

Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

January & February 2012

**NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLANNING**



OOO OPEN
for Business

 **LOCALISM**

 **QUALITY
ORGANISATION**

STREETS ahead



Cabinet Members

	Councillor Alan Melton
Leader of the Council	

	Councillor Christopher Seaton
Deputy Leader of the Council	

	Councillor Ralph Butcher
Cabinet Member	

	Councillor John Clark
Cabinet Member	

	Councillor Mac Cotterell MBE
Cabinet Member	

	Councillor Mrs Jan French
Cabinet Member	

	Councillor Steve Garratt
Cabinet Member	

	Councillor Peter Murphy
Cabinet Member	

	Councillor David Oliver
Cabinet Member	

	Councillor Kit Owen
Cabinet Member	

Neighbourhood Planning

NP1 Growth and future shape of Fenland

The Fenland Strategic Partnership Transport & Access Group

The "Getting on Track" rail consultation was completed on 2 December 2011. Discussions are taking place with project partners and, due to the success of the public consultation, the 3 priorities for the strategy will be carried forward in the final document. These priorities are:

- More Community Involvement
- Better Stations
- Rail Service Improvements.

A final version of the document is expected in March/April 2012 for Councillor comments and/or adoption.

A successful meeting was held with Abellio during December 2011. They will be the new rail operator in the Fenland Area from early February 2012. Abellio have stated that they are very supportive of Community Rail Partnerships and working with local authorities on rail development issues. This is positive news for working on the Fenland Rail Development Strategy once it is adopted. The new rail franchise for the area will be known as Greater Anglia.

Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership (CFRMP)

The Flood & Water Management Act (F&WMA) introduced a number of important roles and responsibilities to help manage future flood risk. Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) are Lead Local Flood Authority under the act, but the delivery of the new act is very much about a partnership approach.

Two current programme streams directly affect Fenland. The first being the development of a Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) for March. Historic flooding records and feedback on flooding helped establish the areas within the town most vulnerable to flooding which are known as 'wet spots'. Hyder, the County Council's consultant, is now undertaking modelling of the catchment to establish how it will be affected by severe rainfall events. This will then be used to establish what can be done to reduce the flood risk. Early findings are expected in March 2012 with a final sign off planned for June 2012.

The second project relates to the new role of SUD's (Sustainable Urban Drainage) Approving Body (SAB). The F&WMA removes the automatic right of developers to connect surface water to sewers. They must in future provide a suitable SUD's scheme with their development plans which must be approved by the SAB. Only if there are no alternatives will a more traditional sewered solution be

considered. In order to take this forward, CCC have engaged AECOM to develop a Cambridgeshire SUD's Manual to take this initiative forward. Local Planning Authorities will play a major role in helping this new role be delivered locally. The first partner workshop has recently been held to kick off this important new initiative. The implementation date for the SAB role has yet to be announced by the Government, but the early work being undertaken by CCC and its partners will put Cambridgeshire, including Fenland, at the forefront of this preparation for this new role.

Fenland Communities Development Plan – Core Strategy

The Council has been working towards, and is on schedule to, take the final CS document to Cabinet and Council on 1st March 2012, however we have recently become aware that the Government are indicating that any Local Authority CS must adhere to the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) document.

This NPPF document was issued in draft form last year and has been subject to significant representation from various bodies, from Developers and LAs to the Countryside Agency and National Trust along with many more.

We have developed our CS to align to the previous draft NPPF document but due to the vast amount of representation the final NPPF has to date not been issued. It was expected by the end of 2011 but latest information suggests it maybe published in March/April 2012.

Not having sight of the final NPPF makes it difficult to align our CS to it, and to issue the CS in advance is a risk to the Council to achieve a 'sound' CS document.

In light of the above, the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Growth (Councillor Owen), have therefore decided to defer taking the CS to Cabinet and Council from March to May 2012 or later depending on the release date of the NPPF.

Officers continue to work on the essential evidence documents and this deferral will also allow further fine tuning of the CS document. We have also circulated a similar note to members of the Fenland Developers Forum.

Wisbech Market Town Transport Strategy

The Strategy was approved by Area Joint Committee on 20 January 2012. The events and documents are currently being prepared for the consultation which will start in March 2012.

March Market Town Transport Strategy

An issues workshop was held in January 2012 for the Councillor steering group to consider the transport proposals that could form part of the strategy. The discussion included proposals for footpaths, cycleways, roads, traffic calming and bus services. An officer steering group will now consider the technical and feasibility issues for these proposals, along with other schemes that could be added to the strategy

Unauthorised Advertisements

Since November 2011 the Planning Compliance team has been proactive in seeking the removal of unauthorised advertisement signage placed on or adjacent to highway verges. The team is covering the whole of the district in this exercise, but is primarily focussing on the main roads running through the district where the majority of such signs are located (i.e. A47).

If the sign has a contact name and number the sign owner is contacted by letter, with a photograph of the sign, and given 48hrs to remove it. Failure to comply with this results in the sign's removal. If there is no contact name or number the sign is immediately removed by officers.

To date 25 signs have been specifically targeted, with 20 being removed. Officers are pursuing the remaining signs or seeking regularisation via requesting applications for advertisement consent. Officers will continue to monitor the placement of any new signs and take action to seek their removal if necessary. To date the action taken is considered to have been very successful.

NP2 The built environment

Fenland Renaissance Programme

Following presentations to 3 of the 4 Town Council's additional target properties have been identified and added to the Renaissance Target Property List. Of particular prominence is the March Freezer Centre, which was highlighted by March Town Council.

The project group has been liaising with the owners to promote some enhancement works until the longer term plans for re-development are taken forward.

Proposed enhancement works include boarding, painting and applying vinyl film to the windows to mask the interior of the property.



