

AGENDA

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2024

10.00 AM

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

Committee Officer: Helen Moore
Tel: 01354 622461
e-mail: memberservices@fenland.gov.uk

- 1 To receive apologies for absence
- 2 Previous Minutes (Pages 3 - 8)

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of 12 July 2024.
- 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 Road Safety Partnership and Vision Zero (Pages 9 - 30)

To receive a presentation on Road Safety Partnership and Vision Zero.
- 6 Progress in Delivering the Economy Corporate Objectives to include Planning 2023/24 (Pages 31 - 56)

To consider progress in delivering the Economy Corporate Priority.
- 7 Update on CPCA Growth Service and impact on Economic Development in Fenland (Pages 57 - 76)

To consider an update on the CPCA Growth Service and the impact on Economic Development in Fenland.

8 Update on previous actions (Pages 77 - 78)

To receive an update on the previous meeting's Action Plan.

9 Future Work Programme (Pages 79 - 82)

To consider the Draft Work Programme for Overview and Scrutiny Panel 2024/25.

10 Items which the Chairman has under item 3 deemed urgent

Friday, 30 August 2024

Members: Councillor Mrs M Davis (Chairman), Councillor E Sennitt Clough (Vice-Chairman), Councillor B Barber, Councillor G Booth, Councillor J Carney, Councillor L Foice-Beard, Councillor R Gerstner, Councillor A Gowler, Councillor A Hay, Councillor S Imafidon, Councillor Dr H Nawaz, Councillor D Roy and Councillor A Woollard

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

FRIDAY, 12 JULY 2024 - 10.00 AM



PRESENT: Councillor Mrs M Davis (Chairman), Councillor E Sennitt Clough (Vice-Chairman), Councillor B Barber, Councillor G Booth, Councillor L Foice-Beard, Councillor R Gerstner, Councillor A Gowler, Councillor S Imafidon, Councillor Dr H Nawaz, Councillor D Roy and Councillor Woollard

APOLOGIES: Councillor J Carney and Councillor A Hay

Officers in attendance: Amy Brown (Assistant Director) and Helen Moore (Member Services and Governance Officer)

OSC1/24 APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

Proposed by Councillor Nawaz, seconded by Councillor Gowler and resolved that Councillor Mrs Davis be elected Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the Municipal Year.

OSC2/24 APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Davis, seconded by Councillor Nawaz that Councillor Sennitt Clough be elected Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the Municipal Year.

It was further proposed by Councillor Booth, seconded by Councillor Roy that Councillor Gerstner be elected Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the Municipal Year.

Following a vote, Councillor Sennitt Clough was elected as Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the Municipal Year.

OSC3/24 PREVIOUS MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of 4 March 2024 were confirmed and signed.

OSC4/24 UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS.

Members considered the update on previous actions.

Councillor Booth requested time to read through the answer given to the Clarion question before commenting further.

OSC5/24 FREEDOM LEISURE - REVIEW

Councillor Mrs Davis welcomed Matt Wickham, Andy Harris and, Dan Palframan from Freedom Leisure together with Phil Hughes and Councillor Miscandlon to the meeting.

Members considered the Freedom Leisure Operating Contract Annual Report which was shared in the form of a presentation.

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

- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked based on the current operational model and the hopefully positive impact of improvements across the three Leisure Centres, how confident are they of the financial viability of the centres going forward? Matt Wicken responded now that the company has come through Covid there has been support from Fenland District Council, Sport England and through Central Government's general support funds phase one for swimming pools, which was received last year, which has put Freedom Leisure into a position above the forecast shown on the presentation just given. He stated that this has put the company on track on an annual basis which gives a positive platform to work on, there is always opportunities to do things better and opportunities for growth which are being looked at as the figures still show there is a drop in membership compared to the figures pre-Covid, with there being lots of reasons for that, people are walking and running in open air more now as this was something they could do during the Covid period and there is a lot more competition that has opened up with personal trainers offering one-to-one services. Matt Wicken added there are opportunities arising in the company looking at GP referrals, which is a market which is relatively untapped, corporately there has recently appointed a Head of Healthy Communities and her focus will be working on those harder to reach groups as studies show only a certain amount of the population commit to physical activity which can add up to 80% of the population to reach out to. He continued that there is a budget in place which shows some contracts are working well but equally some contracts do need addressing but corporately and locally the company is confident with the financial position.
- Councillor Mrs Davis stated she would like to pick up on the comment about not being back to the pre-Covid level of membership for the gym, which does feel concerning as many other private gyms are stating their businesses are doing well, and asked is there an overall theory on why this is? Matt Wicken responded since Covid there has been a lot more personal trainers starting up their own business, offering personal training sessions for customers that potentially do not want to come into a big environment anymore, and there are many more online opportunities than before Covid, but the fitness side of the business is only one third of the wheel, with swimming being the other third and other activities offered making up the rest, so when looking at the overall wheel when one area is not succeeding there is an opportunity to overachieve in the other areas and for Freedom Leisure swimming is one of those areas and this shows there is an above average membership compared to pre-Covid figures.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked how much involvement does Freedom have in the consultancy process, does it have an established relationship with Alliance, for example and is it satisfied with the plans for the leisure centres this far? Matt Wicken responded in terms of Alliance, a project has just been finished with them in Brighton which was a £650,000 squash court conversion into a soft play area which has proved successful and is exceeding number already. He stated that there has also been an operation carried out in Somerset which was an Alliance build in partnership with the Council and Freedom Leisure were there as operating partners, so in terms of a relationship with Alliance there is a very good working relationship and a model that is working well for all concerned. Dan Palframan stated in terms of local plans, Phil Hughes and himself have an open dialogue with the plans, whether that be provisional or whether they are just a concept and needing an honest discussion, with the operational team being consulted to look at what has been presented and the data information to see if what has been proposed will work specifically within Freedom Leisure and are there any other examples of the proposal working in other areas. Matt Wicken added Freedom Leisure has worked with a number of local authorities with over 200 million pounds of capital projects across other estates including Fenland. Councillor Sennitt Clough requested clarification that there is a good relationship with Freedom Leisure, Alliance and Fenland working in collaboration, talking to each other about the broad plans going forward. Matt Wicken confirmed this to be the case.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked Matt Wicken how he feels about the provision of space within the centres that they run for community group use on both a free-of-charge basis and a rental basis? Matt Wicken responded that all space needs to be accessed on its own merit

and there will be some opportunity, the free-of-charge option is not something that is used very often because the company needs to make a surplus that can be reinvested, however, there is engagement with community groups, and some do have a subsidised rate. He continued that as a concept the centres could be better used as a health hub which is being seen a lot more around the UK where leisure centres are one part of the facility with bolt on to GP surgeries and health referrals, an example of this is a facility which has been opened up in Gloucestershire with a range of health services and the opportunity to engage in leisure activities but this does need to be done on a site by site basis and will need to be part of a wider plan County wide and District wide. Councillor Sennitt Clough agreed the shared model is a very productive way forward based on the individual circumstances. She asked how the centres determine who pays for the facilities and who can get them for free? Matt Wicken responded it is very much on a needs analysis basis, the majority can access funding which is something Freedom Leisure can help with so while it is free for the customer there is still funding coming into the centre which can be of benefit to the local community groups and mental health projects.

- Councillor Nawaz stated he observed from the presentation given that 25% of staff are not taking pride in working for Freedom Leisure, he asked how many female staff are there and how many work within the management structure of Freedom Leisure? Councillor Nawaz added he felt it frustrating that when other gyms are doing well Freedom Leisure are still blaming the effects of Covid and suggested looking at the quality of their advertising. He also suggested working with ICS and Health and Wellbeing groups to help with the ongoing obesity and the diabetes crisis. Matt Wicken responded that 75% of their employees are proud to work for Freedom Leisure and this was a survey taken across all 6000 people that are employed by the company, of which 4000 responses came back, there are a number of casual and contract workers within those figures and this can have an impact, once these figures are collated they are broken down into two groups, which are local and corporate, then within these groups discussions take place as to what can be improved, how can staff be rewarded better, and what are the training and development needs. He added that year on year when these surveys are taken the results are on par which means that the company is holding its own which is a positive result and a good base to build on. Matt Wicken stated in terms of the breakdown of male/female, 50% staff are female and a high proportion of females are higher earners, however, the company is conscious that at a very senior level there are not enough females which is a focus but equally it is more important to employ the right person for the job role regardless of gender. Andy Harris added regarding the three senior roles that have recently been recruited for two out of the three roles are females which form part of the leadership team. Matt Wicken acknowledged the suggestion given by Councillor Nawaz around marketing and agreed there is always more to be undertaken in this area. Dan Palframan referred to Whittlesey and confirmed numbers for gym memberships are growing at the Manor Leisure Centre and it has become one of the quickest to grow across the district and is now one of the highest earners with the Fenland area because of the housing growth and the marketing success in the area. He continued that Public Health and Freedom Leisure are developing a learning partnership which can be lifted and used as a model to strengthen the health community and serve as an opportunity for growth within the area.
- Councillor Gowler asked regarding the statistics contained within the report, do they relate to Freedom staff across all leisure centres or just Fenland? Dan Palframan responded the statistics shown cover the whole area which are all three partnerships under his care, there are individual statistics for the Fenland area which is being used to target improvement plans. Councillor Booth asked if there are statistics on Fenland and what does that show against the presentation given? Dan Palframan answered largely as said in the presentation instead of 24% overall the breakdown shows Fenland at 18% but this does vary from venue to venue which can be provided. Councillor Booth agreed quite a sizable improvement.
- Councillor Gowler asked if any benchmarking exercises are carried out on the private sector to obtain a bigger picture? Matt Wicken responded Freedom Leisure benchmark internally but not with competitors, the question asked internally never changes and this can create a

better picture for progress and change year on year.

