

Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

**May 2024
(For performance in January, February
and March 2024)**

Cabinet Members



Cllr Chris Boden
Leader of the Council
& Portfolio Holder for
Finance



Cllr Ian Benney
Portfolio Holder for
Economic Growth & Skills



Cllr Jan French
Deputy Leader of the
Council, Portfolio Holder
for Revenues & Benefits
and Civil Parking
Enforcement



Cllr Sam Hoy
Portfolio Holder for
Housing & Licensing



Cllr Dee Laws
Portfolio Holder for
Planning & Flooding



Cllr Alex Miscandlon
Portfolio Holder for
Leisure & Internal
Drainage Boards



Cllr Peter Murphy
Portfolio Holder for
Refuse & Cleansing,
Parks & Open Spaces



Cllr Chris Seaton
Portfolio Holder for
Transport, Heritage &
Culture



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

Communities

Projects from Business Plan:

Support Vulnerable Members of Our Community

ARP updates (Cllr French)

Business Rates Collection is on target, as is Council Tax Collection. Days taken to process Local Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit also remain on target.

ARP are working to identify and prevent fraud leading to an increase in Council Tax income in the following areas:

- Local Council Tax Support
- Single Person Discount
- Council Tax
- Non-Domestic Rates

The ongoing review of newly awarded Single Person Discounts continues to provide positive outcomes. The ARP team are working with the largest Social Housing provider in the Authority to tackle Right to Buy and subletting abuse.

The team continue to seek opportunities to identify dwellings and businesses not registered or having had an undeclared change in use, leading to increased charges, including possible retrospective charges.

The Cambridgeshire Fraud Hub, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland District Council is operational, aligning with the Fraud and Compliance work carried out for other partners of the Anglia Revenues Partnership. This work has again consistently seen savings outweighing the costs of the work in the areas of Local Council Tax Reduction and Single Person Discounts particularly, over several years.

Homelessness and meeting housing needs (Cllr Hoy)

In 2023/24 the Housing Options team has successfully addressed the housing issues for 257 households where we assessed they were owed a duty to either remain in their own home or found alternative accommodation within either a 56 day prevention period or 56 day relief period. This is broken down to 142 at the prevention stage and 115 at the relief stage.

Prevention means the household has accommodation but are threatened with homelessness and relief means they have left that accommodation therefore there is a need to source some alternative accommodation.

The number of households seeking advice (homeless presentations) for this period was 2201. This is up 7.3% from last year's figure of 2051.

The number of households requiring housing advice continues to rise as the cost-of-living

crisis continues and fixed rate mortgage periods come to an end.

Housing advice has been given to 1143 households where no duties were owed by the Council. This means that following assessment and interventions there was no need to issue a formal homeless decision.

The legislative outcome desired is to get as many households issues resolved in Prevention as the best outcome, Relief as the second best outcome and working to reduce the number prior of main duty decisions (main duty decisions means that the Council could not resolve the housing issues presented by the household in either the prevention period nor the relief period and we have a legal duty to accommodate). The more this can be achieved means for households presenting to the Council we are helping to sort out the worry and uncertainty for households as quickly as possible and have them back in secure and suitable accommodation.

In total during 2023/24, we owed 250 households under prevention duties and 324 households under relief duties with 119 households being owed a main housing duty.

In 2022/23 we owed 182 households under prevention duties and 341 households under relief duties with 138 households owed a main duty.

Therefore, this represents an increase of 37.4% in the amount of prevention duties owed between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

This context is important as it not only demonstrates our commitment to preventative work and that we are keeping people in their home but that we are able to get involved in a household's homelessness situation early. Our prevention success rate in 2023/24 was 57% (the number of prevention duties owed (250) by the number of households prevented at this stage (142)).

For the forthcoming year we will try and bring this successful prevention work into resolving more households' issues at the relief stage. In 2023/24 we owed 324 relief duties with resolution found in 115 households' cases with a success rate of 35%.

This had a significant impact on the overall reported performance indicator metric which is;

The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing Options work for the year = 45% (257 preventions divided by 574 households where duties were owed).

This is 12% under the target of 57% with the following mitigating actions to improve performance for the forthcoming year:

- New community support officer recruited to provide management and support for existing and new temporary accommodation residents which frees up Housing Options officer's time to resolve homeless presentations earlier through each household's personal housing plan
- Increase in temporary accommodation through Local Authority Housing Fund and leased properties from Clarion
- Improvement in void performance by Registered Providers which has been affected by work necessary because of learning from the Awaab Ishak review outcome (damp and

mould)

- Increase in new build affordable housing being completed (see affordable housing section)
- Transformation to review Housing Options service which will hopefully enable further efficiency and release capacity.

In 2023/24, we have successfully rehoused 75 households within the private sector and shows the importance of how that sector can assist the Council in meeting its homelessness responsibilities. This continues to be a challenge with many landlords selling due to economic conditions thereby decreasing the pool of properties available. The market is also highly competitive.

Positive steps are being taken to reduce the length of time households are placed in emergency interim accommodation, for example B&B. Such accommodation is costly for the Council to provide but is also detrimental for the households affected trying to get on with normal day to day living.

	Number of households placed in B&B who left during this period	Number of nights in B&B	Average length of stay (nights)
2022/23	249	10,308 nights	41
2023/34	297	9,964 nights	34

The table shows that between 2022/23 and 2023/24, despite 48 more households placed in B&B (due to increased demand for services), the number of nights commissioned from B&B establishments reduced by 344 nights and the average length of stay reduced from 41 days to 34 days.

This is due to:

- an increase in temporary accommodation (TA) commissioned through Clarion (a further 6 properties commissioned June 2023)
- In the last 3 months of this financial year Temporary Accommodation provided through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF), coming on stream.
- Increase in relets from existing affordable rented housing.
- Increase in new supply of affordable housing.

It is expected with further LAHF properties being purchased by the end of August 2024 bringing a total number of LAHF properties by that time to 33, with new affordable housing being completed and continued reduction in time to relet existing affordable housing, this reduction in length of stay in B&B will continue this financial year. This delivers better outcomes for the households affected and also at a reduced financial cost to the Council.

Reducing Rough Sleeping (Cllr Hoy)

The Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) 5 Project supported a total of 27 clients from January to end of March 2024.

Of the 27 clients, 6 were placed in off the street accommodation, 3 were sofa surfing and the

remaining 18 were rough sleeping during this period. However, with support from the RSI programme we successfully moved 13 clients on in to settled accommodation, which includes supported living routes, into the private rented sector or reconnected with family and friends. A total of 8 clients had alternative outcomes such as custody, hospital or lost contact with services. The remaining 6 clients continue to be supported to find secure accommodation and move off the streets. For the total 27 clients that were supported during this period, 5 had restricted eligibility, 1 had unknown eligibility and the remaining 21 were eligible.

To summarise the end of year (April 2023 to March 2024) the RSI project has supported a total of 84 clients and of these, 45 have had a positive move on in to settled accommodation. A recent highlight of the success to create spaces to allow clients to move off the street is the Prevention and Move On Fund (P&MO) which was granted by DLUHC. A total of 21 clients have been supported under this funding as of March 2024. The breakdown of these interventions is below:

Prevention & Move On (P&MO) Fund:

- 8x Under intervention 1 (Moving On Fund)
- 1x Under intervention 2 (Deposits)
- 3x Under intervention 3 (Decompression for Rough Sleepers in work)
- 2x Under intervention 4 (Arrears)
- 5x Under intervention 5 (Flexible prevention fund). This has supported with matters such as fast tracking a passport for a client to be able to work, transport for re-connection to another area, as well as clearing a property for an extremely vulnerable client.
- 2x Under intervention 6 (Extended Support)

Alongside the support for those rough sleeping in Fenland, the other main focus for RSI is tenancy sustainment and homeless prevention. Since April 2023 to March 2024, the RSI project have supported 54 clients with tenancy sustainment and have also completed 54 homeless preventions.

Golden Age & Supporting older people (Cllr Wallwork)

This year, Golden Age hit a remarkable milestone – 20 years of serving our communities. To celebrate, an event was held in the Council Chamber in November 2023 with the Golden Age team, including Cllr Meekins, Cllr Barber, Cllr Jan French, Cllr Sam Clark, Cllr Susan Wallwork, Cllr Kay Mayor and Cllr Anne Hay. This special occasion wasn't just about cake and congratulations, though. We also welcomed back past members, who shared heartwarming stories of their experiences with Golden Age and reminded us of the lasting impact Golden Age has made on countless lives.

Over the past year, our Golden Age Fairs have brought valuable resources to communities across Fenland, holding fairs at the Manor Leisure Centre in Whittlesey, in Christchurch (where our first ever event was held in 2003), Wimblington Parish Hall, the Braza Club in March for our Christmas celebration and finally Parson Drove in February 2024.

During the summer heat, we encouraged everyone to stay hydrated with handy Golden Age water bottles. As winter approached, we prioritised warmth with the "Stay Warm" campaign,

partnering with Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT) and Citizens Advice Rural Cambs to distribute winter warmer packs. These packs, filled with cozy blankets, hot water bottles, hats gloves, scarves and thermal flasks were met with resounding positive feedback from attendees.

In total, throughout the year, we have had over 500 visitors attend the events this year with 35 different organisations supporting the events including;

CPFT, Oddballs, Armed Forces Covenant Officer, CCC Communities Service Team, Cambridgeshire Libraries, PECT, Careline, March Model Railway Club, Dementia Carer Support Service, Octavius, The Bobby Scheme, CamSight, Parkinsons Support Group, Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, Fenland Volunteer Centre, Lyncroft Care Home, College of West Anglia, Citizens Advice Bureau, Anglian Water, Active Fenland, Victoria Lodge, FACT , Clarion Housing, East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust, Age UK, How are You? Fenland, Fitness Rush, Caring Together, Breathe Easy, Neighbourhood Watch, Versus Arthritis, Care Network, Women’s Institute, Fraud and Cyber Prevent, Healthy You, Royal British Legion, Cambs Fire and Rescue, Country Court Care Home and Hereward Rail Partnership.

After two decades, we are still committed to connecting older adults with the information support and resources they need to thrive. We’re already planning exciting events for 2024 which will be found in the coming month on our website www.fenland.gov.uk/goldenage

Housing Enforcement Policy & Empty Homes (Cllr Hoy)

April 2023 – March 31st 2024

Town	HMOs investigated	Other Homes investigated
Wisbech	58	101
March	12	43
Chatteris	3	10
Whittlesey	9	12
Villages	4	42

Total homes investigated is 294.