Get Britain Building

In the recent Agents & Developers Forum a presentation was provided on the Government's £420 million 'Get Britain Building Fund'. The fund has been set up to assist builders who have difficulty arranging loans from banks. Follow up telephone calls were made to land owners with suitably qualifying sites. We are now assisting one developer with an application through liaising with the Homes and Communities Agency.

New Affordable Homes

The calculation for the numbers of households needing affordable housing in the district has recently been recalculated. 735 new affordable homes would need to be built in the district this year to assist all the people in Fenland who are unable to afford the full cost of renting or buying housing available on the open market. This is the calculation that is used to justify the requirement on developers to provide affordable housing on new housing developments over certain sizes.

Horsefair, Wisbech

The planned capital improvement works to the bus station and taxi rank are progressing to design and implementation stage following the stakeholder engagement exercise and a recent Overview & Scrutiny Committee consideration. The works will be implemented in parallel with the adoption of a user code of conduct for the Horsefair area to help improve both operation and safety issues.

Localism

L1 Supporting vulnerable members of our community

Successful Bid to Tackle Rough Sleeping

The Council has recently supported a successful bid with The Ferry Project under the Homelessness Transition Fund to enable the night shelter in Wisbech to continue its valuable work until October 2013. Under the new funding arrangement commencing in March 2012, the night shelter will be available for both the indigenous and migrant single homeless people, along with a support provision with an emphasis on volunteering, training and work.

Octavia View Performance

Performance at Octavia View (run by The Ferry Project) continues to go from strength to strength. Since opening in June 2010 there have been 148 single homeless people positively move on to independent living; 88 have undertaken

further education courses, 59 have attended volunteering placements and 9 have gained full time employment. The Council works closely with the Ferry Project with regard to client referrals, performance management with regard to the Council's feedback to central government and how the scheme can evolve to continue to contribute positively to the Council's statutory responsibility for tackling homelessness.

Preventing Homelessness

The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) has again managed to help families from having their homes repossessed by supporting them in Court. The Council fund the Court Desk from its homelessness prevention grant.

Winter Crisis Funding

Following a county-wide collaboration, the Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Board has been awarded £24,000 of grant funding from the Department of Health to provide support for the most vulnerable people this winter.

A cross service funding project is now being developed. The project will be completed by March 2012 and will provide practical support to residents over the winter period.

Benefits

The Council is still seeing higher numbers of customers applying for benefits. At the end of January the average for 2011-12 was 84 each week, compared with 66 a week a year ago.

Our standard for assessing new claims is 17 days and at the end of January we were working to an average of 20 days. At the same time our standard for actioning changes is 10 days and we are now at 11 for this. This performance has been impacted by the continual demand pressures and also the introduction of the ATLAS (Automated Transfers to Local Authority Systems) project which is being led by the DWP. This allows for information about changes to a wide range of benefits to be passed from the DWP to Councils each day electronically. In January an average of 55 changes were received each day by this route, all of which need checking and investigating to ensure that we make the appropriate update to benefits cases and this has impacted on the workload during the month.

During January the DWP also published performance data for all Councils nationally regarding Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit for the second quarter of the current financial year (July to September 2011). This showed that on average, Councils were taking 24 days to assess new claims for benefits, with Fenland being better than this, at 20 days. For changes, it showed that the

average nationally was 11 days which is our current performance level for this. The DWP has also recognised that nationally there has been slippage in performance for assessing new claims which has changed from an average of 22 days a year ago, to 24 days now. Fenland's performance remains better than both these figures.

Homeless Prevention

The Council has prevented more people from being homeless during January. This has been achieved by a new deposit scheme that has been used to help single people who have no priority need under the homelessness legislation to gain accommodation in the private rented sector that meet Housing Health and Safety Rating Standards. The deposit scheme will also help those who are affected by the new Local Housing Allowance (under 35s) who will only get benefit to cover a room in a shared property. All this is funded through central government homeless prevention grant.

Proactive Houses in Multiple Occupation Partnership Work with the Fire Service

The Council continues to work in partnership with the Fire Service and other partners to proactively tackle safety issues amongst Fenland's Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). We have recently agreed to enhance our joint working approach and service to the community by sharing intelligence on unauthorised converted properties, taking a joint approach to prevention and share expertise from both services relating to hazards found during routine inspections by either service. We have also provided a raft of information for both landlords and tenants on our website to enable customers to be fully informed about their rights and responsibilities.

Warmer Homes - Department of Health Funding

Working with the County Council, Ormiston Children's Charity, the Red Cross and health partners, Fenland has been awarded a grant allocation of £24,000.

The grant is to support delivery of a crisis fund to vulnerable residents who are without heating this winter. Residents in need will most likely be referred to the Council by charities, GPs or other community workers.

The project also includes training and publicity aimed at raising awareness of the risks of cold housing for vulnerable people, young and old thus increasing the number of referrals. The project will finish at the end of March with local success stories being reported shortly after.

L2 Promoting Cohesion throughout Fenland

Council Investment to Support our Rural Communities

Parkfield Sports Club in Wimblington has successfully completed their FDC funded Rural Capital Grant project to develop new storage and fix the sewerage system. The funding of £35,000 has provided an extensive amount of storage and has prevented the site from being flooded. A successful 'end of project' compliance meeting has taken place to ensure that the project has fully met the objectives set out in the original bid.

Parson Drove Skate Park and 'Safer Routes to School' Project

Parson Drove Skate Park is now completed and a compliance meeting is planned for later in the month. The Parson Drove "Safer Routes to School" project is currently progressing with support from the Highways Team at Cambridge County Council.

Turf Fen Travellers Site

Work to improve the external and internal appearance of Turf Fen Bridge Travellers Site began in January. This refurbishment will bring the site up to a similar standard to the other FDC managed sites in the area and has been funded entirely through the rental income generated by these sites.