- Councillor Roy asked what is the training budget and what succession planning are they undertaking with the staff they currently employ to make sure that they have plenty of skilled people for the duration of FDC's contract? Matt Wicken responded in terms of development since Covid there is a two phase development plan in place which encourages staff to work up to duty manager level then from there progressing to centre managers or area managers, there is a desire to promote from within and the next step is to build a clear picture of who out of the staff would like a progression career within Freedom Leisure which would work within the individuals training programme so their needs are met in whichever path they choose within leisure. He continued that he did not have the percentage figures to hand for investment in training, however, as an organisation there is an amount to pay into the apprentice levy which is around £140,000 per year which is drawn down for training, there are about 100 apprentices across the business and this side is growing, aside from that there is a multitude of inhouse training courses on offer plus there is an online portal which every member of staff has access to with around 79 different courses to choose from. Councillor Roy referred to the mention 'since Covid', and asked how far down the development route is all the training or is some of it still at the early development stages and how much of it is local employment plus how many apprentices are within the Fenland area? Matt Wicken replied he would send out the exact figure of apprentices within the Fenland area after the meeting, as far as the development of the training this is in its early stages and the bulk of the plan has been modernised and updated and delivered in a slightly different way.
- Councillor Barber stated she was pleased to note that there has been a reduction in spending on gas and electricity at the Hudson Leisure Centre, however, she continued to receive complaints about the temperature of the swimming pool and asked if this could be an impact? Dan Palframan responded that due to the energy crisis the parameters were reset which did take temperatures down and there were a few comments made, however, the parameters have since been adjusted and are back within a normal range for the size of tank at the Hudson Leisure Centre. Councillor Barber commented that she had noted that the comments from the public shared on the presentation were complimentary but one comment did suggest opening at 6am instead at 6.30am is this something that has been considered? Dan Palframan confirmed this was something that is being reviewed at present.
- Councillor Booth made the point that last year as a committee they asked that a more detailed list of complaints was shared so the panel could look at the changes that have been made year on year, however, this was never shared which is concerning and he questioned whether Freedom is taking on board the feedback from these meeting? Matt Wicken apologised for not previously sending over the data and made a commitment to send the data to the panel via Phil Hughes and he will happily take questions at the next meeting. Councillor Booth welcomed this and stressed that as councillors they get many complaints from the public about various issues and it would help them to have the data so they can give the sufficient answers when asked.
- Councillor Nawaz asked for an update on the Manor Leisure Centre. Phil Hughes responded that the company is working with Alliance Leisure and they have visited the three larger leisure centres which have swimming pools, some draft plans have been sent away, once the information comes back it will be discussed with CMT and brought to Cabinet in September or October.
- Councillor Roy stated given that Freedom Leisure is allowing sub-contractors into buildings owned by Fenland District Council, what are their procedures for vetting and selecting contractors to come and do the work, whilst they may have undertaken a risk assessment, they may not have had training, so what are the policies and procedures for vetting the sub-contractors to do the works that are required? Matt Wicken responded there was an incident at the Manor concerning a sub-contractor which has now been dealt with, as far as the procedure stands, every process is checked to make sure the right information is in place when taking on contractors and sub-contractors.

- Councillor Imafidon stated it was mentioned in the presentation that the company would like to work more closely with GP's and asked what arrangements are in place for primary care providers or is this a future plan, and if so when will this be brought into practice? Dan Palframan replied there are a small number of contacts through GP's which are referred to Freedom Leisure, but there are some future plans in place that are growing which is as a result of a neighbouring district, their model will be lifted and tweaked to work in the Fenland area to work closely with medical practitioners and building on relationships and processes to build this opportunity and he is hopefully going to be talking about this more at the next meeting. Andy Harris added a national agreement has been signed with Elixir Health who are a UK wide organisation who are set up purely for health referrals and this is related to a swimming project that is currently being developed.

Members noted the Freedom Leisure report for information.

(Councillor Gerstner left the meeting during this item)

OSC6/24 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

Members considered the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-2024 presented by Councillor Mrs Davis.

Councillor Mrs Davis recognised the work the Overview and Scrutiny panel had undertaken during the year.

Members made comments as follows:

- Councillor Booth stated under 5.3 regarding the task and finish group and the new data, he would like to see a line added that the panel will be monitoring this progress to help with the work of the committee.
- Councillor Nawaz stated under 4.2 the table of topic and issues, he recognised the good work of the committee, and he suggested fuller presentation from Public Health in the future. Councillor Booth commented this would be an action when looking at the Future Work Programme going forward, and he also suggested inviting the Director of Public Health. Councillor Mrs Davis agreed but also stated there were not enough questions asked by the committee at the last meeting and she would like more questions when Public Health are due to visit in March 2025, there will also be a discussion before the March meeting so the appropriate people are invited.

Members approved the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for forwarding to Council.

OSC7/24 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered and noted the future work programme.

Members made the following comments:

- Councillor Booth stated that he would like to see a tracking system in place to work alongside the scheduled meetings so the committee could keep up to date on progress once the meeting has finished and keep a track of information that have been asked for during meetings. Councillor Mrs Davis agreed and suggested when the committee are coming up to a meeting they need to backtrack through the minutes of the last time that body was invited to an Overview and Scrutiny meeting, as a refresher and to use as a reference for any work unfinished. Councillor Booth added by using a tracker system the key points would be easier and quicker to see as sometimes information can get lost in the full minutes. The committee agreed.
- Councillor Roy stated he has noticed that Clarion have not been included on the work

programme, at the last meeting Clarion did suggest that everything was being dealt with but he is still receiving a number of repeated complaints from local Clarion residents and he feels that the main issues that were spoken about in the last meeting have not been addressed and feels that a meeting with Clarion would be beneficial. Councillor Mrs Davis stressed that if there are some issues that are not being dealt with since the last meeting contact can be made to follow this up with Clarion. Councillor Booth asked if Clarion are going to be invited back? Amy Brown stated that the Forward Plan has been reviewed and it was discussed which topics could be biannual and which ones would be annual, and the focus was on looking at the Council's core priorities and making sure as an organisation those functions are covered, with Clarion being looked at as being biannual but if there are problems emerging as have been raised in this meeting, there is space within the Forward Plan to invite them back sooner but the thought was to invite new topics towards the end of the year but this can be looked at. Councillor Booth did not agree that Clarion should be biannual and that they need to be invited annually due to the number of problems arising, other councillors agreed. Councillor Mrs Davis agreed to review the Forward Plan with Amy Brown.

- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated there is a distinction between Clarion and Clarion Futures and would like it made clear who the committee are referring too. She continued to make the point that given their reputation and the fact that they are fronting a not insignificant amount of money to match fund with the Arts Council and the Arts Council are part of the Future Work Programme, how this would play out within the public consciousness regarding complaints and was wondering if there was scope to have both parties in on the same day. Councillor Mrs Davis expressed the view that it was better to keep both parties separate. Councillor Booth recommended inviting Clarion Futures in for the Arts Council as opposed to the whole of Clarion to concentrate on that particular element. Councillor Foice Beard felt it would not be a good idea to invite Clarion Futures if the committee are just going to be talking about housing issues as these are two separate areas.
- Councillor Booth made the observation that at the meeting on the 20 January is the draft Budget and Fees and Charges and he feels that the fees and charges needs to roll into the budget because if anything need changing this needs to be discussed. This was agreed by Councillor Mrs Davis.

Members AGREED to the inclusion of the discussed topics to the work programme.

11.30 am

Chairman

Simon Burgin

Road Safety Manager

Road Safety

Engineering

Education

Data Analysis
Safety Audits
Fatal Collision
Investigation
£594k capital fund



Road Safety (Schools)
Sustainable Travel
Junior Travel
Ambassadors
Road Safety
Campaigns
School Crossing
patrols



Data
Who, Where, When & Why?



Delivery
Inclusive – Break Down Barriers



Partners
Funding/Shared Resources



Drive
Motivated and Inquisitive

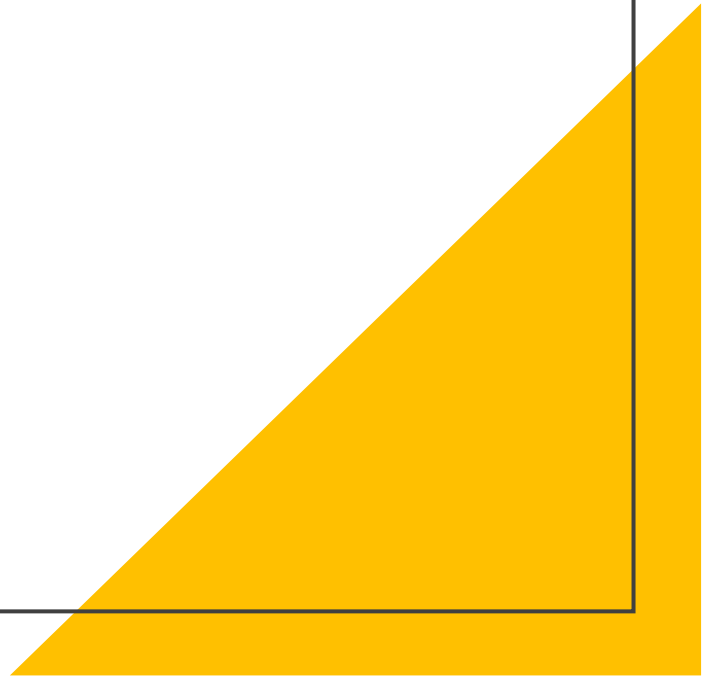
Skills
Best People Best Knowledge

Team
Overcome and Support

Fatal Collision Investigation

Post Collision Response

- Simon Burgin
- Cambridgeshire County Council



- Notification from Police
- Investigation Paperwork raised
- Scene Visit arranged
 - Road Safety Officer
 - Road Safety Engineer
 - Police Traffic Management
 - Local Highways Officer
- Maintenance Reports Requested
- Investigation Review
- Investigation Submitted

