

Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

January 2014



Cabinet Members

	Councillor Alan Melton		Councillor Christopher Seaton
Leader of the Council		Deputy Leader of the Council	

	Councillor Ralph Butcher		Councillor Mike Cornwell		Councillor Steve Garratt
Cabinet Member		Cabinet Member		Cabinet Member	

	Councillor Michael Humphrey		Councillor Pop Jolley		Councillor Simon King
Cabinet Member		Cabinet Member		Cabinet Member	

	Councillor Peter Murphy		Councillor David Oliver
Cabinet Member		Cabinet Member	

Neighbourhood Planning

NP1 Growth and future shape of Fenland

Fenland Local Plan - Core Strategy

The public examination into the Fenland Local Plan – Core Strategy was held from 9 to 13 December in the Council Chamber at Fenland Hall. It was presided over by a government appointed Planning Inspector, Claire Sherratt Dip URB MRTPI, who invited a number of parties to the hearings to discuss issues which she considered to be of particular importance in the plan. This included developers, agents as well as members of the public.

During the examination process, a number of suggested changes to the plan were discussed and agreed in principle with the Council. These are currently subject to a further 6 week period of consultation running from 14 January to 24 February 2014.

Any comments about the proposed changes will be considered by the Inspector only, and she also has the discretion to make other changes should she consider this necessary. Her final Inspector's Report is due to be submitted to the Council by the end of February/beginning of March. This will advise whether the Core Strategy is "sound" or otherwise, and will be published on the website.

If found sound, the plan (together with any modifications) will be considered by Members at Cabinet during March 2014, followed by a meeting of full Council during April for final adoption.

Resource Use Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Cabinet approved a Resource Use Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation in November 2013. This SPD will directly support Core Strategy Policy CS14 "Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland" and covers the Council's approach to dealing with all aspects of renewable energy facilities, including wind turbines.

It seeks to ensure that the unique fen landscape is protected, whilst also acknowledging the important role that renewable energy can play in supporting the Fenland economy. It covers issues such as how developers can build more environmentally friendly homes and how and where appropriate renewable energy infrastructure should be located.

A 6 week public consultation period commenced on 14 January and will run until 24 February 2014. Changes will be made to the SPD if necessary and it will be considered for adoption by full Council after that.

Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

November's Cabinet also approved a second SPD for consultation, "Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland".

This SPD supports Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy and aims to ensure that all new developments are of a high quality design and do not have an adverse effect on the environment. It will help developers to prepare planning applications, as well as assisting the Council in reaching decisions about planning applications.

Both this and the Resource Use SPD are subject to the same consultation period (14 January to 24 February 2014) and the process for adoption by full Council in April or May.

Coalwharf Road, Wisbech – Design Competition

The winner of the Coalwharf Road Design Competition was announced at the the annual Fenland Building Design Awards in October 2013. The winning design was produced by B M Design Consultancy from Peterborough. Together with their development partner, Postland Developments Limited, the winning team intend to construct 11 residential dwellings on the site, providing a combination of 1no. 4 bedroom house; 5no. 3 bedroom houses; 1no. 2 bedroom house and 4no. 1 bedroomed apartments.



The Council has played a lead role in organising and delivering this exciting and interesting competition. It was developed to not only test the design expertise of the competitors, but to also challenge them to deliver their vision, with a viable and deliverable development scheme.

Officers from the Council will now work alongside the winning design team to assist in bringing forward the delivery of the winning scheme.

Nene Waterfront (NWF) Regeneration Area

The disposal and development of the former gas works site is progressing. Formal heads of terms have now been agreed and the respective solicitors are instructed to prepare the build lease. The developer has instructed an architect to develop the scheme.

It is anticipated that the 24 affordable properties will be constructed first and, subject to planning approval, the development will start on site in early 2014.

Further tentative enquiries have been received regarding the availability of development sites at the NWF. Officers continue to explore these enquiries to understand their potential merits.

Manea Train Service

The Manea two hour train service commenced on 27 December 2013. There are 10 new services in each direction per day (Monday to Saturday). A launch event was held at the train station with key stakeholders and the local community including a journey on the train to Ely and back. The event was a celebration for the Hereward Community Rail Partnership and it included Manea Community Primary School.



The children participated in a drawing/painting competition titled Travelling by Train from Manea. Four winning entries were then chosen from each class in the school and the winners were invited to attend the launch event held on 10 January 2014. The overall winner, chosen from the 24 winning class entries, was presented with a framed copy of the winning design and a voucher from

Greater Anglia for her family so they can go on an outing. The initial feedback from the village and the train operator is very positive with the train service being well used.



NP2 The built environment

Fenland Dilapidated Buildings

At November's Planning Committee, Members authorised the service of a S215 on the owners of 1 Nene Quay, Wisbech (Constantine House). The owner has since met with the Council to agree a schedule of works, along with an implementation programme to be completed by autumn 2014, which will be monitored by the Council. However, the Council will be unable to take any further enforcement action until the expiry of the agreed implementation period.

Other updates relating to Fenland Dilapidated Buildings include:

- Letters have been sent to around 50 owners of dilapidated premises across the district, encouraging them to get in contact with the Council to discuss how they may be able to implement improvements to their premises. Where no action is forthcoming, the prioritised premises will be inspected and the owners will be sent pre-S215 letters (or other relevant legislation) in accordance with best practice, in advance of the formal S215.
- During December 2013, Officers from the Council met with the owner of 11/12 High Street, Wisbech. The owner provided a very clear indication that he is willing to work with the Council to develop a successful grant application to help improve the visual appearance of the High Street.
- A public consultation event on dilapidated buildings was hosted jointly by the Council and the Wisbech Society at the recent Wisbech Christmas

Market. The valuable views and opinions on given by the public will help to focus and identify key areas for improvement, as well as assisting with the preparation of a Heritage Lottery Fund application.

Localism

L1 Supporting vulnerable members of our community

Benefits

Benefits performance continues to show sustained improvements in service compared to the start of 2013/14. For new claims, our target for the year is 20 days, and our average performance for the year so far is now just under 22 days, with average in-week turn-round times being as low as 13 days.

For updating changes to customers' benefit claims, our target is 10 days and we are now achieving a year-to-date average of just 8 days, ensuring that customers' benefit is promptly updated as their lives change, but also avoiding overpayments.

The auditing of the 2012/13 subsidy claim which started in June has finally been completed. Despite being 'qualified', the matters raised by the auditors were relatively minor given the amount of checking that was undertaken. With every benefit subsidy audit, our main concern is to avert significant financial penalty because of the unearthing of error in the system. This was achieved for the fourth year in succession and illustrates that despite the workload related pressures we were under in 2012-13, the quality of our work was not compromised. PWC, the Council's external auditors, noted that there were no major issues with the claim.

Action on Energy

A new county-wide scheme was launched in November to help residents cut their energy bills, protect the environment and boost local businesses. Called Action on Energy Cambridgeshire, the scheme is designed to help people save money by making their homes more energy efficient.

The Council will be working with all of the county's local authorities, and an accredited green deal provider Climate Energy, to make use of £15m of funding provided by the big six energy companies. Improvements available to residents under the scheme include cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, boiler replacement and external wall insulation as well as the installation of renewable energy technologies. The scheme will also provide opportunities for locally based small businesses (suppliers, tradespeople and installers) to become involved.

