

Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

October 2014

Cabinet Members



**Councillor
John Clark**
Leader of the Council



**Councillor
Ralph Butcher**
Cabinet Member



**Councillor
Mike Cornwell**
Cabinet Member



**Councillor
Peter Murphy**
Cabinet Member



**Councillor
David Oliver**
Cabinet Member



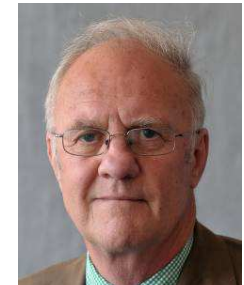
**Councillor
Chris Seaton**
Cabinet Member



**Councillor
Will Sutton**
Cabinet Member



**Councillor
Michelle Tanfield**
Cabinet Member



**Councillor
Fred Yeulett**
Cabinet Member

Communities

C1 Support vulnerable members of our community

Benefits

Our benefits processing performance continues to be strong, ensuring that we help the most vulnerable members of the community with paying their rent (through Housing Benefit) and their Council Tax (through Council Tax Support).

We are performing well within our targets. We are assessing new claims in an average of 14 days (compared to a target of 20 days) and changes in an average of 6 days (compared to a target of 10 days).

Housing Benefits

We are on track to have the 2013/14 Housing Benefit subsidy claim certified by the due date of 30th November. Auditors from PWC have been on-site since June and we are now finalising our checking and agreeing the amendments to the claim. Early indications are that the amendments will again be minimal with little financial impact.

Disabled Facilities Grants

Through this scheme The Council provides adaptation works for elderly and disabled home owners and tenants to remain safe, secure and protected in their own homes. The Council has assisted 39 vulnerable households in the financial year 14/15 to date, compared to 23 for this in in the previous year. There are currently 71 households in the process of receiving their adaptations to their home.

Preventing Homelessness

The Council continue to carry out joint visits with Circle Housing - Roddons to help their tenants remain in their homes. The visits are to those tenants who are facing court action because of rent arrears. Advice is given to the tenants by the Council on how to avoid the court granting possession. The advice is around setting up an agreed repayment plan so that the arrears are cleared as quickly as possible. The Council also advise that if repossession action is taken and they end up presenting as homeless they could find themselves being found intentionally homeless because they haven't used the advice given to stop the proceeding taking place.

By doing the joint home visit the Council along with Circle Roddons prevented 62 families from becoming homeless in 2013-14 and so far in 2014 – 15 have prevented 13 families.

The Council are now in discussion with Accent Nene Registered Provider to do the same kind of prevention work with their tenants.

Waterlees Doorstep Sports Club

A 'Doorstep Sports Club' has been set up in the Waterlees ward to get more people involved in sport, to promote fitness and help curb anti-social behaviour.

One hour sessions are being held each week, starting off with football as the activity as it is very popular, but this will shift to other sports such as basketball and gymnastics. The activities have to be led by qualified sports coaches.

The first weekly session started on 25th September and 18 young people attended. They are currently being held on the Roddons-owned Astro Turf pitch located at Lime Avenue in Waterlees. The school hall at the Orchards Primary School will be used during the winter months.

The Council secured £4,000 from Street Games, a national charity supported by Sport England, to implement this project. The funding received will support the project initially until the end of the financial year, however, if the project targets are met it could continue for a further two years.

Rogue Landlord Fund

The Council's Rogue Landlords task force group has continued working successfully in partnership with Operation Pheasant. In Quarter 2, the team conducted 133 inspections of private rented properties, resulting in 146 notices being served under planning enforcement and housing legislation. The council removed 136 Category 1 hazards (such as dangerous electrics, etc) and 190 Category 2 hazards. 88 people were no longer illegally housed and 14 were voluntarily re-patriated. 635 information packs were distributed to tenants outlining workers' rights, advice on human trafficking, fire safety in the home and where they can seek advice locally.

C2 Support our ageing population and young people

Golden Age

The Golden Age Team have held a Golden Age Fair in Doddington. The fair was attended by 115 people and 34 external stall holders.

The New Vision Fitness stand spoke to 60 people and undertook 50 blood pressure checks. They administered 28 one day gym passes.

The Fenland Ferret identified an additional £1 600 in potential benefits.

Youth District Council

The YDC met in September to progress their 'cycle safety' project through the development stage, this is to conduct a feasibility study within the schools around the potential for a project around cycle safety and maintenance. The YDC also held a debate, the topic 'Animal Testing – yes or no?' Cllr Tanfield led a very lively and well thought out debate. The YDC members have taken away a number of tasks which they will be working on in their schools about delivering a number of cycle safety / maintenance workshops either within or outside of schools. They will also be working on, and submitting as a group a YDC Grant application for their project, enabling them to gain a greater understanding of the work which goes into applying for a grant.

The YDC approved a grant to Wisbech Lawn Tennis Club for junior taster sessions after school, focussing on mini tennis under the age of 18. The grant was for £480 for 12 weeks of sessions for 2 hours a week.