New Arrivals Pack

The information packs have now been circulated to letting agents and other key locations as part of the support service for new arrivals to the area. The packs will also be included on the Council's website.

Community House

The Community House team has been visiting residents in the Waterlees, Clarkson and Staithe wards to find out what kinds of activity they would like to see take place at the House. This menu of opportunity process has so far visited 376 homes, of which 187 forms have been completed. Key areas of interest so far relate to family activities, activities for young people and children and development of ICT Skills.

Rural Capital Grants Compliance Meeting

The Council has conducted the end of project compliance meeting with Parson Drove Amenities group for their skate park to review the outcomes. The group was awarded funding through the Rural Capital Grants scheme for £18,655. They have successfully completed the project and the facility is being used by the public. No formal assessment of usage has been conducted, but this will happen during the summer months when the weather is better.

Timebanking

Fenland District Council has been awarded £9,000 from Improvement East for funding towards a Timebank project in March East. The year long project (starting in March) will work on an intergenerational aspect, bringing older and younger people together to give their skills on a voluntary basis. It is aimed to enlist the help of 40 volunteers within the ward and a Service Level Agreement is currently being developed with the Volunteer Centre to help co ordinate the project.

L3 Supporting our ageing population

Golden Age Event at Whittlesey 'Fenland @ your service' Shop

Another successful Golden Age event was held on 1 December 2011 in Whittlesey. Over 70 people attended the event with one attendee being advised of a potential £624 saving on unclaimed benefits. A total of 35 free blood pressure tests were also carried out.

L4 Promote healthy lifestyles

Swimming lesson enrolments

Swimming is proving more popular than ever this year with income and swimming numbers up on previous years. A key aspect of the Council's swimming pool programme is swimming lessons. The most recent enrolment session took place in December and realised approximately £60,000 in income.

More than 1,600 children have signed up to take part in the swimming lesson programme. This is particularly encouraging considering the economic climate. The Council swimming lesson coordinator has consolidated classes where possible to reduce costs, and focused heavily on waiting lists to get new people into the scheme and increase the Council's income where possible.

Swimming is a key skill for young people, with many parents opting to use the Council's swimming facilities and professional teaching staff to ensure that their children can swim.

Exercise Referrals

To improve the wellbeing of the local community, the leisure service offers exercise referrals to clients from local GP surgeries. The referrals are heavily discounted, offering free swimming for three months, discounted gym sessions and a high degree of care and support.

The scheme helps local people improve their health when a trip to the gym or pool is not something that they are comfortable with, or where they have a health condition that requires specialist care. Staff carrying out exercise referrals are specially trained to deal with a variety of conditions, including clients who have heart conditions.

More than 190 clients have been referred to the leisure service this year, realising £10k income. An additional 30 referrals have been made in partnership with the NHS Smoking Cessation team. The majority of clients who have completed the scheme state that their health has improved as a result of the taking part in the programme.

Manor Leisure Centre - Function Suite

The completion of the sports hall improvements at Manor Leisure Centre to incorporate function and events facilities has already resulted in bookings for 2012 and beyond.

Around 20 events, ranging from weddings, birthday parties and antique fairs are already booked. This interest has been generated with little marketing effort. It is anticipated that throughout the year the number of bookings will increase, establishing the function suite as the venue to hold a larger function in Whittlesey.

Hudson Leisure Centre

The male dry side changing rooms at the Hudson Leisure centre have been refurbished to help encourage an increase in the use of the leisure centres by improvement to the quality of its facilities.

Hearty Lives

The British Heart Foundation funded, Hearty Lives Project is focussing on people over the age of 60 for the last 18 months of the project. More than 10,000 older people in Fenland live within 5 miles of the leisure centres and form a significant proportion of the population.

The Hearty Lives Co-ordinator has seen over 117 people during January 2012 and offered them brief intervention and advice and guidance on healthy lifestyles, signposting them to leisure centres and other local providers. NICE has highlighted that brief interventions are effective ways of supporting people to accept responsibility for their own health.

This project ensures that older people who are less likely to access leisure activities are given help and support to maintain their health. It is expected that over the life of the project more than 2,000 people will receive brief interventions.

Soft Play Investment

As part of the £90k investment programme for the leisure centres, soft play facilities were installed in the Hudson and Manor leisure centres. This investment was aimed to maximise the use of space that at the time was not well used.

The soft play facilities have been designed to attract new customers to the centres in order to maximise and help increase income.

Since they opened in June 2011, the new facilities have attracted over 10,500 visits by young people, which have generated £42k income. This has also led to more young families being introduced to the other services available within the centres.

Leisure Website Redevelopment

The Council's Communications team has worked hard to redevelop and launch the revised leisure centre website. The pages provide customers with easy access to information on activities, promotions and services as well as online booking and payment options. The ease of payment for activities is crucial in enabling the customer to access the services and the new pages facilitate this.

In addition to revised content and easy access, more information about customers accessing the pages will be available. This information will be helpful when updating pages and adding additional links or promotional banners to the pages.

The new website will play a leading role in maximising income in the leisure centres and encouraging additional footfall in the coming year.

L5 Engaging young people

Olympic Themed Community Activity

The Council has met with the Witchford Sports Development Officer to organise an event to link in with the Olympic Games. The inter-schools event "Fenland Games" will take place on 22 June and will involve Year 5/6 Quadkids (athletics based competition), Year 5/6 Quicksticks hockey and Year 3/4 tennis. The event will be co-ordinated in partnership with the schools sports co-ordinator and is likely to be held at Cromwell Community College, Chatteris.

Teens and Toddlers Project

The Council has worked in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council on the Teens and Toddlers project to recruit 9 new volunteers for the project. This will enable the project to continue to support young people on the programme who are demonstrating risk taking behaviour.

