not always about occupancy but rather about getting those business set up so they can move on to other areas when they find the facilities. Councillor Boden said it is important to have realistic charges in terms of the costs that we incur but we do consult with officers to get their opinions.
6. Mark Saunders replied that all services review their services and make their proposals based on ensuring costs are covered. Rates are examined to ensure they are competitive and set between a minimum and maximum to give negotiating room with tenants. Councillor Boden emphasised that new rents will not apply until existing tenancy arrangements expire. Peter Catchpole added that we have had a new Head of Property for about a year who has helped make a big difference, he has done a lot of work with qualified surveyors, and we have seen the occupancy rates rise which tells us we have done the right thing and we have already driven up income in those areas. He signs off all the new leases that come through and sees the amount of work that goes in behind them. Councillor Boden added that our Head of Property has certainly proved his worth.
7. Councillor Mason asked if there had been any thoughts about hiring out the facilities at Fenland Hall. Councillor Boden said that we do not offer the Council Chamber for functions currently but that can be considered as part of the accommodation review. Any out of hours usage would incur additional staff costs and there would be confidentiality and security risks which would need to be assessed. He doubts that hiring out the Chamber would provide any significant outturn.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel AGREED to recommend to Cabinet that the Fees and Charges be included in the final budget proposals for 2023/24.

OSC24/22 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Future Work Programme.

Councillor Mason stated that it was unlikely that the Mayor of the Combined Authority or his deputy would be able to attend a meeting this municipal year, as planned. Councillor Booth asked if the date of the next meeting was the issue otherwise we could change it. Amy Brown said it was not a matter of the date but there has been ongoing dialogue with the mayor's office, and they will make it happen if it can.

Councillor Wicks said he is disappointed on a number of fronts. Firstly, that the presentation from the CPCA last year reference skills and the opportunities that they were creating were miniscule and he has not seen any effort to rectify that or come back to this committee to give an indication of what they are doing to address the problem. Secondly, he thinks it is likely that the CPCA will be adding a precept to Council Tax for all residents in Cambridgeshire. Councillor Miscandlon said he sits on the CPCA O&S committee and there was a meeting, but he is not sure what is happening with regard the CPCA precept as no decision was made. Regarding skills, he met with the Head of the Department for Skills who accepted criticism that the report had been produced in a hurry, but they are attempting to correct this, and he will provide an update to this panel when he himself gets an update.

4.07 pm

Chairman

UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS

REF	Date Requested	Question	Target Date
COMPLETED ACTONS			
Ongoing Actions Completed Since the O&S Meeting of 16 January 2022			
1.	05.12.22	<p>Councillor Booth would like to know what is happening about bus stops being placed in areas to prevent traffic hold ups on the A47 as part of the project installing the Guyhirn roundabout.</p> <p>Tim Bellamy, Interim head of Transport at CPCA to provide this information. Member Services have sent an email reminder on 6 January 2023.</p> <p>Response from Tim Bellamy 16/01/23: I am in the process of finding out more information internally and with National Highways. I will get @Anna Graham to respond to you directly – hopefully by the end of the week.</p> <p>Update received from Anna Graham, Transport Programme Manager, CPCA on 20/01/23 as follows:</p> <p>I have liaised with National Highways about the bus stops on the Fen Road at Guyhirn. The project to improve the bus stops seems to be separate to the recently completed Guyhirn roundabout works and is part of an A47 Accessibility Review. National Highways are looking at measures to improve the bus stops and are likely to include works on kerbs, footways and paved areas, road markings, traffic signs, vegetation clearance and new bus shelters for the on-street bus stops. This work is currently being scheduled and expected to take place sometime after May. If the Councillor would like further information or would like to liaise directly with National Highways then please contact Angelos Panos Angelos.Panos@nationalhighways.co.uk Project Manager for this work.</p> <p>O&S panel emailed by Member Services 20/01/23.</p>	Complete
2.	05 12 22	<p>Councillor Booth raised a query relating to 65 dwellings due to be built at Gaul Road that did not proceed.</p> <p>Response below:</p> <p>On 22 July 2021 a Full planning application was received for 65 dwellings on the site at York Lodge Gaul Rd March. The applicant was the developer not Clarion. Prior to the application being made no pre-application advice was sought from the District Council. However there had been two previous applications (both having some involvement by the developer), one withdrawn and one refused for reasons that included surface water drainage and lack of suitable access to the wider site and a flawed Transport Assessment. Officers are not aware of any preapplication advice sought from the County Council as Highway Authority or as Lead Local Flood Authority.</p>	Complete

ONGOING ACTIONS

1.	07.02.22	<p>Request to invite the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to attend a future meeting of O&S to discuss the levelling-up agenda for Fenland.</p>	ASAP
		<p>Mayor Johnson was due to attend a meeting of the O&S Panel on 5 December 2022 but is now on a 3-month leave of absence. Arrangements were made for Cllr Anna Smith to attend instead but notification was received on 24 November that this was no longer possible due to other mayoral commitments. Future attendance to be arranged.</p> <p>Update: Cllr Smith is unavailable for O&S on 27 February 2023, but Member Services have been in discussion with the mayor's office and a calendar appointment has been sent to Mayor Johnson in the anticipation that he would be able to attend, however his office has now declined that meeting and a meeting will need to be arranged in the new municipal year.</p>	

WATCHING BRIEF ITEMS

1.	8.11.2021	<p>Cllr Booth requested a watching brief on Peterborough City Council's planning review and how this may affect Fenland</p>	Under ongoing review.
		<p>The arrangements that Fenland District Council has in place with Peterborough City Council remain in the following areas:</p> <p>Development Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared support manager • Viability validation assessments that are required relating to S106 agreements Planning Policy • The work required to get a new adopted local plan. <p>Peterborough City Council's planning review is ongoing as is our continued engagement with them in relation to the possible outcomes. Meanwhile we have been pleased to announce that Nick Harding, Head of Planning, has agreed to continue his work as Head of Planning at FDC as he always has done, and this means no change in service for FDC as was emailed to all members before Christmas.</p> <p>A further update was provided from Dan Horn on the 11th January 2022 as follows:</p> <p>"The arrangements that Fenland District Council has in place with Peterborough City Council remain in the following areas:</p> <p>Development Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared support manager • Viability validation assessments that are required relating to S106 agreements <p>Planning Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work required to get a new adopted local plan. <p>Peterborough City Council's planning review is ongoing as is our continued engagement with them in relation to the possible</p>	

		<p>outcomes. Meanwhile we have been pleased to announce that Nick Harding, Head of Planning, has agreed to continue his work as Head of Planning at FDC as he always has done, and this means no change in service for FDC as was emailed to all members before Christmas.”</p> <p>The Head of Planning is a part-time post of 2.5 days per week. The post holder is making Tuesdays and Wednesdays their regular working days with the remaining half day ‘floating’ to enable attendance at corporate / team / staff / project meetings as necessary. There may be the need on occasion to change the Tuesday / Wednesday working days to cover the operational needs of the service, leave etc. All reasonable endeavours are used to monitor incoming emails and phone messages on non-working days so that any urgent matters can be responded to. The arrangements that are currently in place are near identical to those when the Head of Service post was shared with Peterborough City Council.</p>	
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Agenda Item 6

Agenda Item No:	6	
Committee:	Overview & Scrutiny	
Date:	27th February 2023	
Report Title:	Update on CPCA Growth Service and impact on Economic Development in Fenland	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

To provide the Overview & Scrutiny Panel with an update presentation on the CPCA's Growth Works Service and the impact on Economic Growth in Fenland.

2 Key issues

- A review of progress and effect of the CPCA Growth Works Service; and
- The plans and direction of the CPCA Growth Works Service.

3 Recommendations

It is requested that the Overview & Scrutiny Panel considers the contents of the presentation and progress made in relation to the impact of CPCA and CPCA Growth Service on Economic Growth in Fenland.

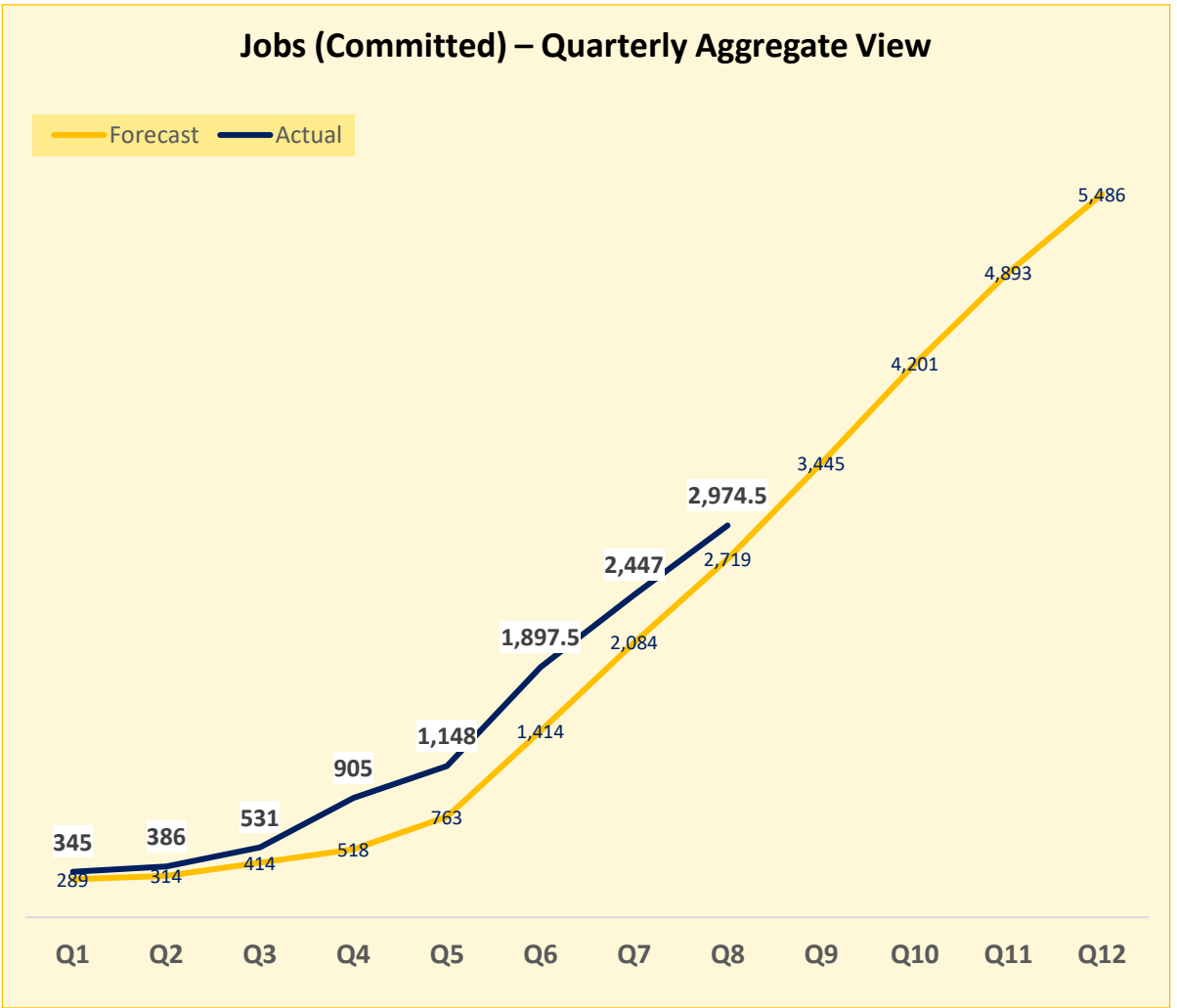
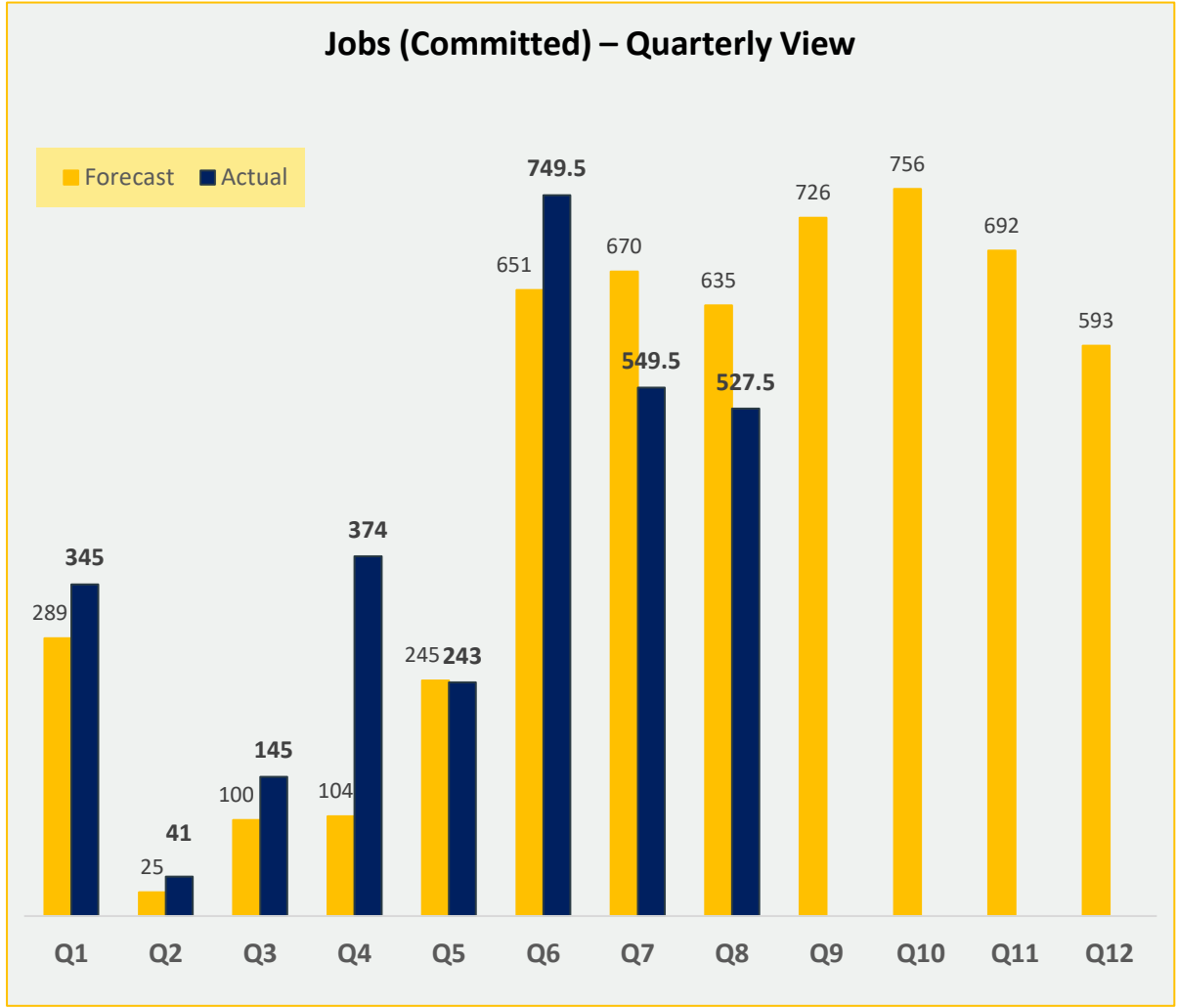
Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Ian Benney - Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth
Report Originator(s)	Anna Goodall - Assistant Director
Contact Officer(s)	Anna Goodall - Assistant Director Simon Jackson – Economic Growth Manager Richard Cuda - Head of Support Functions for Growth Works Fliss Miller - Interim Associate Director for Skills Steve Clarke - SRO LGF and Market Insight & Evaluation
Background Paper(s)	N/A

CPCA Business Growth Service Year Two Annual Review – Area Performance Pack: FDC

Growth Works: Reporting Period
1st January to 16th December 2022



Programme Overview by Quarter for Years 1 & 2 – Jobs



Service Lines: Year-2 outcome creation results broken down by district.