C3 Promote health and wellbeing

New Vision Fitness Marketing

New Vision continues to market the service to users across Fenland. This month we have been targeting increased use of the soft play facilities in Whittlesey and Wisbech. With increased competition in Wisbech, the service has also been highlighting the effect that our staff can have on your work out with 'Change the Way you work out.' New Vision offers a higher level of member interaction with the gym team and ensuring our members take advantage of this will keep retention levels up.

Current Promotional Literature



Autumn Promotion

The service is running a refer a friend promotion in the Autumn, backing the number of new members who highlight that word of mouth and a recommendation from a friend is a key influencer to them accessing New Vision Fitness.



The 'Refer a Friend' promotion is offering a free month to existing members who refer a friend that then becomes a committed member.

This campaign will run from Mid-October through until the end of November.

Outreach Sales

Following the success of the initial outreach project that ran from May – July, and with the increased competition in Wisbech, the project has been extended to run for August and September.

So far the project has visited 36 employers / events in the district, generating over 250 new customers to visit New Vision Fitness clubs.

The project now includes partnership work with CamQuit and NHS partners who are using the Council's support vehicle to raise awareness of healthy lifestyles in the Fenland area. Following the initial activity with this project, 25 new memberships were sold directly to Wisbech residents.



Supporting Sports Clubs' Funding Bids

The Sports Development and Leisure team work to support local clubs and facility improvement funding by assisting with or supporting applications for funding from such sources as Sport England.

This financial year over £320,000 has been brought into the Fenland area to improve sports provision, including successful WREN funding for a play area of £45,000, the Sport England support for the George Campbell of £217,000 and Wisbech Tennis projects of £50,000.

George Campbell Improvement Project Update

Work started on the improvement project on 6 October, with builders setting up and beginning ground works.

A formal ground breaking event took place on Friday 17 October to celebrate the start of the project.

It is anticipated that most work will take place without inconveniencing customers and all facilities are open as usual. The improvements are expected to be completed by Easter 2015.



CLlr Michelle Tanfield at the formal ground breaking event

The George Campbell Centre

August 2014

Plans have been evolving for the improvement of the George Campbell Centre. Fenland District Council's Cabinet has now approved a substantial improvement project that will:



- Replace the pool roof
- Replace the pool liner
- Add a new swimming pool changing facility that uses a 'village style' approach (customers changing in cubicles)
- Improve the entrance and approach to the centre
- Add a good sized, modern, light & airy exercise class studio
- Increase the size of the gym substantially, again adding more natural light and ensuring a modern feel to the room

These works will cost around £850,000, with the Council receiving £216,000 support from Sport England.

Building work is expected to start in October, this should cause limited disruption to customers during the build period, with completion due early 2015.

For more information and updates on the alterations being made to The George Campbell Centre please visit

www.newvisionfitness.co.uk/clubs/newlook

New Vision Fitness – paid attendances

Throughout the first 6 months of the financial year 452,890 paid leisure centre visits have been recorded.

Monthly target	45625	51250	54375	53125	53125	51875
Chatteris	4880	4877	4946	4651	4656	4975
March	14771	15247	16331	16068	16064	14350
Wisbech	29738	29765	31023	26647	26673	35022
Whittlesey	26526	26101	22958	25771	25772	25077
Total all centres	75915	75990	75258	73137	73165	79424

Memberships

Total membership base is 2,559 members across the 4 clubs; this is a reduction in memberships over the past month of 295 members. The service was expecting a reduction in members due to usual seasonal variations, however the drop is 243 members higher than expected.

This reflects the impact of the new gym opening in Wisbech, as well as the Hudson flood damage that is still being repaired. Leisure staff are working hard to promote the facilities and interact with members at every opportunity to increase sales and retention levels.

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Target no of DD members	2710	2713	2764	2801	2719	2667
12mth DD members	1006	1278	1313	1329	1206	1176
6mth DD members	933	934	920	947	1125	1096
Non-committed DD members	774	579	597	641	523	511
Total Daytime members	306	391	369	459	437	453
Total Anytime members	2407	2400	2461	2458	2417	2330
Total Actual DD members	2713	2791	2830	2917	2854	2783

In April the membership scheme was revised to a Daytime and Anytime scheme. Currently daytime memberships make up 18% of total membership, representing 453 members.

Developing Partnership Work Plans – Joint Health and Wellbeing Fenland Inequalities Action Plan

Members of the County Council Public Health team met Council Officers in Wisbech in early October to identify opportunities for closer working between the two authorities.

The meeting included a walk around Wisbech which generated discussion and about issues such as transport links / access to services / levels of smoking / street drinking and worklessness.

This meeting was followed by a wider health and wellbeing summit on the 15th October, organised by the Fenland Health & Wellbeing Partnership. More than 30 partner representatives attended the workshop, including FDC, Cambridgeshire County Council, Local Commissioning Groups, Community Pharmacists and the voluntary sector.