East Cambs and Fenland Children & Young People Area Partnership update

Following a review of young people's needs data across the East Cambs and Fenland area, the multi-agency partnership has agreed that there should be focussed activity around 3 priorities:

Priority 1: To reduce child poverty in East Cambridgeshire and Fenland through targeted early intervention with children and families with a specific focus on support to lone parent households and/or families living in particular wards

Priority 2: To improve emotional health and well-being for children and young people with a particular focus on those who are adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or live in deprived areas

Priority 3: To ensure that all households that are eligible for free school meals are registered

Council updates will follow detailing the progress of the multi agency projects emerging to impact positively on the 3 priorities.

Community Grants Update – Young People March

The 3 year Service Level Agreement for Young People March (YPM) has enabled the group to open up the youth centre for young people for positive activities. These include Friday night drop-in sessions, disability groups and various training sessions. The £8,000 has enabled the group to continue to pay for the centre managers to open the site on a part-time basis (the rest of their hours are paid for by a Reaching Communities bid).

Approximately 1000 young people are attending YPM each month, including new attendees. YPM is seen as a positive activity for young people which can reduce the risk of ASB in the town.

Youth District Council (YDC)

Over 30 young people from the YDC and other youth organisations from Fenland participated in the YDC's annual trip. This year, the visit included a tour of the House of Commons, as well as observing a sitting of the Lords. The group of young people also had the opportunity to take part in a Q&A session with the MP's office, during which they were able to put across their views and ask a number of important questions. The day ended with a trip to the London Eye and a brief tour of the Olympic site in Stratford.

YDC Grants Impact from Previous Awards

Last year the YDC funded a series of summer holiday activities for young people at the Wisbech and Fenland Museum. The project was designed to create a

number of workshops during the summer holidays to promote the museum and informal learning through workshops. The YDC Grant Scheme paid for a facilitator as well as many art and craft material for the events. The total number of participants was 86 for the three workshops.

Youth District Council Meeting

- The YDC met on 25 January at the Oasis Community Centre. The meeting was attended by Richard Barnwell the High Sheriff and representatives from the Safer Fenland team. The YDC reaffirmed their support for Community Safety initiatives such as the 'youth arenas' and confirmed their support for future projects.
- The YDC are progressing with their project to challenge bullying and promote self esteem. They have presented their ideas to the Schools Partnership and have set themselves a task group to design posters and marketing during their half term.
- The YDC have awarded monies to 9 groups and have around £3,000 left to distribute. The YDC will be publicising the grant scheme through the local press in February. In 2011/12 they have awarded £6,897.54 against a total request of £8,194.85.

Successful YDC grant from 2010/2011

The Rural Youth Clubs (via CCC) were able to pull the three youth clubs from Parson Drove, Elm & Friday Bridge and Murrow together for the first time and take them to an activity day at Grafham Water. Many young people who attended the trip would not normally have the access to leave their community so this was great opportunity for them to experience new things. The money that the YDC gave the group went towards the payment of the activity centre and the transport to get them there and back again.

Streets Ahead

SA1 Maintain current levels of waste, recycling & cleansing

Refuse Driver Training

As part of the Council's commitment to continuous professional development for its staff, Certificate of Professional Competency (CPC) training has been delivered to all 45 refuse and cleansing HGV drivers.

The drivers found the training interesting and valuable, because it provides them with a universal qualification that they can use both at work and outside of work. Many commented that "*this has really improved my confidence in dealing with an emergency situation.*"

Rapid Response

The Council's Rapid Response Service continues to be well used and perform effectively.

Between April 2011 and January 2012, 476 customer enquiries were received regarding litter, street sweeping, flytipping or dumped rubbish and of these requests, 97% were removed by the end of the next working day. This results in over 90 tonnes of material being tidied away and sent for treatment, recycling or landfill.

Rapid Response remains an important and well used community service. Plans to modernise the cleansing service are currently being consulted upon which will allow for each town to have its own Rapid Response Team and create a new Rural Response Service in support of our smaller villages and more rural communities.

Recycling Income

Income from recycling is still strong, despite the economic downturn reducing the amount of recycling customers present. The total amount of recycling collected from households has dropped by 9% compared to this point last year.

The quality of the recycling collected is very important and a programme of targeted education work is planned for the coming year to maintain this quality product and create improved opportunities to maximise income.

SA2 Delivering community projects that improve the streetscene

Wisbech Christmas Market

Wisbech Christmas Market took place on 19 December. A large number of people turned out to visit over 100 stalls throughout the town. Feedback received from both stallholders and the public has been positive – as have several reports in the local press.

This is one of the Council's four seasons events that take place throughout the year. These events encourage business and economic activity within the town centre and generate a feeling of community pride amongst people living in the area.

Action to Reduce Dog Fouling

Working with information from customers, the Council has targeted action across Fenland to reduce dog fouling in hot spot areas using a PIE approach (Prevention, Intervention and Enforcement). Increased patrols were carried out at key times, making dog walkers aware of their responsibilities and the potential for fixed penalties.

As a result, during December the levels of complaints about dog fouling dropped by 40%. The campaign continues and is supported by recent newspaper articles.

Street Scene Service

In the first three quarters of this year the Street Scene Team has received and dealt with more than 800 customer enquiries. These are a range of environmental issues for the community; such as dog fouling, abandoned vehicles, untidy land, illegal waste accumulations, fly-tipping, litter and fly-posting.

By listening to and working with the local community the Street Scene Team is able to resolve a range of local issues and support the community in taking pride in where they live and work.

The team has also issued 58 Fixed Penalty Notices since April 2011 for littering, parking or dog fouling, resulting in improved short-term parking opportunities in March Market Place and reductions in litter in targeted areas as part of the Tidy Fenland Campaign.