The scheme has been initially focused in the Waterlees and Staithe wards. Around 2000 letters have been circulated providing information to individual households. The promotion has resulted in a 20% response rate, which is far higher than the 10% which was expected.

Many residents who have taken up the offer are able to save hundreds of pounds every year on their fuel bills given that an un-insulated home will lose a quarter of its heat through the roof and around one third through the walls.

Over the coming months the scheme will be marketed to every house in Fenland through the mailing of Council Tax bills.



Cllr Murphy at the launch of the new Action on Energy Cambridgeshire scheme

Healthy Homes Service

In the year to date, 86 households have been supported through the Healthy Homes Service. The project, delivered by Age UK and funded through the Council, has resulted in minor works being carried out to make home environments more comfortable and help prevent slips, trips and falls.

Of those surveyed, 100% reported improvement in their daily lives as 'better' or 'much better' as a result of the assistance given.

Community House – Supporting people back into work

Following training from Job Centre Plus and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Learning Trust in use of the Universal Job Search and Basic Skills Assessment, the Council have been able to assist people in setting up accounts and searching for employment. During November, a total of 6 people have signed up and have made return visits to Community House to use the facilities.

The Council has also attended a Job Centre Plus team meeting, where 25 members of staff were present, to promote the services of the Community House and explore opportunities for joint working. Plans for the New Year include using Community House as a host for a work experience programme.

The Community House Team have also supported the development of the Wisbech Job Club, which is being held at the Queen Mary Centre, Wisbech on Monday mornings. Officers have actively sign posted Community House users over to use the service. It is intended that members of the Community House team will attend sessions of the Job Club on a monthly basis to promote its services and support it can offer.

Following on from the Community House presentation to the Job Centre Plus team late last year there has been regular contact with the house, both in terms of information of available jobs and new initiatives. Between October 2013 and January 2014, the Community House team dealt with 43 job related sessions, be it supporting with ICT or directing to specific support.

Community House – Developing Community Groups

Last year as part of the REACH community learning project, three learning groups were created; a singing group, a gardening group and a cookery group. Despite project funding finishing in August, all three groups are continuing to meet:

- The singing group has out grown the Community House and now meets weekly at the Performance Space at Thomas Clarkson Academy with around 20 people attending each session. It has become a self sufficient group.
- The cookery group now meets on a fortnightly basis, with up to 6 people attending each session. Participants learn to cook healthily for their families on a budget and have received food hygiene qualification. Their recipes will also be shared with others on the internet.
- The gardening group met throughout the summer and consisted of around 12 people. Three of the group, who took part to increase their confidence from their involvement in the project as volunteers, have secured employment. Some of the other participants have also developed their confidence and become project leaders.

Reconnections

The Council has repatriated 40 Eastern Europeans since April 2012 through the prevention fund which links in with Operation Pheasant work being carried out. These were people who found themselves without work and no way of paying their bills. Joint working with the Police and an Outreach Worker assisted them to return home therefore stopping them from becoming homeless and ending up a sleeping rough.

Spice Timebanking in Wisbech

The Council has been working on a pilot project incentivising volunteering by working in partnership with, amongst others, the County Council and Spice Social Enterprise.

Over 70 local people have signed up to the Spice Credits scheme since September, and have given nearly 400 hours to their community.

Volunteers working on the project can earn spice credits for each hour they give in the form of currency. In return and as a thank you, they can spend their credits on fun activities and events provided by businesses, the community and even in other areas, such as West Norfolk, where the Spice Social Enterprise is active.

Additionally, the New Vision Fitness, Wisbech, Leisure Centre has signed up to the scheme. Volunteers can now spend their credits on swimming, saunas and soft play sessions.

Initially, the scheme is open only to people using the three local organisations where volunteering can take place: The Orchards C of E Primary School, Wisbech South Children's Centre and the Ferry Project. Volunteers have been giving their time on a whole range of tasks including gardening, helping at the Wisbech Adventure Playground and helping in school with reading and painting.

Private Rental Housing Event

Fenland District Council and the National Landlords Association (NLA) held a joint event in Wisbech for local owners of rental properties. The event was attended by 25 landlords (including attendees from rental agents who also representative a large number of landlords across the district).

The event enabled landlords to find out how to become an accredited landlord by joining the NLA scheme and they were also given the opportunity to hear from speakers representing the sector in areas such as their legal responsibilities, how to ensure that their houses are safe from intruders and insurance information etc.

Operation Pheasant update at The Home Office

In November 2013, the Council along with other Operation Pheasant partners attended the Home Office in London to feedback on the project after its first year.

The Council fed back on achievements, which included tackling overcrowded properties often in very dangerous condition and poorly managed private

rented properties in Wisbech. The outcomes were very well received and the efforts of the Operation Pheasant team were recognised as good practice, with the approach being replicated in 14 other areas across the UK.

In December 2013, the Council received the 6th highest allocation in the Country of funding from the Rogue Landlord Taskforce Fund. This recognises the significant challenges that the Council face in tackling issues around the private rented sector. Only 23 councils were successful in receiving funding.

Tackling Rough Sleeping

Funding to enable the continued tackling of rough sleeping has been successfully brought in to Fenland via a Council supported bid. The funding of £144k was secured through CRI, a local charity who specialise in delivering support to vulnerable individuals. The project provides advice and assistance to migrants for the next 12 months ending in December 2014. This will mean that Fenland will have an Outreach worker 5 days a week to work alongside the Council and the Police to tackle rough sleeping and provide proactive advice round accommodation and work opportunities, linking in to Operation Pheasant.

Privately Rented Housing Sector & Houses In Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

A total of 195 separate property investigations had taken place by the end of December 2013 (with 151 property investigations taking place during December 2012).

The Council has investigated 86 separate HMOs in the current year to date. This has included 44 homes where action was taken to remedy identified health and safety related faults and failings (such as lack of smoke alarms, unsafe electrics, gas safety checks etc). Much of the work carried out during the current year was part of the 'Operation Pheasant' initiative, and was a joint effort by the Council, the Police and other partner agencies. This has given opportunity for wider partner engagement including Immigration Enforcement, Department for Work and Pensions, Gangmaster Licensing Authority & HM Revenues & Customs.

The Council has also investigated 99 complaints from tenants occupying privately rented accommodation in the year to date. Council Officers intervene to remove Category 1 hazards (serious faults) and Category 2 hazards (less serious faults) from properties to make them safe for the residents. Typically, this would involve works to fix broken heating systems, remove damp and mould, make safe electrical systems and gas safety checks.

Interventions to another 10 other properties in this sector have helped to address adverse neighbour impacts, including noise, waste management issues, and anti social behaviour.

The Empty Homes project

The Council has developed an up to date database of the current empty properties within Fenland which have been empty for 6 months or more. In total 398 properties have been identified. In December 2013, the Council commenced contacting the owners in batches of 30 to ascertain why the properties are empty and to signpost support to bring the property back into use. From the first batch of correspondence sent out, several enquiries are ongoing. For example, one property is now in the process of being sold on the open market and the completion of the sale is imminent.

In addition to this project, the Council undertook a review of empty properties which has enabled the Council to gain an additional £70,000 of New Homes Bonus funding in 2014-15.

