

Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

**September 2024
(For performance in
June, July & August 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)

ARP continue to work 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 review of Single Person Discounts continues to provide positive outcomes. The ARP team are also 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 continues into its second year. This work continues to consistently see savings outweighing the costs of the work in the areas of Local Council Tax Reduction and Single Person Discounts, with £243,064 fraud identified in Quarter 1 of this year alone. Funding for two additional posts from County has been secured for 2024/2025. The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) premium data matching has been funded by County.

Across the wider partnership, in Quarter 1, the Fraud and Compliance Team have identified fraud and error, for the ARP Local Authorities of over £1.5 million. Four successful prosecutions have concluded with custodial sentences seen in two out of four cases. Five official cautions and two Administrative Penalties have also been accepted as an alternative to prosecution. Ten cases are currently moving through the Court system with a further three cases awaiting sanction. In addition, there are 58 live criminal investigations ongoing.

The use of the Contact Us form by customers (which signposts customers to online forms to streamline avoidable customer contact) has risen sharply as we channel shift away from incoming emails to the form. Work progresses on the Council Tax and NDR mailbox in-tray, with our outgoing correspondence being updated. Over 4,500 forms were received in June with 80% automatically indexed.

Work continues on automation via a Capita form on Council Tax Change of Addresses, as well as automated Refund form to accompany the Direct Debit and Single Person's Discount (SPD) forms.

Work progresses on E-Billing with around 12% of Council Tax bills and 6% Business Rates bills being sent electronically. The bills are sent via PDF attachments to emails, which has lessened

the contact from customers compared to the previous method where they were required to log into a portal. A campaign is being undertaken amongst staff and Customer Services to promote and work is underway to contact all customers for whom we hold email addresses to promote if not already signed up.

In terms of performance in 2024-25 so far, Business Rates Collection is on target; Council Tax Collection remains on target year to date. Days taken to process Local Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit is not currently on target. This is due to the ongoing rollout of Universal Credit as migration files have increased, and staff have targeted new claims, so therefore volumes remain high. The staff continue to have focus days to target areas of work and we are confident that this will tackle the issue over the coming months.

Summary of the current position on the expansion of Universal Credit (UC)

The Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) now intends to contact households by benefit combination order, rather than geography.

Migration Notices have been issued to working age benefit households from April to June for those in receipt of Income Support; June to August for those in receipt of Housing Benefit only; July to September for those receiving income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) with Child Tax Credits; Pensioners on tax credits being asked to move to Pension Credit will be contacted from July, with those being asked to claim Universal Credit being notified from August.

Local authorities were sent a letter in April from the DWP confirming the announcement by the Prime Minister to bring forward the migration of ESA customers to Universal Credit from 2028 to 2025. This will have an impact on all local authorities as this includes a large number of working age Housing Benefit recipients.

As a result of this we are reviewing the potential impact on our resources and workload requirements as we are aware that the cohort of claimants moving from ESA to UC is likely to require additional support.

Supporting residents to manage the effects of the costs of living (Cllr Boden)

Our customer facing teams, including our Help Hub, provide support to residents struggling with cost-of-living issues in many ways:

- Issuing food vouchers
- Advising on additional benefits they can claim
- Signposting to other partners who can support
- Assisting with on-line Universal Credit (UC) applications
- Working closely with our ARP colleagues we signpost to avenues where discretionary benefits might assist
- We work with a huge range of partners who can also provide additional support, and we will link our customers into these channels
- We have just launched our Early Help Hub to provide an additional channel of support to residents who may be ready to return to the work environment, having had a protracted spell of ill-health.

As referred to above, the national timetable of the move to UC is likely to create a cohort of claimants moving from ESA to UC, which is likely to require additional support; and work

continues across the ARP with Communities Teams, referring customers who may need financial/welfare advice, with an ongoing campaign to contact customers who may be eligible to reclaim via TelSolutions.

Homelessness & meeting housing needs (Cllr Hoy)

So far in 2024/25 (Apr – Jul) the Housing Options team has successfully addressed the housing issues for 109 households where we assessed they were owed a duty to either remain in their own or found alternative accommodation within either a 56 day prevention period or 56 day relief period. This is broken down to 62 at the prevention stage and 47 at the relief stage.

Prevention means the household has accommodation but are threatened with homelessness. Here we usually attempt to keep the household in their current accommodation. Relief means they have left that accommodation therefore there is a need to source some alternative accommodation. This is usually the point at which a household would go into temporary accommodation.

The number of households seeking advice (homeless presentations) for this period were 684. The figure last year for the same period was 697.

Housing advice has been given to 351 households where no duties were owed by the Council. This means that following a housing needs assessment and any interventions there was no need to issue a formal homeless decision.

So far in 2024/25 we have accepted 86 prevention duties and 150 relief duties with 55 households being owed a main housing duty (owed a main housing duty means the Council could not resolve the housing issues presented by the household in either the “prevention” stage nor the “relief” stage and we now have a legal duty to find permanent accommodation and must accommodate them until the permanent accommodation is found).

The best outcome is to resolve the housing issue for as many households as possible within the prevention stage as this keeps them in their current accommodation. The second-best outcome is finding alternative accommodation for the household within the relief stage prior to having to make a main housing duty decision. The latter means that we sometimes need to make an adverse decision for the household such as not being in priority need or that they are intentionally homeless.

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 so far in 2024/25 is 72% (the number of households prevented at this stage [62] divided by the number of prevention duties owed [86]).

We are trying our utmost to bring this successful prevention work into resolving more households’ issues at the relief stage. So far in 2024/25 we owed 150 relief duties with resolution found in 47 household’s cases. This is a relief success rate of 31%.

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 = 46% (109 preventions divided by 236 households where duties were owed)

We continue to work hard to reduce B&B use for emergency accommodation. For example, the average stay for a family household in B&B is 11 days less than compared to this time last year.

Reducing Rough Sleeping (Cllr Hoy)

As at the end of July 2024 the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) 5 Project were supporting a total of 21 clients. Of the 21 clients supported during this time; 6 were placed in off the street accommodation, awaiting their move on; 11 were street homeless and 4 were sofa surfing.

To date from this financial year, RSI have supported a total of 41 clients. Of the 41 individuals, we have successfully supported 13 into stable move on accommodation. This includes projects such as; Housing First, Supported living routes such as Ferry Project or Amicus, the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme with Clarion or reconnected with family or abroad.

RSI continues to support our core group of entrenched rough sleepers who do not actively engage with support. We speak regularly with our MHCLG advisor regarding these clients who suffer from multiple disadvantages and liaise with partners such as Changing Futures. This cohort is known as our Target Priority Group with MHCLG and we continue to adopt a multi-agency approach with partners to ensure the most support is being delivered to these individuals.

Housing Enforcement Policy & Empty Homes (Cllr Hoy)

April 2024 – July 31st 2024

Town	HMOs investigated	Other Homes investigated
Wisbech	15	42
March	6	19
Chatteris	8	7
Whittlesey	1	7
Villages	2	13

Total homes investigated is 120.

VILLAGE BREAKDOWN

Benwick = 1
Coates = 1
Coldham = 0
Christchurch = 2
Doddington = 1
Eastrea = 1
Elm = 1
Fridaybridge = 2

Foul Anchor = 0
 Gorefield = 1
 Guyhirn = 1
 Leverington = 1
 Manea = 0
 Murrow = 0
 Newton = 0
 Parson Drove = 0
 Stonea = 0
 Throckenholt = 0
 Thorney Toll = 1
 Tydd = 1
 Turves = 0
 Wimblington = 0
 Wisbech St Mary = 1

No.s of Notices Served April - December 31st 2023	S.11 Improvement Notice *	S.12 Improvement Notice **	Notice of Intent ***	Final Civil Penalty Notice ****	EIC R *****	MEES *****	EPC *****	Prohibition Orders
April	2	1	0	0	2	0	1	2
May	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
June	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	0
July	0	1	3	0	2	0	0	0
Total	4	3	4	0	7	0	3	4

* 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 152 Enforcement Notices served:

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

Of the 65 Final Civil Penalty Notices served:

- 39 have been paid in full,
- 8 are subject to payment arrangements,
- 0 are subject to formal court action,
- 4 are with the High Court Bailiff,
- 3 are proposed to be written off as not recoverable
- 9 are subject to an ongoing appeal.

All fines from the EPC breaches have been paid.

Empty Homes

The tables below represent properties brought back into use up to and including 31 July 2024.