VILLAGE BREAKDOWN

Benwick = 0
 Coates = 3
 Coldham = 0
 Christchurch = 3
 Doddington = 3
 Eastrea = 0
 Elm = 3
 Fridaybridge = 3
 Foul Anchor = 0
 Gorefield = 2
 Guyhirn = 4

Leverington = 9
 Manea = 6
 Murrow = 1
 Newton = 2
 Parson Drove = 2
 Stonea = 0
 Throckenholt = 0
 Thorney Toll = 0
 Tydd = 3
 Turves = 0
 Wimblington = 0
 Wisbech St Mary = 2

No.s of Notices Served April - December 31st 2023	S.11 Improvement Notice *	S.12 Improvement Notice **	Notice of Intent ***	Final Civil Penalty Notice ****	EICR *****	MEES *****	EPC *****
April		1	1				
May					1	2	
June	3	4		1			1
July			6	1			1
August	1	1					
September	4	4		1		1	
October	1	1			1	1	
November	1	1			2		3
December	2	2					
January							
February				6	2	2	
March							
Total	12	14	7	9	6	6	5

* Notices served in relation to Category 1 (serious) hazards identified during inspection

**Notices served in relation to Category 2 hazards identified during inspection

***Notice issuing intent to serve a civil penalty fine due to a breach of legislation & can be reviewed by Assistant Director upon appeal if a request is submitted by the landlord.

****Final Civil Penalty fine issued after review by Assistant Director- (landlord can only make a

further appeal to the First Tier Tribunal)

***** EICR- Requirement for Landlord to comply with Electrical Installation Regulations- Final Number of fines issued after internal review

***** MEES- Requirement for Landlord to comply with Minimum Energy Performance Regulations- Final Number of fines issued after internal review

***** EPC- Requirement for Landlord to comply with Energy Performance Certification Regulations- Number of fines issued after internal review

In summary, since the new approach to enforcement was implemented in September 2019, out of the 111 Improvement Notices served:

- 78 have been paid in full.
- The remaining debts will continue to be registered as a formal Land Charge on the title deeds until they are paid, or the property is sold, at which stage the debt will be recovered as a 1st charge.

Of the 75 Civil Penalty Notices served:

- 38 have been paid in full,
- 7 are subject to payment arrangements,
- 2 are subject to formal court action,
- 3 are with the High Court Bailiff,
- 3 are proposed to be written off as not recoverable
- 9 have been revoked
- 13 are subject to an ongoing appeal.

All fines from the EPC breaches have been paid.

Empty Homes

Table 1

Represents the total number of properties brought back into use through officer involvement from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

	Long Term Empty (LTE) 6-23mths	Long Term Empty Premium (LTEP) 24MTHS+
Total Officer Involvement	71	14
Total for period	1.4.23 – 31.3.24	85

Table 2

Represents the number of properties brought back into use for the New Homes bonus.

	LTE 6-23MTHS	LTEP 24MTHS+
Total Officer Involvement	28	9
Total for period	3.10.23 – 7.10.24	37

Promote Health & Wellbeing for all

Leisure & Freedom Updates (Cllr Miscandlon)

Total site visits for 2023/24 exceeded 500,000 across the 4 centres and membership within Fenland remains stable across the board despite the economic pressure being faced by the customer base. Freedom's continued drive for efficiency and energy saving measures, coupled with the fall in wholesale energy prices has improved the financial outlook for 2024/25.

Works continues at the George Campbell Leisure Centre in March has seen the refurbishment of the gym's male and female changing rooms, the installation of a DLUHC grant funded changing places toilet and will see the completion reception alterations in early May.

The George Campbell has also had pool filters replace recently, necessitating a 2-week pool closure. Unfortunately, shortly after that was complete a pool pump failed and then a chlorine dosing system also failed. Both meaning further, short term closures.

February Membership Joiners

Leisure Centre	Joiners	Target	Performance
HUDSON LEISURE CENTRE	103	110	94%
MANOR LEISURE CENTRE	95	85	112%
GEORGE CAMPBELL LEISURE CENTRE	86	110	78%
CHATTERIS LEISURE CENTRE	68	70	97%

*GCLC has seen internal works and pool closures as detailed and a change of centre manager, leading to a more difficult period in terms of sales and retention.

Investment via the capital program and successful grant funding (swimming pool support fund) will see a large number of projects delivered over the next few months, including pool lighting upgrades to LED, solar capacity additions, destratification fans to pool halls, CHP (combined heat and power unit) replacement at Manor Leisure Centre, replacement pool boilers at George Campbell and building management systems panel upgrades. The combination of these works, when completed, will significantly reduce energy usage and costs across the three swimming pool facilities.

Alliance Leisure has been commissioned to undertake a strategic facility assessment of the three large leisure centres. Further, significant, condition survey works are required in the shorter term. This assessment will consider the three facilities, condition survey works and other options to ensure that the facilities are fit for the next 20 years. A report is due in May 2024.

Active Fenland (Cllr Miscandlon)

The Active Fenland team of three grant funded co-ordinators and a part-time manager continue to deliver projects throughout Fenland designed to encourage people to be more active to support their health. A detailed programme of activities may be found [here](#).

The Football Foundation is to deliver a number of [PlayZones](#) across the country in the next 18 months. Fenland has been selected as a District that needs this sort of provision. The Council has passed Stage 1 of a process, with Stage 2 now offering funding to carry out work within the community to determine what sort of facility, in what location might be appropriate, should the Council proceed to a full application later in the year.

Health & Wellbeing Update (Cllr Wallwork)

Early Help Hub Update

The North Place partnership board has been created to help deliver the expectations from the new Integrated Care System (ICS) legislation.

Historically Fenland District Council has been keen to get into the space of the health service system to make them aware of the wide range of services that we have responsibility for that can both help reduce demand for NHS services and deliver better outcomes for residents (wider determinants of health) and reduce pressure on our services.

As well as this, NHS services can become aware of emerging issues that FDC need to hear about with the Council often getting involved when it has escalated and requires a higher cost intervention from ourselves. Key examples would be Homeless, House condition and Environmental health duties and responsibilities.

What is of great concern to Councils is the need to manage increasing demand for services within a reducing budget determination from Government. System integration to resolving household issues is seen as key to that. Evidence from South Norfolk has shown that having a triage process that has the “offer” of the wider public sector & available VCS system rather than siloed individual organisations struggling to get a collaborative response, helps deliver better outcomes for residents / households earlier.

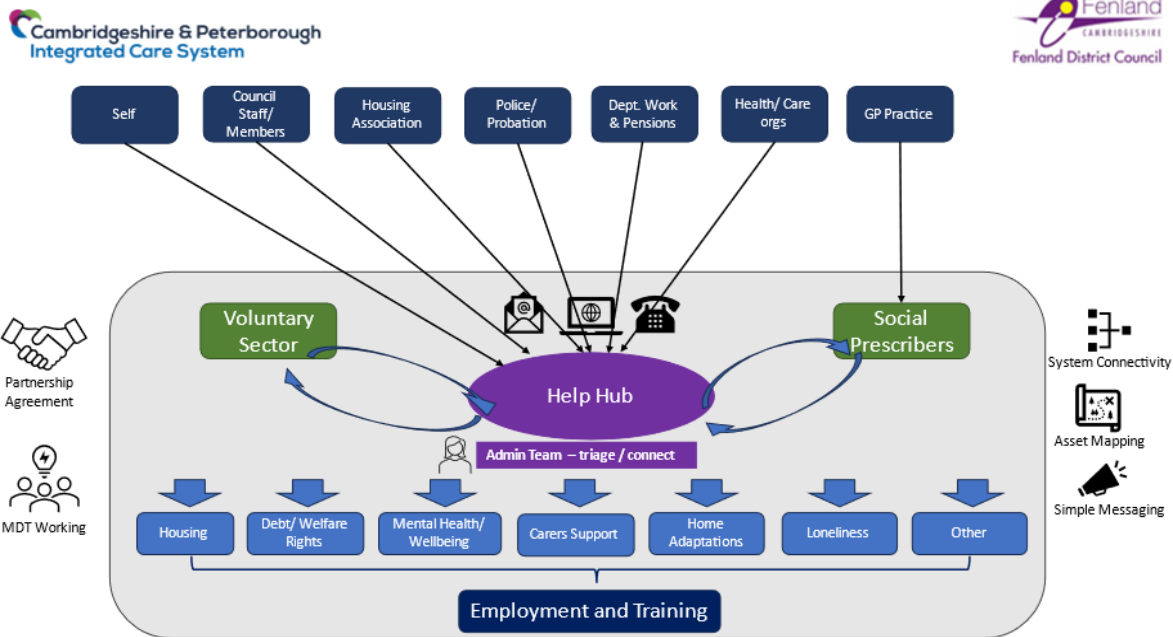
Once triaged, the resident gets referred to services in a much more efficient and collaborative way to deliver better outcomes and at lower cost, often through the VCS sector. The VCS often feel frustrated at being the “poor relation” to the public sector, so having the sector as part of the same triage process supports increasing their impact in the community to assist their bids for funding.

Public health has given funding to the North Place Partnership board to develop a pilot approach across the district of Fenland. The funding has a remit on employment and skills so initially will focus on encouraging residents receiving Universal Credit with health issues to get closer to and back into work. The other initial focus is residents in work but sick, and what support can be offered to the fit note process within a GP practice. However, the aspiration is that this virtual hub will become generic for all issues as the pilot progresses and if future additional funding can be secured.

The North Place Partnership updated Overview & Scrutiny on this project at their March 2024 meeting.

Health partners have recognised their structure for managing a Fenland district wide project is fragmented with 3 integrated neighbourhoods (IN), Wisbech, South Fenland and Whittlesey being part of the Peterborough IN. The public sector structure that best fits the geography of

such a virtual hub is FDC. The proposed system to be developed is set out on the diagram below.



FDC have costed undertaking the triage work to receive over £100,000 (costs being finalised) of funding to help support delivery of the project at no additional cost to the Council. The work of the hub will assist in demand management for our statutory services, homelessness, environmental health, benefits and house condition prevention, intervention and management. As well as this, non statutory services like Economic development growth plan and the Golden Age programme can be utilised to improve impact of work that falls out of the one team collaboration across the public sector and VCS.

Next steps

- Mobilisation of the project, looking to a start date of June 2024 with the pilot to work for a year initially.
- Updates on the mobilisation work underway to future Full Council updates.
- Tracking the impact of the work to help secure further funding.

Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture & Heritage

Delivering the Creativity & Culture Strategy (Cllr Seaton)

Fenland Culture Fund:

19 applicants were successful with grants of up to £2000 each as part of the Fenland Culture Fund, funded by Arts Council England and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. With a combined value of more than £34,000, some of those funded projects and activities have started to take place.

Local photographer Andy Gutteridge received a grant to support his documentary photography exhibition, 'The Life and Soul of the Straw Bear', which celebrated the volunteers who strive to maintain the tradition of the Straw Bear Festival in Whittlesey.

The annual event, which has close ties with the local community and its history, was revived in 1980 but dates back to at least the mid-19th Century.

Andy's exhibition opened at the start of this year's three-day festival last month. It documented the preparations leading up to the festival and brought to the fore the efforts of those who give up their time to ensure the event continues to inspire and captivate people from all over the world.

Thorney resident Andy, who was born in Whittlesey and has been a photographer for over 20 years, said: "Although I'm probably better known for my sports photography, I have been developing documentary photography projects for a few years now. When the grant application opportunity was announced by the council, it became obvious that this project output dovetailed with the aims and objectives of the Fenland Cultural Strategy, and I was delighted the panel decided to make the award in support of this project."



Express Yourself:

The Integrated Care System funded project 'Express Yourself' supports children and young people's health and wellbeing through positively engaging with arts and cultural activity based on the NHS 5 Ways to Wellbeing.

It is now in delivery and being administered by 20Twenty Productions. With their subject expertise, they are a Fenland based Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. 20Twenty Productions were ideally placed to administer this project because they work with many young people and schools already and they understand very well some of the challenges that young people are facing today. 85 young people aged 8-15 have signed up for the first phase. 9 artists and professionals are delivering the sessions, they have been supported with training to further their own skills and development.



Working with partners to promote Fenland through Culture & Heritage (Cllr Seaton)

The Fenland Poet Laureate Award closed for entries at the end of January. Shortlisting was completed by members of the FDC Culture, Arts and Heritage Executive Advisory Committee and finalists were selected by award-winning poet and CAH committee Chair, Cllr Elisabeth Sennitt Clough, and the 2022/23 Fenland Poet Laureate, Qu Gao.

This year's Fenland Poet Laureate Awards saw a total of 63 eligible entries - with 28 adult entries and 35 in the Young Fenland Poet Laureate category, open to those aged 17 and under. An awards ceremony was held at March Town Hall on Friday 15 March, when shortlisted and finalist poets had the opportunity to read their poems and received their anthologies and trophies.

Hannah Teasdale, who has recently published her third poetry collection 'Indelicate Sundays' and runs poetry workshops at local schools, won the appointment with her poem, 'The Un-Coupling', inspired by her winter sightings of migrated swans to the fields of Fenland.



Lacey Vinn, a student from Sir Harry Smith Community College in Whittlesey impressed judges with her poem, 'Christmas Truce', inspired by a Christmas Day football match from World War One.

His Majesty's Deputy Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, Dan Schumann, who was among the guests at the evening, said the creativity and talent shown on the night was "truly remarkable".



Supporting groups to hold public events (Cllr Murphy)

We are pleased to have now successfully introduced an online booking system for events. This enabled 125 bookings to be accepted digitally with the first 10 days of opening, equivalent to 60 hours of administration. We have also selected event caterers following a local tender, after 38 companies bid for 5 events. We were pleased to see lots of variety and local companies benefiting from the Four Seasons events.

St George's Fayre has received £14,000 of support from Creative People and Places Market Place in the form of staff time and resources. This has enabled March Events Committee to

expand the arts and cultural offering at this year's event. Grant funding from Fenland Culture Fund (£2000) and Cambridgeshire Community Foundation (£2000) has also enabled 20Twenty Productions who are a member of the St George's arts working group, to commission Mandinga Arts an organisation specialising in carnival puppetry, like that seen at the Notting Hill Carnival, to come to Fenland and work with Neale Wade Students to develop their skills to create head dresses for the parade. Funding secured by Fenland Arts has also been used for community groups to create screen printed banners for the parade with local artist Ricki Outis.

There are Dragons popping up in shop windows this week as we lead up to the 21st April Fayre; courtesy of professional artist Cary Outis funded by March Events Committee. Headline acts this year will include a fire breathing orc and a community parade at 11:30am. Around 5,000 visitors can expect to see a packed entertainment programme on both the main stage and bandstand, over 100 stalls, street food, amusements, fun fair and indoor craft fayre. The event continues to bring significant benefit to the local economy.

Pride In Fenland Awards (Cllr Wallwork)

The Pride In Fenland Awards took place on Wednesday 13th March 2024 at Wisbech St Mary Community and Sports Centre with a record 117 nominations for 79 incredible groups and individuals who do wonderful things in our community.

All the nominees were invited to the awards ceremony where there were certificates for all and trophies for winners and runners up in the individual, group and young person categories and winners in the special judges, environmental and lifetime achievement award.

It was great to see young and old alike thrive on supporting their communities and those less fortunate and children who are brave, loyal and determined to make a difference.

5 Market Place Wisbech – Fire Damaged Building (Cllrs Laws & Seaton)

As with any damaged listed building, the process of excising the damaged material to preserve element of the building for redevelopment is a delicate matter. The original proposal was subject to a firm objection from Historic England as it was not clear what was salvageable and what impact the demolition works would have on the structural integrity of the attached flanking buildings.

The retention of the façade was prioritised owing to it being a particularly original façade that was deemed salvageable by the applicants own structural report as well Historic England's engineer.

Phase two should be underway shortly (the middle section of the building) after which the applicants will need submit a method statement for the final front phase. As it stands there is no certainty as to the condition of areas which have not been revealed for inspection.

While the scaffolding at the site has an impact on other nearby buildings this is not within the control of the Planning Team. The fire occurred in April 2022 and the Listed Building Application in relation to demolition was not submitted until April 2023. Due to the inadequate initial submissions and additional information required to satisfy consultees the approval was issued in September 2023. The Planning Team have progressed this matter in a sustainable

and proactive manner designed to lead to a consent.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 2023/24	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
ARP1	Days taken: new claims and changes for Council Tax Support	6.48 days	9.00 days	9.31	
ARP2	Days taken: new claims and changes for Housing Benefit	5.29 days	8.00 days	7.45	
CELP1	Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	246	250	294	
CELP2	The proportion (%) of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing options work (%)	53%	57%	45	
CELP3	Number of empty properties brought back into use	81	50	85	
CELP4	Amount of New Homes Bonus achieved as a result of bringing empty homes back into use	£98,395	£45,000	N/A (March 2024)	N/A
CELP6	Number of Active Health sessions per year that improve community health	513	650	605	
CELP19	Satisfaction with our leisure centres (Net Promoter Score)	29	30	47	
CELP20	Value of Arts Council Grants achieved in Fenland	£43,000	£201,000	£199,000	

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

Comments CELP 2 – see update in Homelessness section.

Environment

Projects from Business Plan:

Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

Diverting waste from landfill (Cllr Murphy)

The provisional waste figures for the first 11 months of this financial year demonstrate a continuation of the changes that we observed in previous reports based on the impact of the cost of living.

The teams have already collected a total of almost 37,000 tonnes of domestic and commercial waste from our customers up to the end of February. Within this total, the Residual Waste (green bin waste) has reduced by 2.8% (609 tonnes) and blue bin recycling waste collected has reduced by around 4.3% (350 tonnes). However, the weather has resulted in an increase in garden waste collected of 18.7% (1,503 tonnes).

Collected Waste Tonnages	To Feb 2023	To Feb 2024	% Change
Overall tonnage	36,720	36,964	<1.0%
Residual Tonnage (green bins)	22,145	21,536	-2.8%
Dry Recycling Tonnage Actual (blue bins)	8,142	7,792	-4.3%
Compost Tonnage Actual (brown bins)	6,433	7,636	+18.7%
Dry Recycling & Compost Tonnage Total (blue and brown bins)	14,575	15,428	+5.9%

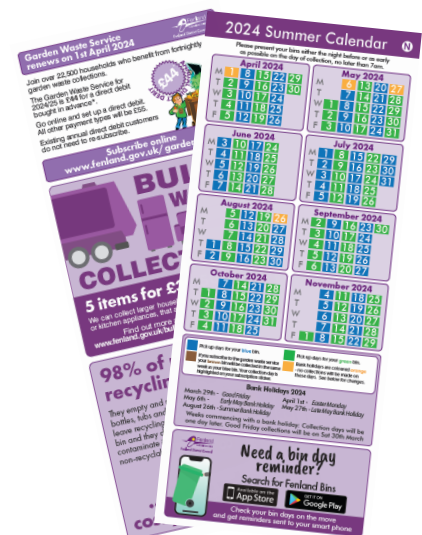
Collected Waste –		
Percentage Recycling (blue bins to green bins)	26.9%	26.6%
Percentage Recycling (blue and brown bins to green bins)	39.7%	41.7%

The economic pressure on our customers is being seen in the reduced amount of green and blue bin waste being produced.

These reduced levels of recycling, along with significant changes in the values of the recycling material markets has seen a change in the income achieved from recycling compared to the highs of previous years.

In the first 11 months of this financial year, we achieved a net income of £292,768 from the materials presented, which is £144,175 less than the same period last year. This is because a tonne of Fenland's recycling was worth £72 in December 2022, down from £130 in August 2022, and is now worth closer to £50. The 50% profit share within the contract has been impacted by this change in the value of the materials.