L2 Promoting Cohesion throughout Fenland

Funding Fair

Fenland District Council and the Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services (CCVS) ran a joint event to support the community and voluntary sector in Fenland. The event consisted of two separate elements; training on how to write effective funding bids, attended by 18 people representing 20 different groups, and a "market place" event whereby representatives of funding bodies including the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Bid Lottery Fund, WREN and the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation attended.

There were 25 groups represented at the market place sessions and the lottery commented that there were some very good potential projects which they would welcome bids for.

The Council will monitor progress through the Service Level Agreement and will carry out an interim assessment to ascertain whether any of the sessions transposed into actual funding bids.

FDC managed Gypsy and Traveller sites - 6 month review

The Council manages 5 Gypsy and Traveller sites comprising of 64 pitches. In order to make the service more efficient, Officers have reviewed performance information covering key areas of service delivery including void periods, occupancy levels and rent arrears.

These will be used to improve service delivery and prioritise work.

In the past 6 months, Officers have seen:

- Void periods (The period a pitch remains vacant when a family leaves) of an average of 39 days – 5 voids since April 13
- Introduction of a Grounds Maintenance contract
- Significant progress towards implementing a planned maintenance programme
- Major surveys of onsite foul water and surface water on all sites
- Maintaining occupancy level of 98% (1 void property)

During December, a number of unauthorised Gypsy Traveller encampments occurred in the Wisbech area. These encampments were mainly people coming to visit relatives in the Festive Season. All encampments have been visited by Officers who have negotiated a leaving date with them.

These encampments are being addressed and they will be moved on without the need to take protracted legal action or be involved in expensive clear up costs often incurred with encampments elsewhere in the country.

The Council have also commissioned extra grounds maintenance works within several sites across the district. The works include landscape enhancements to the entrances, various tree works and boundary line clearance to give a more secure and enhance entrances and areas within the sites. The works are ongoing and will continue throughout the winter months, but several compliments have already been received via the Landscape Group from residents at the Chatteris site where the shrubs bed at the main entrance was cut back hard resulting in increased site lines and a safer entrance and exit to the site.

Big Lottery Fund; Making Money Count

The Big Lottery Funded Making Money County project continues to prove popular with social housing tenants in Fenland. The £1 million lottery funded project over 5 years was launched in the summer with the Council supporting through the New Horizons bus alongside lead partner Circle Housing – Roddons, Citizens Advice Bureaux, and CHS group (formerly known as Cambridge Housing Society).

As of the end of January 2014, the project has seen:

- **New Horizon bus visits:** 44 visits have taken place with 572 people engaged (an average 13 per visit). Project staff are engaged with Children's Centre staff to ensure support and promotion is in place ahead of future events.
- **New Horizon new tenants visits:** During this busy month, 33 visits took place, taking the total number of visits to 205. Follow up calls have started to produce positive results.

- **Laptop learners:** 4 courses have been completed and 7 people remain in training. A tablet / internet support only offer is due to be launched for 15 learners by mid February. Guidance and targets for their development will be agreed.
- **Frontline workers:** 106 people have so far taken part in these successful sessions held in the first week January. The next sessions in February are already fully booked. Two new specialist introductory sessions are being developed and modified for volunteers from April 14.
- **Money Mates:** We have 4 active Money mates with 1 in training and 3 more people showing interest.

The Project Manager has also made good links with Wisbech Savers and FDC's Revenue and Benefits team to promote Discretionary Hardship Payments.

Diverse Communities Forum (DCF) New Arrivals Pack

Norfolk Police have contacted the Council to obtain consent to reproduce the Fenland DCF New Arrivals Pack in Norfolk.

They believe that its content meets the basic needs of new arrivals to there area and clearly sets out their rights and responsibilities. Norfolk Police will just need to put the relevant contact numbers for their own area in place to have a suitable document that meets their needs.

This consent has been given and we will receive a supply of these documents to ensure that anyone approaching us from West Norfolk can be directed to the appropriate service provider's in their own area.

Diverse Communities Forum (DCF) Community Volunteer Translation Service

The Council has suggested a cost effective approach to translation support and has worked with the County Council to develop and tender for a Community Volunteer Translation Service in Wisbech.

The contract was won by the Rosmini Centre, and to date they have enrolled 33 volunteers. Those recruited so far are conversant in Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovakian and Turkish.

These volunteers have recently commenced training on Safeguarding, Domestic Violence and Information Advice Guidance as well as a "New to Interpreting" training course.

The type of translation support undertaken by the volunteers to date has included supporting residents in child safety, legal, tax, health (doctors and dentist) and school related matters

L3 Supporting our ageing population

Golden Age

Fenland District Council recently held a Golden Age fair at Tydd St Giles. Around 130 people attended the event which included over 35 stands from partners including the NHS, the British Lung foundation, FACT, the library service and Community navigators. There was 100% satisfaction rate.

The Council has also held a Golden Age drop in at the Chatteris One Stop Shop. 23 people attended out of which 6 people have their blood pressure and general health checked.

The Council has been actively engaging with local rural community on developing New Age Kurling sessions in partnership with the Golden Age team. To date Christchurch has held a New Age Kurling event and Tydd St Giles, Newton and Elm are interested in developing these sessions.

During this financial year there have been 318 attendees to Golden Age events to date, with 6 events held, and 100% satisfaction rate.

L4 Promote healthy lifestyles

New Vision Fitness

Throughout December 2013, improvements were made in two of the Council's leisure facilities. Following this, signage, uniform and media (including the website) was changed in the week beginning 6 January 2014.

The leisure centres are now branded New Vision Fitness.

Moving to this position has taken considerable efforts from across several of the Council's teams. The new brand will become more prevalent throughout Fenland in the next few weeks and is designed to make the service more attractive to more people.



New Gym Equipment Installation

The Council has procured new gym equipment, with the roll out taking place from 27 December. Both New Vision Fitness Whittlesey and Wisbech have received the majority of equipment, with the switch at New Vision March expected to take place in late January.

The investment in top of the line equipment is necessary to ensure that income levels are maintained by matching, or exceeding, customer expectations. The new equipment includes touch screen treadmills and bikes, as well as interactive equipment that has proved popular in New Vision Chatteris.

January and February are important months for the leisure service; the new branding and new gym equipment will help put the service in a strong position to convert people interested in exercise into committed members, ensuring that the service achieves income targets.

L5 Engaging young people

Youth District Council

The Youth District Council (YDC) met on 27 November at the Cromwell Community College and was attended by representatives from 3 secondary schools. The YDC:

- Agreed their new pledge, outlining the roles and responsibilities for the Youth District Councillors. This will be signed and adopted by all members of the YDC.
- Undertook a consultation exercise discussing and ranking corporate objectives.
- Agreed amendments to training materials for their Employability Skills Day.

The YDC also awarded a grant of £900 to March Air Cadets. The funding will buy specialist camping equipment. The equipment will be used in their loans-store for all cadets to make use of in order for them to complete weekend exercises and Duke of Edinburgh awards.

During November, the YDC also supported the work of the Fenland Road Safety Campaign to raise awareness of the annual Road Safety Awareness week.

Building on the success of last year's week of action, Road Safety campaigners focused on the '2young2die' project aimed at young drivers of Year 11 and above. Over the course of the week, approximately 1000 students from 5 secondary schools received a short lesson and film about the risks of driving, especially on rural roads.