Table 1

Represents the total number of properties brought back into use through officer involvement.
From 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

	LTE 6-11MTHS	LTEP 12MTHS +
Total Officer involvement	12	16
Total for the period	1.4.24 – 31.3.25	28

Table 2

Represents the number of properties brought back into use for the New Homes Bonus
From 3 October 2023 to 7 October 2024 (CTB1 submission date)

	LTE 6-11MTHS	LTEP 12MTHS+
Total Officer Involvement	39	28
Total for the period	3.10.23 - 7.10.24	67

LTE = Long Term Empty

LTEP = Long Term Empty Premium

Golden Age & Supporting older people (Cllr Wallwork)

Due to the pre-election period we postponed our planned event in Eastrea on Friday 21st June as part of the Big Bash event week and it has been rearranged for Friday 20th September 2024 between 10am and 1pm at The Eastrea Centre.

A Golden Age event is scheduled to take place on Friday 13th September between 10am to 1pm at Tydd St Giles Community Centre.

There will be updates on both these events at the next Portfolio update report.

Leisure & Freedom Updates (Cllr Miscandlon)

Financial performance;

Q1 of 2024/25 has seen Freedom exceed income targets, but also incur higher expenditure than anticipated (due to energy costs and previous inflation levels for services and supplies). The business realised just under £1m income in the 3 months to July, but the excessive expenditure has meant a deficit £9k above the anticipated situation contained within the Leisure Operators Base Trading Account (LOBTA) submitted as part of the procurement process back in 2019.

Attendance

The number of participants within the leisure centres is marginally lower than the same period in 2023 down 3,401 to 123,641 in the first three month of 2024/25. Whilst there are smaller increases and decreases in all facilities across the key participation areas of gym / exercise classes / public swim / learn to swim, the reduction seen here is almost entirely attributable to a drop in public swimming at the George Campbell. The filter replacement (planned 1 week closure, over ran to 2 weeks) and subsequent pool pump failure (another week of closures or cool pool) mean a reduction in public swimming in the period of 4,656. No further pool issues or maintenance have occurred since Q1, so anticipated attendance levels to be reports after the end of Q2 should exceed 2023's results.

The number of gym membership are up 137, 3%, when comparing June 2023 and June 2024. The number of young people on swimming lessons has dropped by 146 (5%) to 2,893 per week when comparing June 2023 and June 2024.

Freedom has run several promotional campaigns over the period including;

- Refer a friend (April)
- No joining fee (last week in April)
- Move with Us (May)
- No joining fee (across May)
- 12 months for 9 (May)
- Swim Lessons – no admin fee (May)
- Swim lessons – free taster session (GCLC – April / May)
- 3 month, 20% off, m-ship Hudson (Mid May – end of June)

Social Media use is continuing to support attendance and membership generation, with the 4 facilities having individual Facebook and Instagram accounts, with a total community of 7,700 members at the end of June. In June social media reach was 94,055, with this generating 2,553 link click throughs, 8,855 visits to Fenland Freedom social media sites and 1,57 interactions with posts.

Freedom has generated several press releases in the period including an item on water safety that was picked up by Peterborough Telegraph, Cambs Times, Peterborough Matters and the Wisbech Standard.

Google reviews in the period include:

Chatteris Leisure Centre

- “Absolutely brilliant amazing staff they always check up on you”
- “Just wanted to say how much I enjoyed Matt's class. He explained things well and the class was well structured- a good mix- felt like a proper "road cycle"”
- “Sean is lots of fun and gave everybody a great workout when running the maracas class”
- “Enjoyed the class, appreciated Adams detailed explanation of membership options”
- “Adam did a great tone & sculpt class, ensured everyone was comfortable at their own fitness level”
- “Great centre, lively atmosphere. Totally recommended””

Hudson Leisure Centre

“Well organised very neat the staff are very friendly””

Manor Leisure Centre

“Excellent Pilates class with Abbie””

“Great pool good facilities.””

“It has an ok gym. The pool is nice but the changing facilities not so much. The staff are friendly. It closes at 4pm Saturday and Sunday which doesn't suit me””

“Great place to come swimming and to relax”

Active Fenland (Cllr Miscandlon) – PH

The Active Fenland team continues to deliver a popular programme of low cost or free activities around the District. A full programme is available [here](#). Active Fenland sessions are commissioned by CCC Public Health Team and the Integrated Care System.

Health & Wellbeing Update (Cllr Wallwork) - The help hub

The health funded help hub has been operational since 3 June and by the end of July, it had triaged 91 residents who are either unemployed or have a GP sick note. The FDC triage team have worked with each client to understand the root cause of any barriers preventing work and referred them to a plethora of supporting agencies either in the voluntary and community sector or the public sector. It has been pleasing to see that there are examples of when the Council is now getting earlier heads up of a potential issue relating to our core services to make earlier and lower cost interventions. Examples of support include:

- Assistance with completing Direct Housing Payments for help with rent arrears and shortfalls in rent.
- Volunteering organisations to help keep active and for social support.
- Referral to Richmond Fellowship to offer support with existing employer.

Case study 1:

Customer out of work for 14wks. Previous role in caring but due to having a stroke is unable to return to this role.

The team made 2 referrals:

- to the Adult Early Help team for support at home with bathing.
- to the Papworth Trust for the Pioneer Programme to help with retraining.

Case study 2

This referral was one of the 1st help hub customers. He was referred from the DWP, as he had been given his notice in February. He suffers with arthritis. He was at a low point in his life after losing a family member a few months before. He was issued a foodbank voucher to help him through, which he was grateful for and was overwhelmed. The hub discussed his case with the disability coach at the DWP and what they would be able to help him with. The hub discussed support that he could possibly get for helping him around the house. At that time he was at too low a point to agree, but said he would think about it.

The hub built a rapport and talked about lots of things that he likes to do including photography and gardening. The hub then mentioned about volunteering. After saying no initially he did eventually sign up for Volunteer Cambs.

This built confidence and he is now working full-time and he says he has his Mojo back!

Feedback from an Officer from DWP:

“With regards to the referrals I have sent over to the team, the response from the claimants I have referred has been extremely positive. All callers have been spoken to with empathy and respect and have all come away with support or sign posting that has moved them forward with barriers be it schooling, housing, grants, foodbank support or referral to social support.

The gentleman that received food to his door was so grateful and moved by the kind gesture. I have had another customer that was signposted for social support around hoarding, and she is so happy to have received support and is even getting help to apply for jobs. I have others that have received housing and health support that has resulted in grants and white goods.”

Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture & Heritage

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

Fenland Culture Fund:

A total of 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, more of those funded projects and activities have continued to take place since the last report.

- Chatteris Midsummer Festival: “The Fenland Culture Fund helped to make the Festival a success as it meant I was able to book all the acts and entertainment needed to ensure an action-packed weekend with limited costs to those attending.”
- Wisbech & Fenland Museum: “A fabulous morning with author and illustrator Moira Millman. Participants took inspiration from our latest exhibition, Beasts: epic creatures real and imagined, to create flipbooks that could be used to create magical mixed-up animals. The workshop was made possible thanks to a Fenland District Council grant

from the Fenland Culture Fund”.

- Wisbech & Fenland Museum: “A whopping 561 of you were counted through our doors, and many more of you enjoyed our courtyard activities and a glimpse of Inferno the dragon on his adventures in Museum Square. This free event would not have been possible without a grant from the Fenland Culture Fund. We thank them for their investment.”

Express Yourself:

The Express Yourself project was designed to support children and young people’s health and wellbeing through positively engaging with arts and cultural activity based on the NHS 5 Ways to Wellbeing. The 6-week long programmes have engaged with 363 young people across the district, and a range of artists and professionals delivering the sessions have also received further training and development opportunities. Both young people and artists involved have expressed the great improvement on their mood. In August a workshop called ‘Embedding Wellbeing into your Creative Practice’ was delivered involving 15 creatives and cultural practitioners to learn about supporting your own wellbeing creatively and empower the participants with skills to protect themselves in what can be challenging environments.

Place Partnership Fund:

An expression of interest to the Arts Council England Place Partnership has been submitted, with Clarion Futures as the lead applicant and FDC as a strategic partner. If successful, the project will see developed infrastructure and cultural leadership alongside developing festival activity culminating in new district-wide, multi-art festival activity in the summer of 2027. Officers are waiting for feedback as to whether a full application will be requested.