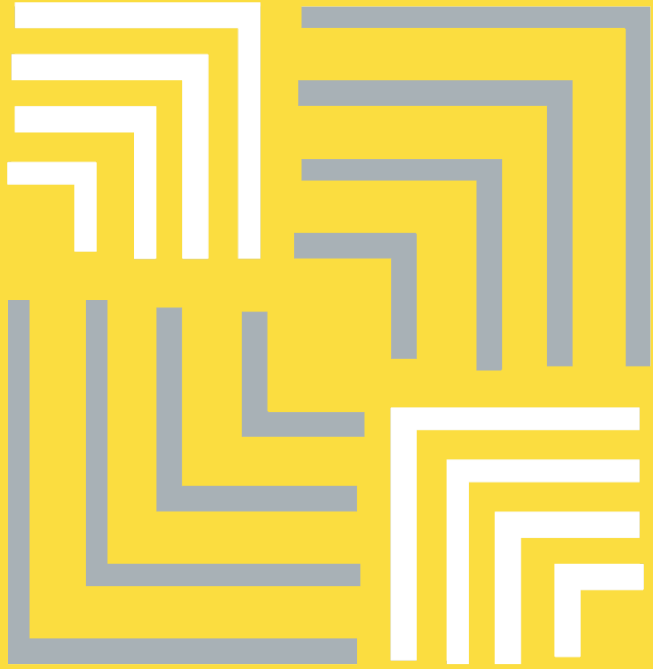
NOTE: Skills has no jobs targets to achieve but occasionally create new jobs, which is noted in italics below



Service Line / GW Offer	Cambridge CC	East Cambs DC	Fenland DC	Hunts DC	Peterborough CC	South Cambs DC	LEP	TOTAL	
Coaching: nudge grants	66.5	55	190	155.5	276.5	544.5	100.5	1,388.5	
Investment	285		18		20	26		349	
SME CapEx Grants	33	71	21	38	52	40		255	
SME Equity Investment					14			14	
<i>Skills has no target to achieve for jobs but occasionally creates jobs</i>									63
Year-2 Jobs (all services)	384.5	126	229	193.5	362.5	610.5	100.5	2,069.5	TARGET BY END OF YEAR-2
Year-1 Jobs (all services)	154	267	81	79.5	188.5	77	58	905	
TOTAL	538.5	393	310	273	551	687.5	158.5	2,974.5	2,719

Skills Outcome	Cambridge CC	East Cambs DC	Fenland DC	Hunts DC	Peterborough CC	South Cambs DC	LEP	TOTAL	
Year-2 Learning Outcomes	33	0	79	19	479	0	0	610	TARGET BY END OF YEAR-2
Year-1 Learning Outcomes	17	1	44	1	194	0	0	257	
TOTAL	50	1	123	20	673	0	0	867	957
Year-2 Apprenticeships	85	5	25	10	116	10	0	251	TARGET BY END OF YEAR-2
Year-1 Apprenticeships	10	3	7	9	30	7	0	66	
TOTAL	95	8	32	19	146	17	0	317	500

* At the time of reporting (our fast close was 17.00 hours on 16.12.2022), the Skills SRO and Skills Service MD are in discussion about the appropriate way to measure apprenticeships. This metric shows performance against an 'above the baseline' target but with data that shows apprenticeships the Service Line have been involved in.



Growth Coaching Service

Year Two Review: Growth Coaching Service and Revenue Grants

Performance Indicator Scorecard Summary for the period 1st January to 16th December 2022.



Our performance against the leading contracted metrics...



190 Jobs created (committed)



168 Businesses provided with a Growth Diagnostic



23 Businesses starting coaching assignments



23 Businesses starting a coaching journey



18 Businesses completing a coaching journey

In delivering diagnostics to businesses, the companies we engaged with cited a range of barriers to growth...

Stated Challenge	Responses Cited
Need growth finance	61
Need to find the right new people	60
Need to improve skills deficits in current team	19
Need more effective people development strategy	10
Need new equipment	52
Need bigger premises	28
Need to improve productivity	20
Need more effective marketing	32
Need more effective sales	22
Need more effective growth strategy	29
Need more effective leadership and management	4
Other	19

TOTAL BY GEOGRAPHY 356

To support coaching some SMEs benefited from a revenue grant.



5 Revenue grant awards made to local firms

SME Revenue Grant Awards

£20,686
Awarded in Revenue Grants

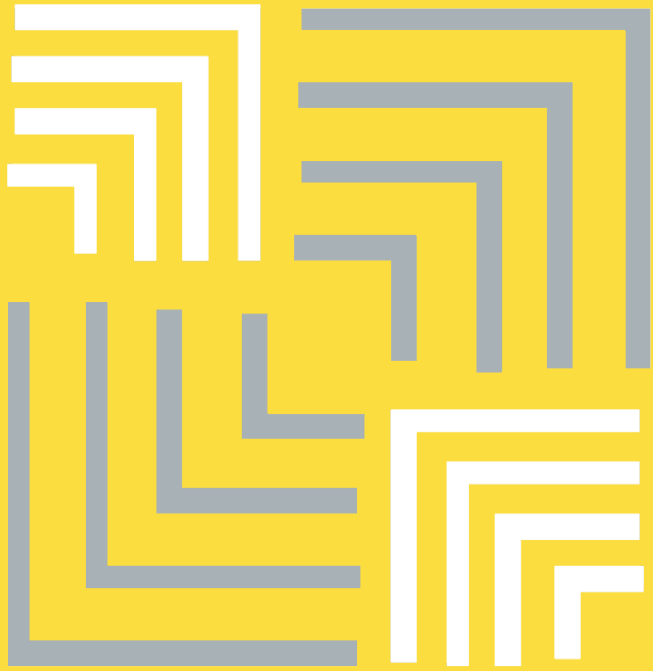
We have supported **76** high-growth businesses within Fenland from April 2021-December 2022.

They collectively employ **1700** employees...

...and turnover **£182,591,937**

We have helped **129** businesses with ambitions to grow through the Growth Hub

In addition, project-wide, we have given access to our start-up and growth e-learning platforms to **1500** businesses, providing an additional 45 hours of high quality self-help support.



Grants – ERDF and LGF Revenue Grants, and SME CapEx Grants

SERVICE LINE REPORTING: Grants – ERDF and LGF Revenue Grants, and SME CapEx Grants



NOTE: data is to 16th December 2022.

Name	Number of Grants Awards	Total Value of Grant Awards	Average Value of Grant Awards	Jobs to be created as a result of Grant	Grant Award per Job Created
Revenue Grant (ERDF)	5	£20,686.04	£4,137.21	16	£1,292.88
Revenue Grant (LGF)	0	£0.00	£0.00	0	£0.00
SME CapEx Grant	3	£144,718.00	£48,239.33	21	£6,891.33
	8	£165,404.04	£20,675.51	37	£4,470.38

Name	Grant Type	Grant Value to be Claimed	Jobs to be created as a result of Grant	Grant Award per Job Created	Date Grant Offer Letter Sent
South & Son	CapEx	£27,225.00	4	£6,806.25	Mar-22
StocksAG Ltd	CapEx	£93,628.00	13	£7,202.15	May-22
Fenland Leisure	CapEx	£23,865.00	4	£5,966.25	Oct-22
		£144,718.00	21	£6,891.33	

Name	Grant Type	Grant Value to be Claimed	Jobs to be created as a result of Grant	Grant Award per Job Created	Date Grant Offer Letter Sent
Hair and Beauty Hub Ltd	ERDF	£5,905.00	1	£5,905.00	Apr-22
Chokshi	ERDF	£7,440.00	12	£620.00	May-22
Lilac HR	ERDF	£2,387.50	1	£2,387.50	May-22
Qualitetch Components	ERDF	£1,153.54	1	£1,153.54	Jun-22
South and son	ERDF	£3,800.00	1	£3,800.00	Jul-22
		£20,686.04	16	£1,292.88	

Fenland - Growth Works Case Studies

April 2022 - December 2022



Social enterprise CCORRN reduces landfill with Growth Works' support

The Cambridgeshire Community Reuse and Recycling Network (CCORRN) is a social enterprise based in March, that reinvests profits into their local Fenland community. Their income is made from repurposing, reinventing, and remanufacturing products that would normally go to waste.

When CCORRN started their paint recycling service in 2013, they were mixing in small fifty litre batches. They've been growing production ever since and were at a point where they needed to scale up with new equipment and staff due to increased demand.

Through Growth Works, CCORRN has received a large capital investment grant which they are using to hit the ground running with their growth plans, investing in larger equipment. They are also helping to set up an educational system to attract, hire, and retain dedicated employees from the local area. With this talent programme, CCORRN will be able to increase their future output by 400% and provide training for essential skills.

“The Growth Works funding was perfect as it’s about accelerating that growth... it’s not that we can’t do these things, it’s about how fast we can do them, how fast we can grow – that’s the big difference for us.” stated Nikki DiGiovanni, Development Director.

<https://www.growthworks.uk/blog/social-enterprise-ccorn-reduces-landfill-with-growth-works-support/>



CRF Start and Grow



How family run RS Body Shop in Wisbech utilised the support from the Start and Grow Programme

Georgina Bond and her husband Rzegar had both dreamed of running their own automobile body shop and the opportunity arose when after a lifetime working in the sector, Rzegar was made redundant. At the same time, Georgina happened to walk past a garage which was closing down. One week later they were the proud owners of a new business!

“It was through the local Job Centre that we heard about the grants available through the Growth Hub’s Start and Grow programme,” Georgina stated. ***“I can honestly say that without the support we have received from the programme, that we wouldn’t have achieved so much.”***

The couple have used the grant to purchase a new Paint Scheme which enables them to be more efficient and they are also planning to hire an apprentice and develop their website. They have exciting growth plans for the coming years and are looking to employ more staff and whilst she looks back on their unusual business start-up journey with a wry smile, Georgina stated, ***“We’d advise anyone starting a new business to spend more time planning at the start. However, the most important thing is to take advantage of the support available from the Start and Grow programme which is invaluable.”***

<https://cpcagrowthhub.co.uk/startandgrowrsbodyshop>

	CRF
Amount	£474,532
Number of Businesses Supported	42






Inward Investment Service

Year Two Review: Inward Investment, Skills, and SME CapEx Grants and Equity Services


FDC

Performance Indicator Scorecard Summary for the period 1st January to 16th December 2022.

Inward Investment performance against the leading contracted metrics...

-  **18** Jobs created (committed)
-  **1** Inward Investment successes landed locally
-  **1** Active projects with this DC as the preferred UK location


Skills performance against the leading contracted metrics...

-  **25** Apprenticeships created (committed)
-  **79** Additional training and learning outcomes
-  **10** CO23's in place / SME engagement
-  **4** R9 (CO23 action plans) completed

SME CapEx Grants and Equity placement performance against the leading metrics...