The aim of the summit was to develop joint objectives and identify opportunities for closer working in the Fenland area to tackle health inequalities. It is intended that the actions identified from the meeting will be adopted and implementation monitored through the local health and wellbeing partnership.

Better Care Fund Update

In June 2013 Government announced the Better Care Fund (BCF), a single pooled budget which will support health and social care and ensure closer working within these sectors. In Cambridgeshire the amount allocated to the fund is £37.7 million. This is not new money, but rather a reorganisation of existing funding.

In July 2014 changes to the BCF were announced. Guidance was issued by Government and required a focus on emergency hospital admissions with plans for either commissioning by the NHS of out-of-hospital services; or be linked to a reduction in total emergency admissions. Each area must set a target for reducing emergency hospital admissions. The amount of money released from the BCF pooled budget will depend on performance against this target. Cambridgeshire's Health and Wellbeing Board set a target of 1% reduction in emergency admissions.

All local areas were asked to redevelop and submit new BCF plans by 19 September 2014. Cambridgeshire's resubmission has been agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board. As the new guidance has a focus on emergency admissions the resubmission does too. The areas identified for investment of BCF are:

- Older People and Community Services (OPACS) Procurement; work closely with Uniting Care Partnership (UCP), the new provider
- 7 day services in health and social care
- Joint assessments including a lead professional
- Data Sharing
- Transformation Team and Ideas Bank – taking forward the ideas from public, private and voluntary sector.

Next steps:

The Health and Wellbeing Board has agreed to establish a Cambridgeshire Executive Partnership Board (CEPB) to provide a forum for developing and

delivering the BCF Programme of work, overseeing the OPACS contract as well as other system-wide transformation.

Environment

ENV1 Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

Domestic Refuse and Recycling Performance Update

The first 6 months of this financial year have been successful for the Council's Refuse and Recycling Team, however recent work has demonstrated that whilst Fenland's recycling rate might be good, that there is much more than could be done to improve recycling achieved through the blue bin service.

During the past 6 months:

Refuse

- Collected a total of 22,822 tonnes of domestic waste; 4432 tonnes of dry recycling (19%) and 8211 tonnes of compostable and garden waste (36%).
- Reported missed collections averaged 258 a month; which is around 12 per collection day, 85% of which were collected the following day (1323 from 1550).
- Customer satisfaction, as previously reported, remains high at 98%.

Recycling

- The percentage of blue bin recycling suitable for recycling was 97% (4225 tonnes from 4360) and supports the move to a new sorting contract with Waterbeach based company AmeyCespa in November.
- Income from recycling realised £193,000 up to the end of September to support services and included £191,000 of recycling credits from the County Council for the materials sent for recycling rather than treated and landfilled.

The first 6 months saw each household in Fenland deliver around 97kg of materials for recycling through the blue bin service. Studies looking at other similar authorities have demonstrated that there is scope to further increase the tonnage of dry recycling collected in the Fenland area and work is taking place to develop actions to improve our dry recycling performance over the next few months.

Commercial Waste and Recycling Plan Update

In 2013 a 3 year strategic plan was developed for the Council's Commercial Waste and Recycling Service containing a number of aims to support the future of the service.

As a result, to date, this approach is delivering to target:

- 61 new customers have been recruited from a target of 100 by 2015
- Commercial Waste recycling rate has risen from 8% to 12%, with a target of 16% by 2015
- Customer satisfaction with service was recently measured at 94% (20 of 21 respondents)
- The service continues to improve income from both refuse and recycling services offered and the net benefit to the authority has risen from £6,635 in 2009/10 to £83,984 in 2013/14

The service is a valuable provision to the local business community whilst also providing a positive financial contribution to the authority.

Future plans involve continued promotion of commercial recycling services and the implementation of changes to the Council's clinical waste service.

Cleansing Service Inspections

Since 2007 the Council's Street Scene Team has acted as independent monitors of the performance of cleansing services across the district.

These inspections commenced as part of the Council's drive to improve cleansing standards across Fenland and used a national performance indicator. Since then the number and nature of inspections has been rationalised, but the key principles that ensure inspections cover all wards and a range of land use types have been retained.

This year, in the region of 700 inspections will take place to evaluate community litter, graffiti, flyposting and detritus levels using Defra guidance based on the Council's Environmental Protection Act responsibilities.

The inspection locations are pre-planned by ward and not selected by the officers. They are scored on a range A to D according to their cleanliness. The guidance is very much about how a customer would perceive the quality of the appearance of their community and a C or D represents a fail.

Consistency is maintained through the independence of the Street Scene Team and their inspection process which involves shadowing of some inspections and officers covering other areas.