Supporting groups to hold public events (Cllr Murphy)

Please see updates [elsewhere in the report](#)

Pride In Fenland Awards (Cllr Wallwork)

Following the successful Pride In Fenland Awards 2024 earlier this year, the team are reviewing the event and looking at ways to bring in sponsorship for each of the categories. This will be the focus over the next few months and plans are in place to hold the next Pride In Fenland Awards after the elections in May 2025.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 2024/25	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
ARP1	Days taken: new claims and changes for Council Tax Support	9.52 days	9.00 days	11.97	
ARP2	Days taken: new claims and changes for Housing Benefit	7.37 days	8.00 days	15.19	
CELP1	Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	294	250	120	
CELP2	The proportion (%) of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing options work (%)	45%	53%	46%	
CELP3	Number of empty properties brought back into use	86	50	28	
CELP4	Number of Active Fenland sessions deliver and total attendance per year	621	600	378	
CELP5	Satisfaction with our leisure centres (Net Promoter Score)	47	38	N/A (March 2025)	N/A
CELP6	Value of Arts, Culture and Creativity Grants achieved in Fenland	£199,000	£201,000	N/A (March 2025)	N/A

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

Comments
<p>In relation to ARP 1: Days taken to process new claims and changes for Council Tax Support and ARP 2: Days taken to process new claims and changes for Housing Benefit; unfortunately, the performance targets have not been achieved this month. Universal Credit migration files have continued to impact significantly on staff time. Staff have targeted Housing Benefit new claims and then CTRS claims this month; and assessing these claims has resulted in an increase in days to process.</p> <p>There are a number of measures that we have put in place to improve the performance in processing times, these include a focus on</p>

new claims, reducing Officer time (across the ARP partnership) on phone rotas thus freeing them up to process, reviewing tasks to focus on essential items only and continued monitoring of resources. We also continue to test the automation of migration notices, which we are receiving increasing numbers of, with the continued roll out to Universal Credit. We have seen a marked improvement in the past couple of weeks in our outstanding work reports, which is encouraging, particularly as we are in peak leave season.

We are on track to see real improvements in performance over the coming weeks, and this should be reflected in the next quarter's performance report.

Environment

Projects from Business Plan:

Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

Diverting waste from landfill (Cllr Murphy)

During the first quarter of this year, the teams collected more than 10,000 tonnes of domestic and commercial waste from our customers. Within this total, the Residual Waste (green bin waste) has reduced by 6.7% (418 tonnes) and blue bin recycling waste collected has increased by around 3.3% (71 tonnes). There has been slightly less garden waste collected, 1.8% (93 tonnes).

Collected Waste Tonnages	Quarter 1 2023/24	Quarter 1 2024/25	% Change
Overall tonnage	11,242	10,731	- 4.5%
Residual Tonnage (green bins)	6,196	5,778	- 6.7%
Dry Recycling Tonnage Actual (blue bins)	2,093	2,164	+ 3.3%
Compost Tonnage Actual (brown bins)	2,953	2,789	- 5.5%
Dry Recycling & Compost Tonnage Total (blue and brown bins)	5,046	4,953	- 1.8%

Collected Waste –		
Percentage Recycling (blue bins to green bins)	25.3%	27.3%
Percentage Recycling (blue and brown bins to green bins)	44.8%	46.1%

Customers are producing less residual waste than last year, which is good news against the background of property growth that Fenland has experienced. Customers remain active recyclers and the good quality recycling has increased. This increase is a refreshing contrast to the trend recently both locally and nationally which has seen reduced recycling.

By diverting this waste from landfill the Council has generated £121,000 of income from the County Council in recycling credits against their cost of landfill which would be in the region of £320,000.

We will continue to support our customers to maximise their recycling efforts and to treat their waste as a resource to generate income and reduce overall costs.

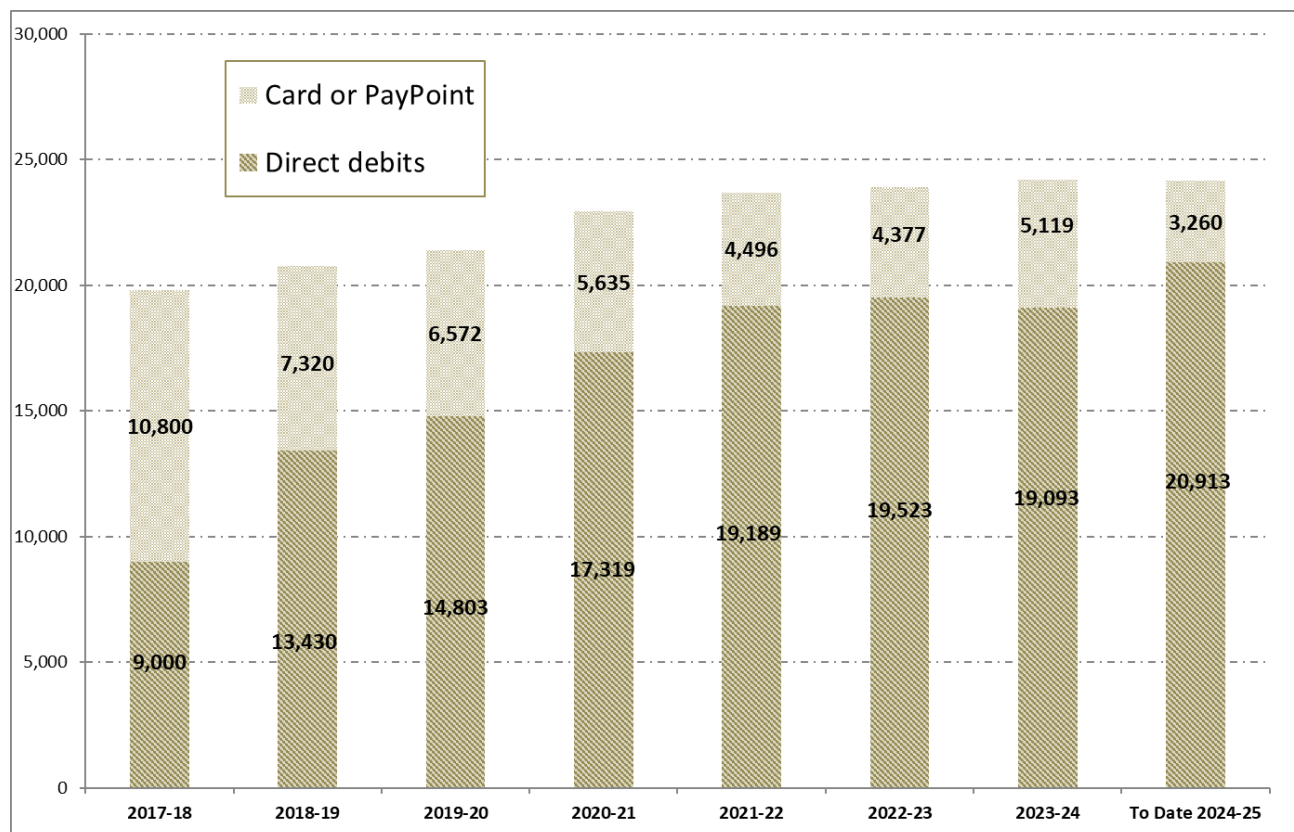
To protect the quality of recycling materials collected, the collection teams rejected 1,440 blue bins in the first quarter of the year. Each of these customers is written to with information about how to get their recycling correct. Alongside the checks upon collections, supervisors performed inspections of 1,702 bins with properties received information directly from them encouraging best use of recycling bins. Of the 1,702 bins inspected, 4% contained incorrect materials (43).

Garden Waste Collection (Cllr Murphy)

To date this year we have 24,173 subscriptions, with 87% direct debits and a total of

£1,099,450 of income. Last year there were a total of 24,212 subscriptions, with 78% direct debits, which generated an income of £985,000. This income covers the costs of providing the service.

Garden Waste Subscriptions 2017-2024



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.

Since April, the team have received 512 requests from the public to resolve environmental issues, such as litter, broken glass, flytipping, drug related litter or similar. 88% (451) of these were attended and dealt with the same or next working 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 continues to place increased pressure on the available HGV mechanical street sweeping resource and schedules have had to move out to 8 or 10 weeks as a result.

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. Since April, officers have completed 434 surveys for litter and street sweeping and found 425 to be of a suitable standard (98%).

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)

Total number of fly tips during this time. Wisbech rural villages have been the most affected across the district.

Month	Total	Chatteris	March	Whittlesey	Wisbech	Villages
June	133	14	6	12	62	39
July	114	12	11	13	35	43

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

1 business has been fined in relation to waste relating to their business being found dumped in Whittlesey. This fine of £300 has now been paid.

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 **11 parking fines** to cars who were found to be parking illegally.

The team have received **a total of 55 reported abandoned vehicles**. All were investigated and 2 were removed by our contractor due to be a danger to the highway.

An internal and external partnership approach, coordinated by Community Safety and Street scene, has seen the removal of several 'abandoned vehicles' across the district being used for advertising purposes. The vehicles had been in situ for some considerable time and becoming an environmental nuisance. Consultation with Police, Cambs County Highways, Streetscene, Community Safety and planning have helped to identify potential offences and interventions.