We will continue to support our customers to maximise their recycling efforts and continue to treat their waste as a resource, but the economic situation is having an impact across the



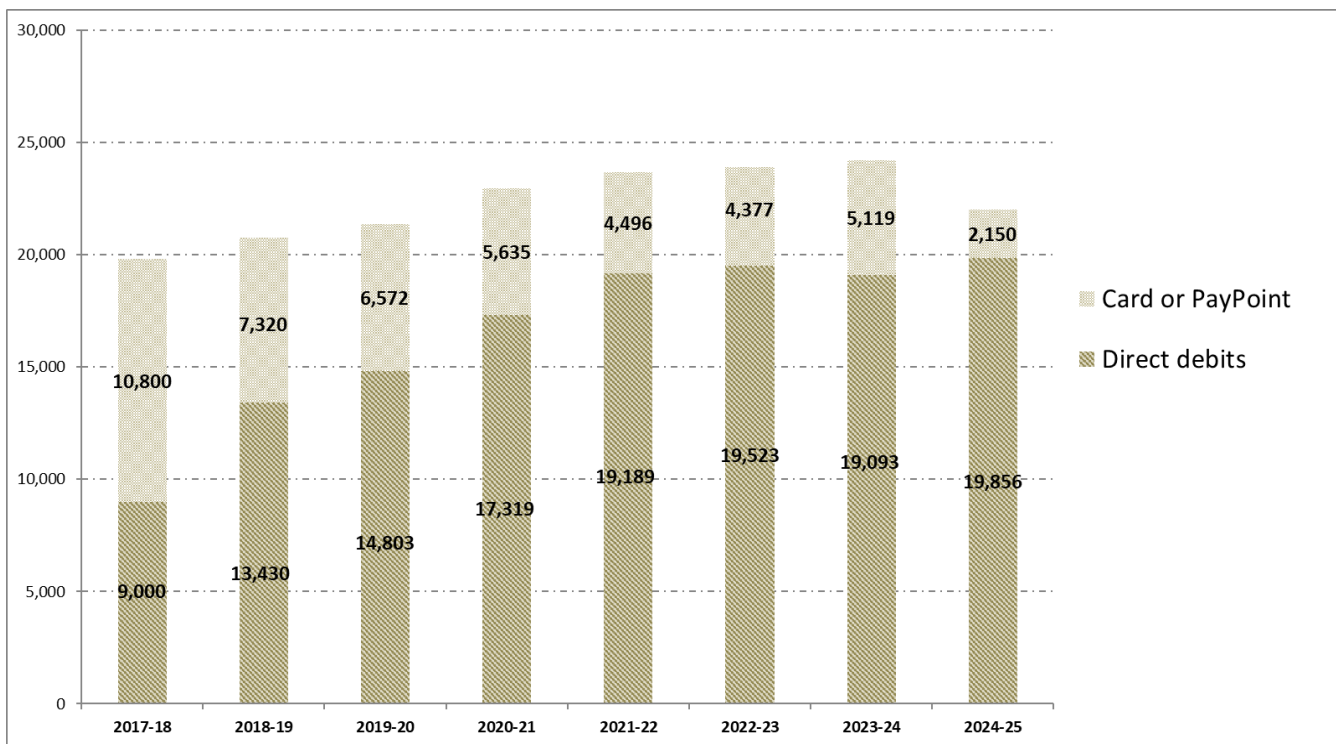
recycling resource chain and reducing income from the materials collected.

To protect the quality of recycling materials collected, the team have rejected 7,184 blue bins so far this year. Each of these customers is written to with information about how to get their recycling correct. Alongside this, through inspections 4,796 properties received information directly from supervisors encouraging best use of recycling bins. Of these 4,796 bins inspected, 5% contained incorrect materials (227). During March all 45,500 properties received the summer calendar again in early March, along with a flier in council tax bills, all contain recycling messages to encourage improved recycling behaviours.

Garden Waste Collection (Cllr Murphy)

Last year there were a total of 24,212 subscriptions, with 78% direct debits, which generated an income of £985,000 to cover the costs of providing the garden waste service to those who have chosen to make use of it. To date this year we have 22,006 subscriptions, with 91% direct debits at present and a total of £991,900 of income so far.

Garden Waste Subscriptions 2017-2024



Last summer produced significantly more garden waste than the previous year's dry summer and the team have collected more than 7,600 tonnes of garden waste in the past year. This material is sent to be composted locally.

Delivering clean streets and public spaces (Cllr Murphy)

The cleansing team works 7 days a week, 364 days a year to keep Fenland's streets and public open spaces clean.

During the past financial year, the team responded to 2,006 requests from the public to deal with fly-tipping, graffiti, street cleansing or similar requests. Of these, 93% (1,874) were actioned the same or next day.

The development, increased kilometres of kerbs requiring sweeping, the weather and the amount of building work taking place in some of the Fenland towns is placing an increased pressure on the available HGV mechanical street sweeping resource and they have struggled to meet their usual sweeping schedules this year. Many schedules have had to move out to 8 or 10 weeks.

The scheduled cleansing and rapid response service, with support from Fenland's active local volunteers, including Street Pride groups, deliver clean streets and public open spaces in Fenland. The standard of cleanliness is monitored by Street Scene officers using Keep Britain Tidy surveying methodology across a range of land use types and all wards. In the past year officers have completed 1,166 surveys for litter and street sweeping and found 1,131 to be of a suitable standard (97%).

Deliver a competitive trade waste service (Cllr Murphy)

Fenland has 590 commercial waste customers, including 25 who make use of the commercial food waste service. The team have collected more than 1,020 tonnes of waste from these customers, of which 121 tonnes was recycling and 90 tonnes was food waste. The total invoiced income for the year for the commercial waste, recycling and food waste is £522,625.

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

Tackling fly-tipping, illegal parking, dog fouling, littering and ASB (Cllr Murphy)

The total number of fly tips for January February and March are shown below. Wisbech rural villages have been the most affected across the district.

Month	Total	Chatteris	March	Whittlesey	Wisbech	Villages
Jan	148	12	29	5	52	50
Feb	78	3	14	2	34	25
Mar	129	7	24	13	49	36

The Street Scene Team aim to be as proactive as they can and aim to attend fly tipped sites to look for any evidence. Some of our proactive work is included below:

- **5 members of the public have been issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice** of £400 for breaching their householder's duty of care. All paid cash for waste to be removed which was later found dumped. No checks were carried out as to who was taking waste away with one resident showing an enforcement officer a message saying the person, they were happy to give cash to was accused of dumping waste. 3 of the fines have been paid. The others are still within timescale.
- **A male from Wisbech has been prosecuted at Peterborough Magistrates Court**

after pleading guilty to dumping waste in West Street Car Park. The person was fined £40 by the court with additional costs awarded of £490.

4 Formal Interview Under Cautions have been carried out. All were questioned in connection with waste fund dumped.

Additional enforcement work is taking place on March Marketplace to raise awareness of the parking order following the recent improvement works. Sadly, we have had to issue **6 parking fines** to cars who were found to be parking illegally.

The team have received **a total of 65 reported abandoned vehicles. All were investigated and 2 were removed by our contractor** due to being a danger to the highway.

Points to note:

- Chapel Road Car Park review and the location for the fair post expire (March 2024)
- Grant funding of £1400 has been received from the PCC antisocial behaviour communities fund. This will be spent on fly tipping signage and 2 new cameras which can be used for covert surveillance.
- An audit was carried out of our covert surveillance operations and the Council passed and were praised for being compliant.

Maintaining open spaces through grounds maintenance contractor and Street Pride, In Bloom, Green Dog Walkers and Friends of groups (Cllr Murphy)

Tivoli stated on grass cutting rounds in early spring and, despite the wettest winter on record, things have gone according to plan so far.

The West End Park extension is being adopted from developers Cannon Kirk at any time. Tivoli has now taken on grass cutting duties for that area too.

A total of 20 Street Pride events were held in January, 19 in February and 28 in March by community groups to improve the environment. As well as regular work parties, a few key events to highlight are:

- On 31st January the Friends of Rings End Nature Reserve held a Stargazing event, led by local astronomers. This was an opportunity for the community to attend to look at and learn about the stars whilst being able to appreciate the reserve and nature they can find on their doorstep.
- The Friends of March Railway Station held an open house event on 10th February and recruited 5 new volunteers.
- The Friends of Wisbech General Cemetery held their annual Snowdrop Walk on Sunday 11th February. Funds raised on the day will go towards further enhancements to the cemetery.
- The month of March saw 13 groups hold a litter pick to coincide with Keep Britain Tidy's national campaign 'Great British Spring Clean'. At March Street Pride's event they were joined by members of staff from MJS Construction and pupils from All Saints Inter-Church Academy.
- Also under the campaign, Benwick Street Pride / In Bloom undertook a wildflower

sowing project at the three gateway entrances to the village with support from FACT & funds from Benwick Parish Council as part of their biodiversity programme.

- The Friends of Octagon Graveyard gave a tour to visitors from Tydd St Giles and Newton-in-the-Isle Gardening Club, so that they could hear about the history of the site, the people buried here, and measures being taken to make it a wildlife friendly pocket park.

Working with town councils and the community to provide local markets and market town events (including Four Seasons events) (Cllr Murphy)

Please see update earlier in the report – [‘Supporting groups to hold public events’](#)

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

FDC received the updated corrective sign and line costs from Cambridgeshire County Council on 23rd November for all four tranches (one for each of the Market Towns and surrounding areas) where traffic regulation orders are in place. Collectively, **294** signing defects were found to exist along with **743** lining defects. The target cost (estimated cost which could go up or down) for the signing and lining works amounted to **£592,393.33** which also included a 10% contingency allowance.

Based on minimal civil enforcement officer deployment, the annual revenue deficit to FDC for the administration and operational running of CPE was estimated at **£45,469.20** per year. This excludes any costs associated with administering waiver, dispensations, suspensions and permits which would be conditional of the County Council agency agreement.

Whilst the CPCA funding deadline was revised to December 2025, the CPE project cannot be delivered unless the estimated funding shortfall in the region of **£500,000** is found from the FDC purse. Currently progress on the CPE project has been paused until such time as additional funding is found or committed.

Reference should be made to the Cabinet report dated 18/12/2023 - Property, Assets & Major Projects – On and Off-Street Parking Enforcement Update Paper.

Officers are currently looking at the estimated cost of introducing a District wide parking places order across all FDC owned car parks. Whilst this would not offer enforcement of on-street parking areas, this would enable off-street parking areas owned by FDC to be regulated and enforced which would in turn free up parking spaces to reduce on-street parking contraventions.

Street Lighting (Cllr French)

Street Light Repairs & Maintenance

A total of 67 streetlight faults were reported and attended to during the months of January to March by FDC’s streetlight maintenance contractor on behalf of FDC, Clarion Housing Association and the seven of the Parish Councils that FDC provide streetlight services for. Only 22 of the reported faults related to District Council streetlights during this period.

Over the last 12 months, 235 streetlight faults were reported. An overview of the fault attendance can be seen below. These figures exclude any programmed replacement or

upgrade works.

Fenland DC –	118 Fault Reports
Clarion -	6 Fault Reports
Christchurch –	5 Fault Reports
Elm –	39 Fault Reports
Gorefield –	11 Fault Reports
Manea -	35 Fault Reports
Newton –	7 Fault Reports
Parson Drove –	6 Fault Reports
Tydd St Giles –	8 Fault Reports

The above figures include 7 faults which required emergency attendance and 4 which were major faults.