The past six month's inspection results for Litter and Detritus (Det) are below:

	April		May		June		July		August		Sept		Total
	Litter	Det	Litter	Det	Litter	Det	Litter	Det	Litter	Det	Litter	Det	
A	-	12	1	9	10	17	9	19	14	18	-	9	118
B+	33	29	39	38	22	20	24	24	21	18	16	9	293
B	27	24	24	12	21	15	20	14	23	23	10	11	224
B-	10	4	5	9	6	7	6	2	2	1	3	1	56
C	-	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	9
C-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
D	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

The criteria A to D; where A is "completely free from litter" and D is "Major accumulations of litter", is carefully defined with written and photographic examples within the Defra guidance.

As a result of this inspection process, considerable improvements have been made to the quality of cleansing services during this time, however the process of learning from the inspections still remains important and feedback from Street Scene Officers, including all areas that have failed inspections, continues to be used to develop Street Cleansing schedules and priorities alongside customer feedback.

Fly Tipping and Responsible Waste Disposal Campaign

The Street Scene Team is well underway with their new fly tipping and Responsible Waste Disposal Campaign.

Throughout September the team have been monitoring locations across the district where fly tipping is prevalent and working to identify any pattern in fly tipping such as type and nature of the waste material which identifies further surveillance is necessary. Additional signage has been installed in certain locations and investigations have been stepped up where evidence is identified.

The focus throughout September has also been raising awareness about the damage caused to the environment, cost of removing and penalties of fly tipping. Fly Tipping in Fenland is often the result of waste which has been passed from residents or businesses to an unregistered waste carrier who then goes on to fly-tip. Two press articles have been released advising residents of the consequences of using unregistered waste carriers. The campaign will help both

residents and businesses be more confident about their responsibilities and how to check for waste registration. Businesses are also being encouraged to sign up to a voluntary code of practice to ensure that they adhere to their legal requirements relating to waste management.

Throughout October business visits will continue in order to establish compliance with legal requirements.

Joint Police / Streetscene Patrols – Wisbech 2020

Littering patrols will be undertaken jointly with Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) throughout October. The patrols will focus on alcohol related litter only, a problem which continues in certain areas of Wisbech.

PCSOs have been authorised to serve the same fixed penalty notices as Streetscene Officers under a signed agreement between both organisations. These fixed penalty notices command a fine of £75, reduced to £50 if paid within 14 days. All payment of fines and any follow up prosecutions for non-payment are taken forward by the Council.

The dates agreed for the month of October are: 3rd, 4th, 10th, 11th, 17th, 18th, 24th, 25th, 31st. Patrols take place at various hours of the day. Patrols will continue for the rest of the year.

ENV2 Work with partners and the community on projects to improve the environment and our streetscene

Constantine House

Since works commenced on site in early August, much progress has been achieved to date.

Officers are in contact with the project manager of the site weekly and progress is being monitored very closely.

All demolition works are now complete and all external works should be completed within 12 weeks and the roof structure reinstated within 6 weeks.

Internally, the building is fully stabilised and ground floor slabs have been laid. Internal refitting of two of the least damaged flats shall commence imminently.

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Bid

The bid was submitted on 31st August 2014, with the outcome to be announced in January 2015.

A meeting was held in Wisbech this month with HLF representatives responsible for presenting the bid to the National Board for consideration. Additional information requested is to be finalised and submitted for the end of the month.

HLF confirmed that the Wisbech Townscape Heritage application is the only application submitted this year for the East of England region.

Renaissance

No formal applications for grant assistance have been received this month, although several expressions of interest have been received and proposed works explored and discussed with building owners.

Interested parties have been made aware that only limited funds (c. £5,000) remain in the Building Grant budget for this year, with c. £2,500 remaining in the Shop Front Grant budget. In accordance with policy, applications will be processed on a first come first served basis.

In September 2014, 3 grant applications were approved. One related to extensive window repairs at Old Bank House in March, a second related to comprehensive refurbishment of the facade at Trident House, 10 South Brink, Wisbech and a third related to 9 Bridge Street, Chatteris. All three of these buildings are considered 'at risk' and were identified for action under the Streets Ahead 'Walkabout' initiative.

Urgent repair works, part-funded through the Renaissance scheme, continue at Old Bank House, West End, March and 7 Park Street, Chatteris. Grant aided repair works have commenced in the last month at numbers 9 & 10 South Brink, Wisbech and numbers 21, 23 & 25 Hill Street, Wisbech.

Officers will continue to regularly liaise with developers, owners and contractors to ensure that delays in commencing outstanding works approved under the Renaissance scheme are minimised and positive resolution secured at the earliest opportunity.

Wisbech Street Pride / In Bloom – Chapel Road Enhancement Project

Through Changing Views under the Renaissance project, Wisbech Street Pride and In Bloom identified an overgrown piece of land at the entrance to Chapel Road Car Park that had become neglected. After confirming that the National Trust was the landowner, the group discussed enhancing the area by working in partnership.

Although a work in progress project, previously the land was cleared in preparation for planting up of the area at a later date, by volunteers from Tesco completing a community project as part of a team building opportunity.