Despite best efforts to work with the person believed responsible for the vehicles, it wasn't possible to achieve an informal resolution for all vehicles. Those considered to be the worst environmental nuisance were moved voluntarily.

However, for those that remained abandoned, vehicle legislation was found to be the best approach, and arrangements were made for the removal of the remaining vehicles using this legislation. In partnership with FDC's Contractor and County Council Highways, all remaining vehicles were moved from the public highway.

Maintain parks and open spaces through grounds maintenance contractor (Cllr Murphy)

The season has gone very well this year, despite some wet weather. Customer satisfaction

with FDC's open spaces remains high with attendances in the parks visibly buoyant. The addition of the pavilion in Wisbech Park and the café within has proved popular this year. Community events continue to use FDC's open spaces and are ever-popular.

Support community groups including Street Pride, In Bloom, Green Dog Walkers and Friends of groups (Cllr Murphy)

The council's Street Pride Coordinator took up a new job position at the council in May and therefore the role has been advertised during July and August, following some work with the transformation team to ensure the most effective and business focussed solution to resourcing environmental projects was in place. The new environmental projects officer, once appointed, will support a wide range of community groups including our getting it sorted volunteers.

Street Pride volunteers have continued their excellent work and held many events and working parties throughout June, July and August.

Highlights include:

Wisbech Street Pride, Wisbech in Bloom and The National Trusts 'Big Help Out' on Friday 7th June. Street Priders took visitors around Harecroft Fields to litter pick, hear about the great work they do and try out litter picking themselves, to see if it's something that they would like to volunteer to do in the future.

On Friday 5 July, Parson Drove Street Pride held an event to formally unveil their replacement carved log at the centre of the village. The old log had unfortunately deteriorated over the years to the extent that it was falling apart. The group applied to the Wryde Croft Wind Farm for funding to be able to replace it and were delighted to be awarded enough funds to engage a chainsaw artist to create a new log for the village. The unveiling event involved some of the local school children, the Street Pride volunteers, a representative from FDC and a number of villagers. They also unveiled a plaque at the oak sapling that was planted to commemorate the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III. The event was followed by tea and refreshments for all.

On 17 July 2024, Benwick Street Pride Volunteer Group welcomed the Anglia in Bloom judges David White, Kerry Maguire and Ruth Bradster to judge their entry to Anglian in Bloom. It was a very successful day with glorious weather. The group thanked all of their volunteers and supporters, in particular The FACT community charity and all those who donated towards their cause. They are hoping for a good result this year at the Awards ceremony sometime in September.

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

June was a great month for the Fenland Four Seasons events. Chatteris Festival was very successful attracting thousands of visitors across the course of the weekend. Highlights this year included Dangerous Steve stunt display and the children's fun day on the Sunday. The volunteers worked extremely hard to fund raise for the event throughout the year and will be holding a follow up fund raiser in October for next year's festival.

August has been a busy month for Whittlesey Festival too. They have been successful in securing grant support from Whittlesey Town Council for which they are very grateful. They

have also gained support from local private businesses. This means that at this year's festival, which will take place on Sunday 8th September, many of the amusements will be free of charge to the public. Attractions not to be missed this year include the Royal British Legion Marching Band and 160 classic vehicles.

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

There is currently no further update on the implementation of the CPE project. Progress on the implementation of CPE has been paused until such time as additional funding has been sought or agreed. It is estimated that the current budget shortfall is in the region of £500,000 but this figure is likely to increase with time by the annual CPI rate.

Reference should be made to the joint portfolio holder report for May [PHB Report for Council - May 2024 v2.pdf \(fenland.gov.uk\)](#) and the Cabinet report dated 18/12/2023 - Property, Assets & Major Projects – On and Off-Street Parking Enforcement Update Paper [Cabinet Committee Report CPE 18-12-2023.pdf \(fenland.gov.uk\)](#)

Officers have explored an alternative option and associated costs of introducing a District wide parking places order across all FDC owned car parks. Whilst this would not offer enforcement of on-street highway areas, this would enable off-street parking areas owned by FDC to be regulated and enforced which in turn would free up parking spaces to reduce the number of on-street parking contraventions. The estimated cost of this proposal is considered to be in the region of £75,000.

Street Lighting (Cllr French)

A total of twelve streetlight faults were reported and attended to during the months of June and July by Fenlands streetlight maintenance contractor on behalf of FDC and seven Parish Councils. Six of the reported faults related to District Council streetlights during this period. The performance figures for August were not available at the time of the report being prepared and so have been excluded.

An overview of the fault attendance can be seen below. These figures exclude any programmed replacement or upgrade works.

Fenland DC -	6 Fault Reports
Clarion -	0 Fault Reports
Parish -	6 Fault Reports

The above figures include one major fault which required attendance within 24 hours and one emergency attendance for District Council streetlight apparatus.

The current streetlight service provider contract has been extended until the beginning of November following an unsuccessful tendered exercise which closed on 15th July. A further streetlight repairs, maintenance and replacement work contract has been put out to tender and is due back on 2nd September. Following completion of the tender evaluation, governance and award procedures, it is anticipated that the new contract will commence in early November. The contract duration will be for three years with the option to extend for a further two years.

A contractor has been appointed to undertake the mandatory streetlight electrical and

structural integrity testing works for all streetlight assets either owned or managed by FDC. The works commenced in early August and is anticipated to be completed by the end of September. Following receipt and appraisal of the testing data, updated condition data will be sent out to Clarion Housing Association and the Seven Parish Councils FDC manage lighting assets for. The data will enable the asset owners to plan and budget for future replacement or upgrade works. It is also likely that the data will highlight some works which will require urgent action.

Capital Streetlight Replacement Works

A number of streetlight replacements or upgrades have previously been ordered through the existing streetlight contract for both FDC and on behalf of six Parish Councils. Officers are working with both our existing contractor and UKPN to complete as much of the outstanding works as possible prior to the end of the contract. Any works still outstanding at the end of the contract period will need to be cancelled with the existing service provider and carried forward to the new contract.

Due to the long material and associated connectivity led in times, no new replacement work orders are being placed through the existing contract with CTL. The remaining FDC capital streetlight replacement and upgrade works shall be ordered through the new service provider contract following receipt and analysis of the electrical and structural testing data.

FDC Car Park Maintenance (Cllr French)

All FDC's public car park inspections have been undertaken and officers are currently compiling a schedule of works for quotation. Any associated defects shall be quantified and actioned.

The FDC car park gully and surface water drain cleansing works contract is scheduled for re-tender in the coming months and will be in place prior to the annual cleansing work being undertaken in January/February 2025.

FDC officers continue to liaise with the National Trust in respect of the new lease agreement offer for the Chapel Road car park site in Wisbech. FDC's former lease will hold over on a protected lease arrangement until the final terms and conditions have been agreed.

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)

ASB case study:

ASB case report received where customer has history of depression and is under the GP. Report indicated concern regards to current mental health situation but no immediate risk to personal wellbeing. Contact was made and arrangements to visit the customer were agreed. During the subsequent visit, some concerns were identified linked to access to food and general self-care & wellbeing. Consent obtained and the customer was subject of a referral

into the 'cost-of-living' support and a social care referral made.

As part of the Serious Violence Duty, Fenland CSP has secured funding to provide targeted youth provision to young people aged 11-19yrs in March, Chatteris and Whittlesey through to 31 March 2025. These programmes are specifically focussed on young people showing signs of being at risk of involvement in criminal activities, County Lines, criminal exploitation, or violence.

The programmes of support available includes:

Youth Outreach Activity across Chatteris, March and Whittlesey. In addition, there will be access to Mentoring, Sports Interventions, Creative Arts Interventions and Awareness Raising. The mentoring is focused on Chatteris and Whittlesey with sport and creative activities linked to March.

Before the extended school holiday period, partners from County Council Youth Services, local police team and FDC Community Safety delivered two County Lines awareness sessions to a small cohort of students at Neale Wade Academy. The sessions challenged perceptions around drug culture and drug dealing within peer groups and within gangs and included an input related to knife crime.

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

Tackling hate crime:

An ASB report was received from a Benwick resident regarding graffiti appearing on a fence and the public highway. In addition to the hate nature of the words on display, there was a national situation of disorder linked to right wing hate motivations.

Linking with the customer, police, Diverse Communities Forum chair, County Highways and FDC's street cleansing team the necessary evidence was secured, and the offending graffiti removed before the end of the same day the report was received.