-  **21** Jobs created (committed) from CapEx grant awards
-  **3** SME CapEx grant awards made to local firms

Inward Investment Success



UK Inbound
• Food & Drink

CEC Contract – 6 Schools / Colleges

-  (Aug) 6 Of 6 eligible schools
- (Dec) 6 engaged in CEC
-  (Aug) 6 Of schools engaged have
- (Dec) 6 completed a Compass

SME Capital Growth Awards



£144,718

Awarded in Capital Growth Funding to local Small Businesses

Case Study: Prathista Industries

- [Prathista Industries](#), is a well-established nutraceutical company from India (1200 employees and £60M turnover) that produces Natural, Clean Label, NON-GMO, Food and Pharma Ingredients. Company is present in USA, Panama, Uganda and exports to 13 countries.
- Growth Works Inward Investment team has been building a relationship with DIT India, and DIT's Head of Investment for South India introduced the team to Prathista Industries in February 2022 to discuss potential expansion into UK market.
- Company is looking to establish a £10M R&D operation and formulation units in the UK for several product ranges, creating 60 new R&D jobs (spanning Pharma, Food & Drink and agriculture). They see the UK as a platform for exporting to other countries (including European and African markets).
- Inward Investment engaged the company and provided comprehensive information about the life sciences and food manufacturing industries in the region, including information on the clusters, key players, workforce/skills available, leading research and trade organisations, venture capital and entrepreneurial community.
- Inward Investment worked closely with Prathista's President & MD and other members of the SMT to understand their specific needs and to explore opportunities in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region. This included potential incentives available and facilitation of conversations with professional advisors on topics of interest like Customs and VAT exceptions.
- In summer 2022, the company confirmed their interest in visiting the region to have the opportunity to check first-hand the suitability of the location for their business.
- The day the company visited sites in the region they called inward investment to cancel the site visit in Fenland. Inward Investment managed to influence and convince the company to visit the site in Fenland as well as to meet with FDC. This was critical to keep Fenland on the cards for this potential investment opportunity.
- The company was in CPCA for 3-4 days (including 1 day in FDC) and, as per company request, inward investment prepared an agenda that included meetings with relevant regional organisations and business service providers including NIAB, One Nucleus, UK Innovate Edge, Growth with Skills and R&D tax specialists; as well as site visits.
- For the site selection, Inward Investment engaged with District Councils and property agents, including FDC, to identify suitable sites across the region. The company also had the opportunity to meet with FDC during their regional visit.
- As a result of this visit, Prathista Industries shortlisted three sites, with the preferred option being located in Fenland.
- Inward Investment worked closely with FDC and DIT India to coordinate efforts to progress on this investment opportunity. Both operational team and CEO at FDC had the opportunity to meet and engage with the client to explain about support available, including business rates relief.
- Company is interested in purchasing the site in Fenland and is in negotiations supported by a commercial real estate lawyer.
- Inward Investment is following up closely on this to make sure that things move in the right direction. It has been proved that cultural differences have slowed down this process. E.g. reiterating the importance of complying with formalities to instruct professionals to act of their behalf.
- Project Length: One year from first engagement
- Expected land date: This company is expected to be a confirmed success in 2023; upon finalisation of site purchase and beginning of the hiring process

Case Study: Prathista Industries

Challenges and inward investment impact

- Significant cultural differences and very strong personality of company decision maker.
- Extensive resources allocated to influence and secure this investment:
 - Engaging with client on regular basis to make sure that they follow the suggested steps to progress on investment plans. *E.g. engagement with business service providers*
 - Managing company's expectations in relation to the support that public sector can provide. *E.g. company expected GW and FDC to support and get involved in areas that are beyond our remit or just not possible in the UK like negotiation of property, securing VAT/customs exemption for their business from HMRC.*
 - Orchestrating support from DIT India and Commercial Real Estate lawyer with Indian background to support in “translating” cultural differences to facilitate progression of investment plans.
- The day the company visited the sites in the region they called inward investment to cancel the site visit in Fenland. Inward Investment managed to influence the company’s decision and convinced the company to visit the site well as to meet with FDC. This was critical to keep Fenland on the cards for this potential investment opportunity.

Feedback:

What has worked well:

- Operational team to support inward investment enquiries helpful
- DIT contacted Growth Works Inward Investment team to include regional narrative to support the national agritech proposition. FDC supported some narrative on strengths in FDC as well as provided some examples of companies that could be used to support the national proposition.
- Danish company Rockwool was looking for a site across the UK for 75 acres of land, and FDC introduced the inward investment team to a property surveyor that connected Rockwool to Whittlesey Science Park as a potential location. Support of the FDC team was integral to getting Rockwool to consider this location. (however, the company found more suitable sites in the North of England).

Challenges:

Infrastructure:

- Business Parks at Capacity and not offering virtual or flexible options for companies (especially an issue during Covid)
 - Limited, and less-suitable, infrastructure available to land investment in industries where the region could be a contender: manufacturing, engineering and AgriTech.
 - Agritech: proximity to growers and food industry is an advantage but lack of lab space/infrastructure to attract fast growing innovative companies looking to do R&D is a real barrier; especially if the company needs to completely refurbish/repurpose the property.
 - Whittlesey Science & Tech park represents an interesting opportunity for the District but still at very early stage. Planning needs to be sorted for this to become an option for investors
 - Sites/property put forward is not always in line with request or no sites offered
- Distances to travel, rural, companies consider it too far away from the 'Hub'; especially if SMT is travelling in from overseas and have a full agenda

Suggestions:

- Work with FDC on crafting a proposition (i.e. agritech, Whittlesey as an option/proximity to Peterborough)
- FDC to update inward investment Team on upcoming properties and planning changes to support potential inward investment opportunities in the region
- Suggest holding a quarterly pipeline review meeting
- Enquiries from suitable companies for the Fenland ecosystem looking for potential partners e.g. manufacturing partners, JV/partnership, etc. could be a hook to get them committed to Fenland if more proactively supported.

Current Examples of collaboration with FDC:

- Agri-Tech Market Access Programme (MAP): engagement with the inward investment team to identify a FDC unique selling point and case studies to promote agritech opportunities in FDC
- Work with FDC to suggest companies in FDC to use as case studies to promote opportunities in the region or to support in identification of panellists for the programme
- Hosting a visit and creating a programme to support President and MD of Prathista Industries in visiting the region
- Identification of a site in FDC (20 Eastwood End Industrial Estate). This is now the preferred site and company is working with a real estate lawyer regarding site purchase. This will result in 60 R&D jobs for FDC: spanning Pharma, Food and Drink and Agricultural industries



Growth Works with Skills

Fenland activity

Working Well	Not Working Well	Why?
New Skills and Business Relationship Manager dedicated to patch to build relationships.	Synergy between Growth Coaching and GWwS has been lacking at times	Lack of communication and sharing of intelligence in relation to businesses experiencing skills and training pain points following on discussions they may have had with businesses
EDO engagement continued and fostered.	Engagement with Chambers of Commerce	This engagement Chambers of Commerce has not matured, seemingly lack of engagement and interest from Chambers regarding GW
GWwS presence at Fenland based careers and jobs fairs	Recruitment of interns (compared with Peterborough) more difficult.	Comparatively smaller pool of individuals to hire from so less people. Harder to find suitable candidates for intern roles.
Cross section of businesses already targeted and pursued and engaged from a range of sectors and areas within Fenland including KAM; s e.g. (Del Monte) building learning outcomes and apprenticeship pipelines		

Fenland Training Vouchers (CRF / Turning Point)	
Applications / Expressions of Interest	83
Approved	20
Completed	17

Fenland Internships (CRF / Turning Point)	
Businesses Reached	83
Applications	56
Approved	38
Completed	29
Jobs Created	20

Company name (District)	Del Monte - Fenland
Opportunity	To support the business with the local training provision to deliver required training for upskilling purposes and implementation of a Training Needs Analysis to determine which type of training their employees need mid to long term to allow them to thrive in their role, fill a knowledge/skill gap, or develop their learning in order to improve their job performance
How Growth Works with Skills supported	We have identified suitable ITPs who could deliver their short-term training needs and made the required introductions including training opportunities for their management population and employees where English is not their first language, so ESOL provision and provider have been sourced. For a longer-term piece, we are to provide support to build and (EVP) to strengthen future recruitment and position Del Monte as a local employer of choice and a place where a career can be built.
Outcome	Since our engagement, learning outcomes have been identified x16 Level 3 Team Leading qualifications to be delivered in Q9 across the business

Environmental Science Group Limited

<p>What does the company do?</p>	<p>Health, Safety and Environmental Science. We specialise in the production of Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and product Labels for compliance with International Regulations such as Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP), Globally Harmonised System (GSH), Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH), etc. Recently, we developed a new and unique foaming hand sanitiser of which the ethanol was tapped from palm trees. The palm tree product meets the WHO and European (EN1276 and EN1500) standards.</p>
<p>What benefits did you find in taking on an intern?</p>	<p>New interns are now integrated to becoming part of the SDS Writing Team. We can expand the business as we are able to service the needs of more customers and meet their deadlines.</p>
<p>What was the outcome of the internship? E.g. permanent position, apprenticeship, etc</p>	<p>All the interns completed the training and reached the basic standard required to become an SDS Writer. We would like to extend the training to the next level so that they are able to handle more complex chemical products that are mixtures and not just single chemicals.</p> <p>The internship has opened up a further opportunity for our business to extend the SDS training program to commercial organisations. It is our intention to develop this soon and introduce it on the market by the end of year 2022.</p>

“Pace: Excellent! It was adapted to accommodate the varying needs of the interns so that we were all on same page and understand what was taught.

Delivery format: Good. Informal and different from the training classes or courses I am used. Delivery format made interns do more personal research following the things taught. The weekly assignments given out were good for interns to evaluate and practice what was taught.

Material: Excellent. Current and updated materials and references were used.

Benefits: Un-quantifiable. It’s a narrow field and seeing job prospects relating to this field is a motivation not to relent. Applying the knowledge of the training to product compliance and safety is rewarding for me.”

“The SDS training course for me was compact. I’m amazed at how much we learnt and understood in such a short period of time. Though the pace was quite intense, the delivery format was really very good, as the instructors patiently carried everyone along making sure that we all understood each section before moving to another.

I feel very privileged to be a part of this training program, as very few people have considerable expertise in this aspect of safety.”

CEC – FENLAND COMPASS EVALUATION – to DECEMBER 2022

SCHOOL	DATE COMPASS EVALUATION LAST TAKEN – AUTUMN 2022	BENCHMARK 1 STABLE CAREERS PROGRAMME	BENCHMARK 2 LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION	BENCHMARK 3 ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF EACH STUDENT	BENCHMARK 4 LINKING CAREERS TO THE CURRICULUM	BENCHMARK 5 ENCOUNTERS WITH EMPLOYERS & EMPLOYEES	BENCHMARK 6 EXPERIENCE OF THE WORKPLACE	BENCHMARK 7 ENCOUNTERS WITH FE, HE & APPRENTICESHIPS	BENCHMARK 8 PERSONAL GUIDANCE	ENTERPRISE ADVISER	
1	13.12.22	88%	80%	81%	100%	100%	37%	87%	100%	MARCIA DAVIES ANGLIAN WATER	
2	10.12.22	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	KIEREN CROSS VINE LAW	
3	2.11.22	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	62%	91%	100%	MARCIA DAVIES- ANGLIAN WATER & SHELLEY HANKINS – SMURFIT KAPPA	
4	6.12.22	88%	100%	100%	68%	75%	100%	79%	100%	MARTIN LAWRENCE STAINLESS METALCRAFT	
5	22.11.22	100%	100%	90%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	DARYL KEYWORTH CAREERS & ENTERPRISE COMPANY	
6	6.12.22	100%	100%	81%	81%	100%	50%	50%	100%	JOHN RASHLEY MJS CONSTRUCTION	
Notes 4 – Secondary Schools + KS5 1 – Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Academy 1 – Alternative Provision		CEC 2022-23 Floor Targets Average 5 BMKS 3BMKs incl BMK1 Enterprise Adviser 98%			Fenland Average 3BMKs incl BMK1 Enterprise Adviser			5.3 BMKS 66% 100%	Compass Evaluation is a self-assessment of the school's careers programme. Schools retake compass 3 times per year – December, March & July.		

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

- All 4 secondary schools have an annual careers fair with 30-40 local & national employers, FE, HE & Training Providers
- The Alternative Provision & Special School engage with a smaller number of local employers, FE & Training Providers to meet the needs of their students.
- All 6 schools have excellent relationships with their enterprise advisers who not only support them strategically but often operationally too.
- Recently, Neale Wade & Cromwell visited NCTS for their Apprenticeship showcase day for National Apprenticeship Week.
- Cromwell Community School had a post 16 afternoon inviting in employers and providers.
- Olive AP – Nene Valley welcomed in MJS Construction who gave a talk on entry level apprenticeships.
- Meadowgate are involved in a SEND Video with the NHS & GS Fresh on 'How does it feel for a person with additional needs to have an interview & get a job'
- Thomas Clarkson recently held 'Grab a Grade Week'. Employers supporting career activities whilst Yr10 went out on work experience

CHALLENGES – looking ahead

- Compass evaluations have been consistently high over the last 3 years. Careers leaders took advantage of CEC Careers Leader training and Opportunity Area funding. This had a very positive impact on careers programmes and compass evaluations along with the financial support of Opportunity Area funding, NEACO & The Skills Service.
- 3 of the 6 schools have new careers leaders. Careers leaders are having less and less time to engage with employers, a trend being seen not only in Fenland but elsewhere.
- Engagement with some schools may become more challenging going forward.

A S Morey - Senior Enterprise Co-A Ordinator for Fenland – 12.2.23



GROWTH WORKS

FUNDED BY
 **CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

 **THE BUSINESS BOARD**


HM Government

 **European Union**
European Structural
and Investment Funds

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Overview & Scrutiny

Progress Against Economy Corporate Priority

February 2023

Cabinet Members



**Councillor
Chris Boden**

Leader of the Council
& Portfolio Holder for
Finance



**Councillor
Ian Benney**

Portfolio Holder for
Economic Growth



**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
Chris Seaton**

Portfolio Holder for
Social Mobility &
Heritage

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)

Following the completion of sales of the first group of three sites, a further nine sites have had planning applications submitted prior to disposal. The sites are at Eastwood, Grounds Avenue, Hurst Avenue, Drybread Road, Crown Avenue, Upwell Road, Gibside Avenue, Mile Tree Lane and Riverside Gardens.

Work continues with the Estates team and Portfolio holder to bring forward a set of Tranche 2 properties for members to consider for disposal.

Due to higher than forecast tender returns from the initial tender process, the tender process for South Fens Enterprise Park has now been suspended and bidders notified of this decision. Estates colleagues continue to work with the design team and Combined Authority to identify a solution that will enable a suitable commercial scheme to be delivered.

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

Wisbech Access Strategy

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

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

A Wisbech Access Strategy report was presented to CPCA Business Board 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 – A47 Broad End Road, A47 Elm High Road and A1101 Ramnoth Road/Weasenham Lane. The work is progressing alongside a full business case project. These projects are now very near to completion with the final land acquisitions expected to be by March 2023. A copy of the main accompanying paper for the meetings mentioned above 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>

The next step for these 3 projects is to secure funding for their construction.

Ralph Butcher Causeway (Kings Dyke Level Crossing)

The delivery of this project is through Cambridgeshire County Council, Growth Deal Funding by the former Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Transforming Cities Fund. In July 2022, the new Kings Dyke bridge, now named the Ralph Butcher Causeway, opened to traffic. Please see the link below for further details and images.

[King's Dyke bridge opens after 50-year bid to replace level crossing - BBC News](#)

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

March Area Transport Study

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. It includes a range of transport projects across March to address transport issues and to facilitate new housing and employment growth.

The main project is currently in detailed design stage with full business case work which is due to complete shortly. Papers confirming the outcome of the previous Outline Business Case (OBC) work including recommendations to draw down funding for detailed design and the final business case, were part of CCC, CPCA and FDC meetings in November and December 2021.

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 \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

In October 2022 a further paper went to CPCA Board. This has secured the drawdown of £962,000 to allow utility and procurement works to commence. This is not new funding but an accelerated approach for schemes in St Peters Road, Peas Hill and Twenty Foot Road.