The YDC are committed to supporting this much needed and volunteer led campaign and have pledged their support for future campaigns

Children's Trust Board Meeting

Councillor Garratt attended the November meeting of the Children's Trust. Highlights included:

- An overview of the new framework and evaluation schedule for the Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers (single inspection framework). It highlighted the importance of coordinated interaction and engagement with partner agencies, such as district councils, in ensuring the safeguarding of children's safety.
- An update was received on the future approach for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for Cambridgeshire. There is a wish across the county of developing opportunities for families and professionals to be able to refer a child or young person who shows early signs of a mental health need to receive interventions very early and quickly to reduce the risk of more acute mental health development.
- The progress of the Together for Families project was received. The project has central government funding targets to support 805 families by April 2015 over the county on a payment by results basis. As at November 2013, 415 families had commenced engagement with the project with 56 families being signed off as meeting the targets set for them. Of the 415 families, 93 are in Fenland. Of the 93, 60 are in Wisbech and surrounding villages, 9 in Whittlesey and surrounding villages and 24 in March and Chatteris and surrounding villages.
- The work this Council has undertaken to enable the names and addresses of families who should receive Free School Meals but are not doing so to be shared with the County Council has been shared with other districts to enable the opportunity for the same to happen across the County.

East Cambs and Fenland Children and Young People Area Partnership Update

The partnership met in December 2013 and included the following highlights:

- The revised Cambridgeshire-wide Escalation Policy was discussed and how to escalate concerns between agencies or within an agency where there is a professional disagreement that an approach taken relating to a safeguarding of children and young people issue is not correct. The policy has been added to the suite of information and training available to FDC staff.

- A presentation by a GP from the Wisbech Local Commissioning Group showed how information sharing could be improved within the Child Protection Network.
- An update was given on the Common Assessment Framework which is the consistent approach developed across all partners for flagging concerns relating to safeguarding children and young people to ensure coordinated and joined up action is taken. The partnership understand that the next steps include better links with similar processes with safeguarding issues relating to adult services to ensure that children and young peoples issues from any adult service assessment does not slip through the net.

The partnership agreed to progress 2 priorities around targeted intervention and improving support for children and young people with mental health issues.

Community House – Youth Service Providers

Over the past year, Community House has been used by the Youth Service Providers organisation to run a Friday evening youth club. The numbers attending have steadily grown, now with up to 20 young people regularly attending. The club provides diversionary activity for young people from across the Waterlees area who have been identified during 'on street' youth work. This contact has enabled us to find out some of the needs of young people and will lead to the creation of a Waterlees Youth Forum (which will feed into the Waterlees Community Forum). Issues of concern have also been highlighted, such as anti-social behaviour.

Through joint working, Youth Service Providers will be working with FDC on a submission for funding for the creation of a Doorstep Sports Club in the Waterlees area through the Street Games organisation. An initial discussion between partners was held before Christmas and an expression of interest submitted.

Streets Ahead

SA1 Maintain current levels of waste, recycling & cleansing

Rapid Response Update

The Rapid Response service responds to flytipping, dog fouling and general cleansing requests made by customers and aims to tackle them the same or next day. For the past 18 months this service has been operating for 7 days a week.

Between April and January, 986 requests for service were received, of which all were completed by the end of the next working day, a fantastic performance of 100%.

Performance by area can be seen as follows:

	April-Sept	Oct - Jan	Total	% completed next day
Rapid Response - Chatteris Requests Received	49	36	85	100%
Rapid Response - March Requests Received	211	83	294	100%
Rapid Response - Villages Requests Received	91	81	172	100%
Rapid Response - Whittlesey Requests Received	48	36	84	100%
Rapid Response - Wisbech Request Received	198	153	351	100%

New Compact Sweeper for March Town

In line with the Council's Vehicle Replacement Programme, a new compact sweeper has been put into service in March Town replacing an older vehicle that has given great service.

This more modern and environmentally friendly machine will be used daily helping to keep the town spick and span providing a clean environment we can all be proud of.



Councillor Peter Murphy, inspecting the new sweeper as it is put through its paces outside New Vision Fitness March

In September 2013, customer satisfaction of the cleansing service was an impressive 94% 'satisfied or better'. The welcome addition to our fleet of this replacement vehicle will play its part in keeping up the high standards and meeting the expectations of our customers.

New Electric Bin Lifts

As part of the efficiency drive for the refuse service, a new electric bin lift has been procured and fitted to one of our front line refuse vehicles.

The bin lifts on the back of our refuse vehicles work very hard throughout the year and, like all things mechanical, require servicing and repair. After a few years they require a full overhaul which means that the vehicle needs to be off the road for a considerable time.



Recognising the opportunity to save money and vehicle down time by being pro-active with the maintenance of the bin lifts, an investment was made in a new bin lift in order to provide for a working spare unit. The workshop can now overhaul all the bin lifts in a planned way without the need to have a front line vehicle to be out of service.

Being electric there are operational benefits too. The engine does not have to rev up in order to lift the bins, therefore creating a more peaceful environment for both our staff and the public, and the vehicle uses less fuel and produces lower emissions.

Cleansing Community Supporter

FDC was recently awarded a certificate by the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service to certify that the support and contribution of the Council is truly valued.

The certificate formally records the thanks of the Chief Fire Officer to the Council for supporting the local community by releasing Tony Bird to respond to emergency calls at Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue.

The Fire and Rescue Service rely on companies releasing staff to fulfil the critical role of on-call firefighter and FDC is one of four companies who provide this support in March. Tony has attended 30 'shouts' over the past year and he is an

essential part of the service provided by March Fire Station. Tony provides a range of specific professional skills:

- Incident Commander
- Driver
- Water Rescue
- First Aid
- Local Knowledge
- Experience of building fires and traffic collisions
- Training of new firefighters

This support role forms a vital part of the service. The impact of this support makes the Fenland community a safer place for all and enables the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service to continue to deliver a high level service across Cambridgeshire.



Portfolio Holder Pete Murphy receiving the certificate from March Station Watch Commander Andy Powell with Tony Bird (middle)

Christmas for Environmental Services

The Council's refuse and cleansing services don't stop for long over the Christmas and New Year period. In fact it can be a very busy and difficult time of year for the teams.

Now that the Cleansing Service is delivered 7 days a week, the work continues to be performed every day with the exception of Christmas day. Along with this, the refuse and recycling all needs to be collected following the bank holiday periods.

The team have worked hard through the period to ensure that the recycling and refuse was collected on the correct day, with only 248 reported missed

collections from the 190,000 collections made over the 3 week Christmas and New Year catch-up period.

Christmas is an important time of year for recycling, and over the 3 weeks customers presented almost 600 tonnes of materials for recycling, making the most of the recycling services offered.

Recap Advanced Partnership Update

The first ever joint Cambridgeshire and Peterborough tender for the processing of recycling materials reached an important point in December 2013 as the specification and other important information for tenderers was agreed by all parties and finalised.

This 18 month project, which will result in a new contract for the transport, sorting and onward sale of recyclable materials collected in blue bins across the 6 partner authorities, combines the 70,000 tonnes of materials collected each year in to a single tender for the first time.

The tender documents will be released by Peterborough Council on behalf of the partners to all prospective bidders in January. Following evaluation of tenders returned and agreement by all parties, Fenland will enter in to the agreed contract from mid November 2014.