Investigation Process

Case Study - One B1098 Stonea



Mapping Sign

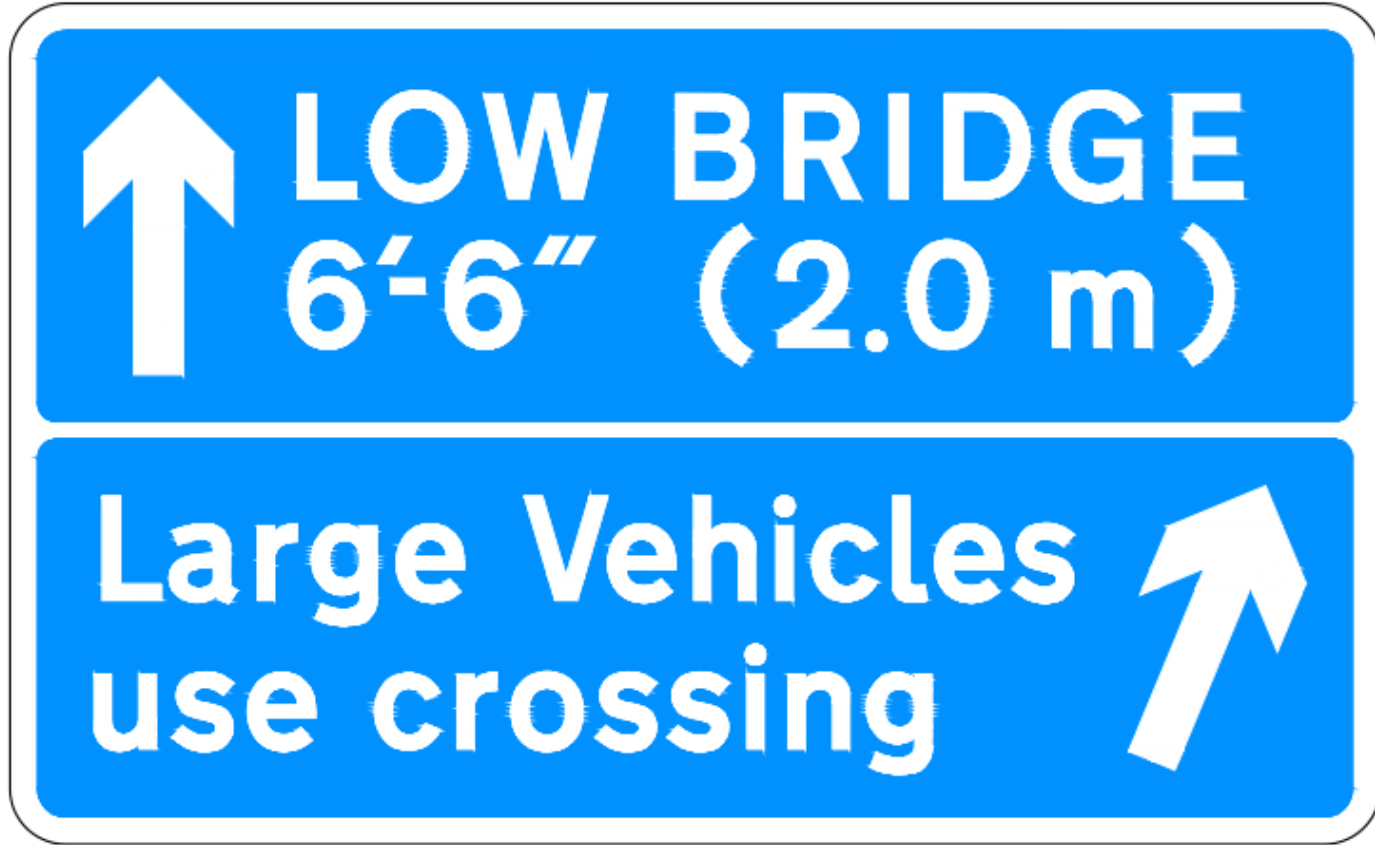
B1098 Stonea



Veh.1 – Volvo motorcar
Veh. 2 – Motorcycle

Veh.1. travelling
towards Chatteris
turned right in front of
oncoming Veh.2





Recommendations

Sign Replaced

Recommendations

Road Markings
Refreshed



Less
Of
This
?



Case Study - Two A1307 Stapleford





Vehicle 1
Kia Sedona

Vehicle 2
Fiat Ducato van



Direction of Travel Vehicle 1

Direction of Travel Vehicle 2



Cluster site analysis

Cluster site analysis for 2023 is currently being reviewed prior to publication.

Fenland does not currently have any sites in the top 15 (to be verified).

A cluster site is identified as a junction or 100 metre length where there has been 6 or more injury collisions of any severity, or 3 or more serious or fatal injury collisions.

Risk = Harm

Data lead intervention and design is key to supporting the Vision Zero mission and driving down serious and fatal injury collisions.

2022 statistics and evaluation by BCH Road Policing provided an insight into the identifying the greatest risks and how targeting specific drivers we may see a reduction in harm.

Threats and immerging trends

- Tackling risk and harm requires a multi-agency approach are our links and partnerships with our traditional partners and wider road safety community have never been stronger.
- Sharing resources, understanding emerging trends help us remain on the front foot to tackling those people who are likely to take the biggest risks. These are not unique challenges to Cambridgeshire.

Emerging risks/Trends

- E-Bikes and E-Scooters - 2026
- Specialist Support
- Drink and drug intervention
- Young Drivers
- Car Cruises



Thankyou
Questions?

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Overview & Scrutiny

Progress Against Economy Corporate Priority

September 2024

(includes information for
April 2024 to July 2024)

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



Cllr Steve Tierney
Portfolio Holder for
Communications,
Transformation, Climate
Change & Strategic
Refuse



Cllr Susan Wallwork
Portfolio Holder for Community,
Health, Environmental Health,
CCTV, Community Safety & Military
Covenant

Projects from Business Plan:

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

Attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities (Cllr Benney)

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 Inward Investment Team	Working with the Growth Works Inward Investment Team: 10 inward investment enquiries per annum 8 GW enquiries received 1 inward investment per annum 1 GW inward investment at negotiation stage	
Economic Growth Team inward investment service	There was engagement with 59 companies that were considering Fenland as an inward investment or expansion location, with 3 successful inward investments, 1 foreign direct investment from Peru and 4 expansions.	
Continue to market Fenland propositions to target growth sectors, individual businesses and locations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 developed for UKREiif Attendance at the UKREiif exhibition and conference held in May Royal Armouries Leeds bringing together an array of key decision-makers from every area of the built environment: the public sector – with every core UK city and regions involved – alongside government, investors, funders, developers, housebuilders, and more.	
Deliver 'soft landing' tools that support an aftercare programme for new and	Creation of soft-landing package. Marketing of package to potential investors, intermediaries i.e., agents,	

<p>recently established investors, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face meetings • Free office accommodation • Priority planning applications 	<p>lawyers, banks and partners Intermediaries identified. Meetings to take place, pack produced and marketed.</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.</p> <p>1 proposition created for a target market per annum. Initial Agrifood proposition created. Research organisation to deliver project identified and discussed with potential providers Initial Advanced Manufacturing/Precision Engineering proposition also created and will be delivered by research providers Discussion underway with CPCA to request funding for the research</p>	
<p>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.</p>	

Provide responsive Business Support (Cllr 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.

An updated and revised Economic Growth Strategic Refresh 2025-2028 will be presented to Cabinet and Council for approval later this year.

Within the current Refresh, five areas of focus have defined activities and outcomes the progress against each of which is set out below. The progress against each activity

in 2023-24 and up to July in 2024-25 is set out below. Delivery of outcomes will continue throughout the remainder of 2024-25.

In addition to the planned for activities in the Economic Growth Strategic Refresh 2022-25, several other activities were delivered against as required during the year. New opportunities continually arise to, for example, attract funding into the district and the Economic Growth Team operate flexibly to maximise these opportunities. These additional activities are 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
Economic Growth Team Service	15 enquiries per year converting to 3 businesses per year finding new premises/site - 18 enquiries 1/3/23 - 30/4/24 5 company expansions and 1 business consolidated into their premises in March from other premises outside the District. Currently working with Fenland Businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robotics company looking to expand due to an increase in exports to Ireland. • 5 Medium business new site or existing site expansion • 6 small businesses looking for new premises Inward Investors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 businesses located in Fenland • Expansion of Peruvian agrifood company to create a manufacturing facility in 2025 	
Maintain regular meetings with the business community to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fenland Chamber of Commerce (FCC) • Federation of Small Business (FSB) 	Quarterly meeting with FCC. Working closely with Chair of FCC to help re-establish the Chamber in Fenland. Quarterly meeting with The Federation of Small Business.	
Develop the Fenland for Business website to support businesses with signposting	Working with the Council's communications team, continue to develop the Fenland for Business	

to advice and guidance and information	website with a focus on Start Ups, Growing Businesses and Inward Investors. We will add video content via YouTube, case studies showing how the Growth Team have supported local businesses and create a presence on LinkedIn. 5% increase year on year of visitors to the Fenland for Business website and the number of followers on X.	
Annual business start-up inserts in Council Tax bills – targeting the hard to reach home based businesses and those considering starting a business	An insert with link to the Fenland for Business website was included in 2024-25 Council Tax bill providing information on the assistance provided to businesses by the Economic Growth Team and partner organisations Plans are in place for insert into 2023-24	

Additional activities:

Activity	Outcomes	Variance
Partner business support introductions	Smart Manufacturing Association regarding Industry 4.0 adoption and grants 5 companies referred to the SMA and a joint event held at the Boathouse with 21 companies attending. The SMA closed in March 2023 as CPCA funding was withdrawn. Business and Intellectual Property Centre (March) regarding Start Up support and grants An officer sat on the judging panel for the BIPC start up grant awards, judging entries from across Cambridgeshire.	