The MATS project also includes a Walking and Cycling Strategy. £562,800 was also approved at the October 2022 CPCA Board meeting. This funding allows for schemes in the Walking and Cycling Strategy to be progressed in 3 phases. The phase one schemes which are primarily lining and signing will be constructed and completed in full. Phase 2a schemes require further investigation and design work to determine the solution to be built. Phase 2b schemes require option development work as well as further investigation and design work. This funding will enable 28 projects to be progressed as set out above. Phases 2A and 2B will require further funding in the future for their construction.

A copy of the October 2022 CPCA Board meeting paper setting out more details and

information including for the 28 schemes can be found from the link below:

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2117/Committee/63/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

The full technical details and feasibility study work associated with the March Area Transport Strategy can be found on the County Council website from the link below

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

March to Wisbech Railway Line

This is a CPCA funded project with current study and assessment work having recently been completed by Network Rail. The outcome of this study work was discussed at the CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee in mid-November 2022. The study focussed on light railway and heavy railway options. The CPCA Committee and the CPCA Board agreed to undertake an Options Assessment project to provide the economic analysis on mode options. This will include existing information on heavy rail, based on a service operating between Wisbech and March. This removes the current dependency on the Ely Area Capacity Enhancements whilst still being mindful of the future strategy to link into Cambridge. An additional £80,000 was drawn down to facilitate this work. A link to the papers and information for the CPCA November 2022 meeting can be found from the link below:

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2139/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

A47 Dualling (CPCA Project)

It was reported in late 2020 that National Highways (formally Highways England) Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) announcement did not include the A47 dualling project. Discussions between CPCA, National Highways and Government in early 2021 have since continued and negotiations are ongoing. In February 2021 National Highways 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 National Highways 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. We are awaiting the outcome of this project and the release of the final report.

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>

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.

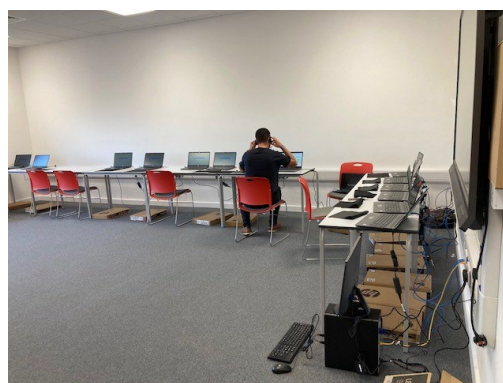
One notable scheme which has received funding is the new shuttering on the Empress Pool building which received grants from the Renaissance Fund and the Town Council. Not only has it vastly improved the look of the building in Park Street, it has also helped to improve security for the Christmas Lights display equipment.

Any future grants will only be offered up to the end of March 2023. It has been agreed by the Combined Authority that any funds remaining can be transferred to the Museum and Community Space project.

The street furniture refurbishment work part of this project is now complete.

Chatteris Skills Development (£36,179)

All of the ICT equipment is now configured and ready for use. West Suffolk College have started marketing Adult Education courses that will be delivered from the North Cambs Training Centre either on the premises, virtually or remotely, using the equipment. Some of the equipment is already being used and usage will increase in the weeks and months ahead as more courses start. The project is now complete.



Chatteris Museum & Community Space (£771,821)

Chatteris Town Council have now purchased 2 Park Street (the former Barclays Bank) and building work is well underway. Listed building consents are being applied for on a regular basis so that agreement can be given on suitable works, but these are resulting in project delays. New security, fire alarm and CCTV systems have been installed. Further unexpected works include the replacement of the existing heating/air con system, an increase in the price of required electrical works and additional preparatory work prior to decoration.

Despite a number of delays, it is hoped that the building will be ready for re-

occupation on 1 April 2023.

Planning permission to extend and convert 14 Church Lane has been agreed in principle, pending further agreements being approved. A schedule of works for this current location of the Town Council and Museum is being drawn up and a revised estimate for the cost of works has been requested.

The Combined Authority have been very supportive and have offered additional funding to ensure both works to 2 Park Street and 14 Church Lane can be completed.

March

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

Please click on the link to see the update for [March Future High Street Project](#) elsewhere in this document.

Whittlesey

Whittlesey Interactive Highway Signs (£57,500)

Interactive highways signs to help improve travel in and around Whittlesey are now fully operational in the town. The three new variable highways message signs (VHMS) along East Delph and the A605, east and west of the B1040 roundabout, alert drivers when flooding closes the B1040 and/or North Bank alongside the River Nene.



The signs will also be able to warn motorists when the nearby A47 is closed due to accidents and when there are other emergencies or roadworks affecting traffic in the area.

As well as helping to reduce the impact of seasonal flooding at the Whittlesey Washes, the signs will help to mitigate delays caused by the current major improvement works at the Kings Dyke Level Crossing and A605 improvements at Milk Water Drove. Longer-term, they will complement the completed Kings Dyke and Milk Water Drove projects and also support the prospect of a new southern relief road.

Please [click here](#) for further information. This project is now complete.

Whittlesey Heritage Walk (£218,169)

The Whittlesey Heritage Walk was officially opened on 20 October 2022. The new interactive walk will help to encourage people to explore the fascinating and often undiscovered history of town. Walkers will be guided by new signage and wayfinding information boards, and they can also use a walk brochure or an interactive app to help them along the route.

Leading explorers on a circular route of the historic town, the Whittlesey Heritage Walk has options to follow a longer or shorter trail, each beginning and ending in the Market Place, with its late 17th century open market house, the Butter Cross.

The routes take in much-loved landmarks, places of interest, and examples of well-preserved architecture spanning several centuries, highlighting fascinating facts and intriguing histories along the way.



There is also the option to add on a scenic riverside walk or follow routes to the Kings Dyke Nature Reserve, Lattersey Nature Reserve, and Whittlesea Railway Station.

To complete the Whittlesey Heritage Walk, visitors can:



- Head to the Market Place, Whittlesey, and follow the directions on the information boards at various points along the routes.
- **Download the Whittlesey Heritage Walk brochure.** Copies of the brochure are also available for those without internet access from the Whittlesey Town Council offices in Queen Street (**check their website for opening hours**)
- Get a guided tour of the walk on mobile with the **Love Exploring app**. The app, which is free to download, uses an interactive map to guide explorers round the walk and provides interesting insights into the town's hidden histories.

Families and youngsters will particularly enjoy the Love Exploring app's Augmented Reality and GEO-Location features, providing fun and games along the route. The [Love Exploring App](#) includes the Heritage Walk and special Augmented Reality (AR) trails are planned for each school holiday throughout the year. This February will see the launch of a brand new, bespoke AR Straw Bear.

For further information, please see the information page on the Council's website [Whittlesey Heritage Walk - Fenland District Council](#) . This project is now complete.

Whittlesey Heritage Visitor Centre (£500k) – project cancelled

As part of the Growing Fenland work for the town of Whittlesey, the town team requested £500,000 to develop a heritage centre for the town. This facility was to be situated on Forterra land, adjacent to a local nature reserve about ¾ of a mile outside the town.

Following the Combined Authority's (CPCA) approval of the grant to Whittlesey Town Council to support the development of the Heritage Centre, the Town Council put together a project working group consisting of three elected Members. Work on the design of the facility has been underway since 2021 until March 2022. Whilst a design now exists, there is a substantial gap in funding between the expected cost of the new building and the funding available. Other funders have been considered with no success – the funding gap is too large and requires a national funder such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. With the current climate in the construction market, alongside the abnormal inflation seen in the UK, any build project would need to add in a substantial inflationary contingency, as well as contingencies for unforeseen issues encountered during the build. These considerations increase the funding gap further.

The project team has considered the location and the gap in funding, alongside market conditions and believe that continuing with the project at this time is unlikely to produce a facility in a timely, affordable manner. The project will not give good value for money to the taxpayer and has now been cancelled.

Following the cancellation of the Heritage Centre scheme, the Whittlesey Town Team highlighted other options that the remedial funding from the Heritage Centre project could be used for in Whittlesey.

CPCA has agreed to fund the following projects;

£260,000	Strategic Outline Business Case – Whittlesey Relief Road
£55,000	Community basketball / tennis / netball, improvements incl. site investment appraisal
£20,000	Market Place improvements
£10,000	Library display, with anticipated match funding from NLHF / Arts Council
£110,000	Additional solar PV on swimming pool building
£455,000	Total

It should be noted that of these projects the only one that is scalable is the solar PV project. As this is the case, the Town Team in Whittlesey has asked that once procurement of the 4 initial projects is complete, the remaining funding will then be used for the solar PV. With the current disruption that inflation and supply chain issues are causing across many industries, the team is keen to ensure that once firm costs from quotations are available for the 4 initial projects, that the grant funding is flexible enough to accommodate fluctuations in costs that are above estimates.

Whittlesey Business Capital Grants Scheme (£124,331)

All of the grant payments have now been made in Whittlesey.

A residual amount of budget is being allocated to town centre businesses that meet revised criteria and are successful following an application process.

Wisbech

Wisbech Market Place Enhancement Scheme (£200k)

The enhanced Wisbech Market Place was opened on 20 June following 9 weeks of construction work.

Enhancements include new paving, benches, waste bins, planters and other decorative features to provide an improved trading area and community space.

The Market Place is now fully open to the public and market traders with the final touch of the Wisbech Town Council crest to be added at a later date.



For further details please [click here](#). Th

Wisbech Footfall Counters (£19,500)

This funding has been received by the Town Council and spent in full.

Footfall counters have been installed and the Town Council has been receiving data since 13 December 2021. The data shows that in the first 29 weeks of operation, almost 1,500,000 people walked through the Wisbech Market Place area. At the request of the Town Council, the supplier of the footfall counters, Springboard, is now providing not only separate reports for both the Town Council and the Horsefair Shopping Centre (which has its own footfall counters via the same supplier) but a report which combines both sets of data. This data is proving to be very useful, as it shows, for example, the additional footfall that results from events etc being run in the town centre. This project is now complete.

Wisbech Replacement Shopwatch Radio Scheme (£33,800)

This funding has been received in full by the Town Council but none of the money has yet been spent.

A meeting between the Wisbech Town Council Clerk and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, for the purpose of developing a Service Level Agreement in relation to the council "handing-over" the radio scheme to the Chamber of

Commerce, has taken place. The Town Clerk is in the process of finalising the Service Level Agreement. A representative of the Chamber of Commerce (who is also a member of Wisbech Town Council) has been involved in discussions with the supplier of the equipment regarding some of the pre-installation technical issues. The delay in implementing this scheme is because of the need to secure access to the radio repeater system, which is installed at Exchange Square (the former FDC offices in Wisbech) alongside the CCTV relays. Aarron Locks, the Manager of the joint FDC and Peterborough City Council CCTV service is currently negotiating with the new owners of Exchange Square an agreement to continue to use that space for both the radio repeater system and the CCTV relays. It is understood that that an agreement is close to being reached. As soon as that situation has been resolved, Wisbech Town Council is ready to procure the equipment and issue it to the Chamber of Commerce. This project has been incorporated within the Safer Wisbech Action Plan.

Wisbech Splash Pad (£147,500)

The community splashpad opened in the summer holidays and continued to be open daily, closing on Sunday 25 September. It features a range of fountains and jets designed to keep kids active and cool on hot summer days. The Splashpad also includes a whole host of state-of-the-art features include sequenced displays, touch pads to control water supply and an automatic timer to ensure that water is conserved when the facilities are not in use.

The new facility, with free entry, has proven exceptionally popular with people visiting being very happy with the new facility. This project is now complete.

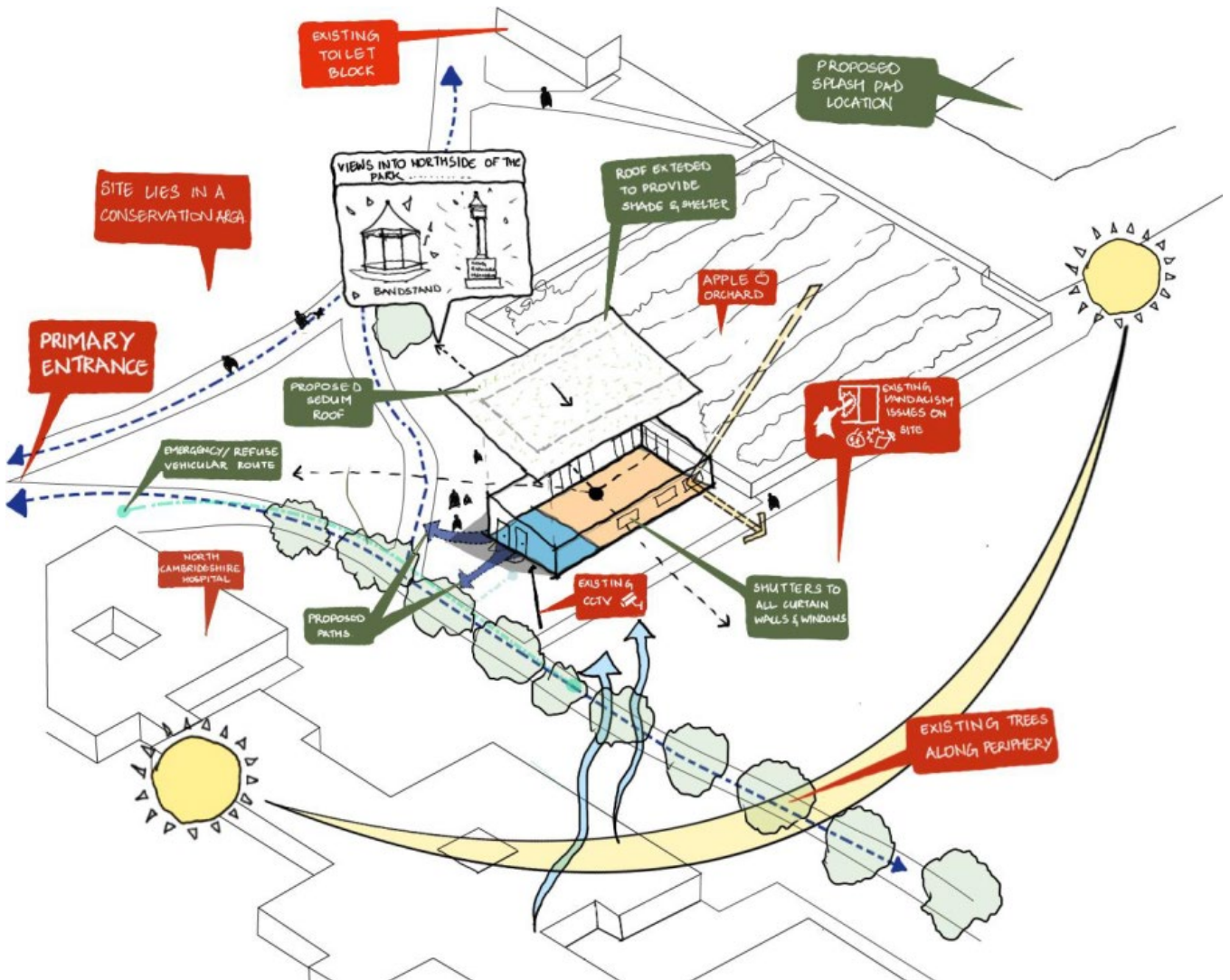


[Wisbech Splashpad Officially Opens - Fenland District Council](#)

Wisbech Park Community Hub (£299,200)

Designs for the Community Hub are complete. The floor plan offers a multi-activity room, café space and servery, indoor toilets, a changing places toilet facility and a small office. Additionally, there are 2 unisex toilets available externally for use as public toilets when the Hub is closed, but public toilets are still required. It should be noted that the glass finishes will all have shutters to prevent vandalism and the public toilets will be fitted with robust toilet fittings. Additionally, the location of the facility sits under one of FDC's CCTV units for added security.