Public Toilets Update

Fenland's 4 modernised public toilets continue to deliver a good service to those customers who choose to use them.

Since April there have been more than 20,000 recorded usages across the 4 facilities and regular inspections of the facilities have found them to be clean and usable on 382 occasions out of the 386 inspections performed, which is 99% of the time.

SA2 Delivering community projects that improve the environment and our streetscene

Wisbech Christmas Market

This annual 'Four Seasons' event was staged successfully during December.

This year the town received several coach trips full of visitors from further afield, as well as attracting thousands of local people to the event. These tourists added to the footfall within the town centre where over 100 stallholders were displaying their goods for sale.

In order to effectively promote the event to more coach companies in the future, promotional materials will be available early in 2014 for the next event and distributed as part of Fenland's wider tourism development plans.

To put the event on a sustainable footing in the future, it is necessary to attract additional traders and their rents as well as reducing running costs for the event.

Alcohol Related Litter Joint Working

In support of the actions already being taken to tackle street drinking issues in Wisbech, the Council's Street Scene Team started a new series of joint enforcement patrols with the Police.

These high profile patrols aim to tackle and reduce antisocial behaviour in Wisbech in support of Wisbech 2020 vision objectives.

The patrols took place at busy times of day on Friday and Saturday afternoons and evenings during December and resulted in 32 people being spoken to and a litter fixed penalty ticket being issued for alcohol related littering.

Joint patrols continued to take place in January in Wisbech Town Centre and other areas highlighted for street drinking. Patrols took place from 4pm – 6pm on Friday evenings and between 10am and 12.30am on Saturday. A total of 24 people were spoken to but no fixed penalties were issued.

SA3 Promote a Safer Fenland

Community Safety Partnership (CSP) - Children and Young people theme

This year has seen more work focussed towards prevention of risk taking behaviour by young people.

In partnership we have delivered:

- Safety Zone to approx 850, Yr5 students
- Outreach services to identified hotspots of Young people engaging in ASB by commissioning the Youth Service Providers (YSP) team to deliver against community issues
- Piloted a themed collapse day at Neale Wade academy, challenging the decision making of 280, Yr10 students
- Voluntary work from the Fenland rural road safety group delivering the '2 YOUNG 2 DIE' campaign to Fenland academies and County school
- CSP supporting the culture change of all partners to adopt a 'Think Family' approach. This includes two officers from the Council taking on the role as Together For Families champions which works with identified families to

improve their quality of life and reduce the need of the family for support from public sector agencies

The partnership will continue to develop new projects to promote prevention techniques before enforcement.

CCTV continues to actively support crime reduction

During November 2013, the Council were able to provide support and detection to 195 incidents across Fenland, compared to 273 incidents November 2012, clearly showing that crime and incidents in Fenland are continuing to reduce due to proactive partnership work.

However, the Council still focuses on areas of need which include retail and business crime, alcohol related anti social behaviour and violent crime.

During January 2014, the Councils CCTV team responded to 178 incidents (compared to 202 incidents in January 2013) which, through successful partnership work, led to 51 positive outcomes as a result. This included 12 arrests as a result of CCTV detection, 3 assisted arrests, and 11 fixed penalty notices.

CCTV helps to secure conviction for GBH (Grievous Bodily Harm)

Local media recently reported on the conviction of a local man from Wisbech for GBH.

On 2 June 2012, a male deliberately drove and hit male pedestrian along Falcon Road, Wisbech, causing internal and external injuries that resulted in the need of hospital treatment over a number of days. The driver then made off from the scene leaving the male victim unconscious on the side of the road.

The Council worked with Cambridgeshire Police in reviewing all the CCTV data and through this they were able to provide critical vehicle identification features to help assist Cambridgeshire Police. Through local Council operator knowledge a location for the vehicle was provided to Cambridgeshire Police which then led to the successful arrest of the male driver.

Last month at Cambridge Crown Court, the accused denied the charges of causing grievous bodily harm and dangerous driving but was convicted following a trial. He admitted perverting the course of justice in relation to trying to disguise his vehicle and was convicted for 12 years. The accused will also face a 5 year driving ban on release.

New CCTV control room modernisation completed

During November and December 2013, the CCTV control room went through a much needed modernisation and system redesign to help realise a number of efficiencies and to maintain service delivery.

The new design has seen the heavy energy consuming CRT (cathode ray tubes) being removed and replaced with energy efficient and high definition LED screens. The new wall and operation allows for a flexible and robust approach to system monitoring and allows for possible future expansion and connectivity.



The CCTV stakeholders, which has representation from each of the town councils, local Chamber of Commerce and Cambridgeshire Police, attended the control room in December and were overwhelmingly in support of the new design and set up. All members were pleased with the new operation and were excited about the future capabilities that the new operation can provide.

SA4 Provide quality parks and open spaces in Fenland

Open Spaces Customer Satisfaction

The results of a 6 month community satisfaction survey show high rates of satisfaction for our parks service. During the last six months we have undertaken questionnaires asking the community how they rate our open spaces. The public were asked to rate out of 10 how satisfied they were with their visit

A rating of 7 or higher is classified as being satisfied and gives us the following figures.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Target score	80%		80%		80%		80%		
Actual score	80%		93%		88%				
Number of returns	86		88		100				
Number of satisfied customers	69		82		88				

From April to June we achieved our target of 80% satisfaction. The following three months exceeded target and satisfaction increased to 93% and during the last three months we achieved 88%.

The Sconce - New Interpretation Boards

Interpretation boards have now been erected at an English Heritage site in March, which is maintained and owned by FDC. The open space is not only an excellent example of a ridge and furrow field but was the site of an English Civil War Cannon emplacement.

The March Sconce is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and now boasts the two new interpretation boards which were commissioned via a grant from English Heritage. The two information boards explain in great detail the design of the fort and excellent pictures depict how the fort would of looked and functioned during the civil war and will be a valuable source of information to visitors to the site.



Pathway Grand Opening - West End Park March

The main path and cycle route running from the George Campbell Leisure Centre to Marylebone Bridge was very narrow for purpose, causing cyclists to run off the path onto the grass verge which in winter deteriorated into a muddy mess. The path was also in a very poor state of repair with cracks and potholes and needed to be resurfaced along with a number of other paths in the park.



FDC capital finance and a contribution from Cambs County Highways was used to fund the project with the tender and works administered through the FDC.

The works are now complete and have resulted in an excellent cycle route and path up to Marylebone Bridge benefiting the many park users and cyclists who use this route between the 2 strategic sides of March town, with numerous compliments received.



Cllrs led by Cllr Peter Murphy test out the new pathway before the official opening

New Local Nature Action Plans

Local Nature Action Plans have been compiled for Whittlesey and two for Chatteris. We will be using these to consider actions in the future that will enhance these sites, not just for wildlife but also for the benefit of the public. Courses of action are dependent on available resources, from voluntary groups, the Wildlife Trust, FDC and from consultation with these groups on what they wish to achieve.

Lattersey Nature Reserve in Whittlesey has an Action Plan that was created after consultation with the Wildlife Trust who manages the site, and discussion with volunteers to achieve their management objectives.

The ongoing management of Meek's Cemetery is taking place in Chatteris. Here the Council works with the Friends of Meeks Cemetery who are keen to increase

the amount of wildflowers in the area, to increasing the variety of nature in the area. There will also be work to control areas of brambles to maintain current areas, but also to prevent their spread. If left unchecked, brambles will take over at the expense of other plants instead than being a valuable wildlife resource.