2. 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
Acquiring technical and	Internal FDC created and objectives	

specialist support to bring forward employment sites to include infrastructure, highway, and market/commercial assessments.	agreed. Currently assessing which sites to focus on within the project. Forecast that reports will be completed by end September 2024.	
Work with partners to encourage and promote sustainable low carbon green infrastructure.	Ongoing dialogue.	
Support the development of sustainable and enhanced broadband infrastructure including completing the delivery of the Fenland component within the Connecting Cambridgeshire project	Engaging with partners including the private sector e.g. CityFibre to help them deliver >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 during the search for cabinet sites. Now operating as BAU	

Additional activities:

Activity	Outcomes	Variance
Fens Reservoir	The new c£3billion reservoir is at the heart of a whole new water supply project to provide homes and businesses with a reliable water supply. The Economic Growth Team is working to help ensure that the opportunities of both the construction phase and the completed reservoir are fully exploited for Fenland residents and businesses.	
Discretionary Business Rates Scheme	Cabinet & Council 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.	

3. 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	4 case studies featuring businesses that have directly benefitted from the support provided by the Team. 5 case studies completed Group of 40 businesses receive 1:2:1 "account management" service with 40 businesses visited per annum 42 company meetings completed resulting in the identification of 9 active expansion projects involving the support of the EG Team.	
Undertake a proactive business engagement programme with all known employers and business owners	2,500 businesses have so far received 6 e-newsletters communications from the Team. Reactive follow up to engagement with Team from businesses	
CPCA Sector Advisors	The team will engage with the new CPCA advisors when they are in position in Sept 2024	
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	
Develop joint Business events with partners to encourage networking, share business issues, etc	2 joint partner business events per annum Smart Manufacturing Alliance on - Digitalisation for the Pathway to Net Zero - Boat House - 30th November 2023. Decarbonising Dissemination event. Worked with Clarion to develop an event to share with the construction sector the lessons learnt from updating and retrofitting social housing (net zero). COWA had a speaking slot. Jan 24. Event with Innovate UK Edge in March 2023 regarding support for research and development	
Services for Business - All businesses registered for business rates receive information advising them of the services available to them from the Council	Every business registered for business rates received communication from the Economic Growth Team with their 2024-25 Business Rates Bills.	

and its partners such as Growth Works.		
Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and data management	A CRM system branded Evolutive provided by Alcium Ltd was acquired in April 2024. All data held by the Economic Growth Team on local business is now held in the system and the number of businesses is targeted to grow annually. The CRM delivers significant benefits including enabling reports and analysis to be created efficiently, a joined-up service provided for businesses, targeted communications and the end-to-end management via the CRM of business grant schemes. The CRM has also enabled the hosting of a commercial land and property database to be created on the Fenland for Business website.	

Additional activities:

Activity	Outcomes	Variance
Updated and revised Economic Growth Refresh for 2025-28. Consultation undertaken with other council departments and external stakeholders.	Cabinet and Council approved Economic Growth Refresh 2025-28 setting out the Economic Growth Team's strategic priorities and outcomes for the next three years.	

Other updates

We welcomed Dawn Caplin, Investment in Business Officer, to the team who will be project managing the Shared Prosperity Investment in Business grant schemes and the Rural England Prosperity Fund. The post is fully funded by the Shared Prosperity fund.

Promote business premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and Light Industrial Units (Cllr Benney)

The Estates team remain actively engaged with tenants of all sites. Overall occupancy across the investment estate remains high at 94.5%

- Industrial units are fully occupied.
- Boathouse occupancy has dropped to 96%. Representing two empty offices for which we have interest in one.
- South Fens Business Centre has fallen to 63% as of 31st July 2024

We continue to have had a high turnover of tenants at SFBC. However, following the relaxation of the rents we can charge, we have seen a flattening of the curve and four tenants who had either served notice to quit or looking too have now reversed that decision based on the new rent profile and agreed new leases.

In addition, with a dedicated marketing budget now available estates team members are working on a renewed marketing strategy to raise the profile of the site, and this will be rolled out during the autumn of 2024.

Skills Update (Cllr Benney)

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.	Number of referrals per annum – 20 to end Dec 2023 when the service was ended by CPCA. A new Skills service established in April 2024.	
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 redundancy event, which was arranged by FDC officers for IPL, Westry staff. 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	4 meetings per annum with COWA – 4 meetings complete & COWA presented their skills offer at an FDC online event to share lessons learnt from the retrofit program run by FDC and Clarion Housing 4 meetings per annum with ARU	

the needs of local business including quarterly collaboration meetings	Peterborough – 2 meetings to date 4 meetings per annum with North Cambridgeshire Training Centre – 4 meetings to date Number of company referrals per annum – 7 companies referred Quarterly meetings held with centre manager and training officer to discuss company training needs	
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Additional activities:

Activity	Outcomes	Variance
Memberships and Events	The team worked with partners to benefit Fenland businesses, including CPCA, Shoestring – a member of the East of England board of the Institute for Manufacturing scheme, Committee members of Fenland Chamber of Commerce and judging the BITP grant scheme for startup businesses in Cambridgeshire Innovate Edge event – held at NCTC to inform Fenland companies of the support available for innovation. StocksAG - Innovate UK Edge Event, David Hampton, manufacturing and operations director at Wisbech firm StocksAG, said: 'I found it to be very informative as we had no idea of the help and support that was out there to help support our journey. A number of the topics discussed were exactly the things we are underway with here at StocksAG.'	

Environmental Health inspection and business support programme (Cllr Wallwork)

The council's food safety and health and safety regulatory service plans were published following portfolio holder consultation in May. These plans set out the forward plan for these statutory services and comply with the council's enforcement policy and national enforcement concordat. The plans can be read here:

[Food Safety Service Plan 2024/25 \(fenland.gov.uk\)](https://fenland.gov.uk)
[Health and Safety - Fenland District Council](#)

Food safety support

The table below sets out the number of support visits undertaken between April and July, and the resulting food hygiene rating score awarded following that visit.

FHRS score 5-0	5	4	3	2	1	0
April	15	2	0	0	0	0
May	23	2	0	1	1	1
June	18	2	2	0	1	0
July	22	3	0	0	1	0

94 visits were undertaken in premises meeting the criteria for a food hygiene rating scheme award (take away and restaurant premises) and in total 113 interventions were undertaken, some of these include telephone surveys or questionnaires.

Premises receiving a score of 2 or lower will receive follow up visits. All premises, if unhappy with their score, may request a paid for reassessment.

The purpose of the food hygiene rating is to allow consumers to make informed choices about the places where they eat or shop for food and, through these choices, encourage businesses to improve their hygiene standards. Some premises may be excluded from the scheme or their rating may not be published for sensitivity purposes (e.g. data protection) however they are still rated in accordance with the standard.

[Search for ratings | Food Hygiene Ratings](#)

National sampling programmes

As part of both food safety and health and safety service plans resource is allocated to undertaking sampling of various products and environments, following national study criteria.

There are currently 3 national surveys running.

- **Study 80:** Unpasteurised and pasteurised milk cheeses (UK and non-UK) from retail and manufacturers/dairies. Study to run from April 2024 until the end of March 2025.
- **Study 81:** Hygiene in Tattoo and Cosmetic Piercing Premises. Study to run from June 2024 until the end of November 2024.
- **Study 82: (Reactive Study)** Raw Shell Eggs (Non-Lion brand). Study to run from July 2024 until March 2025.

Currently we have 8 manufacturing / approved premises in the district. These include food preparation and packing premises. These approved premises are subject to more complex legislative requirements such as sampling of product and certain quality assurances.

Food allergen awareness

To support colleagues in trading standards services we are working closely to support their sampling campaign in relation to food allergen awareness. Trading Standards colleagues have accessed national funding streams to work closely with businesses to better understand this important food standards responsibility.

Health and safety support

Between April and July 22 supportive visits were undertaken with high risk or special project businesses.

There were 9 visits to tattoo and body piercing establishments. Some of these were to provide updated information and guidance and some to assess for additional licensing requirements to be added to current licenses. Thus, ensuring customers can be confident in the processes carried out to protect their health and safety, including infection control.

There were 13 visits to funeral director premises following a special request received in April 2024 from the Ministry of Justice and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

This project was initiated following the recent distressing incident at Legacy Independent Funeral Directors in Hull and East Riding which has received widespread media coverage. The initial police investigation identified some concerns with practices at the premises and therefore each local authority was asked to undertake local visits. This information will be used to inform potential regulation of the industry, something which government have been reviewing since 2020.