The site has since been laid with gravel and Wisbech Lions have erected a fence separating the land from the adjacent building. The site will be planted up by volunteers to make a prairie garden as designed by the National Trust, creating a more attractive entrance into one of the town's main car parks.

The Council is committed to enabling communities to increase pride in their community by enhancing the appearance of villages and towns.



Chapel Road Project in progress- Newly gravelled area awaiting planting

Spring Bedding – Sustainable Planting

As part of programmed budget management work, the Open Spaces team has been working together with TLG to consider ways to reduce the costs incurred by the annual bedding displays without having an impact on the district's street scene.

The Council's grounds maintenance contractor, TLG, has experience of altering planting regimes successfully and one way of achieving this is to plant sustainable shrubs that do not need purchasing and replacing during the spring and summer.

Subtle changes reducing the planting density of bedding schemes in order to purchase fewer plants, as well as the introduction of herbaceous planting which provides a varied display from spring through to late autumn, has reduced the Council's costs.

These minor changes will reduce costs by £5,000 this year.



Pictured are the sustainable beds in Wisbech Park

Coalwharf Road Design Competition

A visibly important, vacant site owned by FDC and created following a land-swap with CCC. The site was subject to a design competition, with the victor currently working on a scheme to deliver a mix of market and affordable housing.

During September, officers met with the architect and developer of the scheme to finalise the proposed Heads of Terms for the planned transfer. Once finalised the developer and architect will begin the planning process.

Nene Waterfront Regeneration Area

Significant work has been undertaken in identifying suitable development proposals for the Nene Waterfront site. Part of the site (former Gas Works) has a current proposal from GB Construction (Location Homes Ltd) to develop 70 homes (24 affordable) in conjunction with Circle Anglia.

It is anticipated that the legal agreements will be completed by the end of October 2014. The developer's architect is preparing necessary plans and has already had discussions with the planning team ready for submission. It is also understood that the developer will be holding a public consultation during late November, to which members will receive an invitation. The Council's capital receipt in respect of 50% of the value is expected to be received this financial year, with agreed staged payments to follow in the following 3 years.

Other means of attracting potential developers to the site are currently being considered and tested, with a view to putting the sites to the market at the appropriate time.

Fenland Landlords' Seminar

This month 21 private landlords attended an evening seminar at the Boathouse to learn how they can make their properties more energy efficient and comfortable for their tenants.

Landlords heard how Cambridgeshire Councils are working together with a private company named Climate Energy, on a new scheme called Action on Energy. The scheme offers funding to help discount and in some cases provide free heating and insulation improvements to tenanted properties in Fenland.

It is hoped that Green Business Club events such as this will enable Fenland landlords to access a high proportion of the £5.67m of funding that has been secured from central government for energy efficiency measures in Cambridgeshire.

Whittlesey Festival

Residents came together during September at the annual Whittlesey Festival. The event saw thousands of residents flock to the town to enjoy what was on offer, including a classic car show, live music and family entertainment. The volunteers who make up the Whittlesey Festival committee have worked tirelessly over the past 12 months to organise the activities in partnership with the Council and the success of the day was a testimony to their hard work.

The festival is one of Fenland's annual four seasons' events which are supported by the Council. Initial feedback has shown that customer satisfaction in the local community remains high at 98%



ENV3 Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting social cohesion

CCTV Update

During September 2014, the Councils CCTV team responded to **163 incidents** (compared to 175 September 2013) to support external law enforcement partners and wider community safety partners to detect and reduce crime in Fenland.

As a result of CCTV intervention, the Council was able to assist in achieving **42 positive outcomes**, which included **18 arrests and 15 fines**. These were achieved from offences which included theft shoplifting, burglary, alcohol related violent crime and drink driving.

The Council continues to focus on delivering a pro-active service which clearly helps identify community safety matters and crime related incidents to ensure timely interventions are made by relevant agencies and partners.

CCTV Partner Liaison Meeting Update

The CCTV partner liaison meeting was delivered in September with wide representation from most town council and business partners.

A full CCTV update, including a comprehensive incident performance update was presented to members, highlighting latest CCTV figures and incident trends by each town and area.

Members were pleased with the levels of performance that the CCTV service provides for each local area and on the positive feedback the service received from the representative from Cambridgeshire Constabulary that attended the partner meeting.

The next meeting is due to be held in December and will be delivered at the CCTV control room to allow members the opportunity to revisit CCTV and see the control room in live operation.

Diverse Communities Forum

A well-attended core group heard updates of the work being undertaken to deliver the Forum's action plan.

An example of the ongoing work is the Community Volunteer Service.

The Community Volunteer Translation Service has been in place for one year. During this time it has started to develop a pool of volunteers who can translate with and on behalf of the community. The Council developed this approach

and worked with the County Council to develop a tender for a Community Volunteer Translation Service in Wisbech.

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

The tender was originally for one year, further development of the service is required and to enable this to happen a further financial bid was submitted to the County Council for funding to enable this to occur. This bid has been successful and will enable the Diverse Communities Forum and the Rosmini Centre to develop and expand this service.