SA3 Promote a Safer Fenland

Improvements made to CCTV at the March Library

To support the reduction of ASB and alcohol related disorder, the Council has upgraded the lens within the camera that covers the front of the March library. This general area has suffered with alcohol related ASB during the warmer months and one of the agreed actions was to make improvements to the local CCTV system which covers this area.

CCTV Supporting Major Investigations

During December 2011, the Council provided both Cambridgeshire Police and Lincolnshire Police with large amounts of CCTV data to support their lines of enquiries.

Two major incidents occurred during November within the local district and CCTV was a vital requirement to allow the Police's Major Investigation Team to progress their investigations into these crimes, clearly showing the high regard the local CCTV system has in relation to crime investigation.

Domestic Violence

Fenland have gained an additional Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) to work closely with the Migrant Population within Fenland. Her role will be to support and advise victims of domestic violence and improve reporting from both victims and professionals from the new European communities. This has been identified through the Community Safety Partnership as an identified need.

Dedicated Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) camera for Fenland

A dedicated ANPR camera has been secured for the Fenland district area through supported funding by the local Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Cambridgeshire Police.

The ANPR camera will be located on an existing CCTV column in Wisbech and will provide Cambridgeshire Police with immediate traffic intelligence which will be connected to the Police's National Computer Database.

This new camera will provide support to Cambridgeshire Police in both the investigation and reduction of crime and disorder.

Fenland Community Safety Partnership update January Quarter 3 highlights

- Reduction in deliberate fires by 25%
- Reduction in criminal damage by 21%
- Reduction in shoplifting by 23%
- Reduction in vehicle crime by 14%

Year to date Violent Crime reduced by 4% but is still off target for the year (10 % reduction)

During December 2011 the location that saw the highest increase compared to the same period last year was Waterlees & Clarkson. However, Whittlesey, Chatteris and Manea also recorded an increase over the same comparison period.

Actions to continue tackling violent crime are as follows:

- Multi Agency meetings targeting top 5 premises to work through issues
- CCTV targeted surveillance
- Link into new Police team which focuses on Licensing and ASB
- Targeted licensing compliance work

Prevention and Awareness

2 new projects have been introduced; Fenland Business Against Crime (FenBAC) and development of Chatteris Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP).

- FenBAC will be the overarching scheme to incorporate the current initiatives throughout Fenland (ShopWatch, PubWatch & Business Against Crime schemes). There will also be an internet based information system introduced to aid businesses identify perpetrators, sharing real time information and report crime. A lead from the current scheme will be asked to form part of a steering group to develop the project.
- Chatteris CAP is in development to be delivered over the Easter period to targeted locations in the town. Focus will also be given to refer young people through to treatment services and police identification.

SA4 Provide quality parks and open spaces in Fenland

New and Refurbished Play areas

The refurbishment of the play areas at Southwell Close in March and Station Road in Whittlesey complete the programme of five new or refurbished play areas that have been developed in Fenland this financial year.



Full consultation with local children, residents, members of the town and district councils was undertaken to consider what equipment would be best suited for the new play areas; all funded by section 106 contributions.

Play is an essential part of growing up to young people, and providing play areas will help communities come together as well as keeping young people active and healthy. The local community can now enjoy modern and exciting play areas, specifically designed in line with their comments and requirements.

Tree Planting – Queens Diamond Jubilee

Members of several environmental and heritage groups were joined by Portfolio Holder, Councillor Peter Murphy, at Tillery Field in Wisbech. A tree was planted in celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The tree was donated by Fenland District Council. The picturesque park, at the bottom of Alexandra Road, has undergone a makeover over the past couple of years with a series of improvements, including the installation of new gates and extra lighting.



Cllr Peter Murphy is joined by members of several Friends & Environmental Groups

Back in the 19th century it was an overflow graveyard for St Peter's Church, when it was called the "New Burial Ground". The Friends of Tillery Field decided to give it back its original name, which means "the place where tiles are made".

Open for Business

OB1 Develop business and employment in Fenland

Council Tax

We are continuing to help small businesses with their National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) by awarding more Small Business Relief.

A year ago we were helping 35% of NNDR payers in this way but by proactively helping customers and using all contacts with them, we have managed to

increase the take-up rate of this relief to 38%. This means that over 1,000 of the 2,950 NNDR payers in Fenland benefit from reduced bills.

Fenland Skills Summit

Following on from the very successful 2011 Fenland Skills Summit, this years' summit has been set for March 13 at the Boathouse. This years' event will further develop links between employers and education providers that can help in raising aspirations and attainment levels of the Fenland students. This event will also promote the Fenland Enterprise in Education project.

Nestle Purina Recruitment

On-going work with Nestle Purina in supporting their recruitment process in going well with a further recruitment timetable planned from February.

South Fens Business Centre

Occupancy at South Fens Business Centre remains high at 93.79% and conference bookings continue to be received.

The Boathouse Business Centre

Occupancy at The Boathouse has increased slightly to 66.16%. The conference facilities remain popular and are in high demand.

Light Industrial Units

There are no vacations, relocations or new tenancies to report for the Mini-Factories. Overall occupancy remains at 86.42%.

South Fens Phase II and III

The provision of 4 workspace units as part of Phase II is complete and a tenant is ready to move in.

The additional 4 units forming Phase III are scheduled for completion by the end of March 2012.

Marine Services

The Council has been approached by MPI Work Boats, who operate 19 vessels which carry out the support service's to the wind farm site north of Wells-next-Sea.



The news of the Wisbech boatyard service offer is spreading throughout the wind farm industry, based on our rapid turn around for routine maintenance we have provided to other craft operators.

They have agreed to use our services at Wisbech for routine maintenance as opposed to Grimsby or Ipswich based on service & logistics.

This in turn will bring additional income to the Port.

LEP Round Table Meeting

Leading business figures came together with Neville Reyner CBE DL, Chair of the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership, to discuss measures to stimulate sustainable growth in the rural economy and help rural businesses reach their full potential. Potential measures to develop are around enabling rural businesses to grow and diversify by; supporting businesses through the Fenland Enterprise in Education programme, Fenland for Business project and delivering superfast broadband.