13 visits were made. The visits, which were supported by an industry appointed representative for Cambridgeshire, followed a set protocol;

1. Hygiene, facility conditions, and capability
2. Traceability and transparency
3. Dignity and condition of deceased people in a funeral director's care; and
4. Pre-paid funeral plans.

A report was returned to Ministry of Justice setting out no local issues were identified.

Satisfaction with business support visits

Following the service plan interventions a short survey is undertaken with customers. Approximately 25% of businesses are contacted and asked for feedback.

Between April and July 34 business were surveyed and 100% provided positive feedback.

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration

Planning updates (including progress on the Local Plan) (Cllr Laws)

Overview

The year so far, there has been significant change in the Service due to a number of new members of staff joining Fenland District Council. Planning Policy including S106 Management has been resourced in house after Peterborough City Council withdrew their support for these matters. The vacancies within the Development Management and Enforcement have reduced but the Service is still covering 3.no vacancies and agency staff are still required to deliver the service and to deal with the backlog generated over the extended period of vacancies. Alongside this the Head of Planning role, which was increased from part time to full time, has been filled.

The amended scheme of delegation, which decides which planning applications are determined by committee as opposed to officers, continues to put pressure on the ability for Officer's to meet the statutory deadlines for planning applications. This is particularly relevant for the smaller and less controversial planning applications. The resulting impact is also of lengthy meeting agendas and the associated significant impact on those engaged in delivery of them.

In addition, we are continuing to work 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.

The Government are currently consulting on significant changes to the NPPF and have indicated that they are looking to bring forward further changes to the Planning System. The impact of these changes is unknown at this moment but is likely to put additional strain on the limited resources within the Service.

Activity	Outcomes	Performance Against Target
Speed of Determination of Planning applications 2024/25 to date	Majors	100 %
	Minor	86.05 %
	Other	87.50 %

The national performance requirement is measured over a 24-month rolling monitoring period and in relation to this we are performing as follows:

Major 85.94% (against a target of 60%)

Non-Major 75.2% (against a target of 70%)

Activity	Outcome
Planning Appeals 2024/25 to date	3
No. won by FDC	1
No. Lost by FDC	2
Awards of cost	1

Income 2024/25 to July 2024*

Application Fee	£323,680 (down £25,902 on previous year)
'Major Development' Application Fee	£168,789 (down £51,779 on previous year)
Pre-application Fee	£11,019 (up £7,036 on previous year)

* It is worth noting that Planning application fees increased by a minimum of 25% (35% for 'major development') in December 2023 and the comparison to last year is therefore not directly helpful as this would further increase the shortfall stated above. More importantly income is circa £130k lower than the profiled budget to July 2024.

Activity	Outcomes
Enforcement (2024/25 year to date)	No. of Service Requests – 183 No. of Cases Closed (following investigation / mitigation action) – 914 No. of pending cases – 392
No of Notice Served:	Enforcement Notices – 7 Section 215 Notices – 7 Breach of Condition Notices - 1

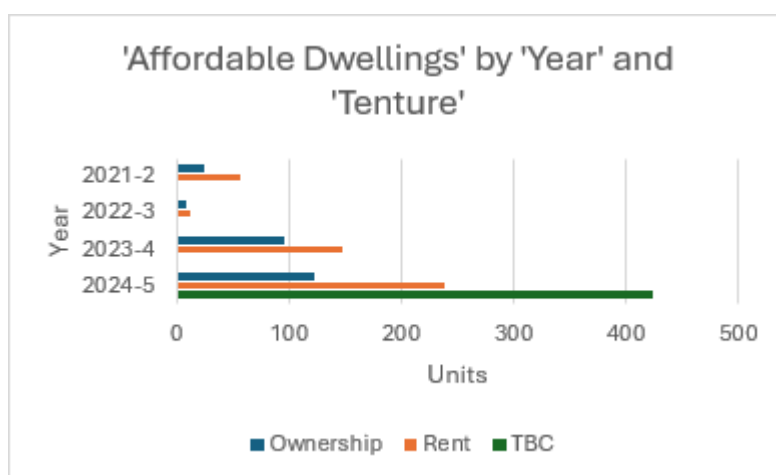
Activity	Outcomes
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5 Year Land Supply	Published May 2024 – 8.08 years (passed)
Housing Delivery Test	Published December 2023 – 96% (passed)
Annual Monitoring Report	Published Feb 2024
Fens Reservoir second non-statutory consultation response	Submitted August 2024

Delivery of new homes (including affordable homes) (Cllr Laws & Cllr Hoy)

Over the last 4 years we have seen an upward trend in the number of affordable dwellings delivered in the district. 2021–2023/4 are confirmed, 2024/25 remain subject to change, but we currently forecast that the trend will continue and that the number of completed units will continue to see an increase year on year.

Clarion continues to hold the most stock as the councils' stock transfer provider, but the districts has also attracted new RP's. This has been difficult in previous years, with developers and RP's feeling that the district was less attractive and viable. Whilst some of the changes in attitude are associated with external influences, Fenland DC should also take credit. Our constant engagement, collaborative approach, supportive planning team, realistic policies and pragmatic planning committee have all helped developers and RPs look more favourably on the district. Case Study – Accent Housing



External funding bid and major projects updates (Cllr Boden)

Long-Term Plan for Towns (LTPFT), Wisbech (Cllr Hoy, Cllr Tierney, Cllr Wallwork)

Council Officers have successfully completed the requirements of MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) to access the LTPFT capacity funding.

Work has been undertaken to set up a Town Board in Wisbech with an independent chair, several local community representatives and representatives of local partner authorities.

The agreed aims and objectives of The Board are:

- To work together to shape and manage the development of a ten-year, long-term plan for the town.
- To work together to deliver a three-year delivery plan of projects (in the short term) for the town.
- To allocate and deliver projects in line with the Government guidance to invest £20,000,000 into the town of Wisbech.
- To explore new ways of working to maximise the impact of resource deployment within core organisational resources to address the priorities for the communities we support.
- To seek to add social value to the work we all deliver by considering wider socioeconomic, environmental and health impacts through our normal service and project delivery work.
- To work together to deliver a joined-up approach towards strategic interventions which improve the long-term opportunities and fortunes of our communities.
- To provide support and advice to the accountable body (Fenland District Council) in developing and governing a Long-Term Plan For Towns programme in line with the MHCLG prospectus.

The current makeup of The Board is as follows:

- Chair: Iain Kirkbright
- Member of Parliament: Stephen Barclay MP
- Fenland District Council Member: Cllr Sam Hoy
- Wisbech Town Council Member(s): Cllr Susan Wallwork
- Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) or their Representative: Chair to invite the PCC or ask the PCC for a senior local Police Officer to attend as the PCC's representative
- Local community member: Louise Pitt
- Local community member: Amanda Scott
- Local community member: Paul Faulkner
- Serving member of Cambridgeshire County Council: Cllr Steve Tierney
- Serving member of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority: Cllr Chris Boden

A long list of project ideas has been initially created which has been distilled down to form the basis of how the board would like to see the investment spent.

The Board has taken its first actions to employ consultants (in line with CLG guidance on spending of funds) to create both a 3-year investment plan and 10-year vision for the town of Wisbech. Alongside this work there are public consultation events planned.

Following the recent change to central government, the deadline has been pushed back from November to a future date, and officers are awaiting clarity on this revised deadline from MHCLG. The Board have taken the decision to continue working with the consultants to generate the required documentation. Public consultation is on hold until more information is available from MHCLG regarding deadlines.

Accommodation Review (Cllr Boden)

The Outline Business case regarding the shortlisted options in respect of the Accommodation Review is now complete. The Outline Business Case will support the decision-making process in relation to the future of the corporate accommodation.

As part of the agreed next steps, we have engaged with key partners via One Public Estate (OPE) to ascertain the potential for future co-location.

A report seeking Members agreement to a preferred option regarding the future of our Corporate Accommodation will be brought to Cabinet in Autumn 2024, following which, if Cabinet are in agreement, a full business case of the preferred option will be commissioned.

Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund (Cllr Benney)

Activity	Outcomes	Variance
Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)	SPF funding of £1.25m over three years has been secured by the by the Growth Team. Case studies will be made available via the Fenland for Business website. The programme is on time and funding will be utilised by February 2025. A full programme evaluation report will be produced by August 2025.	
Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)	REPF funding of £436k over two years has been secured by the Growth Team. Case studies will be made available via the Fenland for Business website. The programme is on time and funding will be utilised by February 2025. A full programme evaluation report will be produced by August 2025.	

March Future High Street Fund (Cllr Seaton & Cllr French)

The March Future Highstreet Fund programme continues through delivery phase and at pace. To date the Market place scheme has been completed on time and under

budget, along with four property grants being provided to local property owners. March Dental and 24 Market Place have both received grants totalling £100,000 to improve their premises from empty/derelict properties to bring them back into use. Following intervention by the grants, FDC have been able to support the creation of two new purpose build business units (now let) and three new residential units (also let) within the town centre.

The Broad Street project continues to be delivered by our contractor Octavius, with regular community coffee mornings allowing officers and staff to be available to members of the public that may have questions or concerns. At the time of writing, phase one, two and three of the scheme are completed. The March toilet block has been removed and works continue to the western side of the road with a temporary roundabout and temporary road surface currently in operation throughout the works site.

Most importantly for the town, the temporary traffic lights in Broad Street have now been removed. This allows traffic to flow through the town. As expected, the new roundabout design, alongside zebra crossings, is working very well and traffic is flowing much more effectively than it did in the past. The removal of the traffic lights at the northern end of Broad Street has significantly improved the traffic flow, with the zebra crossings allowing safe and swift pedestrian flow in the town centre.