York City Council Learns from FDC

The Council's profile in best practice for Gypsy and Traveller engagement has been raised through a request by York City Council looking to learn about the best approaches to deal with Gypsy Travellers within their area. They are a forward thinking authority who wishes to engage, learn and evolve their services to address the challenges they have in their area.

The Council was asked to look into the issues they have and offer both solutions and the way forward to York Council, York Travellers Trust and other partners. Having looked into these issues and prepared a report this was presented to the Council and other partners at the end of September.

They all agreed that this was a valued insight into the situation in their area and the suggestions made could be developed to form an action plan to resolve.

All expenses incurred by FDC including officer time, to carry out this work, has been met by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Association

Economy

EC1 Attract new businesses and jobs and support existing businesses in Fenland

Destination Digital

FDC assisted in promoting two Destination Digital Workshops held in the Fenland area. Destination Digital has reported a recent increase in the number of enquiries received from Fenland businesses. FDC continues to promote the grants available through the DD scheme for digital equipment and training, with 5 grants being awarded to date.

Economic and Business Premises Estate

The overall estate occupancy remains at 78.3% against an end of year target of 80%. There have been a number of new enquiries and further lettings are expected to be reported in the coming months, which should result in an achievement of our occupancy target by the end of the financial year. It is anticipated that this additional occupation, along with recovery of historic income, should bring the budget back on track by the end of the year.

Conference income at both business centres remains strong with a combined income in September of just over £10,700.

Conference business continues to be extremely strong at both business centres with 100% positive customer feedback. Office enquiries are steady with occupancy continuing to increase at The Boathouse with only 6 suites available.

EC2 Raise aspirations and improve learning opportunities

Annual Visitor & Accommodation Guide

The Council produces an Annual Visitor and Accommodation Guide to encourage visitors into the District. The Distribution figures for 2014 from the distribution agency show that all 10,000 copies have been distributed with a further 1,000 copies have been sent to the distribution agency in August to cover the remaining part of the year of which 599 copies have been distributed totally 10,599 copies compared to 8201 at the same time in 2013.

Healthy High Street Bid

In June 2014 Fenland submitted a Business in the Community (BiTC) Healthy High Street (HHS) Bid for Wisbech. Wisbech was chosen in the first 29 of the 100 towns across the UK that will be supported by the Co-operative, Boots UK and Santander to transform its high street.

BiTC Head of Region & relationship manager for Wisbech as part of the Healthy High Street Campaign held an initial meeting in August, where an action plan for delivery was created.

Current stage of the Campaign is to develop a relationship with the other High Street Champions in the town, network with the Town Partnership and identify a number of actions which will assist in delivering the requests for business support identified during the Campaign's application process.

The BiTC Head of Region & relationship manager is returning late October to review the progress made on the action plan.

Funding Fair

FDC sponsored and assisted in organising the Funding Fair on 23 September, attended by 40 local business people and supported by Councillor Fred Yeulett.. The Fair had information on a range of schemes, support and funding available for local businesses, to support our objective of ensuring that businesses in Fenland are aware of the funding and support opportunities that are available. FDC has continued to promote many of these opportunities after the event through social media and individual visits.

Moy Park, Wisbech

FDC coordinated a swift partnership response to a round of redundancies taking place at Moy Park in Wisbech. Representatives from FDC benefits team, Jobcentre Plus, College of West Anglia, Making Money Count and TCHC (response to redundancy project) attended the factory for a morning to provide assistance and information to staff. The redundancy process is now underway and staff which have required/opted for further support in retraining or enhancing their employability skills continue to receive tailored support.

EC3 Promote Fenland as a tourism and visitor destination

Heritage Open Days

Fenland District was part of the national Heritage Open Days event which celebrates England's fantastic architecture and culture by offering free access to places that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission. Every year for four days in September, Fenland buildings such as museums, Peckover House, Octavia Hill Birthplace, Masonic Halls and The Castle open their doors to the Fenland community and visitors. It is a once-a-year chance to discover architectural treasures and enjoy a wide range of tours, events and activities that bring local history and culture to life. At a local level, Fenland Heritage Open Days was organised in partnership with local town councils and community groups, led by the Fenland Tourism Board.

EC4 Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration across Fenland

Building Control

The proposed shared service arrangements of Building Control with CNC Building Control were approved by Cabinet and Full Council on the 18th September, 2014. The team are in the process of liaising with counterparts at CNC/South Norfolk Council to begin finalising the detailed matters associated with the transfer.

Planning Delivery

Being now in position to assess the returned figures for the 2nd Quarter of 2014/15 (July – Sept 2014) it can be reported that the service continues to improve its performance across all types of applications.

The 2nd Quarter figures are as follows:

- Majors - 92% which is 42% above the Service Plan Target of 50%;
- Minors - 91% which is 21% above the Service Plan Target of 75%;
- Others - 98% which is 13% above the Service Plan Target of 85%.