Capital Street Light Replacement Works

A number of streetlight replacements have been progressed on behalf of six Parish Councils. In recent months progress has also been made in completing any outstanding FDC replacement works that had been previously ordered, however some connectivity works are still outstanding with UKPN, despite continued officer and contractor communications with UKPN and Cambridgeshire County Councils StreetWorks team.

The remaining capital streetlight replacements shall be ordered following programmed electrical and structural testing works due to commence in July and the appointment of a new streetlight service provider following a tendered contract exercise later this year.

FDC Car Park Maintenance (Cllr French)

Car Park asset inspections are scheduled to commence in April where the various defects shall be quantified and actioned. The Engineering Team have seen construction costs for repair works increase considerably over the last 12 months and a noticeable reduction in contractor interest to undertake repair works for FDC.

Gully cleansing works for all FDC's public car parks was undertaken in January /February.

Liaison with the National Trust continues following the expiry of the long term 60-year lease agreement of Chapel Road Car Park on 25th March. FDC's former lease will hold over on a protected lease arrangement until a way forward is determined and agreed.

FDC have now received a notice to vacate the Darthill Road Car Park from solicitors acting on behalf of the landowners. Currently FDC have until 8th April 2025 to vacate the site, however FDC officers are seeking legal advice in relation to this matter following which a detailed strategy for the site will be circulated to cabinet for consideration.

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

Community Safety Partnership updates (Cllr Wallwork)

Drink Spiking Awareness:

Community Safety worked with the Licensing team and the police licensing officer to create and co-ordinate a drink spiking project. Based on feedback given by police, spiking was low in the Fenland area, so an educational campaign was deemed more appropriate. As such, posters promoting education were created and, with the help of the Streetscene team, they were handed out to local drinking establishments. Distribution was intelligence led and we opted for likely 'hotspot' locations linked to the nighttime economy. A few designs were created and distributed.

Shoplifting:

As part of the partnership work looking at the problem of shoplifting, engagement with stores identified a lack of awareness and a willingness and/or confidence to report offences. The Fenland police teams and FDC Community Safety & Reprographics designed and printed a shoplifting booklet. The booklets have been distributed across the retail outlets of Fenland.

Feedback from retail outlets about the booklet

- QR codes in booklet were well received.
- Liked the examples of outcomes.
- GoodSam well received.

March town distribution was completed as a part of Police action week focussed on retail crime which helped gain traction and relevance to the visits.

External Funding:

The partnership continues to support applications for external funding. FDC teams have made a number of bids to a OPCC fund relating to fly tipping issues. The partnership has also made a funding bid to support the delivery of two projects related to the Serious Violence Duty. The applications have received local support and have received funding.

Hate Crime Project:

Hate Crime training has been delivered to staff from organisations that are Third Party Reporting locations in Fenland. Attendees included Job Centre plus, Oasis Centre, Wisbech town council and Freedom Leisure.

Domestic Abuse Project:

Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence media campaigns continue to identify and share a wide range of content that will reach out to men, women, LGBTQi+ whilst also signposting to the support that is available.

Working with the County Domestic Abuse Sexual Violence partnership and an action to increase engagement with the Eastern European (EE) Community on Domestic Abuse,

Community Safety has secured advice and support flyers in 5 EE languages. These are being shared with partners, such as Housing, Community Centres, Ferry Project, Community Organisations and Primary Care.

Work Force Development:

The CSP continues to deliver training sessions to help improve the awareness of frontline staff and volunteers who work across Fenland. These sessions are linked to community safety topics and priorities of the partnership;

- February: Focus on Eastern European Victims of Domestic Abuse was delivered to 57 frontline professionals and members of community organisations.
- March: In conjunction with Hourglass coordinated a domestic abuse awareness session to 23 frontline staff and members of community organisations

Community Engagement:

Chatteris

The fourth and final town event was held in January at the King Edward Centre in Chatteris. This event was supported by partner agencies including, Cambs Fire & Rescue, NHW, Scams & Cybercrime Officer from Cambs Police, Bobby Scheme. Issues reported included concerns with dog fouling and speeding and enquiries relating to NHW.

Elm

A community safety event was held in Elm church at the lunch club in February. Residents engaged with Cambs Police, Cyber Crime officers and community safety to ask for advice and guidance on safety using internet sites, online purchasing and how to report dog fouling to FDC.

We continue to seek opportunities to visit rural locations and these smaller events are primarily supported by Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the local Neighbourhood Police Team and the Scams/Cybercrime Officer.

Fenland Diverse Communities Forum updates on delivering the Community Cohesion Action Plan (CIIr Wallwork)

In partnership with Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the Diverse Community's Forum (DCF), and its partners an awareness programme is underway to raise/ improve awareness of hate crime trends, improve confidence for people to report these crimes and the formal reporting options and third-party reporting opportunities to do this. This also includes on-going refresher training for the established third-party reporting centres across the district, with over 100+ professionals/ volunteers who work across Fenland attending the training in the last year. There was also a Social Media campaign which partners were encouraged to support and this is repeated and synced with other initiatives. This hopefully will help to raise people's confidence to report and thus improve the under reporting of these crimes that take place.

Some of our challenges include that many of the victims state to partners that they believe that they have to accept being treated in this way as they believe that this is part of life in general. They simply don't feel valued enough to see that this is unacceptable and/or confident enough to report these to the police for a number of reasons. A lot of work is done by Diverse

Communities Forum partners to dispel this myth and to help build confidence to report incidents and provide alternative ways to do this. To make reporting more user friendly, we have promoted on-line reporting and local community led independent reporting centres for anyone to come forward and report incidents of hate incidents and/ or crime. These centres offer the opportunity to victims and witnesses of crime to talk to someone in a safe place. What people say in the centres are strictly confidential and help people to report an incident without, in the first instance, directly speaking to the police. Trained members of staff are on hand to provide people with advice and to also refer victims to support services if they need any extra help.

Hate Crime reports:

This does not include incidents that the Police currently don't provide details on. The table below provides the number of crimes reported in each town and the hinterland surrounding it.

Date 2023/24				
No of Hate Crimes reported in the month of...	Chatteris	March	Whittlesey	Wisbech
April	0	0	0	+
May	0	1	0	7+
Jun	0	1	2	2
July	0	1	0	11
August	0	2	1	9
September	0	0	0	3
October	0	5	0	5
November	0	2	1	3
December	1	0	1	5
January	0	0	0	8
February	0	4	0	8
March	2	4	0	2
Totals	3	20	5	63

A total of 91 hate crimes were reported during this timeline.

April and May 2023 figures have been amalgamated due to a change in Police reporting figures.

We also work with the County wide Victims Hub who can offer support to victims by professionally qualified people.

Appropriately trained community partners in the Diverse Communities Forum also engaged in low level community mediation as one of a range of conflict resolution interventions that seeks to settle disputes and conflicts at the neighbourhood level, referring people (if appropriate) to the victims hub. Other practical conflict resolution intervention tools include peer mediation and are in place at schools who receive ongoing support from the police.

The partnership maintains ongoing links with the Third Party Community Reporting Centres in the district. These will also be promoted by the Council's communications team.

There is a Hate Reporting Centre Partnership Protocol in place for all Reporting Centres in Cambridgeshire.

Community Safety Grant Agreement updates (Cllr Wallwork)

Working with Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) and local police, the team conducted a community engagement session in the Safer Street 5 project in Wisbech. The session was intended to improve awareness of and increase membership of NHW. There was interest in starting three potential new NHW schemes which will be progressed.

Reports were received of inappropriate use of a mini-moto on a public green space and impact of noise nuisance, which was also damaging green space and making green space unsafe to use. Working with the customer to identify the potential perpetrator, we've then been able to link with local police regarding a visit to suspected perpetrator.

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

The CCTV shared service has maintained its 100% service function across a 24/7 period – the CCTV service is the only council service that is delivered across 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

From April 2023 to March 2024, the CCTV service has been able to respond to 1,110 incidents across our four market towns including incidents relating to anti-social behaviour, criminal damage, violent crime, illegal drug use, possession of weapons and theft. As a result of CCTV intervention this has led to 152 arrests being made by Cambridgeshire Police. This highlights the work CCTV services do to support the council and partners in responding to crime and disorder and helping to make our communities safer and reduce the fear of crime.

The CCTV service also continues to be pro-active in delivering services that helps reduce crime & disorder and anti-social behaviour by delivering regular camera patrols of our four market towns and other key locations. The CCTV team have delivered 4,380 patrols during 2023/24. All patrols are conducted across the 24/7 period ensuring that no matter what time of day and night our local communities are being protected and that any issues or concerns are being identified as early as possible.

The CCTV service also provides the councils 'out of hours' telephone contact services for example, homelessness, stray and lost dogs, cleansing incidents, dangerous buildings and structures, damaged trees, to name but a few areas. During 2023/24 the CCTV service has responded to over 388 calls for services from our telephone contact service.

Street Drinking Update (Cllr Wallwork)

Community reports to police and FDC continue to be low.

CCTV continue to monitor and provide data feedback. Of the observed street drinking by CCTV, the behaviour of the individuals involved rarely requires notifying the police for their consideration of attendance.

Homeless outreach resources continue to report less observed street drinking in public open spaces. It's believed Op Luscombe has had a positive impact.

Op Luscombe, the police led partnership work to tackle street based ASB issues, continues to have a positive impact. External funding secured by FDC will support extra policing activity in addition to their normal patrols.

Monthly partnership monitoring meetings continue in addition to the Op Luscombe hub meetings.

The general consensus of partners is that street drinking is reducing overall in Wisbech. However, partners are conscious of seasonal trends and potential increase as we enter the lighter days and warmer weather.

A fixed CCTV camera has been installed at St Peter's Church Gardens, which is a hotspot location. The camera has been funded through Safer Streets 4.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 22/23	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP8	Rapid or Village Response requests actioned the same or next day	96%	90%	93%	
CELP9	% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards	98%	93%	97%	
CELP10	% of collected household waste – Blue Bin recycling (1 month in arrears)	27%	28%	26.6%	
CELP11	Customer satisfaction with refuse and recycling services	95.8%	90%	93.6%	
CELP12	Customer satisfaction with our garden waste service	89.1%	85%	89.8%	
CELP13	Number of Street Pride and Friends Of community environmental events supported	236	204	255	
CELP14	% of those asked who are satisfied with events	97%	95%	98%	
CELP18	% of businesses who said they were supported and treated fairly	100%	95%	100%	

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

Comments
CELP 10: Recycling weights are reducing as a result of some increases in contamination, producers reducing the weight of their packaging and customers changing their buying habits.