Cohesion action plan project example:

Fenland has one of the largest Gypsy Traveller communities in the Country. To help capture the history of Travelling people in Fenland and to aid integration, members of the Diverse Communities Forum and in particular Chatteris Museum, March Camera Club and One Voice4 Travellers have undertaken a project to document the complex histories of the Gypsy Traveller communities who have made Chatteris and Fenland their temporary or permanent home in the last half century. This follows on from an earlier project "Who lived in my House in 1921" which focused respectively on the changing townscape and its landmark buildings, and its population as recorded in the census of that year. This relied upon historic records, whether built or written. This project addresses the question, but what about those who did not live in houses, and moved from place to place?

The Museum's photographic collection and those of one of the members of the March Camera Club contain many historical images, from the 19th and 20th centuries, of Gypsy Travellers living on the Fen in their vans.

The project focused on a then and now picture lookalike from the perspective of their modern-

day counterparts. Looking at:

- How did/do Travelling people shape the life of the town?
- Why did/do they stop or settle here?

The project will enable all to reflect on these questions and to do this it will focus on documenting the discrete but overlapping lives of:

- Past and present Gypsy, Romany and Traveller communities;
- Travelling fairs, show people and entertainers
- Horse traders and general traders
- Reflecting on both van and house-based lives, and the transition between them.

Work has been/is being undertaken on the project rollout;

- Launch at the Chatteris Museum
- Cultural awareness training for Museum volunteers
- Collecting local stories at the Museum
- Roadshows and Festival

The project will be archived permanently at Chatteris Museum, to be used in future exhibitions, and digital outputs will be hosted on its YouTube channel, OV4T website and offered to the Traveller Times News Magazine.

Community Safety Grant Agreement updates (Cllr Wallwork)

UKSPF ASB project supported the WisBeach Rock Festival by offering different opportunities for youth engagement. There was football, rock climbing, jewellery making, and mental wellbeing relaxation sessions which attracted a constant flow of young people all day. Standout was the 60 individuals who engaged in discussions about volunteering opportunities through Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service (CCVS).

By engaging in conversations throughout the day with young people and parents, it was possible to provide valuable information and signposting to existing youth services including the detached youth work and youth café provided by Sports Connection Foundation within Wisbech Park each week.

There was also the opportunity to complete a youth focussed survey and signposting to youth activities available across the Wisbech area.

Following the Rock Festival, an introductory youth work and safeguarding course was held at the Wisbech Park Pavilion. Eleven participants attended the introduction into youthwork while twelve took part in the safeguarding course. Of the attendees, five were under 25, three of whom have since registered an interest in the Wednesday youth café and sports sessions. The other two are exploring volunteer opportunities. The session received positive feedback.

Safer Streets 5

Safer Streets 5 Officer has completed a follow up survey of the retail community who are part of the out-of-town commercial sector which is situated within the area of Wisbech subject of

this initiative. The same 22 stores were visited and asked the same questions as in December 2023, and retail theft continued to be the main issue. However, in all other categories there had been an improved situation. This included an increase in the number of outlets who were now reporting incidents of crime/ASB to authorities which is a priority objective of this project.

Community engagement

A Community Safety Partnership Engagement session took place in Whittlesey Library on 8 July 2024, coordinated by the community safety team at FDC and supported by Police, Bobby Scheme and Neighbourhood Watch. Residents were assisted with issues relating to electric scooters, safety concerns in residential areas, an assault, and drug related activity.

Community Safety supported the 'Clarion Resident's Community Day' in Sycamore Road, Whittlesey. Both the community safety team and Clarion had received reports of youth ASB this in this area and worked together with youth outreach partners to deliver an engagement event on an open green space, that was accessible to all of the local community. There was good engagement from local youth and other residents from within the locality.

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 to end of July 2024, the CCTV service has been able to respond to 430 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.

The CCTV intervention this has led to 65 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 and disorder, and anti-social behaviour, by delivering regular camera patrols of our four market towns and other key locations. Since April the CCTV team have delivered 1,564 patrols. All patrols all 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. Since April, the CCTV service has responded to over 103 calls for services from our telephone contact service.

The CCTV partner liaison meeting was held on Tuesday 6 August via MS Teams, which provided an informative and comprehensive update to all contributing partners and stakeholders on all matters relating to CCTV including a full performance update and review. These meetings are in addition to the quarterly performance updates that are provided to each town council partner throughout the year.

Street Drinking Update (Cllr Wallwork)

The police led partnership Operation Luscombe continues to provide a positive response to street drinking related anti-social behaviour.

Community reports to the police and Fenland District Council continue to be low in number. However, intelligence continues to be shared across partner agencies to help monitor the situation and to provide best opportunity to respond to an increase in street drinking nuisance.

This information sharing has identified some concern about the situation in St Peters Gardens and a potential new hotspot around the Old Market, both in Wisbech. There have been discussions with the local Police Inspector who continues to be supportive of the Op Luscombe model and has introduced new engagement/intervention directions for Luscombe patrol officers.

FDC/Police joint patrols continue, with patrols carried out at different times and days.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 2024/25	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP7	Rapid or Village Response requests actioned the same or next day	93%	90%	88%	
CELP8	% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards	97%	93%	98%	
CELP9	% of collected household waste – Blue Bin recycling (1 month in arrears)	26.6%	28%	27.3%	
CELP10	Customer satisfaction with refuse and recycling services	93.6%	90%	N/A (March 2025)	N/A
CELP11	Customer satisfaction with our garden waste service	89.8%	85%	N/A (March 2025)	N/A
CELP12	Number of Street Pride and Friends Of community environmental events supported	255	204	June 24 July 21 August 17	
CELP13	% of businesses who said they were supported and treated fairly	100%	95%	N/A (Jul 2024, Jan & Mar 2025)	N/A
CELP14	% of those asked who are satisfied with events	97%	90%	N/A (Jul 2024, 96% Jan & Mar 2025)	N/A

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

Comments

Economy

Projects from Business Plan:

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

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

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) has recruited a sector team which will respond to FDI enquiries from DBT. The Economic Growth team has met with the team members and will host a visit by the team to Fenland. There have been 5 DTB enquiries received via the sector team relating to Biotech and Agritech. The Economic Growth team also met with a Dutch company and a British Embassy representative regarding potential investment in Fenland.

Provide responsive Business Support (Cllr Benney)

The Economic Growth team arranged for support for IPL staff facing redundancy following the closure of the March facility. Organisations providing job search, training and financial support attended a daylong session for employees at the facility.

Meetings were held with Fenland advanced manufacturing, food and robotics companies that are consolidating their operations in Fenland or looking to expand. A meeting was also undertaken with a recent Peruvian inward investment company who are planning to develop a manufacturing facility in 2025.

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

The Estates team remain actively engaged with tenants of all sites. Overall occupancy across the investment estate remains high at 94.4%

All industrial units are fully occupied.

Boathouse occupancy has now risen to 100%.

South Fens Business Centre (SFBC) has fallen to 64.7%

We continue to have had a high turnover of tenants at SFBC. However, following the relaxation of the rents we are able to charge, we have seen a flattening of the curve and at least one tenant who had served notice to quit has reversed that decision based on the new rent profile and agreed a new lease. The Estates team are implementing a revised marketing strategy to commence in the autumn to maximise the exposure of the site.

Skills Update (Cllr Benney)

The Economic Growth team are working with the CPCA skills team to promote their Internship, Digital Badges and the My Skills platform to Fenland businesses. Companies that utilise the digital badging program can apply for up to £3000 to help them adopt the scheme

Environmental Health inspection and business support programme (Cllr Wallwork)

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

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

Food safety support

The table below sets out the number of support visits undertaken between April and July, and the resulting food hygiene rating score awarded following that visit. Data for August is currently not available however in the region of 15 more visits were undertaken.

FHRS score	5	4	3	2	1	0
5-0						
June	18	2	2	0	1	0
July	22	3	0	0	1	0

A total of 40 visits were undertaken in premises meeting the criteria for a food hygiene rating scheme award (take away and restaurant premises) and in total 63 interventions were undertaken, some of which include telephone surveys or questionnaires.

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

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

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

National sampling programmes

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

There are currently 3 national surveys running.

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

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

Food allergen awareness

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

Health and safety support

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Satisfaction with business support visits

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

This year a total of 34 businesses have been surveyed and 100% provided positive feedback.

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration

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

FDC have worked with Burmor and Accent on 48 new affordable homes in March, Cambridgeshire to allow work to start on site.

All homes will be available for social rent and achieve an EPC A rating. This development will provide a range of homes that will attract a diverse community and allow local residents to continue to live affordably in Fenland.

Properties will be available in 2026.