The rolling 2 year performance figure for major applications is currently at 50%, 10% above the 'Special Measures' threshold of 40%. With the continued return of high performance figures in respect of major application, the authority is clearly moving away from any threat of being designated in this regard.

Work on the development of the action plan continues and, building upon its current success, it is anticipated that, with the implementation of further improvement measures, these figures will increase still further.

Planning Technical Support

Performance remains very good in the planning support team. Applications validated were not only within target but exceeded it, as did issuing of decisions. Current validation is 5 working days. The team continue to be proactive in coming forward with more efficient ways of working, looking to reduce what we print and make the process more paperless. This links into a project that has now commenced looking into how we can utilise the new document management system to achieve this.

A47 Alliance Steering Group

The latest meeting of the Alliance was held in September 2014. Work is continuing on studies to inform Government announcements in the autumn statement. The A47 feasibility study will include a more detailed consideration of A47/A141 roundabout at Guyhirn. This work will include a high level economic assessment along with further details about deliverability and value for money. A further meeting to discuss the study work is expected to be in November 2014.

The A47 Alliance business case work has been updated to include benefit cost ratio information for the whole route. This is thought to be critical information because it helped make the case for improvements on A11. For the Fenland sections of the A47, the BCR is High. It was also clarified that costings and information in the A47 Alliance Business Case are 2010 baseline figures. The Feasibility study work is using 2014 information and also makes allowances that implementation of schemes may not happen for a number of years, hence the difference in financial information that has been provided.

There are 3 key stages of A47 Alliance work in the coming months:

- Actions from now to Autumn Statement
- Actions from Autumn Statement to 2015 General Election

Post the general election, working with the Government to seek buy in to the principles of A47 and to seek the longer term commitment for full dualling of the whole road.

Cambridgeshire Future Transport (CfT) Areas K & L

CfT is a partnership project led by Cambridgeshire County Council. The project aims to address local solutions to transport issues whilst also reviewing subsidised transport services in Cambridgeshire. The CfT programme is about to commence for most of Fenland District with the public consultation starting on 13 October 2014. The consultation is to seek views about the use of local bus services but also to get a better understanding of when and where local people want to travel. To assist the County Council hard copy questionnaires will be available in the One Stop Shops. A series of drop in events are also taking place during October and November 2014. Posters with the drop in event details are also on display in the One Stop Shops and a link to the online questionnaire and events are available from FDC website. A Councillor Briefing meeting was held in September 2014 that included Town and Parish Councils. This meeting allowed Councillors to ask questions about the project but also to make the questionnaires more available especially in the villages. Encouraging people to complete a questionnaire is essential to ensure that future bus services meet people's needs.

East Wisbech Development Meeting

A second meeting has been held with developers and interested parties about the East Wisbech development area in the Local Plan. Technical Information was provided about the site in relation to education, public rights of way and transport. There remains commitment from the developers to move the site forward. A further meeting will be taking place between the education and planning authorities in November 2014 to enable further information to be given to developers about school provision for this site. The outcome of study work and technical information on the A47 is seen as being significant for taking the development work for this site forward. The next meeting of the whole group will therefore be during December 2014 after the Autumn Statement.

Quality Organisation

Contact Centre

The way performance in the Contact Centre is monitored was changed in April 2014, the overall target of ' % of calls answered within 20 seconds' revised to 70%. The way the performance is monitored on a monthly basis has been re-profiled to reflect the busy months at the beginning of the year and the quieter period at the latter end of the year, a cumulative monthly target was introduced to manage the performance.

For September the Contact Centre continued to exceed the cumulative target answering 69.2% of calls answered in 20 seconds, against a target of 61% and 88.6% of overall calls were answered against a cumulative target of 81%. This means that the team are on track to meet this year's overall performance targets. Numbers of calls into the Contact Centre slightly increased with 8481 calls offered in September 13/14 and 8566 calls offered in September 14/15.

Council Tax

Collection rates are holding steady and are on target at 62.8% at the end of September. We have now collected £27.7 million this year.

There has been a slight reduction in recovery action this year so far, aided by customers taking advantage of our new facility to spread payments over 52 weekly instalments, helping customers who prefer to budget on a week to week basis. So far this year we have sent 12,481 reminders for arrears for £1.52 million compared to 13,530 at the same point last year worth £1.63 million.

We have also issued 3,293 summonses this year for debts totalling £1.05 million, compared to 4,049 summonses sent up to the same point for £2.3 million.

The reduction in recovery action shows that residents are prioritising payment of Council Tax and it is allowing us to target those who won't pay their Council Tax; whilst at the same time helping those having difficulties paying by spreading payments and offering weekly payment facilities.

NNDR

Collection rates are slightly below target at the mid-year point; 56.8% has been collected compared to a target of 57%. We have now collected £14.4 million this year.

So far this year we have sent 628 reminders for arrears for £1.46 million compared to 742 at the same point last year worth £0.86 million.