Following a successful Project Amendment Request to MHCLG, FDC has recently launched a further grant funding scheme for business owners to access funding for new shop-fronts. The team have received 16 Expressions of Interest to date with first full applications being requested in September.

11-12 High Street, Wisbech (Cllr Boden, Cllr Hoy & Cllr Tierney)

A revised design and expected costs and their affordability continue to be discussed by the project team. Sources for funding are also being investigated to see if delivery of the project is an affordable proposition.

24 High Street, Wisbech (Cllr Seaton)

Etec, FDC's main contractor, continues with the construction work on 24 High Street, Wisbech. More progress is visible, with work now taking place at height, with brick and blockwork at the first-floor level, moving up towards the second floor more recently.

Unfortunately, the original completion date has slipped due to considerations regarding the floor slab size impacting on the laying out of brickwork following slight movement of buildings adjacent to the 24 High Street. Discussions are ongoing with the contractor regarding the revised formal expected completion date. Following piling issues in 2023 absorbing the 'float' in the project plan (i.e. the excess time built into the project plan in case of issues), there is no further flexibility so any issues mean that the project will complete later than expected. The original completion date was in October. Current estimations set the date in early 2025, but at the time of writing a confirmed date has not been negotiated between the contractor and FDC.

The Elms, Chatteris (Cllr Boden, Cllr Benney, Cllr Tierney)

FFL and Lovell Homes are progressing a reserved matters planning application to build out the site

Nene Waterfront Development (Cllr Boden, Cllr Benney, Cllr Tierney)

A reserved matters application is being progressed for plot 5 for an affordable housing extra care scheme and options being further considered for the remaining plots.

Growing Fenland (Cllr Boden)

Chatteris Projects

The Chatteris Town Council managed Chatteris Museum project has now moved the museum into its new premises (the old Barclay's bank building in the High Street) as scheduled.

The contract for the works to 14 Church Lane has been awarded and work is well underway in converting the former museum and town council chambers to create better workspaces, badly needed storage facilities and new community rooms. The existing first floor accommodation (residential flats) is almost ready to be offered to prospective tenants. The building work continues but should be completed shortly, allowing Chatteris Town Council to move back after using temporary accommodation at 2 Park Street. As a result of the building works large meetings of the Council, including full council meetings, are being held at the King Edward Centre.

Whittlesey Projects

Funding from the CPCA, following the suspension of the Whittlesey Heritage Centre project, has been secured for work to;

- Develop an SOBC regarding a Whittlesey relief road. Consultants will be appointed to progress this work.
- Add additional solar PV to the Manor swimming pool; Business case developed. Application to UKPN underway – awaiting notice from UKPN to proceed, procurement completed. Expecting to deliver project, subject to UKPN approval in early 2025.
- Improvements to the netball / tennis court area at the Manor Centre have been completed
- Whittlesey Buttercross
A meeting with local Members has taken place an improvements discussed are to be highlighted to the property owners (CCC) to see if FDC is able to manage the (minor) works concerned.

Wisbech Projects

Further works needs to be carried out to install equipment at Exchange Tower before the Shop Watch Radio Scheme can be progressed.

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 Benney)

The Estates team continue to engage as a key stakeholder in the ongoing accommodation review. As reported to members, this has included member tours of both Fenland Hall and The Base and work with appointed agents in preparation of an outline Business case to be presented to members in due course.

The first tranche of disposal continues as planning consents are granted followed by either a sale via auction or by private treaty. In the case of private treaty sales, to ensure fair value an independent valuation by a local RICS qualified surveyor is undertaken prior to disposal. To date Tranche 1 sales of resulted in capital receipts of £431K.

Work is concluding in relation to identifying potential sites for a further tranche of disposals, and these will be put before members for approval prior to disposal work commencing.

Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements

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 complete in the autumn 2024.

The next step for these 3 projects is to secure funding for their construction. Discussions between FDC, CCC and CPCA are ongoing to consider all the opportunities to get the funding needed.

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 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>

In July 2024, an additional project update went to the CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee. This report included the recommendation to draw down an additional £7million pounds towards phase FBC2b of the project, for the next two years up to March 2026. The funding is to progress the construction of the Twenty Foot Road and St Peter's Road schemes. It is also to progress the Northern Link Road FBC3 up to and including detailed design. Further information can be found on the CPCA website from the July 2024 meeting using the link below:

[Agenda for Transport and Infrastructure Committee on Monday, 22nd July, 2024, 1.00 pm \(cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/Agenda-for-Transport-and-Infrastructure-Committee-on-Monday,-22nd-July,-2024,-1.00-pm)

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 the latest 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. The outcome of this work is expected to be available in the autumn 2024. A link to the papers and information from 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. Pipeline work for RIS3 has been ongoing which includes consideration of the A47 Elm High Road Roundabout. Stakeholders and the public are now waiting the funding announcement for RIS3 covering the period April 2025 – March 2030. It is likely that any announcement will be in early 2025.

Whittlesea Station

In May 2024, FDC Cabinet approved £3million funding from CPCA to enhance Whittlesea Railway Station. The funding is available from April 2024 to March 2027. The first phase will be delivered up to June 2025 and will be an outline business case stage

with a preferred option scheme. Further details are available from the Cabinet paper using the link below:

[Agenda for Cabinet on Monday, 20th May, 2024, 2.00 pm - Fenland District Council](#)

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 2024/25	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP15	% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks	74%	70%	100%	
CELP16	% of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks	62%	70%	86%	
CELP17	% of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks	81%	80%	88%	
EGA1	% occupancy of our business estates	93.9%	90%	94.5%	
MS1	% occupancy of Wisbech Yacht Harbour	95%	100%	90%	

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

Comments

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CPCA Growth Hub Case Study – Fenland

Contact: Miguel Malnati Ramos - mmalnati@bionatsolutions.com

Business Name: Bio Natural Solutions

Business Address: E2 Building, Ronald House, Fenton Way, Chatteris, Cambs, PE16 6UP

Bio Natural Solutions

‘Changing the world one peel at a time’

Bio Natural Solutions is a global biotechnology company committed to changing the world, by reusing waste with biotechnology, one peel at a time.

Using potato peels and patented technology Bio Natural Solutions has worked to revolutionise the production of fresh fruit and vegetable produce as we know it by offering chemical-free, vegan, organic and net-zero commercial products for a carbon-neutral transition of the agricultural sector.

The fruit and vegetables on supermarket shelves are commonly coated in wax to preserve freshness post-harvest and to increase shelf-life. Bio Natural Solutions has created a chemical-free coating for fruit and vegetables that is natural and nontoxic unlike some of the current petroleum-based offerings. Bio Natural Solutions coating offers an invisible barrier to protect the produce without using pesticides or wax. By



taking advantage of organic waste obtained from agribusiness, they are offering carbon-neutral solutions that provide a positive impact on the environment as well as society.

Miguel Malnati Ramos, CEO of Bio Natural Solutions deployed the product with enormous success in Latin America, Europe and Asia. He saw an opportunity to offer the ground-breaking coating to the UK. After setting up an office in Chatteris, Miguel approached the CPCA Growth Hub knowing he had to build a network within the agriculture sector. The CPCA Growth Hub were able to reach out to the ever-growing Growth Hub network and introduce him to credible and key people within farming and Agri-Tech whilst offering future funding suggestions.

Growth Hub Manager Chris George said, "It is inspirational to work with innovative companies such as Bio Natural Solutions, not only do they offer natural and carbon neutral solutions they are also bringing the latest technology into the Agri Sector right here in Cambridgeshire".

Bio Natural Solutions reuses more than 70,000 kg (about 154323.4 lb) of potato peel per year; which would usually go to waste. Not only are they creating a positive impact on the environment but also globally as they are being recognised and accredited for their innovation. They are working to transform the agri-food industry and optimise organic waste whilst improving the quality of produce for consumers.

Make sure to check out their [website](#) and socials!

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

CPCA Update to
**FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL**

Growth Works Programme – whole 3-Year Review: Growth Coaching and Revenue Grants



385 Jobs (Committed)



240 Business Supported with growth Diagnostic



63 Business starting Coaching Assignments

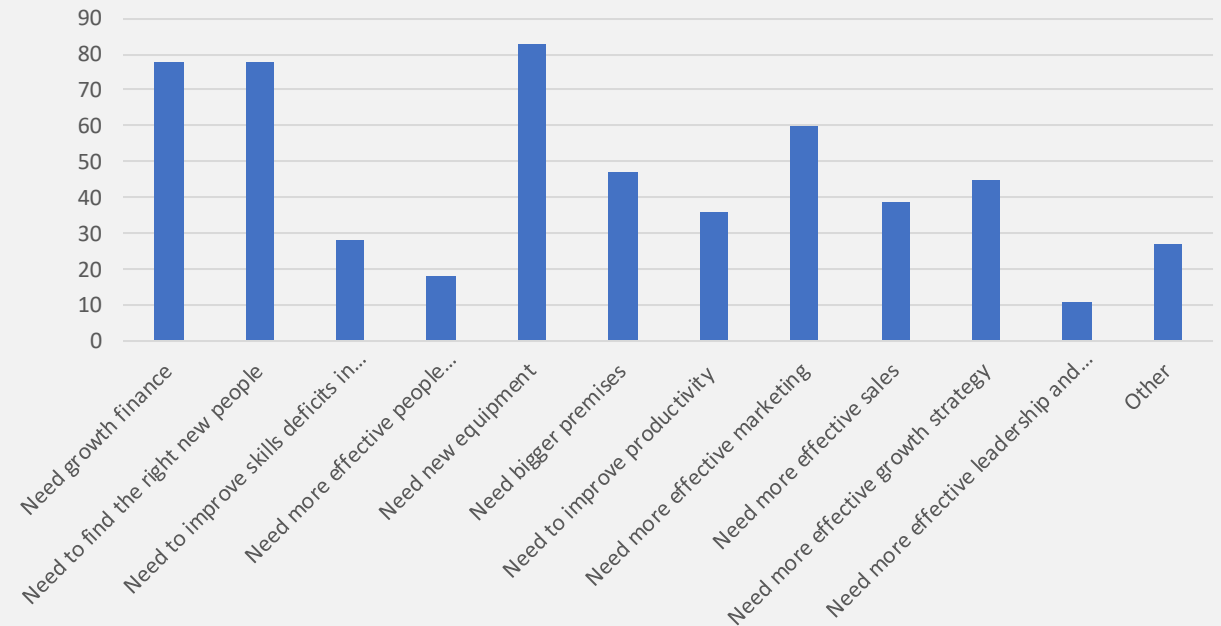


63 Business starting a Coaching Journey



63 Business completing a Coaching Journey

Diagnostic Report on Challenges by Businesses in FDC



Growth Works Programme - whole 3-Year Review: Inward Investment, Skills support, SME CapEx Grants and Equity Investment