OB2 Promote the economic profile of Fenland

Fenland Enterprise in Education

The Fenland Enterprise in Education project website is almost complete and development on a new logo and brand for the project is complete and will soon be launched. Interest from various parts of the UK has been generated through social networks and Fenland is seen as being ahead of the times for this work in facilitating closer working between schools and businesses.

A meeting was held with the Peterborough Skills Service, an Opportunity Peterborough project, to identify where shared learning with the Fenland Enterprise in Education project could deliver a more joined-up approach to skills development within the Local Enterprise Partnership sub-national area.

Tourism Training

A six week training programme has been developed is being delivered to all One Stop Staff to enable a greater understanding of tourism and tourist information. This training will be completed by the end of February.

Tourism Website

January saw the launch of the first phase of a new tourism section within the councils existing corporate website. The new tourism web pages have been designed and developed to deliver a more image related site that will promote Fenland as a great place to visit and stay.

Quality Organisation

Q1 Providing good quality and access to services for the community

Council Tax

Council tax collection rates at 20 January were up 0.1% on the previous year at 95.9%. It demonstrates the hard work of the team who help collect council tax, resolve issues with customers and find solutions to customers' circumstances in what are very challenging times. We therefore remain on track to equal the record-breaking 98.20% collection rate last year.

NNDR

At 5 February we have now exceeded our target collection rate for this point in the year, being currently up 0.20% compared with this point last year.

We are currently targeting ratepayers with larger outstanding balances overdue by telephone to ensure payment, as well as taking further recovery action to secure our target collection rate of 98.50% for the financial year as a whole.

Customer Access

During January 2012 the Migrant Population Advisors helped 202 customers, of whom 11 had not previously used the service. Of those we gave benefits advice to 142 customers and another 101 had housing enquiries.

The new opening times went live at the start of January:

- Our Chatteris and Whittlesey Shops are now open Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9am to 4pm and Saturday 9am to noon.
- Our March Shop is now open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9am to 4pm and Saturday 9am to noon.
- Our Wisbech Shop is now open Mondays to Fridays 9am to 4pm and Saturdays 9am to noon.
- Our Telephone Contact Centre opening hours have not changed and remain Mondays to Fridays 9am to 5pm and Saturdays 9am to noon.

Following the change there has been an increase in telephone calls as the new opening hours settle down. This has been accompanied with some vacancies in the team, which although recruited for during January, will not see the staff taking up their roles until mid-February.

As a result, our Telephone Contact Centre answered 69.5% of phone-calls within our service standard of 20 seconds during the month and we dropped slightly below our target for the year to date, at 79.4%. At the same time, we had a

higher than normal number of abandoned calls at 7.5% for the month, although we are still within target for the year as a whole at 4.3%.

Our service quality at our Fenland @ Your Service Shops continues to be excellent and last month we helped 94.6% of customers visiting us within ten minutes against a target of 90% and the number of customers dealt with at first point of contact was 91.9%.

As our new team members get up to speed, we are confident that they can help us improve performance during February and March so that we can meet our targets for the year.

Customer Satisfaction

This year's customer satisfaction survey took place in our Fenland @ Your Service Shops and Telephone Contact Centre during January. Over 300 customers were asked about their experience of our service. 97% were satisfied with the service in our shops and 95% with our Contact Centre; both great reflections on our focus on providing excellent services to our customers. Some of the fantastic comments made to us by customers during the survey were:

"Surprisingly efficient and humane - I was pleased to be treated as a human being"

"Always very professional and helpful, brilliant"

"All staff very helpful and professional"

Accountancy

An Annual Audit Letter for 2010/11 has been received from PWC and was presented to Corporate Governance Committee on 6 December 2011. The letter highlighting the significant achievements made during the year, particularly in regard to the change to the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) accounting requirements.

The Agresso financial system upgrade went 'live' on 4 January 2012. The transfer took place over the Christmas/New Year period to reduce disruption to teams. The roll-out of new version is ongoing.

Jubilee Event Workshop

The Council met representatives from local town and parish councils on 1 December to discuss potential Diamond Jubilee events. Information was provided on organising events using funds provided by the Leader.

Correspondence, Compliments and Complaints

Please see appendix A attached for the statistics for the months of October to December 2011.

Q2 Continue to use our resources effectively

Taxi Licensing Policy

The full Council meeting on 15 December 2011 discussed and debated the Taxi Licensing Policy and Procedures document and the Sex Entertainment Venue (SEV) Policy and conditions document. Both policies were agreed at Council. The SEV policy will be introduced via a transition timetable of one year and there will be regular updates of the progress made. Under the new Taxi Licensing Policy, all new licensed vehicles will require a calibrated meter to be fitted before being granted a vehicle licence and all existing vehicles will be required to have a calibrated meter fitted by 1 April 2012. The Council will be undertaking a marketing and awareness campaign with the general public to make them aware of this change and will be supporting the trade in the transition.

Contracts for Pest Control and Stray Dog Capture

Adverts have been placed advising potential contractors that the Council is retendering for these services.

The tender assessment process will require bidding contractors to show how they can provide excellent value services in line with the Council's priorities; Open for Business and Quality Organisation.

The Pest Control contract will commence from 1 May 2012 and the Stray Dog and Kennelling contract from 1 July 2012. Both will run until 1 May 2015.

Q3 Deliver regulatory services in a customer focused way

Licensed Driver Investigations following complaint from the public

Three drivers were reported by the public for alleged overcharging on Hackney Carriage fares for three short journeys in the Wisbech area.