Additionally in Chatteris, the Council is working with Chatteris in Bloom and the Wildlife Trust to enhance the pond at Meadow Close. This is currently swamped with an invasive water weed and we are working together to control its spread. This and other works will increase biodiversity and help to breathe new life into the pond. Further ideas involve improving access for visitors to create an educational resource and a more eye catching area.

Promoting Fenland's Cemeteries

The Council is addressing ways to make cemeteries more viable by developing and implementing a marketing plan. In recent years, we have seen extensions to both Eastwood in March and New Road in Chatteris. It is vital that we use these spaces and the existing spaces in our other cemeteries in the most efficient way to get the most out of these assets. To develop our ideas, we have consulted with local undertakers on how the Council can improve its offer to customers.

Due to the nature of the cemeteries and the limited space available, we have to develop ideas that are in keeping with and not detrimental to existing custom. We are considering different options that provide the Council with the chance to bring in additional revenue and to attract new revenue streams.

Further work includes an assessment of current costs, the improvement of visual aesthetics, the development of effective partnerships with undertakers, and improving the promotion of what is available.

Open for Business

OB1 Develop business and employment in Fenland

Green Business Club

Last month the Council's Green Business Club delivered a unique and bespoke two part event especially for Fenland companies. By working with Anglia Ruskin University, Luminus Group and Cambridgeshire County Council, businesses looking to improve their environmental performance received practical advice to help them to choose how renewable energy could benefit their company.

Representatives from 12 different firms discovered how investing in generating their own power could help to, meet environmental responsibilities and become more resilient in a volatile energy market. An expert commercial installer led the session at the Boathouse and Green Business Club members, Fosters Renewable Energy also shared their experiences by presenting to fellow companies.



The Skills Service

The Council has been working in partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnership, Opportunity Peterborough and Kings Lynn and west Norfolk Borough Council to develop 'The Skills Service', a programme that aims to connect businesses and schools, helping them work closer and better together to develop and support young peoples employability skills and aspirations. Over £500,000 funding grant has been won to support delivery of this project over a 2 year period. Delivery mechanism across the pilot geography will be through 3 Business and Education mangers supported by administrative and marketing assistants. Operational and CRM support will be through Opportunity Peterborough. The Fenland Enterprise in Education will support this new initiative.

Economic and Business Estate

Conference income at both business centres has exceeded targets, with a combined income of over £14,000, hosting 96 events in total and exceeding income on December 2012 by over £4,800.

Tesco have taken temporary occupancy of four office suites at The Boathouse. This is in connection with their recruitment campaign to attract staff to their new store taking shape on Cromwell Road in Wisbech. Overall occupancy has increased 76.2% against a target of 78%. There is currently a small supply pipeline of upsizing businesses and new enquiries that have been converted into lettings and these shall be reported in the coming months.

Office letting enquiries are also steady with 3 positive enquiries at South Fens and 2 at The Boathouse. It is anticipated that 3-4 of those enquiries will be converted into actual new tenancies.

Work continues with Tinfish, our Marketing Consultants. The designs for the new Boathouse conference and business premises brochures have now been approved and are currently in print. Designs have also been approved for email shots which will shortly be sent out to local businesses, encouraging them to visit the www.fenlandproperty.co.uk website and make contact with the Council to arrange a viewing or book a conference room.

Officers also continue to explore further marketing opportunities, which include broadening the exposure of the vacant business premises through existing property websites and reviewing possible referral and affiliation networks with partner organisations.

OB2 Promote the economic profile of Fenland

Whittlesey Fashion and Living Festival

The Whittlesey Fashion and Living Festival was recently held at the Manor Leisure Centre where 440 visitors attended on the day and all space for business stands were utilised. The Council ran this event in conjunction with Boome Hair and Beauty in Whittlesey, who helped with promotion and organisation, as well as running two fashion shows on the day. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with many comments received on the day as well as comments received from Boome during the weeks afterwards. Requests have also been received to host the event again next year.

Employee Support Programme

The Council's Employee Support programme partnership of Jobcentre Plus and The Consultancy Home Counties (TCHC) has been working closely with both Del Monte and Greencore Ltd over potential for 50 and 30 redundancies, respectively. Both businesses, which are located in Wisbech, have seen a reduction in customer contracts over the summer which is now affecting staffing levels. Most of Del Monte's redundancies have now either been assisted into or

have independently found alternative employment with a few taking part in skills training for CV writing and interview techniques. After initial assessment of 'at risk' staff at Greencore Ltd, the Employee Support programme, through TCHC, is working with 15 employees on interview techniques and job search assistance. TCHC have also dedicated bilingual staff on hand to help with Eastern European employees.

Both Del Monte and Greencore are very happy with the Employee Support Programme and have found the help and support very useful.

Visitor and Accommodation Guide

The Council have produced its annual 'Welcome to Cambridgeshire Fens' Visitor and Accommodation Guide which is a 26 page A4 full colour brochure promoting the Cambridgeshire Fens. The brochure provides an overview of Fenland and some of its accommodation and attractions, and is used as a marketing tool to encourage visitors into Fenland. The brochure is part funded by the Council and through local tourism businesses purchasing advertising space within the brochure.

The brochure is distributed nationally through the tourist information centre network as well as locally. The brochure can also be viewed online – please go to <http://www.visitcambridgeshirefens.org/article/6541/VISITOR-GUIDE>

OB3 Raising aspirations and improving learning opportunities

Careers Fair held at Thomas Clarkson Academy

A Careers Fair was recently held at Thomas Clarkson Academy when around 1000 Y8, 9, 10 and sixth form students attended and had the opportunity to meet and learn about a number of employers. The fair had around 20 stands from a variety of sectors including the uniformed services, creative industries, agricultural, engineering and utilities as well as colleges and universities. The Fenland Enterprise in Education (FEE) project directly supported this event by helping to source companies to attend, organisation on the day and follow-up enquiries.

Wisbech Job Club

A project group consisting of Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Jobcentre Plus, Ferry Project, Business in the Community (BITC) and Anglian Water was set up last month to develop and support a new Job Club for Wisbech with a potential launch date in January 2014.

The group has now developed marketing and publicity material to support the launch of the Wisbech Job Club with the first being held on 20 January 2014 at Queen Mary Centre, Queens Road, Wisbech.

The job club will support jobseekers by offering;

- Friendly support and advice to help secure employment
- Careers advice from the National Careers Service
- Volunteering and Apprenticeship opportunities

Computers will also be available with free internet access.

This new drop-in job seekers support service will be open each Monday morning (10-12pm) at the Queen Mary Centre to help anyone (of any age or employment status) move into work or progress in their career.

A promotional poster for the Wisbech Job Cafe. The title 'Wisbech Job Cafe' is in large, bold, orange letters. A blue circular badge in the top right corner says 'NEW FOR 2014'. Below the title, it says 'Starting Monday 20 January 2014 10am - Midday'. The location is 'Queen Mary Centre, Queens Road Wisbech, PE13 2PE (next to Somers Road car park)'. A list of bullet points includes: 'Anyone is welcome to attend', 'Friendly support and advice to help you get a job', 'Careers advice from the National Careers Service', 'Volunteering and Apprenticeship opportunities', 'Computers available with free internet access', 'Refreshments and relaxing environment', and 'Recruiters attending!'. At the bottom, it says 'For more information speak to anyone at Wisbech Jobcentre Plus or call Fenland District Council on 01354 654321'. Logos for 'supported by' include Fenland District Council, Jobcentre Plus, and LUMINUS ENERGY PROJECT.