Economy

Projects from Business Plan:

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration

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

2023/2024 saw a significant uplift in the delivery of affordable dwellings in Fenland in comparison to the previous 2 years. 16 of the affordable ownership units in 2023/2024 were delivered as part of the First Homes scheme and were the first ones within the district.

2023/2024 numbers are subject to change as we gather final year end numbers, but we are confident that changes if any will be small and be higher rather than lower.

2024/2025 and beyond:

Pipeline developments of over 1500 affordable dwellings (700 affordable rent, 300 shared ownership, and 500 tenure TBC)

Currently forecasting circa 400 units to be completed in 2024/2025 continuing the upward trend in numbers.

External funding bid updates (Cllr Boden)

Shared Prosperity Fund

In 2023/24, Fenland District Council awarded £194,910 to eight Fenland businesses through the UK Shared prosperity fund. 100% of available funds for 2023/24 have been distributed and all projects were delivered by the 31st of March 2024 deadline.

UK Rural Prosperity Fund 2023/24

Fenland District Council awarded £75,005 to fifteen businesses through the UK Rural Prosperity Fund. All capital items have been purchased prior to 31st of March 2024 deadline.

For 2024/25, three grants through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund went live in December 2023 and closed on the 6th of April 2024.

- (1) UK Shared Prosperity Fund – 123 expressions of interest received; grants requested totalled £2,632,284 with a projected return of investment totalling £4,513,000. Only **£316,500** is available to meet Fenland business's needs.
- (2) UK Shared Prosperity Fund for Start-Ups – 26 expressions of interest received
- (3) UK Rural Prosperity Fund – 20 expressions of interest received

Capital Projects Update:

Accommodation Review

Work continues in conjunction with the instructed expert external partners to help draw together the Outline Business Case in respect of the short-listed options regarding the organisation's future accommodation requirements. The Outline Business Case will support the decision-making process in relation to the future of the Corporate Accommodation.

As part of the next steps, we are engaging 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 Corporate Accommodation will be brought to Cabinet in Spring 2024, following which, if Cabinet are in agreement, a full business case of the preferred option will be commissioned.

Wisbech Port

The suspended quay works are completed, APA Concrete Repairs met the contractual repair deadline of 15 December 2023 for the repairs to the underside of the quay.

We have now received two consignments of the new cargo of LECA (Lightweight Expanded Clay Aggregate). This will still be monitored closely by the Port Authority and our environmental team to prevent any migration of the material.

The Port of Wisbech is currently receiving 3-4 cargos of timber and bricks each month. The timber is being discharged on both Crab Marsh Berth and our town Berths due to split shipping loads by Port of Wisbech Ltd costumers.

The yacht harbour and boat yard continue to be very busy with additional commercial fishing vessels arriving for their spring maintenance programs. Whilst some vessels have left for the summer, the increase of commercial vessels arriving has resulted in additional work linked to lift outs and use of yard space, including a broken-down RNLI vessel that needed to be lifted out onto transport for repair. However, we are still on target to achieve our performance targets of 95%.

Berthing Applications have been sent out for 2024/25 and we have received 74% back within the first two weeks of April. This follows fees and charges being approved by Cabinet early in March.

The Elms Chatteris

Lovell and Fenland Future Ltd are developing the business plan, technical reports and final scheme design for the reserved matters planning application to be submitted.

Nene Waterfront Development

A Reserved Matters planning application is being finalised for the affordable housing extra care scheme on plot 5 and work is progressing as to the development on the remaining 4 plots.

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

The March Future High Street programme continues through delivery phase and at pace. To date, the Marketplace scheme has been completed on time and under budget, along with four property grants being provided to local property owners.

Grants Update:

Government have confirmed that the grants can now be offered to business tenants as well as property owners, dramatically increasing the appeal of the grants. Officers are currently working up an application process for this revision to the grants available.

Broad Street and Riverside update:

The Broad Street project continues to be delivered by main contractor Octavius, with regular community coffee mornings making officers and staff available to members of the public that may have questions or concerns.

At the time of writing, paving along the eastern side of Broad Street, Dartford Road and Station Road is completed. The toilet block and shelter have been demolished and the road has been relocated to operate on a temporary surface of the new road layout.

The temporary mini roundabout was installed prior to the Easter weekend and is operating as planned, although there are still a set of temporary lights in operation creating some minor delays for road users. These are expected to be removed at the end of May.

Following a brief road closure in March, a significant underground void has been repaired, reducing future risk of damage and future emergency closures of the road.

The coming weeks will see the next phase of the project progress as works focus on the southern end of Broad Street and initial works begin on the western side of the road implementing the new pedestrian area, planters and street furniture.

A planning application for the replacement toilet on Grays Lane has been submitted and is live on the planning portal. This application is due for determination in May.

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 work spaces, badly needed storage facilities and new community rooms. The existing first floor accommodation is already taking shape as a residential flat, and initial work is now complete for the new build above the flat roof part of the building at the rear to create a second residential flat for rent. 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.
- Improvements to the netball / tennis court area at the Manor Centre:
Fencing replacement has been completed, lighting units have been ordered and the playing surface refurbishment is due to complete w/b 29 April.
- Whittlesey Buttercross – trip hazard works
Discussions regarding options for this work have taken place. Meetings with local Members will be booked in the coming weeks to consider the situation.

Wisbech Projects

There is no further progress with the Shop Watch Radio Scheme due to issues around access to the aerials at Exchange Tower.

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 and overage claims is ongoing with a total of £466K received as of October 2023. The remaining initial properties continue to be pursued via planning consents prior to sale at auction to ensure maximum value. Future value gains are also protected with the adoption of stricter overage clauses.

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

Promotion of sustainable road, rail and concessionary travel initiatives

Manea Railway Station

The car park at the station opened in August 2023 with a soft launch. An official opening was held in January 2024.

March Station

The platform 1 building project and the refurbished and extended station car park was officially opened in May 2022.

Whittlesea Station

Following the completion of the second strategic outline business case and options appraisal work in late 2022, additional funding needed to be sourced for the Outline Business Case (OBC) and to deliver projects on the ground. Following a public consultation in late 2023, the CPCA have approved £3 million pounds for Whittlesea Station from April 2024 to end of March 2027.

Further details about the Whittlesea Station funding are available here [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com)

Hereward Community Rail Partnership

Funding applications in 2023 were successful in securing money for a Manea Walking and Cycling map and a series of 10 mini maps covering a range of locations within Fenland. These projects were successfully completed in March 2024 and can be views from the following link:

[Fenland Walking and Cycling Maps - Fenland District Council](#)

The CRP worked in partnership with the Friends of March Railway Station to enable children from Westward School to visit the station, learn about its history and view and the model railway.

Gardening projects have also been completed with the new planters finished at Whittlesea Station, new planters for Peterborough Station and a gardening/Volunteer Day at Ely Station.

A successful Meet the Manager Event was held in Manea Village Hall and at Manea Station. This gave local people the opportunity to meet with train company representatives and ask questions.

Engagement with CPCA and CCC on delivery of major road and rail infrastructure projects

Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP)

There is no specific update on this project

The LTCP sets out the forward transport strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is an essential document to help secure funding for local transport improvements. The CPCA are currently updating this document. In November 2023 the latest version of the LTCP went to the CPCA Board for further discussion and was adopted. This version of the document includes the full draft LTCP with the district chapters, the main report and all the appendices. It can be viewed from the link below.

[CMIS > Meetings](#)

Relating to the September 2023 version of the LTCP, at FDC Council on 2 October 2023, a motion was passed that the LTCP should be revised. The good elements should be retained and matters relating to deliverability and funding should be amended and prioritised. Any such prioritisation should recognise differences within individual districts. A copy of the motion has been sent to all CPCA Board members. Further details can be found in the FDC press release,

a link to which is below

[Call for revised local transport plan - Fenland District Council](#)

Wisbech Access Strategy

There is no specific update for this project.

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. It contains a range of transport projects in Wisbech that aim to address transport issues within the town and to help support the delivery of the scale of growth in the Fenland Local Plan. 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. 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>

There has been delays relating to land acquisition and ongoing discussions around related issues such as probate. This work is now expected to complete before the end of 2023. The next step for these 3 projects is to secure funding for their construction.

March Area Transport Study – Main schemes

There is no specific update for this project. Work is ongoing to progress the individual projects as set out below.

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.

In January 2023, A paper went to CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee. The paper asked the Committee to:

- note the completion of the Full Business Case stage 1 (FBC1);
- Recommend to the Combined Authority Board to approve the drawdown of £4,149,825 for the construction of MATS Broad Street;
- Recommend to the Combined Authority Board to approve the drawdown of £300,000 for the completion of the FBC 2;

Here is a link to the Committee Paper and relevant reports for further details: [CMIS > Meetings.](#)

Work is ongoing to deliver these projects until Spring 2024.

The schemes forming part of this project are:

- A141 / Peas Hill Roundabout Upgrade (52m ICD), including the creation of an allmovement signalised junction at the A141 / Hostmoor Avenue Junction.
- A141 / Twenty Foot Road Signals.
- Broad Street / Dartford Road / Station Road Mini Roundabout, with one lane in each

direction on Broad Street

- High Street / St Peter's Road Traffic Signal Improvements.
- Development of a Northern Industrial Link Road (NILR) – As a larger more complex project this scheme is expected to be taken to FBC2 in 2024.

March Area Transport Study – Walking & Cycling Schemes

There is no specific update for this project. Work is ongoing to progress the individual projects as set out below.

The MATS project also includes a Walking and Cycling Strategy. £562,800 was 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

There is no specific update for this project. Work is ongoing to progress the individual projects as set out below.

This is a CPCA funded project with study work being taken forward by CPCA.

In November 2022, CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee and the Board approved work to Undertake an Options Assessment Report to provide the economic analysis on mode options, including existing information on heavy rail. This will be based on a service operating between Wisbech and March which removes the current dependency on Ely Area Capacity Enhancements whilst still being mindful of the future strategy to link into Cambridge. £80,000 has been drawn down from CPCA Medium Term Financial Plan to undertake this options assessment work. This study work is currently ongoing.

A link to the papers and information from the November 2022 CPCA meeting with the the relevant reports and papers 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

There is no specific update for this project. Work is ongoing to progress the individual

projects as set out below.