The images below illustrate the position of the building in the park (following consultation with planning officers), along with 3D renders of how the building may look on completion.



The planning application for the community hub has been approved and procurement for a construction partner is underway. Tender returns are due back in mid-February. The building has been designed to the budget available, but given the current state of the construction market, the Council will not have an accurate cost until tenders are returned. Market intelligence is currently highlighting that the cost of materials such as bricks is dropping rapidly due to a slow down in construction, with labour rates also falling for the same reason.

Wisbech Business Capital Grants Scheme (£200,000)

All of the grant payments have now been made in Wisbech. Discussions are to be held with the Town Team on the best way to allocate a remaining residual amount of budget.

District Wide

Civil Parking Enforcement (£400k)

Following an additional £150k of funding being secured by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) to carry out the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) review work, Milestone have now been commissioned to develop work packages for all of the existing TRO's within Fenland to inform the estimated cost of the corrective sign and line works.

Milestone have already prepared an indicative work program with an estimated task completion date for the work package preparation of April 2024. However, FDC have requested this timeline be looked at and shortened where possible.

A change request form was submitted to the CPCA to request that the funding deadline for the Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) works is revised from March 2024 to December 2025 to enable delivery of the scheme following completion of the CCC work. This was agreed at the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) board meeting held on 25.01.23.

FDC continues to progress the CPE project works where possible and current progress to date and the current focus can be seen below:

- 1) A draft CPE Off Street Parking Places Order has been compiled for all FDC owned/managed parking facilities. The order will be developed further and completed following short and long stay periods and dispensations being agreed for each site.
- 2) A draft FDC/CCC agency and service level agreement has been compiled by Cambridgeshire County Council. However, further development of the document will be required over the coming months by CCC and the FDC project team to minimise both the operational and long-term risk to each organisation. The final agreement will require member approval by both administrations.
- 3) A draft application to the Department for Transport (DfT) for a Civil/Special Enforcement Area Designation Order for the introduction of CPE in Fenland has been prepared by Cambridgeshire County Council in partnership with FDC. However, as the application requires information relating to the agency agreement and FDC's enforcement and back-office administration service provision which have yet to be agreed, it is likely that the DfT application will not be made until September 2023.

Whilst the initial timeline to implement CPE in Fenland was originally estimated to take 2 years, several factors including available County Council and Contractor resources have now inadvertently resulted in project slippage. It is now estimated that the CPE designation order will be made in Q3 of 2024 with the implementation of CPE in Fenland being in 2025.

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

The community consultation closed in October 2022 and the representations are in the process of being analysed. A revised plan (with a summary of the representations and recommendations on whether or not the Plan should be changed to accommodate them) will be brought before members for approval prior to another round of community consultation.

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

Manea Station

The car park is nearing completion. The car park is expected to be open in early 2023.

March Station

The platform 1 building project and the refurbished and extended station car park are now complete. The official opening event took place in May 2022. A video showing the delivery and completion of the project can be found from the link below.

[New drone video shows March Railway Station works from start to finish, from the air! | Hereward Community Rail Partnership \(herewardcrp.org\)](https://www.herewardcrp.org/)

Whittlesea Station

The second strategic outline business case and options appraisal work is now complete. The Project Board have reviewed the recommendations and have confirmed the next steps for an Outline Business Case (OBC) Project. A high-level proposal for the OBC project has been completed and submitted to CPCA for consideration as part of their funding assessment process. Funding will need to be secured for any future work on this project.

Work with partners to deliver property improvements and the activity plan as part of the National Lottery Heritage Funded Wisbech High Street Project (Cllr Chris Seaton)

The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) scheme has continued to progress positively.

Individual property updates are as follows:

13-17 Wisbech High Street - now complete with a certificate of completion received

by the NLHF Officer.

18 Wisbech High Street - has completed 60% of the works to their property with completion programmed for this quarter

19 Wisbech High Street - have now formally completed their grant application with works expected to take place in 2023.

31 Wisbech High Street - formally completed an application for funding which was approved, works commenced in November 2022 and are now complete.

24 Wisbech High Street - FDC are currently in a pre-contractual agreement with ETEC (chosen contractor) to generate a formal target cost for the works. Once received, this cost will be reviewed by the team ahead of commencement onsite in the new financial year.

11-12 Wisbech High Street – Officers are currently exploring two options for development of 11-12 following the departure of the previous private investor. One option is for the creation of a temporary Façade at the site which would plug the gap in the Highstreet but not add any real world usage. The second option continues to work with an external investor and funding partners to create a development similar to that which currently has planning permission. Updates on this will be provided under separate cover at forthcoming Cabinet meetings.

Fenland District Council is also in the process of requesting a further formal extension to the grant funding agreement with the NLHF as funding continues to be allocated and projects progressed. Initial conversations with the NLHF indicate that this should not be an issue.

Activity plan

We have worked with partners at Lincoln Conservation, six artist workshop providers, St Peter's Church Hall and Etcetera Community Hub Studio. We have co-ordinated seven free traditional heritage skills workshop as part of the Wisbech High Street Project activity plan.

We have promoted, organised and been point of contact for the public attending and we have liaised with venues and supported with on the day delivery. Each of these events have been successful with new people joining each workshop and learning about the history of their town, local buildings and interesting opportunities to learn traditional skills. We have received positive feedback from those attending:

24/31 participants were local to Wisbech

14/31 participants have engaged with the project before

31/31 participants said that they learnt something

Comments included:

- “very educational!”
- “excellent and informative day”
- “amazing workshop loved learning a new skill”
- “fantastic event, full day that felt like 10 minutes my favourite day ever!”
- “absolutely great - hope more funding will be made available to bring much needed creative activities to Fenland via the Council”
- “thank you so much for the opportunity...fantastic day, will be telling everyone about this”

Other Projects:

Economic Growth Team Activity (Cllr Ian Benney)

Economic Growth Strategic Refresh 2022-25

The Economic Growth Strategic Refresh 2022-25 was approved by Cabinet and Council in February 2022. The Refresh was created to continue the delivery of the Council's Economic Development Strategy 2012-2031. The Refresh set out how the Council's Economic Growth Team, other Council departments and public and private partners will continue to work together to support economic growth in Fenland.

Within the Refresh, five areas of focus have defined activities and outcomes the progress against each of which is set out below. Delivery of outcomes will continue throughout Q4 in 2023.

In addition to the planned for activities, several other activities were delivered against as required during the year. These additional activities are also set out below.

1. Enterprise

Objective - Maintain and build a thriving enterprise and entrepreneurial culture that encourages businesses to start up and grow.

Activity	Outcomes	Variance
Community Renewal Fund “Start & Grow” programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 supported enterprises • 8 jobs safeguarded • 25 new businesses • 25 new products • £150k investment attracted • £725k grants paid <p>The programme runs until 31.12.22 and it is forecast by CPCA that all outcomes</p>	Awaiting CPCA final figures

	will be delivered.	
Maintain regular meetings with the business community, including the Fenland Chamber of Commerce (FCC)	Quarterly meeting with FCC. Working closely with new Chair of FCC to re-establish in Fenland. Meetings also take place with The Federation of Small Business and The Smart Manufacturing Association,	
Develop the Fenland for Business website to support businesses with signposting to advice and guidance and information	Working with the Council's communications team, we have redesigned the Fenland for Business website with sections for Start Ups, Growing Businesses and Inward Investors. We will continue to develop the website, including utilising video content via YouTube. 10% increase year on year of visitors to the Fenland for Business website and the number of Twitter followers.	
Annual business start-up inserts in Council Tax bills – targeting the hard to reach home based businesses	An insert was included in 2022-23 featuring information on the assisted provided to businesses by the Economic Growth Team and partner organisations Plans are in place for insert into 2023-24	
Economic Growth Team Service	15 enquiries per year converting to 3 businesses per year finding new premises/site - 14 enquiries since 1/3/22 2 inward investors moved into premises and 1 company moved to larger premises within the District. Inward investor comment ' <i>Thanks for all you've done so far it's very professional. Provided some very useful info as a follow up</i> ' Currently working with Fenland Businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large business expansion creating a second location at Chatteris. • Large business expansion • 2 Large business new site location search • 2 Medium business new site or existing site expansion • 3 Medium business expansion 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 small businesses looking for new premises <p>Inward Investors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 businesses located in Fenland, sign off regarding EG team support will be obtained 2 current projects - 1 Indian agrifood company establishing an EU HQ in Fenland, 1 UK Construction company establishing a manufacturing and technology facility. Planning permission granted 	
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Additional activities:

Activity	Outcomes	Variance
Partner business support introductions	<p>Smart Manufacturing Association regarding Industry 4.0 adoption and grants</p> <p>Business and Intellectual Property Centre (March) regarding Start Up support and grants</p> <p>Growth Works Coaching regarding revenue grants to help companies develop their websites or engage professional assistance</p>	

2. Workforce development

Objective - Help ensure that current supply of and skills of the available workforce are appropriate for the Fenland marketplace, as well as offering young people improved aspirations, increased wage levels and alternative career paths. Improved access to employment, training, and skills for balanced economic participation.

The Team will act as a key intermediary between business and key training and skills providers including the CPCA, colleges, developing North Cambs Training Centre and emerging University of Peterborough.

Activity	Outcomes	Variance
To engage with CA Growth Works with Skills - demand-led skills service connecting learners and employers with opportunities that enable growth.	<p>Number of referrals per annum – 14 to date</p> <p>EG Team also arranged joint meetings with Growth Works with Skills with 4 large employers. 7 further meetings planned. Growth Works with Skills had a stand at</p>	

	the Fenland for Business Skills and Recruitment event.	
To engage with North Cambs Training Centre (Stainless Metalcraft)	Number of company referrals per annum – 10 companies referred Quarterly meetings. NCTC had a stand at the Fenland for Business Skills and Recruitment event. EG team attended the NCTC Careers event	
Encourage businesses to utilise Growth Works with Skills Turning Point scheme	Number of employers referred to the scheme which concludes in March 2022. 57 applications 35 approved 26 businesses completed the Turning Point Scheme	
Work collaboratively with Jobcentre Plus to help raise awareness to businesses of enterprise opportunities and work placements.	4 meetings per annum with Jobcentre Plus. 8 meetings to date 3 listings per annum of DWP in programmes in the Team's e-newsletter. 3 listings to date DWP had a stand at the Fenland for Business Skills and Recruitment event. EG Team attended the DWP Jobs fair in Wisbech	
Work collaboratively with College of West Anglia (COWA), North Cambridgeshire Training Centre (NCTC) and ARU Peterborough to deliver programmes that meet the needs of local business including quarterly collaboration meetings	4 meetings per annum with COWA – 3 meetings to date 4 meetings per annum with ARU Peterborough – 3 meetings to date 4 meetings per annum with North Cambridgeshire Training Centre – 4 meetings to date COWA, ARU Peterborough and NCTC exhibited at the EG Team's Skills and Recruitment event EG Team attended the NCTC Careers event	

Additional activities:

Activity	Outcomes	Variance
Skills & Employment Event	A half day Skills & Employment event was held at The Boathouse in October featuring eight exhibitors, including DWP, North Cambs Training Centre and Growth Works Skills. A total of 14 major	

	<p>businesses attended and we received very positive feedback from them all about how they will make use of the information and take part in follow up meetings to help them with their recruitment and retention of staff. For those major employers that could not attend we have held a number of onsite meetings along with Growth Works with Skills. Interest from the employers is focussed on upskilling the existing workforce and apprenticeships.</p>	
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3. Enabling infrastructure

Objective - The provision of excellent underpinning infrastructure, which, as well as providing serviced land and available premises, to include road and transport linkages and the provision of superfast broadband.

Activity	Outcomes	Variance
<p>Acquiring technical and specialist support to bring forward employment sites to include infrastructure, highway, and market/commercial assessments.</p>	<p>Internal FDC created and objectives agreed. Currently assessing which sites to focus on within the project. Forecast that reports will be completed July 2023.</p>	
<p>Work with partners to encourage and promote sustainable low carbon green infrastructure.</p>	<p>Ongoing dialogue.</p>	
<p>Support the development of sustainable and enhanced broadband infrastructure including completing the delivery of the Fenland component within the Connecting Cambridgeshire project</p>	<p>Engaging with partners including the private sector e.g. CityFibre to help them deliver by 2022-23 >97% premises (homes and businesses) having access to broadband speeds of at least 24mbps. Meetings undertaken with City Fibre and UPP regarding fibre installation in Wisbech and March</p>	

Additional activities:

Activity	Outcomes	Variance
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Investment Zones	<p>Four Expressions of Interest have been submitted to the Combined Authority (CPCA) for Investment Zones in Fenland for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whittlesey Science & Technology Park (ex-brickworks site) - Nene Waterfront, Wisbech - Advanced Manufacturing Park, Chatteris (Stainless Metalcraft) - South Wisbech (previous location for potential enterprise zone). <p>The CPCA have forwarded all the Eol's to DLUHC and we await their decision as to whether we are to take any to full application.</p>	
Discretionary Business Rates Scheme	Cabinet & Council in October approved a new discretionary business rates scheme aimed at encouraging developers to build new business units with the potential of not having to pay business rates for up to 12 months until the unit is occupied.	