Wisbech Job Cafe **NEW FOR 2014**

Starting Monday 20 January 2014
10am - Midday

Queen Mary Centre, Queens Road
Wisbech, PE13 2PE
(next to Somers Road car park)

- Anyone is welcome to attend
- Friendly support and advice to help you get a job
- Careers advice from the National Careers Service
- Volunteering and Apprenticeship opportunities
- Computers available with free internet access
- Refreshments and relaxing environment
- Recruiters attending!

For more information speak to anyone at Wisbech Jobcentre Plus or call Fenland District Council on 01354 654321

supported by

Fenland District Council Jobcentre Plus LUMINUS ENERGY PROJECT

OB4 Promote Fenland as a tourism and visitor destination

Promoting the Fenland Area

The Council produces a guide to 'What's on?' in Fenland, which is emailed out to a growing database of both internal and external contacts. It is included on the www.visitcambridgeshirefens.org website, sent out via the new Facebook page, and linked to Cambridgeshire.net.

The publication is growing over time as more community groups are becoming involved in advertising their events and building a wider scope of events for visitors.

Fenland Tourism Board Update

The Fenland Tourism Board (FTB) sent out its second Bi-monthly newsletter as part of its ongoing work to strengthen its dialogue with all stakeholders and partner agencies. The newsletter helps to provide additional information and enable support and guidance to be delivered in a coordinated way, as well as providing updates on any news or opportunities that arise.

Quality Organisation

Q1 Providing good quality customer services that are accessible to the community

Customer Services – customer survey

At the start of February 2014, we surveyed customers who contact us through our 'Fenland @ your service' Shops, Community Hub, Contact Centre and via Email. A fantastic 95% (spot on our target for this year) of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the service received from us, showing that despite greater call volumes and on some occasions a longer wait for their calls to be answered, customers continue to feel that we offer a very high standard of service to them. This reflects the desire of team members to go the extra mile for our customers and the pride that they take in delivering excellent customer service.

Annual Audit Letter

The Annual Audit Letter was presented to the Corporate Governance Committee during their meeting in December. Our auditors Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) praised the excellent work of staff and confirmed that the Council continues to deliver excellent accounting and governance. A press release was issued highlighting this achievement early in the year.

Public Communication

The December Fenlander Monthly page in the Citizen newspaper included key stories on 'Slimmer, fitter, healthier: how Mark went from fat to fit' (including fitness programmes at the leisure centres); Christmas community events and opening times; and Christmas/New Year holiday bin collection changes. Shorter stories included:

- Road safety campaign in schools, backed by YDC
- Canvassers' home visits
- Peer review report

A 'Year in Pictures' page was also printed on Fenlander page in the Citizen on New Year's Day.

In addition to the Monthly page(s), we completed the following updates in January:

- Facebook posts = 16
- Twitter 'tweets' = 16

- News stories to FDC website = 16

Key news stories for the Council's website in January 2014 included;

- Manea Rail Services – official launch update and Manea school trip Leisure rebranding launch
- Our four leisure centres have been rebranded with a bright new image (open day launch, 25 January)
- Leisure Website launch – Launch of new re-branded website
- 13 January - Five consultations now underway (Council priorities, Core Strategy, Two Supplementary Documents & Community Governance Review Draft Corporate Plan consultation). Launch of the annual consultation to help it decide future priorities
- New Job Café offers a friendly helping hand - A new "job café" has opened in Wisbech to help people who are struggling to find work
- March Rainbow Savers credit union launch - new credit union has been set up in March
- 8 January - Annual Canvass Reminder - Canvassers will be out and about across the district making visits from 9 January until 26 January
- Dog Fouling control patrols - Spray paint highlights the poop problem <http://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/8266/Spray-paint-highlights-the-poop-problem>
- Tillery Field Information Board - Park's new board recalls WW1 family tragedies <http://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/8168/Parks-new-board-recalls-WW1-family-tragedies>
- LGC shortlist - Council in line for national efficiency award <http://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/8181/Council-in-line-for-national-efficiency-award>

Q2 Continue to use our resources effectively

Contact Centre

We are continuing to see increased volumes of phone calls in the Contact Centre compared to last year:

- December - 6,131 calls received compared to 5,224 in December 2012,
- January - 8,517 calls received compared to 8,125 in January 2013.
- During 2013-14 to date, we have now received 82,903 calls compared to 78,464 calls, which is an increase of 5.66%.

The increased call volumes have primarily been a result of more Council Tax recovery action being taken as we seek to robustly challenge customers who are not paying their Council Tax on time. To the end of January, we had issued

18,583 reminders for Council Tax, compared to 11,883 for the same period last year, which is an increase of 56%.

Our recovery plan continues to see improvement in Contact Centre performance despite the significant increase in demand and focus of calls. In December, we answered 80.9% of calls compared to our target of answering 80% within 20 seconds. We also had less abandoned calls, at 4.9% than our target of 5%. However it should be noted that customers do not need to abandon their call without speaking to a Customer Advisor as we have a call-back facility that allows customers to leave their contact details so that we can return their call later.

Our overall contact centre performance for the year to date is now 66.4% for answering calls within 20 seconds, and a call abandonment rate of 4.9%.

Council Tax

Collection rates continue to remain stable, with 93.4% of Council Tax being collected this year to date.

During December, we issued 1211 reminders which represented an increase of 189 on this time last year. There was no Summons run in December due to Court date changes in previous months.

We have commenced the annual review of Council Tax single person discount, targeting potentially fraudulent claims through the use of credit report data matching. A total of 1400 (approx.10% of all households receiving a single person discount) have been targeted following a successful data match.

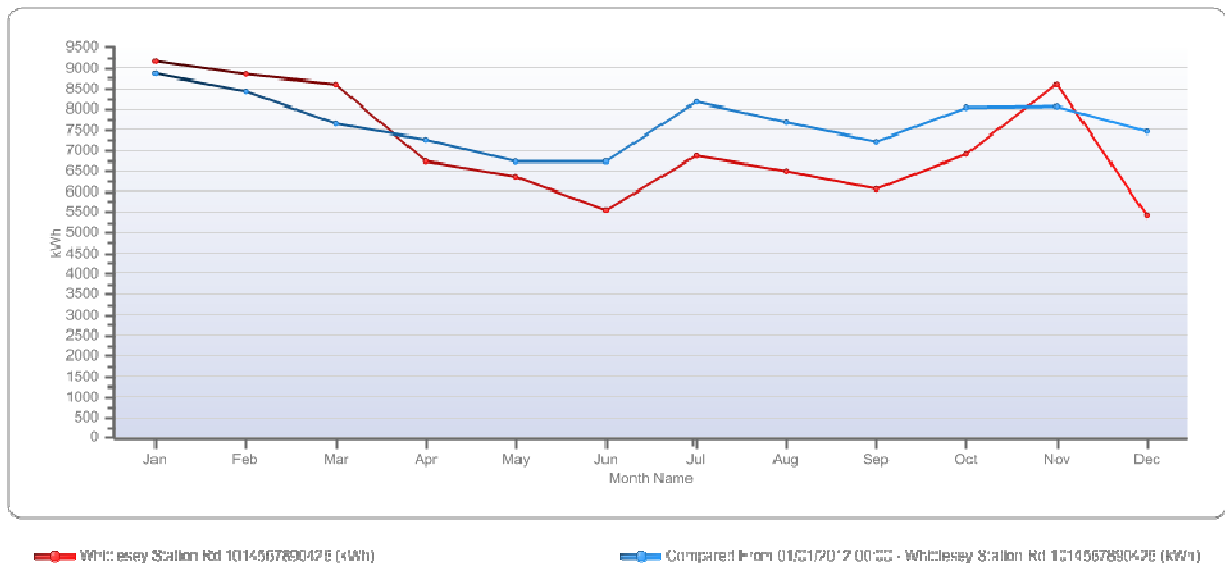
National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