External funding bid and major projects updates (Cllr Boden) - all

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

Council Officers have successfully completed the requirements of MHCLG to access the LTPFT capacity funding. Work has been undertaken to set up a new Town Board in Wisbech with an independent chair, several local community representatives and representatives of local partner authorities.

The agreed aims and objectives of The Board are:

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

The current makeup of The Board is as follows:

- Chair: Iain Kirkbright
- Member of Parliament: Steve Barclay
- Fenland District Council Member: Cllr Sam Hoy
- Wisbech Town Council Member(s): Cllr Susan Wallwork
- Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) or their Representative: Chair to invite the PCC or ask the PCC for a senior local Police Officer to attend as the PCC's representative
- Local community member: Louise Pitt

- Local community member: Amanda Scott
- Local community member: Paul Faulkner
- Serving member of Cambridgeshire County Council: Cllr Steve Tierney
- Serving member of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority: Cllr Chris Boden

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

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

Following the recent change to central government, the deadline has been pushed back from 1 November to sometime in the future, although officers are awaiting clarity on this revised deadline from MHCLG. The Board have taken the decision to continue working with the consultants to generate the documentation as far as possible, however they have paused consultation until more information is available.

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

We remain in close contact with the CPCA about any potential SPF & REPF budget underspends from across the CPCA area that Fenland could utilise.

Shared Prosperity Fund

All grant offers have been issued and receipted invoices are now starting to be received into the Council enabling grant payments to be made to businesses. Additional funding has been made available and previous Expressions of Interest are being reviewed with the potential of inviting those businesses that just missed out in the 1st round to submit a full application.

Rural England Prosperity Fund

All grant offers have been issued and receipted invoices are now starting to be received into the Council enabling grant payments to be made to businesses. The grant scheme is being reopened to utilise surplus funding from the 1st round.

Start-Up/Early-Stage Grants

All grant offers have been issued and receipted invoices are now starting to be received into the Council enabling grant payments to be made to businesses. The grant scheme is being reopened to utilise surplus funding from the 1st round.

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

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

The Broad Street project continues to be delivered by the 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, phase one, two and three of the scheme are completed. The March toilet block has been removed and works continue to the western side of the road with a temporary roundabout and temporary road surface currently in operation throughout the works site.

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

Completion of the Broad Street capital works is currently programmed for late October 2024.

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

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

The cost of developing a meaningful building in the space where 11-12 High Street formally stood is considerable. Various options have been considered following the private developer pulling out due to affordability issues 2 ½ years ago. It should be remembered that the private developer was buying the plot for £1 and would have received £1m in National Lottery Heritage Funding – and still could not make the project viable.

Following discussions with Members, another option is being assessed for the space in terms of its cost.

Once a design has been settled on, the project will take several years to complete. Steps will include;

- Affordability; The cost of FDC's far smaller project at 24 High Street is around £3m. 11-12 is a space that is far larger – if this were built out the cost will exceed 24 High Street's significantly. Even a building on part of the plot will match – or exceed (given inflation in the past 18 months) the cost of 24 High Street. Potential funding partners such as the Wisbech Town Board, CPCA and National Lottery Heritage Fund will require an application process, associated governance and the time such processes take – with no guarantee of funding success.
- Designing the building.
- Planning permission – and the building is in a conservation area.
- Development of the specification for the building and the procurement pack for tender
- Tender, appointment of contractor, pre-contract period and the build itself. 24 High Street will take 2 years to construct due to the site difficulties and complexities, as well as the location of a compound away from the site and the High Street, meaning no road closures (unless very brief) are allowed.

24 High Street, Wisbech (Cllr Boden, Cllr Hoy & Cllr Tierney) – PH

24 High Street continues to progress, but remains a challenging site, despite the limited size of the build. Adjacent buildings lean into the space of number 24 and the fronts of all buildings along the side of the High Street do not match up. Our contractors are working around issues with our supporting consultants - architect, quantity surveyor, engineer.

The building is up to the second floor, more 40-year-old supporting steels within the 24 High Street gap have been removed, with roof completion expected in October.

Discussions are ongoing regarding the contractor's application for an extension of time for the project. Current expectations are completion in Q1 2025 calendar year.

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

FFL and Lovell Homes are working on a reserved matters planning application.

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

A planning application for the extra care scheme will be submitted in the Autumn.

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 is well underway in converting the former museum and town council chambers to create better workspaces, badly needed storage facilities and new community rooms. The existing first floor accommodation will become 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 (please see update on page 39).
- Add additional solar PV to the Manor swimming pool;
Business case developed. Procurement phase completed, awaiting results. Application to UKPN underway – awaiting notice from UKPN to proceed, prior to an order being placed. Expectation is that the solar will be fitted in the coming 3 months – subject to UKPN G99 notice permission.
- Improvements to the netball / tennis court area at the Manor Centre have been completed with a refreshed surface, new fencing and new lighting.
- Whittlesey Buttercross
The following improvements are planned and due to complete before March 2025;

- Remove phone box
- Reposition salt bin to alley way next to George Pub
- Remove bike rack outside Betfred
- Add a differing coloured tegula block every third block to highlight potential trip hazard
- Assess integrity of all Buttercross columns for future works if necessary
- Refurbish benching & paint additional wheat stalks / black bike racks / galvanised traffic signage / planters (where necessary)
- Assess drop bollards and replace as necessary; use lightweight lockable bollards & locate storage unit adjacent to litter bin beside George Pub. Remove temporary fencing once bollards are addresses

Wisbech Projects

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

Continue to review council land and property assets to ensure they are fit for purpose and optimised to deliver better public services, improve efficiency and release surplus land for residential and commercial development as outlined in our Commercial Investment Strategy (Cllr Benney)

The Estates team continue to engage as a key stakeholder in the ongoing accommodation review and to work with appointed agents in preparation of an outline business case to be presented to members in due course.

The first tranche of disposal continues as planning consents are granted followed by either a sale via auction or by private treaty. In the case of private treaty sales, to ensure fair value an independent valuation by a local RICS qualified surveyor is undertaken prior to disposal. Receipts to date have amounted to £431K with an additional £275K agreed in principle

Work has now concluded in relation to identifying potential sites for a further tranche of disposals, and these will be discussed with put before members for approval in due course prior to any disposal work commencing

Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements

Promotion of sustainable road, rail and concessionary travel initiatives (Cllr Seaton)

Manea 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.

An initial Project Board Meeting was held in July 2024. High level options are now being developed for review in September which will then allow design work to be produced and schemes developed in the coming months.

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

Hereward Community Rail Partnership

Community events and Meet the Manager sessions were held, along with the commencement of the CRP Try a Train Project. This programme aims to assist people with using the train and give them confidence to make independent journeys in the future. Children from local uniform organisations also attended safety and history talks at March Station. They also helped the station adopters with a gardening project. A women in railway event was also held to show girl guides about the opportunities for females to work in the railway industry.

The latest Highlights Poster detailing CRP activity from April 2023 to March 2024 is now available and can be viewed from the following link:

[Hereward CRP publishes its Annual Highlights Report poster. | Hereward Community Rail Partnership](#)

Engagement with CPCA and CCC on delivery of major road and rail infrastructure projects (Cllr Seaton)

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 2024. The next step for these 3 projects is to secure funding for their construction.

March Area Transport Study – Main schemes

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 July 2024, A paper went to CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee. The paper asked the Committee to approve the Full Business case (FBC)2 and the draw down of £7million pounds spend between 2024 and 2026. Discussion with CCC, FDC and the MATS Members Steering Group suggested that the £7million funding be to progress the schemes at Twenty Foot Road and St Peter's Road – total outturn cost of £6.1m and Northern Link Road FBC3 – estimated up to £0.9m. This was approved by the Committee.

Further details of the July 2024 meeting can be found in the link below:

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

March Area Transport Study – Walking & Cycling Schemes

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.

An update on the walking and cycling schemes was provided by the CPCA at its Transport and Infrastructure Committee in July 2024. This was included in a paper setting out updates on the main MATS schemes. The majority of phase 1 is complete. Phase 2a is continuing and phase 3b has commenced. The link to this paper and further information is below:

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

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 late 2024 or early 2025.

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 \(fenland.gov.uk\)](https://fenland.gov.uk/Cabinet%20Paper%20March%202023%20-%20Whittlesey%20Relief%20Rd%20V2%206.2.2023%20updated%2002.03.23.pdf)

A procurement exercise has since been completed and a contractor appointed in August 2023. The project agreed a 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 has been completed. Option development work and associated high level designs are in progress. A public consultation is expected in Autumn 2024 and early preparation of materials and information is being progressed. All the steps of the project are in line with government business case guidelines.