Inward Investment

25 Jobs Created

2 Inward Investment successes landed locally

Skills

40 Apprenticeships created

183 Additional training and learning outcomes

SME CapEx Grants and Equity

224 Jobs Created

12 SME CapEX grant awards made to FDC local firms

Inward Investment Successes:

- Food and Drink (UK Inbound)
- Agritech (Peru)

- 6 of 6 eligible schools engaged in CEC
- 6 of 6 schools engaged completed a Compass

SME Capital Growth Awards

- £956,724 Awarded in Capital Growth Funding in local Small Businesses

CPCA Growth Hub



Growth Hub team of 4 TUPE'd from Growth Works Programme in November 2023



(Growth Hub is funded by DBT annual Grant of £298,500 to deliver business signposting service across CPCA region to businesses of any size)



CPCA Growth Hub and Fenland EDO team have a very strong relationship working in partnership, for example many joint visits to business clients across the year, this maximising value add to the client,

A great recent example of joint working is Bio Natural Solutions and this was a joint approach with Ann Wardle and the Growth Hub.

Outputs in FDC in last year:

62 businesses across the region received 1 hour session with Growth Hub business advisors (including, mentoring, signposting, guidance on national programmes)

12 businesses across the region have had 3-hour workshop delivery (business planning and Financial Overview)

Big role in helping the FDC UKSPF programme, including support to run Workshops and Mentoring

CPCA Growth Hub – Case Study

Bio Natural Solutions



Bio Natural Solutions is a global biotechnology company. Using potato peels and patented technology Bio Natural Solutions has worked to revolutionise the production of fresh fruit and vegetable produce as we know it by offering chemical-free, vegan, organic and net-zero commercial products for a carbon-neutral transition of the agricultural sector.



"It is inspirational to work with innovative companies such as Bio Natural Solutions, not only do they offer natural and carbon neutral solutions they are also bringing the latest technology into the Agri Sector right here in Cambridgeshire".

Chris George – Growth Hub Manager



Miguel approached the CPCA Growth Hub knowing he had to build a network within the agriculture sector. The CPCA Growth Hub reached out to the Growth Hub network to introduce him to key people within farming and Agri-Tech whilst offering future funding suggestions

UKSPF People and Skills

Funded by UK Shared Prosperity Funds, providing a region wide 'one stop shop' for businesses and residents looking to upskill. Increasing connection and cohesion between skills provision and the business community to grow the locally skilled workforce;



Growing the locally skilled workforce:

- ✓ Deliver Apprentice growth through increasing support for employers to navigate the system, Enabling SMEs to access greater financial support by developing levy transfer partnerships with businesses such as BBC, John Lewis and COOP.
- ✓ Drive job creation and broadening participation in the labour market through funded Internships (50% match funding salary costs) Provide 1-2-1 support to [\(Rush Fitness video case study\)](#)
- ✓ help business to identify recruitment and skills development needs and solutions, 'brokering' local support and provision to increase participation and drive the growth of a local, skilled workforce.

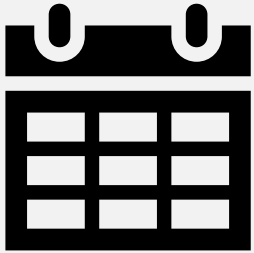


Increasing resident access to skills and employment support:

Increasing access to employability support, basic skills and informal learning, building pathways to careers with wider access for those furthest from the labour market by;

- ✓ Increasing the availability of high-quality employability support
- ✓ Expanding digital badging support offer
- ✓ Developing resident information platform to include free to use tools

SKILLS BROKERAGE SERVICE (GWWS)



From 1st April 2024...

- Place based approach, staff based 'on patch' providing 1-2-1 in person support for local businesses
- Place based stakeholder and partnership development. EG Wisbech Ely JCP teams to increase resident connection to provision, and employer access to talent.
- Greater value add and wider system engagement – membership of early help hub, supporting response to redundancy activity and a wider range of business support needs
- Dedicated careers events on patch led by All-age careers service (Autumn 2024)
- Employability support service launching September 2024 (Partnership between All age careers service REED in Partnership Centre 33) outreach to be delivered out of Wisbech and Ely

Commissioned Skills Provision (Fenland based only)

Adult Education Budget (AEB) and Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs:

(Courses to upskill and reskill adults with skills and qualifications needed for work, further education, or personal development)

Combined 23/24 Academic year investment £1.2m

(financial allocation by learner based on postcode)

Combined 23/24 enrolments: 1,889 on courses

On the previous academic year...



15% growth in budget allocation to upskill those in employment

30% increase in funding to support 50+ learners

11% increase in residents studying above level 2

**BETTER
SKILLS
FOR ALL**

Bootcamps:

- Wave 4 recruitment delivery recruited 44 learners, indicative investment of £128,028
- 57% of Fenland postcode learners were employed, 52% of businesses signing up staff were classed as SMEs indicating an emerging trend in employers utilizing bootcamps as a tool to develop talent

Careers Hub

Cambridgeshire
& Peterborough
CAREERS HUB

THE CAREERS &
ENTERPRISE
COMPANY

Supporting schools to align the strategic intent of the curriculum to the real world of work and business;

Every school is matched with an Enterprise Advisor, who is a business volunteer, who supports the schools in their development and execution of their Careers Strategy.

Expansion of business volunteers is currently underway to support schools to access wider business networks to support their programmes.

Gatsby Benchmark performance is solid across the Fenland area and represents some of the strongest in the region.

	BM 1 (Stable careers Programme)	BM 2 (Learning from career and Labour Market Information)	BM 3 (Addressing the needs of each pupil)	BM 4 (Linking curriculum to careers)	BM 5 (Encounters with Employers)	BM 6 (Experiences of Workplaces)	BM 7 (Encounters with FE and HE)	BM 8 (Personal Guidance)
Sep-23	100%	100%	98%	95%	92%	85%	88%	100%

CPCA - New Sector Champion Team



Nykki Rogers

**International Trade and
Investment Manager**



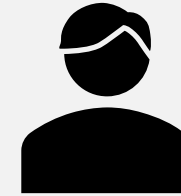
Paul Gibbons

**Advanced Materials
& Manufacturing**



Duncan Palmer

**Life Sciences
BioPharma & MedTech**



Emmanuel Ogbonna

**Clean Energy &
GreenTech**

Additional new Sector Champion roles currently being recruited:

**AgriTech and Food Production
Digital Infrastructure Creative & Media**



Promoting the Region

Why we went

Biggest UK Property Investment Event

CPCA led a team Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Pitch

450 Delegates from over 200 organisations visited our pavilion

Ensured we could give a louder and unified voice to the interests of the region nationally and globally



How we are following up

In contact with all visitors to the pavilion, following up on their specific interests

Pursuing all contacts made from speaking at other events

Impact made this year has given confidence to book a pavilion for next year – CPCA Pavilion space now booked

Promotion of our region and its assets to external audiences embedded as part of our 'business as usual activities

Market Towns Programme

Phase 1

Whittlesey Heritage Walk	£218,169
Wisbech Business Capital Grants Scheme	£200,000
March - FHSF	£900,000
March - FHSF (Additional Funding)	£1,100,000
Fenland District Civil Parking Enforcement	£400,000
Community Hub at Wisbech Park	£299,200
Chatteris Museum & Community Space	£1,050,000
Whittlesey Community Project	£195,000
Whittlesey Relief Road SOBC	£260,000

Phase 2

Social Enterprise Hubs - CCORRN (March)	£350,000
Social Enterprise Hubs - People & Animals UK (Wisbech)	£225,761
STEM in Fens Roadshows	£200,000



£4,167,369 Invested in FDC (Market Town Phase 1) - **29%** of total budget



£775,762 Invested in FDC (Market Town Phase 2) - **31%** of total budget

The Market Town Programme aims to:



Safeguard and enhance social capital.



Boosting the local Social Enterprise ecosystem.