We have now collected 88.49% of the NNDR due for this year, 0.71% less than our target for this point. This is traditionally a quiet time for payments to be made due to the Christmas and New Year break

Smart meters Installed

This month, smart meters have been installed in all of the Council's main buildings. The meters will provide information every half hour, which will be particularly useful to leisure centre managers to help them manage and reduce energy use and costs from equipment such as air conditioning and lighting.

Installing meters was a key objective within the Council Energy Management Plan as it can assist in encouraging behavioral change and identifying long term year on year cost saving energy saving improvements.



The graph above is an example of the information which can be produced by the smart meters. It shows electricity used at the Manors Leisure Centre, Whittlesey for 2012 (blue line) and 2013 (red line).

Fenland Strategic Partnership (FSP)

The FSP came together at the Stakeholder event on 10 December 2013 to review progress against the priorities and associated projects identified at the FSP Stakeholder event in May 2013. These included:

- **Cohesion** with a focus on Private Sector renting to include HMO's and Supporting New Arrivals
- **Health Commissioning** with a focus on Alcohol Misuse and reducing deaths from Coronary Heart Disease
- **Together for Families**
- **Meeting the needs of Older People** with a focus on Living Well and Independently
- **Economic Development** with a focus on Apprenticeships

Partners took the opportunity to discuss future support that is required and can be offered to further advance progress, whilst considering key challenges and potential barriers for the future.

It was recognised that further work is required by all organisations to address the range of issues facing Fenland communities in terms of meeting the needs of younger and older people, cohesion and health commissioning.

The FSP also needs to give consideration to future demand management to inform the strategic approach of the group, with increasing demand for front line services and finite resources.

A set of new priorities will be set at the next Stakeholder Event in May 2014, with a report on progress and discussion regarding future priorities.

Q3 Deliver regulatory services in a customer focused way

Health and Safety

During December, the largest tidal surge for over 60 years affected the East coast of the country. Within Fenland this impacted on the tidal River Nene and Wisbech in particular. This required liaison with other agencies e.g. Environment Agency, County Council Highways and Cambs Police, to ensure flood defences/gates, sand bagging of drains and gullies were in place to prevent flooding within the town.

No flooding of properties occurred, although at the height of the surge there were 1.8 metres of tidal water above the port quay. This resulted in clean up operations to remove the mud and silt left on the quay. Follow up multi-agency meetings are taking place to review the event and identify any areas where improvements are required.

FDC were tasked via the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Resilience Forum to produce Guidance booklets for the public and community groups. The aim of these booklets is to improve awareness of emergencies, how to prepare for them and thereby improve resilience across local communities. The booklets also contain blank templates plans which can be used to produce individual/group plans.

Area Officer visits to Town Councils

Area officers in Environmental Health have now given a presentation at a meeting of each Town Council informing them of the refocused Environmental Health service. Details were shared on how the new service will work and also gave officers the chances to meet Councillors as the key point of contact on environmental health matters. The programme of meetings attended also trialled a new process of reporting back to the Town Council on questions raised during the meeting, in a single update document

As Environmental Health is now structured on an area basis, each Town Council is a key partner in this new approach to service delivery. Environmental Health will focus on local issues, seek close working with partners and provide a one stop shop service. It is important for Town Councils to know this for routine

working, where there are opportunities for more collaborative working as well as getting to know their area officer.

The presentations and update bulletins have been well received at each Town Council and these should pave the way for closer working and improved service delivery.

Air Quality Reporting

The Council is required to monitor and report on Fenland's air quality. This is a statutory requirement and requires regular and ongoing monitoring for air pollution. For Fenland, potential pollution to air is generally from traffic but also some from larger processes such as coal fired boilers.

Each year the Council must produce and submit a report to Defra setting out the recorded pollution levels over the previous 12 months and proposing any action required to resolve high levels of pollution.

In previous years, the Council has been required to formally declare areas where air quality levels are not within guideline levels. These areas were formally declared as Air Quality Management Areas. There are 3 in Wisbech (1 for traffic related pollution along the dual carriageway along Lynn Road and 2 related to industrial pollution covering the residential areas around Princes Foods) and 1 in Whittlesey in the location of Hanson Bricks. Nationally there are many air quality management areas, mainly in city or industrial locations.

Since the declaration of these management areas approximately 10 years ago, work has been ongoing in partnership with neighbouring authorities, the Environment Agency and the County Council to improve the air quality and there are now some positive results from this work.

In December 2013 a report was submitted to Defra requesting agreement to revoke 2 of the 4 areas with potential to revoke a third if work progresses to improve the industrial plant at Princes Foods, Wisbech. Defra's response should be received within the next 3 months at which time it is hoped work to start revocation of these areas can be commenced.

New Legislation – Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

The Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 replaces the previous registration system for scrap metal dealers created by the 1964 Scrap Metal Dealers Act. This new licensing scheme will be run and administered by local authorities, and is based on the legislation for alcohol licences created in the 2003 Licensing Act.

Every scrap metal dealer will be required to have a licence, and operating without one will be a criminal offence. Under the new legislation, the definition of

scrap metal dealers is extended so it now includes motor salvage operators, and the provisions in the Vehicles (Crime) Act 2001 under which they operate will end once the new Act comes into effect.

The new regime started on the 1 October 2013 with a transitional period to ensure a smooth hand over from the old regime to the new with minimal disruption to existing licensed scrap metal dealers. Licences were issued by the deadline of 1 December 2013.

King's Lynn & West Norfolk Council visit FDC to share best practice

Officers from the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk (BCKL&WN) visited Fenland District Council to view how the Licensing service utilise the ECINS software system to operate a single file case management process with other partner agencies relating to managing premises. The software coordinates multi agency working in excess of 350 open case files within the system that cover the Fenland District.

Local Election

On 9 December 2013 the Council successfully delivered the Elm and Christchurch District Ward by election. The election was as a result of the sad death of Councillor Mac Cotterell MBE.

The Elm and Christchurch District ward had an eligible electorate of 3,839 of which 483 were issued with postal votes.

The turnout was overall voter turnout was 17.9% and Michelle Tanfield, Conservative, was elected.

This is the 6th election the service has successfully delivered this calendar year. These electoral events range from local town and parish by elections to the major County Council elections held in May. The service has a great track record in ensuring electors are able to take part in the democratic process whilst also ensuring local people have confidence in the integrity of the poll and declared results.