4. Business retention & growth

Objective - The District is seen as an exciting place to seek to start or grow a business. This objective recognises the importance of proactively targeting and supporting growth-oriented employers in Fenland; helping them to grow through enhanced access to finance, expert advice, suitable premises, and locations.

Activity	Outcomes	Variance
Undertake a proactive account management business engagement programme with larger employers and potential growth companies	<p>4 case studies featuring businesses that have directly benefitted from the support provided by the Team. 5 case studies completed</p> <p>Group of 40 businesses receive 1:2:1 "account management" service with 40 businesses visited per annum 37 companies meeting completed from March to date resulting in the identification of 13 active expansion projects involving the support of the EG Team.</p>	

	<p>Whittlesey – Multinational Logistics company expansion and creation of UK headquarters</p> <p>Whittlesey – Multinational Logistics company seeking larger facility</p> <p>Wisbech – Multinational Agrifood company expansion to consolidate other facility from outside Fenland</p> <p>Wisbech – 2 advanced engineering companies expanding, new premises</p> <p>March – Biotech/Pharma Precision Engineering company expansion</p> <p>March – company seeking new premises for exhibition area and science research</p> <p>Chatteris – Construction sector company expansion</p> <p>Chatteris – advanced engineering company expansion</p>	
Undertake a proactive business engagement programme with all known employers and business owners	<p>2,500 businesses have so far received 6 e-newsletters communications from the Team.</p> <p>Reactive follow up to engagement with Team from businesses</p> <p>Economic Growth leaflet included in Business rate bills in 2022 and planned for 2023</p>	
CA Growth Works Business Coaching Service – 1:2:1 consultancy, masterclasses, grant funding	<p>Team to refer a minimum of 20 businesses for 1:2:1 consultancy and grant support per annum</p> <p>16 direct referrals year to date</p> <p>Service and schemes featured in Fenland for Business Newsletter and Twitter Account</p>	
South Fens Enterprise Park additional light industrial units Phase I and Phase II (additional funding will be required to deliver Phase II)	The Team handed over the lead role to FDC Estates. The Estates Team are currently assessing the specification for the buildings, etc to seek a reduction in the build costs.	
Work with agents and developers to bring forward employment land provision, encourage investment in 'move on' opportunities	2 agents and developers forum meetings per annum	

Work with Growth Hub - Peer to Peer network to recruit SME leaders to create strong peer-to-peer networks	Team to recruit 5 businesses and enable continuing engaged in the network in the first year. 8 companies recruited in Year 1 Team to enable a rolling group of 10 businesses in the network from 2023-24 Pilot scheme was not continued as funding was withdrawn	Peer to Peer Networks will not be funded in 2023. Negative feedback from 2 businesses received about the scheme.
Develop joint Business events with partners to encourage networking, share business issues, etc	2 joint partner business events per annum Fenland for Business Skills and Recruitment Event Oct 2022 with 7 partner organisations Event in planning stage with Innovate UK Edge in March 2023 regarding support for research and development (date to be moved due to purdah)	
Services for Business - All businesses registered for business rates receive information advising them of the services available to them from the Council and its partners such as Growth Works.	Every business registered for business rates received communication from the Team. Plans are underway for an insert for 2023-34.	
Adopt a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) data management	Assessments are underway with a potential CRM provider and it is forecast that a CRM system will be in place by 31st March 2023.	

Additional activities:

Activity	Outcomes	Variance
Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)	SPF funding of £1.25m over three years has been bid for by the Team and approved for Fenland.	
Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)	The Team have bid for £436k of funding over two years. The bid along with bids from three other Cambridgeshire LA's were submitted to DLUHC in November. Decisions are expected early 2023.	

5. Inward investment

Objective - To maintain and increase the level of employment in the district and improve the quality of employment locally to provide all ages of the community with the opportunities that match their skills and aspirations. This will require the district to secure new inward investment to compliment current local employers

Activity	Outcomes	Variance
Work closely with and respond to information enquiries from CA Growth Works Inward Investment Team	Working with the Growth Works Inward Investment Team: 10 inward investment enquiries per annum 9 GW enquiries received 1 inward investment per annum 1 GW inward investment at negotiation stage	Current project may not complete before the end of March 2023
Economic Growth Team inward investment service	2 inward investment enquiries per annum 7 inward investment enquiries 1 inward investment per annum 6 businesses located in Fenland, sign off regarding EG team support will be obtained 1 global consultancy and construction company establishing a manufacturing and technology facility	
Continue to market Fenland propositions to target growth sectors, individual businesses and locations including: • Supermarkets, fast-food brands, hotels, etc • Inward Investor Pack • Targeted Business Exhibitions • Programme of strategic marketing	Email and telephone contact undertaken with major hotels, fast food companies and supermarkets Creation of Inward Investor Pack. To be completed Q4 Attendance at a targeted business exhibition per annum and generated of 3 quality leads. Attended Built Environment Networking event June 2022 Event attendance planned at NEC event in Q4	Attendance is low at exhibitions following Covid. Very few exhibitions took place in 2022
Deliver 'soft landing' tools that support an aftercare programme for new and recently established investors, through:	Creation of soft-landing package. Marketing of package to potential investors, intermediaries i.e., agents, lawyers, banks and partners i.e., Growth Works Inward Investment.	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face meetings • Free office accommodation • Priority planning applications 	<p>Intermediaries identified. Meetings to take place, pack produced and marketed in Q4</p>	
<p>Collate Insight/data – targeted market research to include opportunities for attracting an hotel into Fenland, high quality manufacturing and engineering, research institutions, etc</p>	<p>1 research project undertaken per annum. Research organisation to deliver project identified</p> <p>1 proposition created for a target market per annum. Initial Agrifood proposition created. EG Team working with NIAB to develop Agritech information as a subsector of the proposition Initial Advanced Manufacturing/Precision Engineering proposition created</p>	
<p>Enable a Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC) at Chatteris study</p>	<p>Study highlighting the options to market the MTC for inward investment.</p>	<p>Funding for the MTC is not currently available. May need to be carried over to 2023/24</p>
<p>Work closely Thinking Place and potential Place Board</p>	<p>Brand strategy and prospectus. Proposition information created for Thinking Place covering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and Training • Agri-Food • High Value Manufacturing / Precision Engineering • Micro Businesses and Start-ups 	<p>EG team reactive to requests to provide information.</p>
<p>Consider Discretionary Business Rate Relief to incentivise businesses to locate in Fenland and commercial developments to be brought forward. Any relief is totally discretionary and only considered where it acts as a real incentive to business.</p>	<p>To date no business has been considered suitable for consideration. However, it may be that in Q4 2022-23 suitable candidate businesses do emerge.</p>	

Additional activities:

Activity	Outcomes	Variance

Other updates

We welcomed Cherrie Gatty, My Fenland Technical Officer, to the team who in addition to her My Fenland duties will provide much needed support to the Economic Growth Team. Her first objective is to cleanse and add to the data the team hold on local businesses and provide contact and other information on businesses we are targeting to attract into Fenland. She will then concentrate on improving communication with Fenland companies through social media.

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

Broad Street/Riverside:

Projects were put out to tender in early October. The tender response date has now passed and two tenders for the work have been received. A contractor will be appointed shortly.

Work has commenced on the replacement of the gas main at the northern end of Broad Street. These works will take some three months and will, unfortunately, cause traffic disruption. Due to the nature of the works this disruption cannot be avoided.

Marketplace:

Marketplace works began as programmed on January 9th. Materials have now been delivered to the site with initial plaining and excavation of the existing site under way. Arrangements to relocate market traders onto City Road car park are now in place with the first Market trading days going well. Feedback from traders in attendance has been good to date.

All business surrounding the marketplace were written to in early December to inform them of the closure of the marketplace for the duration of the works. The contractor's liaison officer has visited all affected properties to discuss working with them to facilitate the works in a manner that results in the least disruption to their businesses.

Planning:

The planning application for the relocation of the fountain in Broad Street was approved on at the Planning Committee meeting held on 8 February 2023.

A planning application for the demolition of the existing toilet in Broad Street was also

approved on at the Planning Committee meeting held on 8 February 2023.

Planned Communications:

FDC have updated all information on the website and are currently pushing a social media campaign to keep residents informed of the works.

Communication throughout the new year will focus on the different projects that make up the programme and making clear the sperate streams and objective of the individual parts of the programme.

Members will shortly receive an invite to a press photo opportunity for “breaking ground” on the March Marketplace once a date has been confirmed with the contractor.

Car parking

Additional parking is to be made available at City Road car park with the removal of the bring bank. Bring bank sites are also located in Sainsbury’s car park, as well as Tesco. A switch to car parking will add several extra spaces in this location. Additionally, the fencing surrounding the current area would be removed, enhancing how the space looks. Further spaces will be developed in the location of the former toilet block in City Road car park.

Taxi rank and Bus stop locations for duration of works

Temporary bus stops will be provided within Broad Street for the duration of the works and bus operators have been notified of this.

FDC officers have also looked to accelerate the lining of new disabled parking bays and taxi bays that are included within the plans on Station Road specifically to ensure capacity remains whilst the Broad Street Taxi bays are closed from March 2023.

Programme and Key Dates:

The March Market Place work commenced on 9 January 2023 and is expected to last for 10 weeks (weather dependent).

Broad Street and Riverside works will be split. Cadent Gas commenced work on 13 February 2023 with the FHSF and MATS work beginning thereafter May 2023, for one year.

The public toilet works will be completed following all other works in 2024 and will be delivered by FDC’s engineering team as a separate project to the Future High Street Fund and MATS projects.

Promote and develop our Business Premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and Light Industrial Estates to encourage investment, business and job creation and skills diversification (Cllr Ian Benney)

The Estates team continue to work with tenants of all sites to ensure the properties remain occupied and profitable. As of October, all industrial units are fully occupied whilst the Boathouse is at 88.8% occupancy and the South Fens Business Centre is at 71%.

The Boathouse occupancy is lower for this period as two tenants have had funding withdrawn and have therefore vacated. However new tenants have been identified and ongoing work to secure the new leases is progressing.

The process of reviewing the occupancies of the industrial units continues with offices taking action to renew expired leases across all sites before moving onto rent reviews which have not been actioned. To date the work has resulted in rent increases to the benefit of FDC of 25.87% on the estates actioned as well as the management benefit of the agreements being on new standardised modern lease terms.

Affordable Homes (Cllr Sam Hoy)

The new affordable home completions total has reduced from a forecast of 170 units to a total of 60 units expected during 2022/2023. This is due to the following:

- Elm High Road, Wisbech was expecting 79 units to handover during 2022/23 but these have now all slipped into 2023/24
- Bassenhally Phase 3, Whittlesey was expecting 27 units to handover during 2022/23 but some of these completions have slipped. We are currently forecasting 7 units for 2022/23 and the remainder during 2023/24
- Wisbech Road, March was expecting 10 units to handover during 2022/23 but these have now slipped into 2023/24
- Kingswood Park is still showing 27 units forecast for handover during 2022/23 but these are at risk of slipping into next financial year, due to the original Contractor going into administration. This means Sanctuary need to reappoint the contractors to finish up and complete the units and retest all the installations.

We have a forecast for 174 affordable homes to be completed in 23/24 with 43 will be home ownership products and 131 affordable rented.

Planning (Cllr Dee Laws)

Overview

The year has been and remains very challenging not least due to at scale staff

turnover (5 permanent members of staff and 5 agency) recruitment difficulties. A total of 50% of the case officers below manager level are agency or equivalent. This has impacted significantly on our performance on the speed of decision making due to the breaks in the continuity of staff resourcing. Whilst we are currently meeting the national performance standards, there is a risk that by December 2023 we will not. The amended scheme of delegation, which decides which planning applications are determined by committee as opposed to officers, continues to result in lengthy meeting agendas and has an associated significant impact on those engaged in delivery of them.

In the early part of the year, the validation team had substantial backlogs of applications to process which equated to some 6-7 weeks work). Through the use of a short-term temporary resource, this was reduced down to 1 week but, with the resource coming to an end, the backlogs have increased to 3 weeks. So far this year the team have dealt with 1400 applications of various types and so the workload remains substantial.

In December 2022, Peterborough City Council informed us that its support for Planning Policy (including Neighbourhood Plans), Development Viability & S106 Management and Ecology was being withdrawn as of 31 March 2023.

Workstreams that are ongoing in relation to the above include:

- Review of the recruitment package
- Planning performance agreements to help fund additional resources
- Use of Capita as an alternative route for the provision of temporary staffing
- Exploration of how we can meet our Policy, Ecology and Viability / S106 needs going forward

In addition, we are working with colleagues in the MyFenland Team on a multistage Transformation project which is already implementing change within the service. The objective of the transformation project is to identify and implement efficiencies.

Activity	Outcomes	Performance Against Target
Speed of Determination of Planning applications 2022/23 to date	Majors	75%
	Minors	62%
	Others	81%
The national performance requirement is measured over a 24-month rolling monitoring period and in relation to this we are performing as follows: Major 81% (against a target of 60%) Non-Major 78% (against a target of 70%)		

Activity	Outcome
Planning Appeals 2022/23 to date	5

No. won by FDC	3
No. Lost by FDC	2
Awards of cost	None

Income 2022/23 to date	
Application Fee	£888 k (up £34k on previous year)
Pre-application fee	£44k (down £2k on previous year)

Activity	Outcomes
Local Plan	The Local Plan was published for public consultation in late 2022

With the pending loss of policy support from Peterborough, other potential resources for delivering the plan are being assessed and an option paper is being prepared on this issue.

Activity	Outcomes
Neighbourhood Planning	The Whittlesey Plan went to consultation and examination in 2022. A referendum on the Plan is due to take place in February 2023.

Activity	Outcomes
Enforcement (2022/23 year to date)	No. of Service Requests – 159 No. of Cases Closed (following investigation / mitigation action) – 213 No. of pending cases - 266

Activity	Outcomes
5 Year Land Supply	Published July 2022 – 6.34 years (passed)
Housing Delivery Test	Published January 2022 – 95% (passed)
Annual Monitoring Report	Published Feb 2022

Activity	Outcomes
Review of Local Validation List	Adopted February 2023

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

Fresh social media campaign

As part of our work to support businesses, a fresh series of social media posts commenced in September. Each time business achieves a score of 5 in the Food

Hygiene Rating Scheme we offer to publicise this score. The monthly social media posts are going well and receiving many views.