Support Community ownership of local assets and boosting young people's engagement with STEM.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

UKSPF Programme in FDC

Project Title	Primary area	Funding amount
Amplifying Arts	Local Business	£ 120,000.00
Safer Wisbech	Communities and Places	£ 34,000.00
ASB	Communities and Places	£ 51,000.00
Fenland Investment in Business	Communities and Places	£ 908,000.00

Shared Prosperity Fund Aims:



Support small businesses and entrepreneurship



Improving careers education for all ages



Expanding green spaces (Included Walking and Cycling Routes)



Improve vitality of high streets



Support arts and culture



£1.13m Invested in FDC (UKSPF)



140 Volunteering Opportunities Supported



20 Business Receiving Non-Financial support



10 Business receiving financial support other than grants



5 Jobs Created or Safeguarded



45 Business introducing new products or technologies

Rural England Prosperity Fund

REPF Programme in FDC

Project Title	Primary area	Funding amount
Rural Grant Scheme – 23/24	Local Businesses	£109,178.50
Rural Grant Scheme – 24/25	Local Businesses/Communities and Place	£327,535.50



£436,714 Invested in FDC (REPF)

Rural Prosperity Fund Aims:



Boost the rural economy and create jobs



Provide capital grants



Supporting diversification to other business uses, building rural tourism.



25 Business Support



10 Farm Business Supported



12 Jobs Created

New Growth Support Programmes

Business and Social Investment Fund

This Fund has two elements:

- The first fund of £7.15m will investment into businesses adopting carbon reduction measures or delivering clean-tech products to the market.
- The second of £2.35m tranche will invest into Social Enterprise or Third Sector Orgs with grants and loans invested to generate social and community impacts.

Strategic Growth Fund

£21.5m capital investment into skills and economic capital continuing from previous Local Growth Fund, this fund is intended to provide investment into impactful projects that can leverage significant match funding and fund both the direct construction as well as enabling infrastructure.

Rural Levelling Up Fund

This £10m capital fund is to enable both local match funding for projects which will leverage significant external funding as well as expand the current market towns programme into other non-market town settlements in the area enabling the delivery of much-needed public realm improvements.

Strategic Plans

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER 2)

Developing a single strategic position to underpin the case for greater fiscal devolution and powers to unlock the delivery of major infrastructure, following earlier CPIER 1

State of the Region

Aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the area. It's a collaborative effort, aiming to collate essential data to support the development of regional policies.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Shared Ambition

A guide and charter setting clear commitments, and to be used by local and nationally elected representatives, public sector bodies and place leaders to unite and support a common direction in shaping future plans.

Innovation Plan

Enable and build on innovation, best practice, and forward strategic thinking to build the positive future we want for the area and facilitating start-up support and encouraging scale-up

Internationalisation Plan

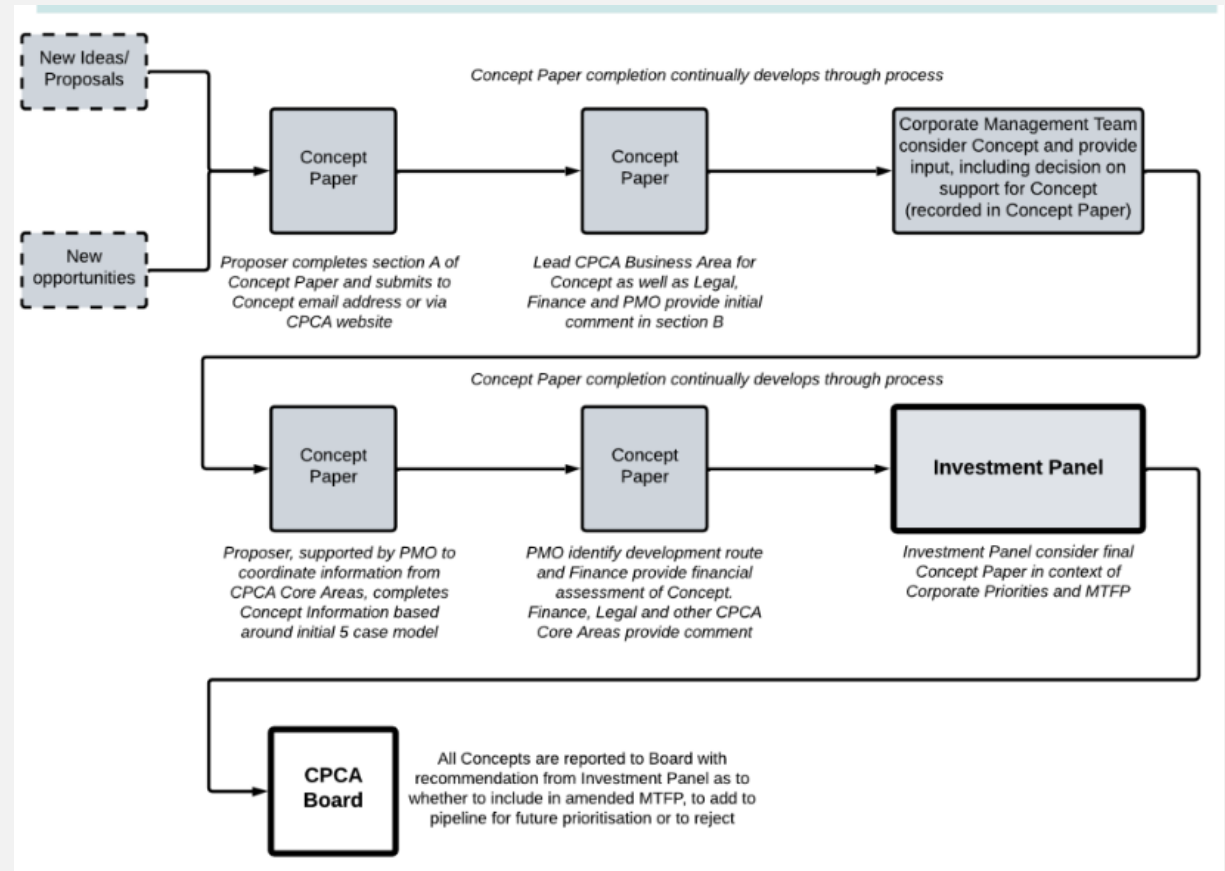
Trade and Inward Investment targeting to attract commercial investment in all areas of CPCA region through deep business cluster development, networking and knowledge transfer including supply chain development

Local Growth Plan

A new 10-year Local Growth Plan required by new Government guided by outputs from the Shared Ambitions and State of Region work completing this summer.

SAF – Single Assurance Framework

The Single Assurance Framework (SAF) is a set of **systems, processes and protocols** designed to provide an **evidence base and independent assessment** of the **governance, risk management, and funding processes of a funding or grant application**



Thank you,
we welcome questions

REF	Date Requested	Question	Target Date																				
COMPLETED ACTONS																							
	04-03-24	Gavin Booth Asked if Oil fire Burners are being subcontracted out ... Carl Grimmer of Clarion Housing to respond																					
		Followed up with an email 26 June 2024 – waiting for a response Answer received and circulated to the panel	10-07-24 11-07-24																				
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Fuel Type</th> <th>No of Heating Systems</th> <th>Compliance</th> <th>Repairs April 2023 -March 2024</th> <th>Repairs April 2024 - June 2024</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Oil</td> <td>105</td> <td>94.29%</td> <td>94</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Solid Fuel</td> <td>13</td> <td>76.92%</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grand Total</td> <td>118</td> <td></td> <td>98</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Fuel Type	No of Heating Systems	Compliance	Repairs April 2023 -March 2024	Repairs April 2024 - June 2024	Oil	105	94.29%	94	11	Solid Fuel	13	76.92%	4	1	Grand Total	118		98	12	
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Grand Total	118		98	12																			
ONGOING ACTIONS																							
1.																							
WATCHING BRIEF ITEMS																							
		None at present																					

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Overview and Scrutiny – Draft Work Programme 2024-2025

All Informal pre-meetings are held via Teams 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>
11 October 2024	14 October 2024	2.00pm	Via Teams	21 October 2024	10.00am
22 November 2024	25 November 2024	2.00pm	Via Teams	2 December 2024	10.00am
10 January 2025	13 January 2025	2.00pm	Via Teams	20 January 2025	10.00am
March 2025	25 February 2025	2.00pm	Via Teams	3 March 2025	10.00am
April 2025	22 April 2025	2.00pm	Via Teams	29 April 2025	10.00am

New Municipal Year –

21 October 2024

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	Annual Meeting with the Leader and Chief Executive		Paul Medd Cllr Boden All of CMT All of Cabinet
	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
	Transformation & Communications Portfolio Holder update	Quality Organisation	Anna Goodall Peter Catchpole David Wright Stephen Beacher Sam Anthony Councillor Tierney
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2023/24	All	Chairman Amy Brown

2 December 2024

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	Anglian Water		Cllr Murphy Grant Tuffs Anglian Water
	Progress of Corporate Priority – Environment (to include CSP & CCTV)		Annabel Tighe Cllr Count Cllr Mrs French Cllr Murphy Cllr Tierney Dan Horn Garry Edwards Mark Mathews Phil Hughes
	LGO & 3CS	Quality Organisation	Cllr Tierney
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2023/24	All	Chairman Amy Brown

20 January 2025

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	Draft Budget 2025/26	Quality Organisation	Cabinet CMT
	Draft Business Plan 2025/26	Quality Organisation	Cabinet CMT Dave Wright
	Fees and Charges 2025/26	Quality Organisation	Councillor Boden Peter Catchpole Cabinet Mark Saunders All of CMT

	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2023/24	All	Chairman Amy Brown

3 March 2025

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	Arts Council	Communities	
	Public Health & Education	Communities	
	Progress on Corporate Priorities – Communities	Communities	
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2023/24	All	Chairman Amy Brown

29 April 2025 (Boat house)

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	KEEP CLEAR IF POSSIBLE		
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2023/24	All	Chairman Amy Brown