Following investigations, it was decided that the Council would not pursue a prosecution of the offences and all three drivers received a formal note on their licence files and were given advice as to the legislation and what would be expected of them in the future with regard to operating as a Fenland Licensed Hackney Carriage Driver. All three drivers thanked the Council and said they understood the error. The complainants were happy with the way their complaints and concerns were addressed and also thanked the Council.

Proactive Approach from Taxi Drivers to Install New Meters

In preparation for the changes in Taxi Conditions, a number of drivers and owners had proactively fitted meters into their vehicles, but not in accordance with the process required to ensure they are set correctly. The drivers were contacted and invited to the Council to have the meters correctly installed.

Each driver was asked to complete a satisfaction survey form and most did so. The feedback was complimentary, particularly where an unknown defective tyre was detected and quickly rectified.

Performance

PI	Description	Baseline	Target	Year To Date	Variance
1 - Neighbourhood Planning					
1.1 Growth and future shape of Fenland					
LPI GI1	Core Strategy consultation complete	N/A	100%	100%	0%
LPI GI2	Core Strategy pre-submission complete	N/A	100%	Annual	
1.2 The Built Environment					
LPI GI3	Net additional homes provided	253	300	Annual	
LPI HCS1	Number of new affordable homes	142	112	Annual	
LPI DS1	% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks	64%	65%	82%	26%
LPI DS2	% of minor applications determined in 8 weeks	76%	76%	63%	-17%
LPI DS3	% of other applications determined in 8 weeks	90%	90%	87%	-4%
LPI HCS2	Number of households prevented from being homeless	158	130	Annual	
2 - Localism					
2.1 Supporting members of our community					
LPI FACS 10	Overall average time taken to process new claims and changes to benefits	11.05 days	12	13.32	-11%
LPI FACS 1	Time taken to process new claims for benefit	19.22 days	17	20.41	-20%
LPI FACS 2	Time taken to process changes to benefit	9.42 days	10	11.65	-17%
2.2 Promoting cohesion throughout Fenland					
LPI TD 23	Number of racial incidents	23	35	7	-76%
LPI TD 24	% of racial incidents which resulted in further action	100%	100%	100%	0%
2.3 Supporting our aging population					
LPI HCS 3	% of attendees satisfied with Golden Age Events	100%	96%	Annual	
2.4 Promote healthy lifestyles					
LPI LS 1	% of people who say they are more active or eat healthier as a result of attending our programmes	80%	80%	73%	-9%
LPI LS 2	Number of customer visits to our leisure centres	N/A	750000	931665	66%
2.5 Engaging young people					
LPI HCS 4	Annual satisfaction survey of young people involved in YDC activities				
		100%	80%	Annual	

PI	Description	Baseline	Target	Year To Date	Variance
2.6 Raising aspirations and improving learning opportunities					
LPI ED 1	Apprentice scheme launched successfully at business summit	N/A	100	100%	0%
3 - Streets Ahead					
3.1 Maintain current levels of waste, recycling and cleansing					
LPI ES 1	No of incidents of fly tipping reported that are collected by the end of the next working day	96%	96%	97%	1%
LPI ES 2	% of streets meeting our cleansing standards upon inspection	N/A	93%	99%	6%
LPI ES 3	% of streets clear of graffiti and flyposting upon inspection	N/A	97%	99%	3%
LPI ES 4	% of household waste recycled and composted	52%	54%	52%	-5%
3.2 Delivering community projects that improve the environment and our streetscene					
LPI EH 1	No of hours given by community groups to support environmental projects	2767	2000	4558	160%
LPI EH 2	Number of Green Business Club Members	120	130	Annual	
3.3 Promote a Safer Fenland					
LPI HCS 5	% of those involved in our programmes who state they feel safer after attending an event	79%	65%	76%	17%
3.4 Provide quality parks and open spaces in Fenland					
LPI POS 1	Number of community led management action plans for Fenland's key open spaces	2	4	Annual	
4 - Open for Business					
4.1 Develop business and employment in Fenland					
LPI PS 4	% occupancy of South Fens Business Centre	80%	85%	94%	10%
LPI PS 5	% occupancy of Boathouse	52%	60%	66%	10%
LPI PS 3	% occupancy of factory estates	88%	90%	86%	-4%
LPI PS 6	No. of jobs created and safeguarded through SFBC occupation	360	370	406	10%
LPI PS 7	No. of jobs created and safeguarded through Boathouse occupation	70.5	75	91	21%
LPI MS 1	Number of berth holders at the yacht harbour	89	95	84	-12%

PI	Description	Baseline	Target	Year To Date	Variance
4.2 Promote the economic profile of Fenland					
LPI ED 2	Refreshed Fenland Business Welcome Pack produced and marketed	N/A	100%	Annual	
LPI ED 3	Wireless technology roll-out plan delivered in Council Business estate	N/A	100%	Annual	
5 - Quality Organisation					
5.1 Providing good quality access to services for the community					
LPI FACS 9	% of customers dealt with at 1st point of contact	93%	85%	94%	11%
LPI FACS 5	% of customers satisfied with overall service at the shops	99%	95%	Annual	
LPI FACS 6	% of customers satisfied with overall service in the Contact Centre	100%	95%	Annual	
LPI FACS 7	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	86%	80%	79%	-1%
LPI FACS 8	Annual average percentage of abandoned calls	2%	50%	4%	14%
5.2 Continue to use our resources effectively					
LPI FACS 3	% of Council Tax collected	98.20%	98%	96.6%	0%
LPI FACS 4	% of NNDR collected	97.49%	99%	96.9%	1%
LPI HR 9	% of successful work related training course outcomes	97%	90%	Annual	
LPI HR 10	% of staff that feel proud to work for FDC	91%	85%	Annual	
5.3 Deliver regulatory services in a customer focused way					
LPI EH 4	% of Local businesses supported and treated fairly by a regulatory service	82%	85%	97%	14%
LPI PC 1	Number of visits to the FDC website	279037	292988	229261	4%