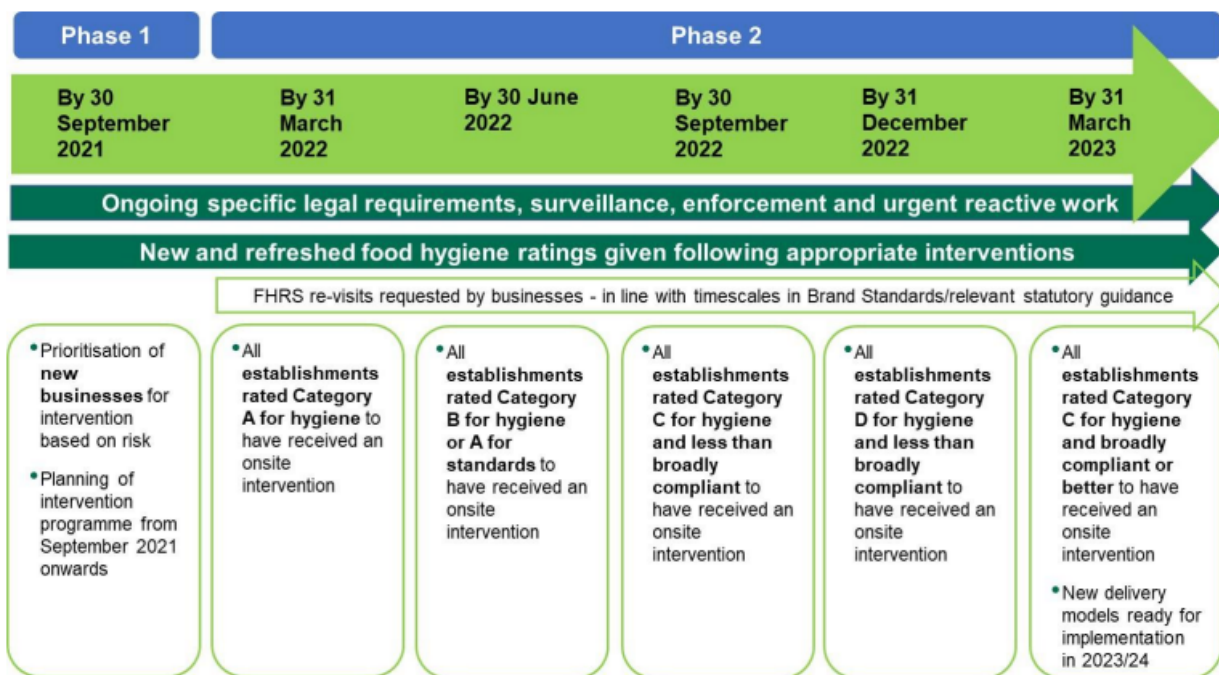
The list of successful businesses is published on our website and the social media post contains the link that leads to this.

[Food Hygiene Rating Scheme - Fenland District Council](#)

Statutory inspection programme

In October, the Food Standards Agency requested information in relation to the Council's progress to meet the Agency's recovery plan. This plan allows some flexibility to the normal inspection programme due to councils continuing to 'catch up' following the COVID pandemic and businesses being closed or restricted in terms of their activities.

Our feedback was positive and that we continue to meet the requirements and timescales of the plan below:



Inspections completed

From April to December 2022, the team carried out 242 food safety interventions. This includes in person inspections as well as self-assessment questionnaires for low-risk premises.

There were 22 formal interventions required with most businesses achieving high ratings through the food hygiene rating scheme.

Please note not all businesses are published on the Food Hygiene Rating website as

they may be exempt from the scheme for various reasons.

Month	Number inspected	Number rated 4 or above
August	25	25
September	52	49
October	33	26
November	3	3
December	9	9
Total	113	103

The Council continues to receive complaints about food and food premises and take appropriate action. There were 43 reports of food safety or hygiene issues from April to December 2022.

We also received 30 enquiries regarding a new business start-up or existing businesses' queries. Further we dealt with 6 applications for rescore visits (where businesses achieved Food Hygiene Rating 4 or below and requested an unannounced rescore inspection that needs to take place within 3 months of the application being made).

Health and Safety at work inspection programme

Progress against this statutory plan has continued throughout the reporting period. This service plan sets out the regulatory requirements for health and safety in the workplace.

Of particular focus has been those businesses offering skin piercing and beauty treatments. During this period there have been 9 new tattoo businesses licensed and 11 full inspections to support businesses with their regulatory compliance.

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)	92%	70%	75%	
CELP16	% of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks (or within extension of time)	72%	70%	62%	
CELP17	% of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks (or within extension of time)	84%	80%	81%	
EGA1	% occupancy of our business estates	91.2%	92%	93.6%	
MS1	% occupancy of Wisbech Yacht Harbour (85 berths)	94%	95%	98% (August)	
CELP18	% of businesses who said they were supported and treated fairly	100%	96%	100%	

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

Comments
Performance in relation to Minor applications, whilst below target, has improved since the figures were last reported. There has been a 3% improvement since the previous month. Performance on Major and Other applications exceed our performance target. The team remain under considerable pressure with caseloads higher than benchmark levels and turnover of agency staff as we have been unable to fill all the vacant post we have in the team.

Agenda Item No:	8	
Committee:	Overview & Scrutiny	
Date:	27 February 2023	
Report Title:	Progress in Delivering the Transformation and Communication Portfolio 2022-2023	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

This report sets out the Council's progress in delivering the Transformation and Communication portfolio.

2 Key issues

Particular successes are:

- 104 press releases published between 01 April 2022 and 31 January 2023.
- Increased popularity of the Council's Social Media Channels. We now have 6,459 followers on Facebook and 8,851 on Twitter.
- Providing vital communications messages on key corporate projects including
 - March Future High Street Fund
 - Business Plan and Budget
 - Annual Report
 - Transforming the Council projects
 - Cost of Living Campaign
 - Fenland Railway Station Masterplans
 - Garden waste subscriptions
 - Wisbech High Street Project
- Supporting key corporate consultations including
 - Draft Business Plan & Budget
 - Local Government Boundary Commission
 - Tax Tarff Consultation
 - Housing Enforcement
 - March Railway Station Redevelopment
 - Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan
 - Draft Local Plan
 - Polling District Review

- Progress of the Better Online Services Council for the Future project and development of online transactions.
 - Over 274,000 website hits between 01 April 2022 and 31 January 2023.
 - Over 17,500 online forms completed, and 5 new online forms launched.
 - Fenland For Business website relaunched, with new content and hosted on the FDC website.
- Progress of the Modernising Council Services Council for the Future project, in particular the transformation project and improved customer experience.
 - Creation of new My Fenland team, new structure, roles, and training plan.
 - 67 new and existing processes mapped, and 11 processes redesigned.
 - We continue to offer an appointment scheme for customers who still want to access council services face to face. We provide an enhanced individual service with a member of staff trained to deal with their query.
- Delivery of a suite of ICT projects which are seeking to modernise service delivery across the Council.
 - All office-based staff have been enabled for hybrid working, where required.
 - ICT infrastructure has been appropriately upgraded / replaced to ensure performance, reliability, availability, and security.
 - 94% of ICT users have completed our improved user education programme in cyber security and information management.

3 Key Areas of Focus for 2023

- Continue to promote all Council communication and consultation projects to staff, members, residents and businesses highlighting news, events, Council services, and information.
- Building on the achievements of the Better Online Services project and developing our website and suite of online services to enable our residents and customers to self-serve where applicable.
- Building on the achievements of the Transformation Project, we are now developing phase 3, which is an organisational wide transformation.
- Continue the delivery of ICT projects which are seeking to modernise service delivery across the Council.

4 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Panel considers the progress made in delivering the Transformation and Communication Portfolio during 2022 - 2023.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	

Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Steve Tierney, Portfolio Holder for Transformation & Communication
Report Originator(s) And Contact Officer (s)	Peter Catchpole - Corporate Director Anna Goodall - Assistant Director Stephen Beacher - Head of ICT, Digital and Resilience David Wright - Head of Policy and Communications
Background Paper(s)	

Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Progress Against the Transformation & Communications Priorities

For performance from
1st April 2022 to 31st January 2023

Portfolio Holders



**Councillor
Chris Boden**
Leader of the Council



Councillor Steve Tierney
Portfolio Holder for
Transformation,
Communication &
Environment

Quality Organisation

Communications Projects

The team supports all Council services with a wide range of internal and external communication projects. Support is tailored to the requirements of the project or service. For key services, we also hold monthly communications meetings.

Some of the large projects we support will include developing communications plans, consultation and engagement plans, promotional design work (logos, documents, leaflets, social media assets, posters etc.) and printing materials. These projects can run over a longer period of time and will involve an extensive project plan.

Key communications projects include:

- March Future High Street Fund
- Business Plan and Budget
- Annual Report
- Transforming the Council projects
- Cost of Living Campaign
- Fenland Railway Station Masterplans
- Garden waste subscriptions
- Wisbech High Street Project

We also offer support for 'everyday' communications. These include projects that need external communications (a press release, web page and programme of social media posts), or marketing materials (logo, document, poster or leaflet).

These projects include:

- Active Fenland programme
- Recycling projects/Getting it Sorted project
- Fenland for Business projects
- Community support projects (i.e. Grants available, Community Safety Partnership projects)
- Street Pride events
- Commercial Investment Strategy
- Hereward Community Rail Partnership projects

Consultation

In line with our Corporate Consultation Strategy, we support teams to engage and consult with residents about Council services.

We offer advice in ensuring that all consultations are well planned and prepared

ensuring consistent communication messages.

Also, a consistent process allows the consultation to give clear results and therefore, help inform future decisions.

Teams are supported by the communications team with assistance through questionnaire development, design and printing of associated posters and surveys, and a communications plan to publicise the consultation.

Key consultations included:

- Draft Business Plan & Budget
- Local Government Boundary Commission
- Tax Tarff Consultation
- Housing Enforcement
- March Railway Station Redevelopment
- Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan
- Draft Local Plan
- Polling District Review

Policy

The Policy & Communications team continue to support the development of Corporate Policy. Over the past 12 months we have developed the Business Plan (and related consultation), Service Planning templates and the Annual Report for the organisation.

In addition, we provide advice on corporate performance reporting and demographics to all teams across the organisation.

Press Releases / Media

We continue to use a clear and positive approach to all media and press releases to promote the good work of the Council.

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 January 2023, we have publicised 104 Press Releases.

All press releases are published on both the front page and news and events sections of our FDC website. They are also published on our FDC social media accounts, Facebook and Twitter. In addition, all press releases are distributed to local news

outlets, including where appropriate, radio and TV outlets.

These press releases include promoting the good work the Council delivers within the community, promoting FDC and partner initiatives and programmes, and also communicating information about the Council including consultations, events or good news stories.

Key press releases included:

- Opening of newly redeveloped March railway station
- Preliminary designs revealed for March town centre transformation
- Commitment to customer service praised as Council retains national quality mark
- Delivering for Fenland while consistently freezing Council Tax, report highlights
- Help shape Fenland's future by having your say on new Draft Local Plan
- Whittlesey's rich history brought to life in new heritage walk
- Vital support and advice available to help residents with cost of living
- Hereward Community Rail Partnership celebrates 10th anniversary
- Fenland's volunteers honoured at celebration evening
- First ever International Christmas Golden Age Fair comes to Wisbech
- Multi-million pound transformation of March town centre is under way
- Fenland residents need photo ID to vote at elections in May

All press releases are generally shared with the following channels:

- FDC Members and town and parish councils
- Local media/newspapers – Fenland Citizen, Cambs Times, Wisbech Standard, Peterborough Telegraph and Cambridge News/Cambridgeshire Live
- Local Magazines – Discovering Magazines (March, Whittlesey and Wisbech editions), The Fens Magazine (Whittlesey and Wisbech editions) and Fenland Resident Magazine.
- Local Radio – BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, Greatest Hits Radio, Heart Radio and Fenland Youth Radio

In addition to publicising messages to the community, we also proactively manage all press enquiries from the local press, newspapers, radio and tv. To assist press enquiries, we also compile member quotes, statements and briefing notes

Social Media

We promote all Council news and services on our Social Media channels, Facebook and Twitter.

They are significantly increasing in popularity; we now have 6,459 followers on Facebook and 8,851 on Twitter.

We currently add 25/30 tweets on our twitter page per week and 25/30 posts on our Facebook page per week. There is a direct link on every page of our website to both our Facebook and twitter accounts.

Our social media accounts are a useful platform to communicate key service information including latest news, promotions and events. We also publicise and monitor key community-based information of partners and other local groups.

We promote a variety of news and are linked to the appropriate organisations that we can endorse (and who will endorse us.) A greater number of customers contact us through these mechanisms to raise service requests – these require same day responses.

We monitor social media channels for emerging issues so we can be on the front foot and respond to inaccurate media reports.

Website

Current performance:

Between 1 April 2021 and 31 January 2022, our website received 274,540 hits.

We are currently working on a CFF project relating to the FDC website: **Better Online Services.**

The project focusses on developing the Council's website to provide residents and businesses even better online services.

Our aim is to have an inviting and user-friendly website and to have a suite of online forms and online digital journeys that enable our residents and customers to self-serve via the website with little or no back-office intervention.

We work with all services to ensure the content and information is accurate and offers residents a user-friendly browsing experience.

The front page is tailored for users to find key information, services, top tasks and top transactions. Council latest news, information and events is also a key section of the front page.

Online Transactions

In total, we received 17,508 online form submissions via the council's website www.fenland.gov.uk

Our website offers 48 online forms; 5 new ones were developed this year.

The Fenland For Business website was relaunch with new content and is now hosted on the FDC website.

Our missed bins reporting form and suite of environmental service request forms are fully automated. This means that once the resident completes one of these online reporting forms, information is automatically added to the operatives in-cab work packs in real time without the need for staff intervention.

We have also launched 2 new customer digital journeys. Licensing and Events digital journeys allow customers to apply online for licences and events at a time convenient to them. Our digital journeys allow customer applications to be automatically into our back office system in real time and without the need for staff intervention.

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

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.