We have also issued 102 summonses this year for debts totalling £1.05 million, compared to 138 summonses sent up to the same point for £0.61 million.

HR/OD

The Staff Survey results have been collated and have been circulated to the organisation. The response rate was around 40%, and the results were really encouraging with 83% of staff proud to work for FDC.

Health & Safety

A 'walk through exercise' of the new East Coast Flood Plan was conducted at the Boathouse, involving 45 personnel from various organisations. The plan has been jointly produced by FDC and Cambs County Council Emergency planning staff, as one of the recommendations following last year's tidal surge in Dec 2013. The purpose of the plan is to respond to the flood risk from a tidal surge along the River Nene predominately in Wisbech. The plan details individual agency actions/responses from the early stages of such a threat to the recovery stage following a surge.

Accountancy

Final Statement of Accounts 2013/14 and External Auditors (PwC) report on the accounts presented to Corporate Governance Committee on 26 September.

The purpose of the auditors' report is to highlight any issues or matters that it wishes to raise with members regarding the accounts. The auditors had no significant issues to raise with members and thanked the accountancy team again for their excellent working papers and work in preparing the accounts and audit. Both the accounts and auditors report are on the website.

Updated capital programme expenditure plans and resources statement prepared, incorporating scheme amendments (including the George Campbell Leisure Centre refurbishment) and anticipated capital receipts, presented to Cabinet on 18 September.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

The Council takes part in the 'World's Biggest Coffee Morning' to support Macmillan Cancer Support, this is the Charity historically hosted by the Chairman of the Council.

The Coffee Morning is an annual event, it gives the Chairman a chance to meet with staff, for staff to socialise with colleagues whilst enjoying a cup of tea or coffee, enjoy some home-made cake and sausage rolls. Raffle prizes are donated, raffle tickets sold and a raffle held at the end of the morning. Invitations are sent out to other local Councils and their Chairman and Mayor's

attend which also gives the Council the opportunity to show the good things happening in Fenland.

Since its inception in 1995 the event has been supported by staff, other Chairman and Mayor's, members of the public and guests of the Chairman, helping to raise much needed funds to support Macmillan. For the second year the Council raised more money by incorporating a 'Dress Down Day' for a small donation.

Statistics:

- 2010 – raised £816.35, 150 guests in attendance
- 2011 – raised £738.12, 135 guests in attendance
- 2012 – raised £702.11, 120 guests in attendance
- 2013 – raised £536.72, 95 guests in attendance
- 2014 – raised £600.00, 110 guests in attendance

Feedback from the guests attending the events has always been very complimentary and allows the Council to show its competence at arranging successful events, which also provides good networking opportunities. The events are attended by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Council and work closely together to welcome guests and are involved in arrangements prior to the event to ensure that it runs smoothly.

Unfortunately due to the downturn in the economic climate there has been a reduction in the amount raised but this does not detract from the enthusiasm of those attending and events are still extremely well supported. The Coffee Morning ensures that the Council supports a very deserving charity whilst avidly supporting the Council's Civic representative.

The Council received a visit this year on 11 July from the High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire during her walk from Coast to Cambridge an event in support of Macmillan Cancer Support where she was presented with a cheque from Fenland Leisure Services Team for £1,200 which had been raised as a result of a Charity Weekend held at Whittlesey Leisure Centre. The March, Chatteris and District Committee for Macmillan Cancer Support were in attendance who advised that the money raised from the Charity Weekend would be spent in the Fenland area which ensures future success and attendance at forthcoming events as guests are keen that the monies are spent in the local area.

Equality Service Champions (ESC)

The focus of the last ESC meeting was around development of the Champions knowledge regarding Faith/ Belief. An officer gave a presentation to all those present on this topic and an interesting question and answer session followed on.

The Council's annual refresh of our Customer (Equality) Impact Assessments is underway and examples of the work being undertaken in the communications team was shared and discussed.

Coaching and mentoring continues as well as regular 1-2-1 sessions with new champions or those who need advice through their impact assessment work

3Cs Update – Quarter 2

3Cs category	Measure	1 July 2013 – 30 September 2013	1 July 2014 – 30 September 2014	% Change + / -
Compliments	Total number received (over given period)	18	6	Recorded compliments down 67%
Correspondence	Total number received (over given period)	155	163	Recorded correspondence up 5%
Complaints	Total number received (over given period)	110	91	Recorded complaints down 17%
Total contact (over given period)		283	260	Overall contact down 8%

Forward Plan

Dates	Future Projects	Involvement of Portfolio Holder to be requested (Please tick) ✓
20 October 14	New ASB Powers come in to force, media strategy launch	Cllr Oliver Cllr Butcher
20 th October	Senior Citizens Advisory Group meeting	Golden Age Councillors
23 October 14	Fenland Community Safety Partnership Board meeting Quarter 3 Review and actions	Cllr Oliver Cllr Butcher
November 2014		
17 th November	Golden Age Event- St Andrews Hall. Whittlesey	Golden Age Councillors