In May 2023 National Highways released a series of documents and a consultation to support the Roads Investment Strategy 3 process covering the period 2025 – 2030. The consultation is live until 13 July 2023. It includes a Strategic Road Network Initial report, regional reports, and interactive maps. There are several references to A47 within the East of England regional report. The outcome of the consultation will feed into the RIS3 decision making by Government. The documents can be viewed from the following link:

<https://routestrategies.nationalhighways.co.uk/>

As part of RIS2 National Highways are working on a series of Pipeline scheme undertaking feasibility and other technical work to support decisions for RIS3. One of these projects is A47 Elm High Road roundabout. They are also considering this roundabout alongside Weasenham Lane/Ramnoth Road. Officers are providing extensive technical input into the project. The outcome of the work will go forward to Government as part of their decision making for RIS3. Any such decisions are expected to be in 2024.

Whittlesey Relief Road Project SOBC

The Whittlesey Relief Road Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) project is being procured and managed by Fenland District Council with funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) market towns programme. The project commenced in March 2023 with a paper approved by FDC Cabinet for the Governance arrangements and procurement of a contractor to deliver the project. Please see the link to the Cabinet paper for further details.

[Cabinet Paper March 2023 - Whittlesey Relief Rd V2 6.2.2023 updated 02.03.23.pdf \(fenland.gov.uk\)](#)

A procurement exercise has since been completed and a contractor appointed in August 2023. Project Board meetings took place in August and September 2023. The project has an agreed programme to complete in late autumn 2024. Initial evidence and gap analysis work, including traffic surveys was completed in 2023 and early 2024. Technical workshops have been held to seek the views of key stakeholders and a case for change report is in progress. All the steps of the project are in line with government business case guidelines.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 23/24	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP15	% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks	74%	70%	92.5%	
CELP16	% of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks	62%	70%	68%	
CELP17	% of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks	81%	80%	85.75%	
EGA1	% occupancy of our business estates	93.9%	90%	95%	
MS1	% occupancy of Wisbech Yacht Harbour	99%	100%	95%	

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

Comments

Quality Organisation

Projects from Business Plan:

Governance, Financial Control & Risk Management

Finance and internal audit updates (Cllr Boden)

The budget for 2024/25 was approved by Full Council in February 2024 and work to finalise the 2023/24 numbers is in progress. It is looking increasingly unlikely that we will have a full external carried out on the 2022/23 statement of accounts as the audit system attempts to deal with extensive backlogs. A Value for Money audit for 2022/23 was carried out and preparations for the 2023/24 audit are taking place.

The Audit and Risk Management Committee met in February and March 2024 and full papers are available on our website. Following the last update, we have successfully recruited to the vacant positions in the Internal Audit team and a new Head of Internal Audit joins us in May with a new Internal Auditor starting on the 1st July. There will be some overlap with our interim arrangements as we want to ensure a full handover and to continue to deliver the internal audit plan in line with expectations.

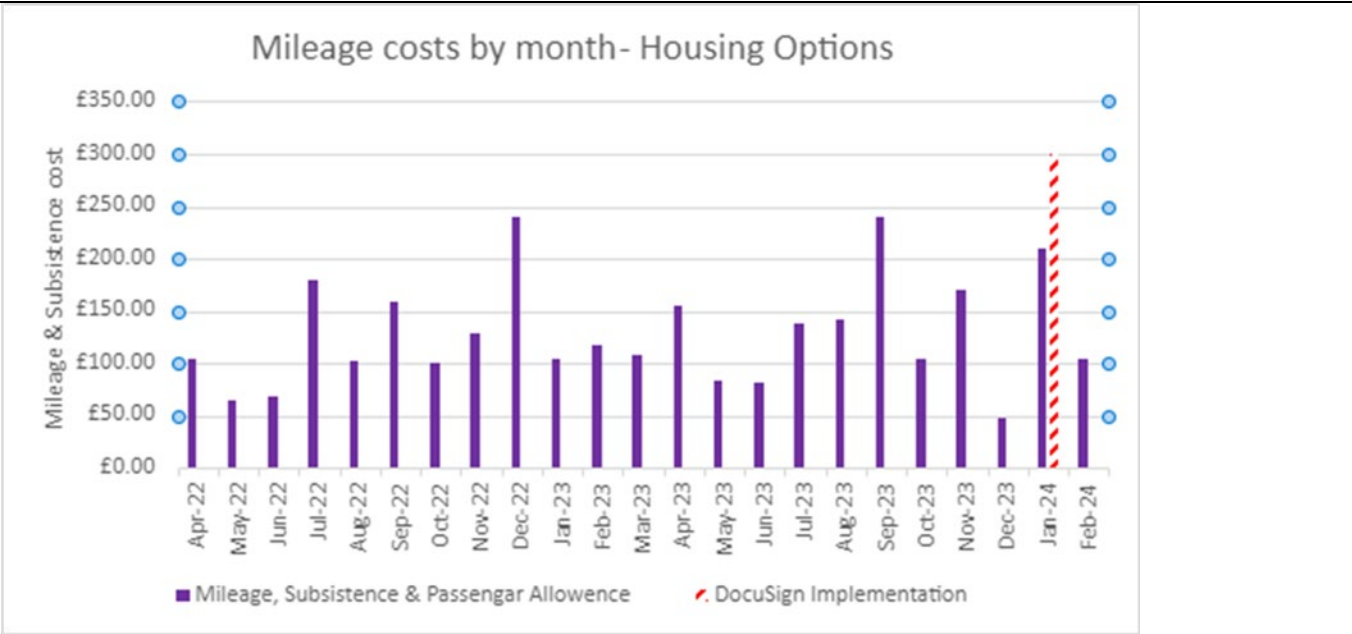
Data protection updates (Cllr Boden)

There have been no reportable breaches of the UK GDPR during the period to which this briefing relates. However there have been 4 recorded breaches requiring no further action. In the same period, there have been no data subject access requests.

Transformation and Efficiency

Transformation Project updates (Cllr Boden & Cllr Tierney)

The transformation team have saved officers 67 hours within the first week of successfully delivering the Booking to Live project into the Markets and Events team. Implementing a cloud-based booking service has improved the customer experience and the transformation team are analysing the capacity to put this now proven software to good use further across the Council. The next Booking Live implementation will be with Active Fenland as we are estimating a 28-hour efficiency per month within their team, allowing staff to spend more of their time on core work rather than administrative tasks. In addition to this project, transformation have also delivered the DocuSign project into Housing Options. This again has had an enormous immediate impact on Officer time and in turn a positive effect on managing the pressures that accompany the vital work undertaken by the Housing Options team. As part of our project delivery commitment, we actively track the effects of projects within services to ensure that the projected outcomes have been met. Please see below an example of our trackers. This one is to validate that DocuSign does reduce the cost to the Council of mileage occurred by the Housing Options Officers.



Transformation are supporting the continued roll out of TA1 efficiencies within the Planning Team. Tablets are currently being issued to Planning Officers to improve application times and support a paperless approach to working.

In addition to the above activities, service reviews have commenced and are already identifying costs savings and improvements to the customer’s experience, reducing exposure of risk to the Council and impacting on the budget deficit. Our recommendations are being agreed and implemented. Our team approach is allowing synergies between services to be identified and best practices replicated across the organisation. We also pride ourselves in advocating a culture for continuous improvement encouraging services to consider their costs of recourse and engage with us to make impactful and sustainable change.

Our team is also project managing the new Help Hub service in conjunction with My Fenland, to support the successful delivery of this new multi-agency initiative, which aims to support residents who have needs that are impacting upon their health and well-being.

By reconfiguring the process for using Council land for events and adding in quality controls, we are empowering the Council to make better informed choices. We are also re-addressing our service delivery of Public Health Funerals and services offers within our Cemetery Service.

Finally, we are recommending planned preventative maintenance and cost avoidance procedures within our Port and Fleet.

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

Individual project updates are as detailed elsewhere in this report. A full review of 2022-23 was published in the Annual Report as approved by Cabinet on 17th July 2023. The report is available on our website

Communication, Consultation and Engagement

News update:

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in January = 12. We also created an additional 3 news articles we published on our website.

Highlights include:

- Council plans freeze on council tax, as draft Budget and Business Plan is published.
- Nominate an unsung hero for Pride in Fenland award.
- Free taster sessions for new Whittlesey strength and social exercise classes for older people.
- Council leaders thank those who helped others during recent flooding.
- New community pavilion set to enhance Wisbech Park.
- Three people fined after using rogue traders to tip their rubbish.
- Internal Drainage Board levies welcomes commitment to implement long-term funding solution.

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in February = 6. We also created an additional 8 news articles we published on our website.

Highlights include:

- Over £30,000 awarded to arts, culture and heritage organisations across Fenland.
- More support for rough sleepers through council's extended cold weather provision.
- Over 60s can discover free support and services available to them at event in Parson Drove.
- Consideration of legal challenge in bid to block Wisbech incinerator.
- Toilet block demolition signifies next step in March town centre regeneration.
- Join Street Pride and make a difference in Fenland this February!

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in March = 17.

Highlights include:

- The 17 businesses that got a £5k business grant from Rural England Prosperity Fund.
- Council seeks judicial review of Wisbech incinerator decision.
- Litter heroes assemble...Fenland is fighting back!
- Amazing stories of bravery and selflessness at Pride in Fenland Awards.
- Wisbech to get investment of up to £20m.
- Council tax measure ramped up to help tackle long-term empty homes in Fenland.
- Hannah Teasdale awarded Fenland Poet Laureate honour.
- Latest Meet the Manager event provides open platform to discuss all things rail.

All press releases are distributed to relevant press and media organisations, appear as a web article on the news pages of the [Fenland District Council website](#) and on our social media channels [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Monthly update on FDC social media sites:

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

January:

Twitter = 132

Facebook = 129

February:

Twitter = 112

Facebook = 102

March:

Twitter = 134

Facebook = 129

We currently have 7,485 followers on Facebook and 8,865 followers on twitter.

Consultation Summary:

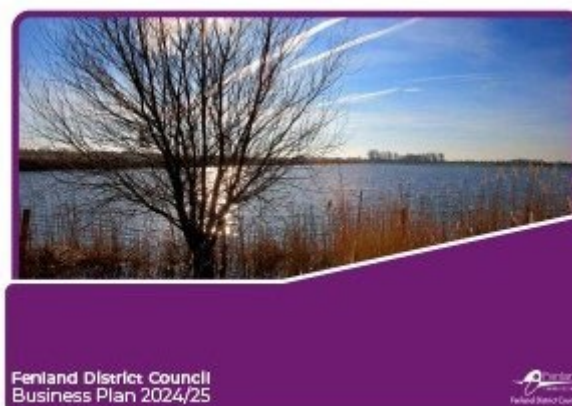
- Business Plan and Budget – 2 Jan – 4 February 2024.
- Customer Satisfaction Survey – 26 Feb – 1 March 2024

Business Plan 2024-25

The Business Plan 2024-25 sets out the priorities we aim to deliver over the next 12 months. These priorities have been developed to address the most important needs of our communities and set a framework for how we will work towards our ambitions for the area and achieve our goal of creating a thriving place to live and visit.