Work with CPCA to influence housing and infrastructure funding to stimulate housing development and economic growth (Cllr Boden)

Work is underway across the CPCA area to make a pitch to Government through the submission of a Local Growth Plan with the aim that it will leverage in more inward investment into the area as a result. All Mayoral Combined Authorities have been requested to submit a Local Growth Plan to feed into central government's financial planning.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 2024/25	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP15	% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks	92.5%	70%	100%	
CELP16	% of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks	68%	70%	86%	
CELP17	% of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks	85.75%	80%	88%	
EGA1	% occupancy of our business estates	94.2%	95%	94.4%	
MS1	% occupancy of Wisbech Yacht Harbour	95%	97%	90%	

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

Comments

Quality Organisation

Projects from Business Plan:

Excellent Customer Service

Customer Service Excellence accreditation (Cllr Tierney)

Our annual assessment took place on 13 June, and we have once again been reaccredited for Customer Services Excellence (CSE).

CSE is a national standard that recognises public bodies that provide customer-focused, high quality, excellent services. Fenland is one of the few Councils that have consistently achieved this rigorous standard for all of its services, both customer-facing and internal, not just individual ones.

Following the remote assessment in June, the CSE assessor, Neil Potentier, stated that Fenland continues to demonstrate how they put residents at the heart of service delivery, with examples of reduced Council Tax and the introduction of new services, such as the Early Help Hub; a Transformation project at Stage 2 has added further channels, but traditional channels have also been enhanced ensuring access for the elderly, vulnerable or people who do not have a digital access.

Mr Potentier praised the Council, saying “The use of staff insight into delivering excellent services was already at a high level in 2023. However, staff insight has increased further through empowering the 3C’s (Compliments, Complaints and Comments) Team, which has led to them implementing their own ideas”.

Mr Potentier noted further, “the number and range of partner organisations is constantly increasing to meet the needs of a diverse community, including areas of deprivation”, with the Council “increasing their interaction with wider communities”.

We will continue to build on this achievement by continuing to listen to the valuable feedback of our residents and partners so we can identify opportunities for further improvements to our services.

Supporting vulnerable customers with complex queries (Cllr Wallwork)

Please see updates on [Homelessness](#), [Rough Sleepers](#) and [Community Safety](#).

Elections Update (Cllr Boden)

Parliamentary General Election 4 July 2024

On Thursday 4 July 2024 we successfully delivered the UK Parliamentary General Election for the North East Cambridgeshire Constituency.

There were 59 polling stations located across Fenland (the North East Cambridgeshire Constituency voting area) where 27,522 electors voted in person and a further 11,800 voted by post. The total eligible electorate for this election was 71,511.

The turnout was 54.99% and Stephen Barclay of the Conservative Party was duly elected.

This was the first General Election where electors were required to show Photo ID before they could vote in person at a polling station following the introduction of photo ID as part of the Elections Act 2022. We ran a campaign to raise and strengthen awareness of these requirements which included voter ID leaflet sent out with every Council Tax bill, email signature reminders, reminders on all post going out to in-person electors and an extensive programme of social media posts and press releases.

Following a Modern Polling iPad pilot rolled out across our previous two elections, the Elections Team and Polling Station Staff successfully used iPads in ALL polling stations in the North East Cambridgeshire Constituency at July's General Election.

By-Elections 4 July 2024

On the same day, Thursday 4 July 2024, the Council successfully delivered two By-Elections following the resignation of Councillor Mrs Kay Mayor as follows:

Whittlesey South Ward of Fenland District Council:

There were 3 polling stations located at St Andrews Parish Hall, The Manor Leisure Centre and Pondersbridge Village Hall where 1516 electors voted in person and 644 voted by post. The overall turnout was 58.21% and Gurninder Gill was duly elected.

St Andrews Ward of Whittlesey Town Council:

There was 1 polling station located at St Andrews Parish Hall where 692 electors voted in person and 331 voted by post. The overall turnout was 57.93% and Peter Bibb was duly elected.

Changes to European Union Voting and Candidacy Rights (EUVCR)

From 7 May 2024, following a change to legislation, European Union (EU) electors will only be able to vote or stand at Local Government elections in England if they are:

- a qualifying EU citizen
- a citizen from EU countries with reciprocal agreements with the UK, currently Denmark, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal and Spain (referred to as the EU5), or
- an EU citizen with retained rights – EU citizens from other EU countries who were legally resident in the UK before 31 December 2020 (referred to as the EU19)

Eligibility Confirmation Review Process (ECR)

We are required to carry out an ECR on any electors that have not been confirmed as a qualifying EU Citizen via a DWP data check and by local data checks carried out by the team. We have written to all affected electors to explain the situation and to either confirm they are entitled to remain on the Electoral Register or to ask them to confirm one of the qualifying statuses above.

Approx 5000 electors have now been confirmed as a qualifying EU citizen and there are approximately 800 electors to follow up with reminder communications and personal visits where necessary. After all steps have been taken, any electors who confirm that they are not a qualifying EU citizen or those who fail to respond will receive a notice of removal and be removed from the electoral roll.

Annual Canvass 2024

The Annual Canvass was reformed in 2020, but the purpose of Canvass remains the same, to identify everyone who should be on the electoral register. The start of the annual canvass project this year was delayed when the snap Parliamentary General Election was announced, and because of this delay the canvass timetable had to be pushed back and therefore the revised register will be published on 1 February 2025.

The reformed canvass process incorporates a data matching step at the start in which registered electors are compared against National datasets to see if they match. The team also compare data against local datasets to match as many unmatched properties as they can. These steps inform us whether electors living in properties are likely to have changed allowing us to concentrate resources on the properties where data does not match.

Households of matched properties are allocated to Route 1 and those with email addresses received a Canvass Communication A (CCA) email, these emails require a response even if it is just to confirm there are no changes. We sent emails to approximately 25,000 households and have already received responses from around 25%. After the deadline non-responding households and those without email addresses will receive a CCA letter.

Households of unmatched properties are allocated to Route 2 and receive a Canvass Communication B (CCB) this route follows a more traditional canvass process with a reminder and a household canvass visit.

3C's Update (Cllr Tierney)

June - July 2024	Total received	On time	% On time
Correspondence			
	11	10	91%
Stage 1			
CELP	25	18	72%
GI	-	-	-
PRCS	7	7	100%
Stage 2			
CELP	1	1	100%
GI	-	-	-
PRCS	-	-	-
Stage 3			
CELP	-	-	-
GI	-	-	-
PRCS	-	-	-

Governance, Financial Control & Risk Management

Finance and internal audit updates (Cllr Boden)

The Annual Internal Audit Report and Audit Opinion for 2023/24 was presented to the Audit & Risk Management Committee (ARMC) at their July meeting. An audit opinion of 'reasonable assurance' was given over internal control, governance and risk for the Council. The Draft Annual Governance Statement was also presented at the same July meeting.

During the last quarter, work has started on the Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 (Debt recovery, Legal, Insurance, Grants, Taxi Licensing), and an update report on the status of the engagements within the Plan will be provided at the November ARMC meeting. A review of outstanding agreed audit actions is being undertaken to monitor their implementation by Services.

A new internal auditor now completes the audit team, whilst it remains small at 1.5 auditors and 1 manager. The Head of Audit sits on the newly established Corporate Governance Group and the Risk Management Group; the aim of both groups is to provide more concentrated focus on key issues. Work is also starting on assurance mapping of our risk register risks.

Data protection updates (Cllr Boden) – AB

There have been no reportable breaches of the UK GDPR during the period to which this briefing relates. However there has been 1 recorded breach requiring no further action. In the same period, there have been 2 data subject access requests.

Transformation and Efficiency

Transformation Project updates (Cllr Boden & Cllr Tierney)

The Transformation team are working with colleagues in the Procurement Team to ensure that all Officers are ready for the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023 in October.

With the Communities team we have mitigated risk and improved process efficiencies. This translates into quicker customer signposting for queries and better data handling and decision making.

The Hybrid Print and Post service review is addressing the cost of internal printing and is, making provision towards future cost avoidance of hardware.

The Marine Service Review is in the implementation stage, our recommendations were accepted for an improved maintenance schedule. This will provide a long-term cost avoidance

plan ensuring resilience in service provision. Alterations to the current standing operation procedure will result in an increased income.

The legal service review is underway, identifying improvement to expenditure decision making at Officer level empowering best value for the Council, as well as exploring ways to mitigate likely fee increases.

With effect of 1st August, we have implemented a more resilient approach for Public Health Funerals. We have an integrated new process between the My Fenland Bereavement team and the Environmental Health Team. The work is overseen by the Head of Environmental Health and Compliance, promoting a team approach.