Forward Plan

Dates	Future Projects	Involvement of Portfolio Holder to be requested (Please tick) ✓
21 st February 2012	Level 2 Course – Health and Safety Full Day Council Chamber	
22 nd February 2012	COSHH Assessment Course Half Day Council Chamber 9am – 1pm	
22 nd February	Ageing Well Health Workshop – Fenland 10am – 3.30pm Council Chamber	Cllrs Butcher, Owen & Cotterell
22 nd February 28 th February 28 th February 1 st March 1 st March 5 th March 6 th March 7 th March 8 th March 9 th March 12 th March 13 th March 14 th March 20 th March 20 th March 27 th March	CrimeBUSTER Project Rural Tours Leverington 0830 – 1230 Wimblington 0830 – 1100 Doddington 1130 - 1400 Eastrea 0830 – 1100 Coates 1100 – 1300 Safety Zone CrimeBUSTER March All Day March All Day March All Day March All Day March All Day Whittlesey All Day Whittlesey All Day Whittlesey All Day CrimeBUSTER Project Rural Tours Benwick 0830 – 1030 Turves 1100 – 1230 Manea 0830 - 1200	Cllr Oliver
24 th February and 30 th March	PSCO Drop In / Surgery at the Community House, 11:00am – 1:00pm	

Dates	Future Projects	Involvement of Portfolio Holder to be requested (Please tick) ✓
25 th February, 10:00 – 11:00	Chatteris Street Pride Group Event Outside the Town Council, Chatteris	
25 th February, 10:00 – 11:00	March Street Pride Group litter pick Collingwood car park, Darthill Rd	
25 th February, 10:00 – 11:00	Whittlesey Street Pride Group event New Road/Lattersey Nature Reserve at Car Park	
Start date 29 th February	Supporting the delivery of a Confidence Course at the Oasis Community Centre through North Wisbech Learning Community, 10 weeks x 2 hours.	
29 th February 2012	Business Expo, Newmarket Racecourse	
End February/March	Local Business Event (Neville Reiner)	Cllr Seaton
3 rd March, 10:00 – 11:00	Manea Street Pride Group Event Outside Manea Primary School	
6 th March, 18:30 – 19:30	FOMRS Meeting March Railway Station, Platform 1, room under stairs	
6 th / 13 th / 20 th / 27 th March	Health MOTs at the Community House, 2:00pm – 3:00pm, in association with Health Trainers.	
7 th March, 19:00 – 20:00	Chatteris Town in Bloom/Street Pride Council Chamber, Church Lane	
10 th March, 10:00 – 11:00	Chatteris Street Pride Group Event Outside the Town Council, Chatteris	

Dates	Future Projects	Involvement of Portfolio Holder to be requested (Please tick) ✓
10 th March, 10:00 – 11:00	FOMRS Clean Up Event March Station	
11 th March, 10:00 – 11:00	Whittlesey Street Pride Group Event TBC	
13 th March	Skills Summit	Cllr Seaton
16 th March 2012	County wide ageing well health event Venue TBC.	Cllr Butcher
17 th March, 10:00 – 11:00	Gorefield Street Pride Group Village Pavilion, Gorefield	
20 th March	Pride in Fenland Awards	Cllr Owen
24 th March, 10:00 – 11:00	Whittlesey Street Pride Group Event TBC	
26 th March	Golden Age Event – March One Stop Shop	Cllr Cotterell
28 th March	East Cambs & Fenland Children & Young People Area Partnership	Cllr Garratt
31 st March, 10:00 – 11:00	March Street Pride Group Event Collingwood car park, Darthill Rd	
March	Launch of on-line Business Support 'Resource Centre'	Cllr Seaton
March	'Superfast Broadband' Road shows	Cabinet
March (Date TBC)	Wisbech Gets Physical School Sports Festival	Cllr Garratt
6 th April 2012	Open air Church Services at March and Whittlesey Market places.	Cllr Murphy
7 th April, 09:30 – 10:30	Manea Street Pride Group Event Meet at Mollies, High Street	
19 th April	Fenland Community Safety Partnership - Action plan sign off	Cllr Oliver
22 nd April 2012	March St George's Fayre	Cllr Murphy
25 th April 2012	Street Pride Celebration	Cllr Murphy

Dates	Future Projects	Involvement of Portfolio Holder to be requested (Please tick) ✓
	Evening 18:30 – 21:00	
17 th May	Golden Age Fair – Fridaybridge Village Hall – 4.30pm	Cllr Cotterell
3 rd - 4 th June 2012	Chatteris Historic Festival & Queens Jubilee Celebration	Cllr Murphy
Date to be advised	Taxi Tariff increase request from the Trade for Licensing Committee consideration.	Cllr Kit Owen
Date to be advised	Limo & Event Vehicle Policy for consideration by Licensing Committee and consultation with Trade and Public.	Cllr Kit Owen

Staff Updates

Team	Staff Details
CMT	Sandra Claxton (Chief Executive) officially left the Council on 31 December 2011.

Appendix A

Portfolio Holder Briefing – Q3 2011 – Reported December 2011

3Cs category	Measure	1 October – 31 December 2010	1 October – 31 December 2011	% Change + / -
Compliments	Total number received (over given period)	381	98	Recorded compliments down 74%
Comments	Total number received (over given period)	293	31	Recorded comments down 89%
Correspondence	Total number received (over given period)	288	152	Recorded correspondence down 47%
	% of correspondence responded to within 10 working day timescale	94%	88%	Response rates for correspondence received down 6%
Complaints	Total number received (over given period)	71	79	Recorded complaints up 11%
	% of complaints responded to within 10 working day timescale	93%	87%	Response rates for complaints received down 6%
Total contact (over given period)		1033	360	Overall contact down 65%