Its structure outlines our key Corporate Priorities (Communities, Environment, Economy and Quality Organisation), and an additional cross cutting 'Transformation Agenda - Council for the Future' section. This section encompasses our ongoing transformation work to improve efficiency and customer experience, drive positive change and ensure the Council is fit for the future.

A Task and Finish group set up from members of the O&S panel reviewed the current performance indicators, and they were approved at Cabinet on 18 December 2023 to be included in the Business Plan 2024-25.



The Business Plan was approved at Cabinet and Council on 26th February 2024.

Excellent Customer Service

Customer Service Excellence accreditation (Cllr Tierney)

Our annual assessment is scheduled for 13 June and results will be shared as soon as they are available.

Elections Update (Cllr Boden)

Chatteris By-Election

On Thursday 14 March 2024 the Council successfully delivered the Slade Lode South Ward of Chatteris Town Council By-Election following the resignation of Councillor Alice Keating. There was one polling station located at Quaker Way where 85 electors voted in person and a further 59 voted by post.

The overall turnout was 21.2% of the registered voters and Ken Perrin was duly elected. The Elections Team and Polling Station Staff successfully piloted Modern Polling Technology in the Polling Station, and this will be rolled out to 40 of our 58 polling stations in May's PCC Election.

Elections Act 2022 Updates

Online Absent Vote Applications (OAVA)

Since the introduction of OAVA on 1 November 2023, the Elections Team have processed 908 Online Applications via the Government Portal.

Maximum period for absent vote applications now 3 years

For electors who had a long-term postal vote in place before 31 October 2023 transitional arrangements were put in place to extend their absent vote expiry to 31 January 2026.

With no refresh process in place, to ensure we continued to refresh signature images, as these can significantly change over time, and to avoid a huge volume of renewals in January 2026, in February this year we invited 1860 of our oldest applications held to renew this year.

No changes were made to any postal vote arrangements unless electors reapplied. 783 successfully completed new absent vote applications.

3C's Update (Cllr Tierney)

October 2023- December 2023

October 2023- December 2023	Total Received	On Time	% on Time
Correspondence	27	26	96%
Stage 1			
CELP	32	32	100%
GI	1	1	100%
PRCS	12	11	92%
Stage 2			
CELP	1	1	100%
GI	-	-	-
PRCS	-	-	-
Stage 3			
CELP	-	-	-
GI	1	1	100%
PRCS	-	-	-

January 2024 – March 2024

January 2024- March 2024	Total Received	On Time	% on Time
Correspondence	21	20	95%
Stage 1			
CELP	28	22	79%
GI	-	-	-
PRCS	9	8	89%
Stage 2			

CELP	1	1	100%
GI	-	-	-
PRCS	2	1	50%
Stage 3			
CELP	2	2	100%
GI	-	-	-
PRCS	2	2	100%

Asset Management and Commercialisation

Commercial & Investment Strategy (Cllr Boden)

As part of the Commercial and Investment Strategy, a facility of £25m was granted to the Investment Board to finance capital expenditure to be undertaken in accordance with the aims and objectives of the agreed strategy. At the end of March 2024, £4m of this facility has been utilised to fund the acquisition of a commercial investment in Wisbech and a house in March. These acquisitions were approved at Investment Board meetings held on 16th March 2021 and 3rd December 2021 respectively. Further utilisation of this facility was used to fund the development of the two sites now owned by Fenland Future Ltd in line with the agreed Business Plan for 2024/25 has now been agreed.

The Commercial Investment in Wisbech has delivered a rental income of £230k every year since acquisition in March 2021 and continues to be on track for 2024/25. As we used our own funds to acquire this asset there is no external cost of capital and the loss of interest foregone on our funds is minimal at present. This acquisition has enhanced the Councils revenue position and has had a positive impact on the MTFS.

Updates on the work of the Investment Board were presented to Cabinet at its meetings on 30 January 2023, 16th March 2023 and 11th September 2023. The annual report on Investment Board activity was presented to Overview and Scrutiny on 19th September 2023.

Fenland Future Limited (Cllr Boden, Cllr Benney & Cllr Tierney)

Fenland Future Ltd (FFL) has been granted Outline Planning permission on the two Council owned sites identified for development in their Business Plan. Work now progresses on options for the delivery methodology to be utilised in delivering the developments.

On The Elms site in Chatteris, Lovell Homes have been commissioned to work with FFL as a Development Management Partner and Design Architects, Planning Consultant and

Engineering specialists have been appointed to work up the Reserved Matters Application. At the Nene Waterfront in Wisbech, a Reserved Matters Application is being prepared for 1 of the 5 plots for a circa 70 home affordable housing extra care scheme.

Workforce Development

Workforce skills and training (Cllr Boden)

We have a strong commitment to learning and development. We believe that if we are to continue to deliver excellent services to our customers, our staff must be well trained.

We have an extensive learning and development offer for our workforce, which involves opportunities for formal and informal training; we have a range of learning resources available to all staff, e-learning, coaching, shadowing, secondments, in house training workshops delivered by our own in-house experts; as well as more formal courses and training and apprenticeships.

Staff value the learning and development opportunities that are offered at FDC and are able to indicate the difference that training makes to them and their team. However, it is important that we continually review our learning and development offer to ensure it is fit for purpose and as accessible as possible.

We believe that talent exists in all our staff and that it needs to be encouraged and nurtured. Every manager with staff responsibility manages talent through the following activities:

- Performance management
- Coaching and development
- Springboard discussions, 121's and
- Recruitment

Talent management and succession planning ensures ongoing organisational capacity and capability for the future and enables transformation; and at a time when more is demanded of less, it becomes increasingly important.

Supporting and empowering staff (Cllr Boden)

We are committed to supporting and empowering our workforce, and we have a range of support that our staff can access, from an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) The EAP is free and confidential for staff to use, and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and is accessible by phone, email and online.

The EAP is designed to help with a wide range of work, family, and personal issues. It provides practical information, fact sheets and packs, resource information on support services in the local area and even short-term face to face or telephonic counselling if required.

It is supported by a comprehensive EAP website offering extensive resources including articles, interactive tools, regular online seminars, confidential 24/7 support, self-help

workbooks, Podcasts, blogs, videos, and articles on a range of topics, Debit advice, Debit Management, Domestic Abuse support, Wellbeing portal & App, Trauma programme and Exercise and Fitness advice.

Alongside this we provide additional support via our team of Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA), our Occupational Health Advisor, a range of family friendly policies and procedures, a comprehensive (cost neutral) employee benefits platform. We also provide individual support via our HR team, service managers, our Management and Trade Union and Staff Partnership (MTSP) reps.

We carry out our Staff Survey every two years to get a better understanding of employee morale, satisfaction, and engagement at Fenland District Council. This was undertaken in 2022, with 87% of respondents stating they were proud to work for Fenland District Council.

Health & Safety

The Council has a comprehensive suite of Health and Safety Policies and procedures, which all managers are aware of and trained on. We have a Health and Safety Panel, with membership drawn from all areas of the Council. This Panel meets every quarter to ensure ongoing compliance in all areas; to track all health and safety related issues, accidents and near misses. An ongoing Action Plan to monitor the corporate health and safety goals is in place and well established.

Work continues to drive forward improvements in health and safety management where required.

In 2023/24 the emphasis has been to support managers and staff to continue good standards of health and safety.

A summary of of the work for 2023/24 is provided below:

- A review of the Council's Codes of Practice as required under the three yearly revision programme.
- Ongoing delivery of a corporate health & Safety training programme.
- Ensure accident investigations are completed as applicable.
- Coordinated delivery of a health surveillance programme across the Council.
- Ongoing development of further e-learning training courses for the Council's e-learning platform.
- Completed audits/inspections of individual services/teams/buildings as per the audit programme.
- Updated intranet-based health & safety information for staff use.

Health & Safety Action Plan updates (Cllr Boden)

Good progress has been made over the last 12 months to deliver our objectives as set out in the health and safety action plan for 2024/24. Some of the actions are highlighted below:

- The role out of internal health and safety e-learning courses developed for staff training via the Intranet.
- An analysis of all accidents and their consequent actions has been undertaken.
- Health and Safety training was delivered to a total of 113 staff
- A programme of audits and inspections undertaken

Other Updates:

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

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

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

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

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

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

CPCA COMMITTEE	DATE OF MEETING	LINK
Combined Authority Board	28.02.24	CMIS > Meetings
Combined Authority Board	20.03.24	CMIS > Meetings
Audit & Governance Committee	08.03.24	CMIS > Meetings
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	18.03.24	CMIS > Meetings
Skills & Employment Committee	04.03.24	CMIS > Meetings
Transport & Infrastructure Committee	13.03.24	CMIS > Meetings
Business Board	04.03.24	CMIS > Meetings
Human Resources Committee	08.03.24	CMIS > Meetings
Human Resources Committee	13.03.24	CMIS > Meetings
Human Resources Committee	14.03.24	CMIS > Meetings
Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee	11.03.24	CMIS > Meetings

Forthcoming CPCA meetings include:

CPCA COMMITTEE	DATE OF MEETING	LINK
Combined Authority Board	05.06.24	CMIS > Meetings
Business Board	20.05.24	CMIS > Meetings
Audit & Governance Committee	07.06.24	CMIS > Meetings
Employment & Skills Board	14.05.24	CMIS > Meetings

Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee	19.06.24	CMIS > Meetings
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	01.07.24	CMIS > Meetings
Skills & Employment Committee	17.06.24	CMIS > Meetings
Transport & Infrastructure Committee	26.06.24	CMIS > Meetings

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Target 22/23	Cumulative Target	Cumulative Performance		Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries processed at the first point of contact	99%	90%	99%		
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (measured annually in February)	86%	90%	N/A (Feb 2024) 97.94%		
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	47.49%	46.5%	43.96%		
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	87.96%	80%	83.46%		
ARP3	In year % of Council Tax collected	96.76%	96.76%	96.40%		
ARP4	Council Tax net collection fund receipts	£65,262,181	£68,755,817	£68,341,134		
ARP5	In year % of NNDR collected	97.10%	97.10%	96.58		
ARP6	NNDR net collection fund receipts	£24,120,990	£24,779,458	£25,460,126		
PRC5	Number of online forms submitted via FDC website	21,504	21,000			

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