CFF projects:

- Modernising council services
- Better online services
- Bringing empty homes back into use
- A more commercial outlook
- Health you
- Putting communities first
- Safer homes for tenants
- Clamping down on poor parking
- Protecting our environment
- Competitive trade waste service
- Planning for the future
- Corporate building review
- Better railways for Fenland

There are 2 CFF projects led by the Communications and Transformation portfolio holder, **Modernising Council Services** and **Better Online Services**.








Please see summary of achievements from April 2022 for Better Online Services on page 8 and Modernising Council Services on page 9.

Better Online Services - April 2022 to January 2023






Our Aim

Our aim is to develop the Council's website to provide residents and businesses with even better online services.



FDC Website

-  **274,540 visits** to www.fenland.gov.uk
-  **17,508 webforms** completed online
-  **Regular** update and front-page news story promotions to maintain user engagement
-  **Accessibility** improvements undertaken to increase compliance with WCAG 2.1AA
-  **Wisbech 2020 Vision** website brought back in house, with content hosted on the FDC website
-  **Fenland For Business** website brought back in house, with content hosted on the FDC website
-  **Launch of** 'Operation London Bridge' homepage template following the death of Her Majesty the Queen

Online Forms

-  Our website offers **48 online forms**
-  **17,508** webforms completed online from April 2022 to January 2023
-  **Launch** of new online forms relating to Internment bookings, Commercial Waste enquiries, Noise complaints, Smoke complaints and the Local Plan consultation
-  **Updates** undertaken to Garden Waste form to improve the user journey
-  **Process mapping** work completed, and order placed for a Bulky Waste Collection form. Like our Missed Bin Reporting and Environmental Service Requests forms, it will be fully integrated with Bartec to provide real-time information to crews and reduce back-office resourcing

Digital Journeys

-  **2 Idox** Digital Journey forms for Licensing and Events. These enable customers to supply information or apply for a license via our website on a 24/7 basis
-  **Launch** of Noise Reporting, Smell Reporting and Event Application forms via Goss linking to Idox system, reducing the amount of back-office intervention required

Social Media

-  **Links** to regular Council news, events and information to our 8,851 Twitter followers and 6,459 Facebook followers



Modernising Council Services - April 2022 to January 2023

Our Aim






Our aim is to transform council services to improve customer experience and make it even easier for people to interact with the council.

Customer Benefits







People

-  **2** new service areas supported by technical officers
-  **78** officers trained over **24** topics
-  **41,065** answered calls to our contact centre
-  **99%** of customer queries resolved at first point of contact

Finance

-  **8,237** payments made via PayPoint
-  **Over £994,000** in payments made via PayPoint
-  Development work on **PayPoint for Travellers** rent and water service
-  Purchased **Tree Management software** to enable development of processes for our open spaces team
-  **Fenland For Business** website brought back in house, with content hosted on the FDC website

Process

-  **67** new and existing process mapped
-  **11** processes redesigned
-  **Customer** digital journeys launched for Licensing and Events
-  **17,508** website forms completed online
-  **Over 274,540** visits to our FDC website
-  **5** new webforms



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

Transforming 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. The team work across the organisation to independently review current processes and in collaboration with the service, recommend improvements and options to transform the way they work and the way in which customers access Council services.

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
- Improving our talent pipeline and succession planning for the Council.
- Improving service, driving down costs
- Identifying capacity released as a result of improvements and understanding how this resource could be re-allocated.

So far....

We have delivered the initial two phases of the My Fenland project, 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 service teams across the council.

In addition to our digital improvements, we continue to offer an appointment scheme for customers who still want to access council services face to face. We provide an enhanced individual service with a member of staff trained to deal with their query.

Key Successes from April 2022.....

- 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 £994,000 payments made
- Development Technical Officer role to free up the capacity of specialist officers across the organisation.
- Two new services joining the My Fenland team and receiving support from

dedicated Technical Officers further releasing capacity of specialist officers. The capacity release will enable specialist officers to focus resource on income generating tasks for the Council.

- The development of new forms to enable customers to self-serve via our website
- 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 Phase 1 of the Planning service review is underway with a number of key recommendations being implemented. Phase 2 of the review commenced in January 2023 and will focus on tasks carried out by Planning Officers.
- Upcoming launch of a new Bulky Waste Collection form for customers. These requests will integrate with our back office system (Bartec) without staff intervention, and enable customers to book and pay for bulky waste collections online as well as allowing the team to manage service peaks effectively.

Our officer and member unity has underpinned our journey giving it a real 'one team' approach. In light of the success of the project to date, members and officers were keen to enter 'Transformation' submissions to both the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) and the Municipal Journal (MJ) Awards. These awards are to celebrate Local Government success stories. We are currently waiting to see if we have been shortlisted.

The Future

Following the success of Phase 1 and 2, we are now developing phase 3, which is an organisational wide transformation programme. The successes of our new operating model and service mapping processes have given us the confidence and commitment to roll this programme out across the wider organisation. The Transformation Programme will further build on our previous successes and develop objectives under key emerging themes whilst maintaining our unwavering customer focus. The vision for our transformation programme is to ensure our Council is fit for the future.

3Cs Update (Cllr Steve Tierney)

Performance for the 3C's service between 1 April 2022 and 31 December 2022:

April 2022 – Dec 2022	Total received	Total within time frame	%age within time frame
Correspondence	68	64	94%
Stage 1	105	101	96%
Community Environment Leisure and Planning (CELP)	56	52	93%
Growth and infrastructure (GI)	0	0	N/A
Policy Resources and Customer Services (PRCS)	49	49	100%
Stage 2	8	7	88%
CELP	8	7	88%
GI	0	0	N/A
PRCS	0	0	N/A
Stage 3	10	9*	*Due date after reporting date
CELP	10	9*	*Due date after reporting date
GI	0	0	NA
PRCS	0	0	0

From 1 April 2022 we have adapted our 3cs reporting system to identify the breakdown of complaints, correspondence and comments into service areas and

key topics. This has allowed us to identify any common themes or patterns in service areas. This breakdown is included in the LGO Annual Review of Complaints that also reviewed at O&S.

ICT Transformation

ICT's workload can be categorised into 3 sections:

- Reactive Support – Day-to-day 'break-fix' support (e.g. password changes / broken laptop / unable to connect to the network).
- Proactive Maintenance – Replacement / upgrade of ICT infrastructure. (e.g. hardware replacement / software upgrades).
- Corporate Projects – Supporting the ongoing corporate transformation programme (e.g. Introducing new business applications / achieving VFM from current investments).

The ICT service aims to deliver continuous improvement in its journey to modernise the way we work, to deliver efficiencies to our services, and to improve service delivery to our customers.

Our achievements since April 2022 have helped to achieve these goals and to transform the way we work. These projects have included the following:

Online Cyber Security Training

As part of our drive to improve user knowledge in relation to cyber security and information management we now have 94% of staff appropriately trained and working towards our 100% goal. This training is designed for staff to drop in and out of according to their available time. The material is updated on a regular basis and forms part of our compliance conditions.

Mobile Device Management (MDM)

We have used Microsoft Intune (a cloud-based service delivering mobile device management and mobile application management) to control how devices (mobile phones, tablets, and laptops) are used. It controls who has access, and what they have access to. It will be used with the Microsoft 365 suite of products enabling users to be productive on all of their devices, while keeping our information protected.

Hybrid Working

We continue to improve our remote access systems to enable staff to work away from the office in terms of stability, performance and security. All staff that require remote access to corporate systems now have the necessary equipment assigned to them and the appropriate security processes in place.

Refresh Programme

We operate a continuous programme of hardware replacement throughout the year which ensures all hardware (telephony / servers / storage / desktops / network) remain supported and fit for purpose. Last year we completed the process of replacing all of our network switch infrastructure to ensure the hardware is supportable and compatible with our other systems, and to deliver reliability, availability and performance. Last year we completed the refresh of our entire network infrastructure and uplifted our DMZ and virtualised server environment onto new hardware, storage and operating system. We also improved the performance and capacity of our test environment by recycling storage and servers previously used in our live environment.

Business Application Upgrades

All business applications are upgraded / patched on a regular basis which is timetabled to suit the service areas, suppliers and ICT. Each year a number of major upgrades are conducted which take a significant amount of planning and resources. ICT are continually involved in the replacement of business applications to improve the efficiency of service units and provide a better service to the citizens of Fenland. There is a continual stream of requests coming into the service for which we provide guidance, technical knowledge, and project management. This year's successes have included;

- **Digital Journeys** - the introduction of self-service forms for licensing and event bookings.
- **HR / Payroll System** – Reviewing the market in readiness for our contract renewal.
- **Cemeteries System** – Reviewed the suitability of the system and processes followed.
- **Tree Management System** – Introducing a new system to manage our trees within the district.
- **Estates and Property Management System** – Reviewing the market for a replacement system.

- **Planning System** – Implementing changes to ensure the system is as efficient and effective as possible.

Cloud Infrastructure Review

We are in the process of review our infrastructure now embarking on a fresh review to ascertain where our infrastructure and data would be best located to leverage the most benefit for the authority in terms of cost, reliability and resilience. The results of this exercise with help to inform the Accommodation review, ICT's future space requirements, and any cost of moving premise should the need arise.

Collaboration with Teams, SharePoint and OneDrive

Microsoft 365 is designed to be a universal toolkit to give staff integrated and flexible ways to work for their projects and tasks. You can store and share files using SharePoint, OneDrive, and Microsoft Teams. We are currently rolling-out these features to staff to facilitate collaboration and efficiency.

GDPR Compliance

A significant amount of redundant electronic data has been removed from our cloud storage in accordance with our data retention policy as well as our on-site file storage areas. We continue to manage paper documents within Planning to reduce the volume of paper records and ultimately allow these records to be accessed remotely. All office storage is being reviewed to; free-up space, ensure documents are stored securely, become more environmentally friendly, and improve customer service.

Contact Centre and Telephony Enhancements

As a way of making our service delivery more flexible, we continue to investigate the costs and technical possibilities of delivering our telephone contact centre from the cloud. This will remove the need for having our own hardware / software and associated support contracts on site. This may also enable calls from customers to be answered from anywhere, reducing the need for office space and alternative business continuity arrangements. We are currently working with partners to review their offerings as well as the costs, and we investigate the advantages and disadvantages of a cloud-hosted solution.

Public Access WiFi

Connecting Cambridgeshire, the digital connectivity programme led by Cambridgeshire County Council, is expanding free public access WiFi services to help people get online, support businesses and make it easier to access vital public services. The programme is working with partners to increase free public access WiFi provision in public buildings, open spaces, market town centres and village halls in rural areas. Last year we introduced WiFi access points within Whittlesey town centre and the infrastructure is in place ready for this to be made available within March.

Direct Internet Connectivity for 365

We are working towards the move to a safe and robust way of connecting corporate devices directly to Microsoft 365 in the cloud rather than traversing through the FDC network. This will make the process for accessing emails and stored files more user-friendly whilst still providing the appropriate levels of security.

Digital Switch Over

It has been announced that the telecommunications industry will replace all analogue lines and upgrade to digital internet-based infrastructure by 2025. An investigation is well underway to look into the replacement of ISDN (integrated services digital network) services with SIP (session initiation protocol) technology.

Business Centre Audio-Visual Equipment

All equipment has been replaced in all of the larger meeting rooms at the Boathouse and South Fens Business Centre. We are now looking to improve cellular coverage for mobile phones and WiFi performance.

Security – Improved security around email traffic by introducing authentication techniques and encrypted digital signatures. Also further prevention has been put in place to protect against spoofing and phishing scams.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Target 22/23	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries resolved at first point of contact	Rolling monthly target of 85% per month	99%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (March 2023)	90%	Customer satisfaction rates are formally recorded annually during February	
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	46.5%	50.64%	
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	80%	90.06%	
PRC5	Number of online forms submitted via FDC Website	22,000	17,508	

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

Overview and Scrutiny – Draft Work Programme 2022-2023

All Informal pre-meetings are held via Zoom until further notice,
but Formal meetings will be held in the Council Chamber at Fenland Hall

Meeting Dates

<u>Agenda Despatch Due Date</u>	<u>Informal pre-meeting</u>			<u>Formal Overview & Scrutiny Meeting</u>	
	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting</u>
17 February 2023				27 February 2023	(Pre-Meet 1pm) 1.30pm
16 June 2023	19 June 2023	2.00pm	Via Zoom	26 June 2023	2.30pm
8 September 2023	12 September 2023	2.00pm	Via Zoom	18 September 2023	2.30pm
6 October 2023	9 October 2023	2.00pm	Via Zoom	16 October 2023	2.30pm
17 November 2023	20 November 2023	2.00pm	Via Zoom	27 November 2023	2.30pm
5 January 2024	8 January 2024	2.00pm	Via Zoom	15 January 2024	2.30pm
23 February 2024	27 February 2024	2.00pm	Via Zoom	4 March 2024	2.30pm
5 April 2024	8 April 2024	2.00pm	Via Zoom	15 April 2024	2.30pm

26 June 2023

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
14.30 to 16.30 Meeting	Appointment of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year		
	Annual Review of Anglia Revenues Partnership	All	Cllr Mrs French Peter Catchpole Sam Anthony Adrian Mills
	Road Safety Partnership	Environment	Cllr Count Dan Horn Matt Staton
	Community Safety Partnership	Environment	Cllr Count Dan Horn Police (TBC)
	Freedom Leisure Review	Communities	Cllr Sam Clark Phil Hughes
	Draft Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report		Amy Brown
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2022/23	All	Chairman Amy Brown

18 September 2023

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
14.30 to 16.30 Meeting	Commercial Investment Strategy and Investment Board Update	Economy	Cllr Boden Cllr Tierney Cllr Benney Paul Medd Peter Catchpole

			Dan Horn Anna Goodall Mark Saunders Adam Broadway Simon Machen
	O&S Annual Report	All	Chairman Amy Brown
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2022/23	All	Chairman Amy Brown

16 October 2023

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
14.30 to 16.30 Meeting	Anglian Water	Environment	Cllr Murphy Anglian Water Contact: Rose Shisler (AW reps tbc)
	Progress of Corporate Priority – Environment	Environment	Cllr Mrs French Cllr Count Cllr Murphy Cllr Tierney Mark Mathews Annabel Tighe Garry Edwards Phil Hughes Dan Horn
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2022/23	All	Chairman Amy Brown

Work to update the Work Plan for the remainder of the municipal year is ongoing to be agreed and finalised

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