We are working well with the Finance team to complete their Service Review and we expect to save Officer time by streamlining tasks that are administratively heavy.

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. A review of 2023-24 will be presented to Cabinet in September 2024.

Communication, Consultation and Engagement

News update:

Due to the General Election on 4 July and the pre-election period commencing on 4 June, we were unable to publicise our normal selection of press releases.

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

Highlights include:

- Active Fenland Activities this Summer
- Whittlesey By-Elections to be held on same day as General Election
- Don't miss Chatteris Midsummer festival 2024

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in July = 8. We also created an additional 2 news articles we published on our website.

Highlights include:

- Council Maintains gold standard in customer services
- Event highlights free help available to innovative Fenland businesses
- Builders arrive at Wisbech High Street 'gap site'

- Fenland rail partnership launches art competition as part of anniversary celebrations
- Net tightening on Council Tax fraudsters
- Enjoy free summer activities in Wisbech Park
- Grants up to £25,000 available to help bring empty shops back into use
- Come along to free tea dances in Fenland towns

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in August = 10. We also created an additional 3 news articles we published on our website.

Highlights include:

- Bids invited for March shopfront improvement grants of up to £50,000
- Fenland District Council formalises its commitment to supporting the armed forces community
- We need you to help us develop plans and secure funds for new and improved sports pitches, says Fenland District Council
- Bin collection changes in Fenland – make sure your blue bin is out early!
- Changing Places toilets improve accessibility in Fenland
- Whittlesey hosts enlightening talk on Bronze age archaeology
- Tributes paid to former Councillor and Mayor of Wisbech

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:

June:

Twitter = 102

Facebook = 98

July:

Twitter = 122

Facebook = 119

August:

Twitter = 115

Facebook = 109

We currently have 7,987 followers on Facebook and 8,806 followers on twitter.

Consultation Summary:

- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy – 8 July – 15 September 2024
- Taxi Tariff Consultation – July – 11 August 2024
- Fenland Play Zones – August – 8 September 2024

Consultation Strategy

Fenland District Council is committed to involving local people in shaping their area and the services they receive.

Fenland already has a good track record of consulting and engaging local people as a normal part of service delivery. We have well-established structures such as a network of Partnership Boards, user/focus groups and forums; we undertake regular customer satisfaction surveys; and we routinely undertake consultation across the full range of council activities.

The Consultation Strategy supports all the Council's core priorities as outlined in the corporate Business Plan. It is also aligned to our Transformation Agenda - Council for the Future.

The Consultation Strategy outlines our approach to consultation, who we will consult with, methods of consultation, our corporate consultation channels, and how we analyse and review our strategy.

The Consultation Strategy was approved at Cabinet on 15th July 2024.

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.

The most recent updates on the work of the Investment Board were presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 15 July 2024. The annual report on Investment Board activity will be presented to a the Overview and Scrutiny committee scheduled for 21 October 2024.

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 is needs to be encouraged and nurtured. Every manager with staff responsibility manages talent through the following activities:

- Performance management
- Coaching and development
- Springboard (appraisal) discussion and regular 121's, which include a discussion about the learning needs and aspirations for each member of staff
- Recruitment

In the first few months of this financial year, we have arranged and delivered numerous development interventions based on the requests of our workforce, such as:

- IT skills courses
- Qualified project management skills courses
- Fire safety training
- First Aid training.
- People management skills workshops
- People Policies Briefings
- Mental Health First Aid Courses

to name but a few.

In addition to this, following the successful implementation of our new HR/Payroll software system, we have also trained the entire workforce on how to access and the use the new self-service application for booking holidays, submitting mileage and expenses, submitting sickness absence and recording the completion of annual appraisals.

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, Debt advice, Debt 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.

This year we will be carrying out pulse surveys for our staff via our new HR/Payroll system app to obtain more immediate feedback.

Enforcement

All enforcement policies updates (Cllr French (CPE), Cllr Laws (Planning), Cllr Murphy (Streetscene) & Cllr Wallwork Environmental Health))

The review of fixed penalty notice fines for environmental crimes will be presented, with recommendations to Cabinet, in September 2024.

Health & Safety

Maintaining Health & Safety Systems to comply with legislation (Cllr Boden)

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 2024/25 the emphasis will be to support managers and staff to continue good standards of health and safety,

A summary of some of the work planned for 2024/25 is provided below:

- Continue to review and update of the Council's Codes of Practice as required under the three yearly revision programme, and/or because of any legislative changes.
- Delivery of the ongoing corporate health and safety training programme.
- Conduct accident investigations as applicable and continue to build management skills in conducting these investigations.
- Coordinate delivery of a health surveillance programme across the Council.
- Development of e-learning training courses for the Council's new e-learning platform.
- Undertake audits/inspections of individual services/teams/buildings as per the audit programme.
- Continue to update intranet-based health and safety information for staff use.
- To deliver a programme of proactive health and welfare events across the Council

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 2024/25.

Some of the actions are highlighted below:

- The final roll out of internal health and safety e-learning courses developed for staff training.
- An analysis of all accidents and their consequent actions has been undertaken.
- The Accident Incident Rate (based on 100 per employees) was 7.71, which is an increase of 1.4 on the previous.
- Health and Safety corporate training was delivered to a total of 65 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 \(cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)

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

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

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

CPCA COMMITTEE	DATE OF MEETING	LINK
Combined Authority Board	24.07.24	Agenda for Combined Authority Board on Wednesday, 24th July, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Combined Authority Board	04.09.24	Agenda for Combined Authority Board on Wednesday, 4th September, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Business Board	30.09.24	Agenda for Business Board on Monday, 30th September, 2024, 2.30 pm (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Audit & Governance Committee	18.07.24	Agenda for Audit and Governance Committee on Thursday, 18th July, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Audit & Governance Committee	26.09.24	Agenda for Audit and Governance Committee on Thursday, 26th September, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee	31.07.24	Agenda for Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee on Wednesday, 31st July, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11.07.24	Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 11th July, 2024, 2.00 pm (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Employment & Skills Board	24.09.24	Agenda for Employment and Skills Board on Tuesday, 24th September, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Investment Committee	29.08.24	Agenda for Investment Committee on Thursday, 29th August, 2024, 2.00 pm (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Investment Committee	30.09.24	Agenda for Investment Committee on Monday, 30th September, 2024, 11.30 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Transport & Infrastructure Committee	22.07.24	Agenda for Transport and Infrastructure Committee on Monday, 22nd July, 2024, 1.00 pm

		(cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Transport & Infrastructure Committee	18.09.24	Agenda for Transport and Infrastructure Committee on Wednesday, 18th September, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Skills & Employment Committee	29.07.24	Agenda for Skills and Employment Committee on Monday, 29th July, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Skills & Employment Committee	09.09.24	Agenda for Skills and Employment Committee on Monday, 9th September, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)

Forthcoming CPCA meetings include:

CPCA COMMITTEE	DATE OF MEETING	LINK
Combined Authority Board	16.10.24	Agenda for Combined Authority Board on Wednesday, 16th October, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Business Board	11.11.24	Agenda for Business Board on Monday, 11th November, 2024, 2.30 pm (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Audit & Governance Committee	08.11.24	Agenda for Audit and Governance Committee on Friday, 8th November, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee	25.10.24	Agenda for Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee on Friday, 25th October, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Human Resources Committee	14.10.24	Agenda for Human Resources Committee on Monday, 14th October, 2024, 1.00 pm (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Investment Committee	21.10.24	Agenda for Investment Committee on Monday, 21st October, 2024, 2.00 pm (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	07.11.24	Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 7th November, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Transport & Infrastructure Committee	04.11.24	Agenda for Transport and Infrastructure Committee on Monday, 4th November, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)
Skills & Employment Committee	21.10.24	Agenda for Skills and Employment Committee on Monday, 21st October, 2024, 10.00 am (cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Target 2024/25	Cumulative Target	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries processed at the first point of contact	99%	85%	99%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (measured annually in February)	97.94%	-	N/A (Feb 2025)	
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	43.96%	46.5%	54.48%	
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	83.46%	80%	92.06%%	
ARP3	In year % of Council Tax collected	100%	37.55%	37.90%	
ARP4	Council Tax net collection fund receipts	£73,595,060	£27,637,195	£27,810,092	
ARP5	In year % of NNDR collected	96.57%	36.23%	38.07%	
ARP6	NNDR net collection fund receipts	£28,409,318	£10,505,497	£11,756,589	
HR2	% of staff that feel proud to work for FDC	87%	-	N/A (Dec 2024)	

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

Comments