

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 5**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

<b>Date</b>	<b>28 JANUARY 2013</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2013-16</b>

**1. PURPOSE/SUMMARY**

For the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to scrutinise the Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16

**2. KEY ISSUES**

- The Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16 identifies our key challenges and opportunities for Fenland over the next three years. We are committed, along with our partners, to work with residents, community groups, and businesses to overcome the key challenges in the district. We will seize opportunities to improve quality of life for local residents and make Fenland a great place to live, work and visit for years to come.
- As with all public sector agencies, the Council faces continuing financial challenges within the foreseeable future and will continue to be taking some tough decisions. During these difficult financial times, we will maintain our commitment to providing excellent customer service and endeavour to minimise the effect on frontline services.
- Although the current financial situation is difficult, there are still opportunities for the Council to make a difference within the district through partnership working. Projects such as the construction of the College of West Anglia engineering skills centre, new Chatteris Leisure facilities and the South Fens Enterprise Park have recently been completed or are under construction, benefitting the community by offering enhanced service provision.
- The Council also continues to be ambitious on behalf of residents. With its partners, Fenland District Council has developed a proactive and aspirational vision encouraging a successful and vibrant future for Fenland. This work has culminated in the production of the Fenland Communities Development Plan, the Core Strategy. This looks to ensure the future prosperity of the District and improve resident quality of life by taking a positive and sustainable approach to growth. The Wisbech 2020 Vision will also improve quality of life and encourage long term economic prosperity for the local area.
- The Council is consulting Fenland residents on the Draft Corporate Plan in the form of a questionnaire asking residents what issues are of most importance to them. This consultation runs from 15 January - 7 February 2013 and is available via the Fenland @ your service shops, leisure centres, business centres and the Council's website.

- The Final Corporate Plan will be considered by Cabinet and Council on 21 February 2013 incorporating feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and from residents.
- Following the Council meeting in February, a set of performance indicators will be developed which will be reported to Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny and to the public to ensure we account for the delivery of the priorities within the Plan.

### 3. RECOMMENDATION(S)

For the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to scrutinise the Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16.

<b>Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Forward Plan Reference No. (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Portfolio Holder(s)</b>	Councillor Alan Melton – Leader of the Council Councillor Chris Seaton – Deputy Leader of the Council
<b>Report Originator</b>	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Carol Pilson, Corporate Director Gary Garford, Corporate Director Rob Bridge, Corporate Director Richard Cassidy, Corporate Director Alan Pain, Corporate Director
<b>Contact Officer(s)</b>	As above
<b>Background Paper(s)</b>	Cabinet Papers 14/1/2013 Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16

## **1. BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16 sets out the Council's priorities and objectives for the next three years taking into account national and regional policy, demographic information and consultation information.
- 1.2 The Council completes an annual consultation programme to ensure that the Council's priorities reflect the needs and preferences of the local community. The results of the public consultation will be incorporated into the final plan before presentation to Cabinet and Council on 21 February 2013.

## **2. CONSIDERATIONS**

- 2.1 The Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16 is a three year plan; however, it is reviewed on an annual basis.

## **3. EFFECT ON CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 The Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16 sets out the Council's corporate objectives for the next three years. Within the Draft Corporate Plan, there are three overarching social, economic and environmental considerations which inform our five priority headings:
  - Neighbourhood Planning
  - Localism
  - Streets Ahead
  - Open for Business
  - Quality Organisation
- 3.2 Throughout the Draft Corporate Plan we focus on how we can meet these priorities, whilst acknowledging the financial challenges the whole of the public sector faces.

## **4. IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1. Financial and Value for Money**

- 4.1.1 All financial and value for money implications for the achievement of the priorities set out in the Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16 will be considered as a part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and General Fund Budget 2013-16.
- 4.1.2 The Coalition government has set a public sector spending reduction programme which will impact on the Council's budget. Whilst making these savings, we will manage our resources effectively, look for innovative ways to make efficiencies and remain committed to minimising effects on frontline services.
- 4.1.3 Although the Use of Resources assessment has been abolished, this has been replaced and incorporated within the audit of the Council's annual accounts. At Corporate Governance Committee in September and December 2012, the Council's external auditors PriceWaterhouse Coopers (PWC) stated that the Council has proper arrangements in place for financial resilience and for challenging economy, effectiveness and efficiency. PWC also issued an unqualified value for money conclusion.

### **4.2. Legal**

- 4.2.1 There are no direct legal implications for this item.

#### **4.3. Staffing**

4.3.1. There are no direct staffing implications for this item.

#### **4.4. Risk Management**

4.4.1. The Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16 contains no specific information on risk management, however, any risks concerning the achievement of the Corporate Plan will be considered as a part of the annual service planning process, and therefore documented within the corporate risk register. This is monitored regularly by the Corporate Governance Committee.

#### **4.5. Equalities**

4.5.1. The Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16 aims to improve the quality of life of all Fenland residents.

4.5.2 There is a commitment within the Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16 to ensure we meet the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act through our core service delivery which we will publish on a yearly basis our success in achieving this

4.5.3. In line with the Council's Communications Strategy, copies of this plan can be prepared in community languages, Braille and other accessible formats upon request.

#### **4.6. Environmental**

4.6.1. The Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16 sets out clear commitment to addressing environmental issues through our corporate priorities. The Streets Ahead objective in particular sets out our approach to the environment.

### **5. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

5.1. The Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16 aims to positively impact on the community through providing effective services and improving the quality of life for Fenland residents.

### **6. CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 The Draft Corporate Plan 2013-16 identifies our key challenges and opportunities for Fenland over the next three years. This plan will be subject to public consultation to ensure the Council's priorities reflect the needs and preferences of the local community.

**Fenland District Council**

**Draft Corporate Plan 2013 – 16**

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## **Introduction**

By the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive

Welcome to Fenland District Council's Corporate Plan for 2013 – 16. This plan sets out the priorities for the Council and outlines how we will address the challenges ahead over the next three years. We are committed, along with our partners, to work with residents, community groups and businesses to overcome the key challenges in the district and seize upon any opportunities to ensure we improve quality of life for local residents.

To ensure the District continues to prosper in to the future, we are committed to embracing growth to attract improvements in infrastructure, attract new businesses to the area and enable existing businesses to flourish. The Council will support this agenda through promoting economic development and the skills agenda and attract residents and businesses to Fenland to set up and grow.

The Council's priorities are a reflection of the customer feedback we receive, which says residents want high quality services and excellent customer care. We strive to deliver this for the Fenland community, ensuring we listen to feedback on how we deliver our services and make changes as a result. This approach has reaped rewards with high levels of customer satisfaction and recognition for the way we interact with our customers through the achievement of the government's national standard for excellent customer service.

Along with other public sector organisations, the Council has and continues to face significant financial challenges and was in the top ten worst hit Councils nationally in terms of budget cuts. Consequently, we have had to achieve savings whilst as far as possible maintain frontline customer services. Through approaching these challenges innovatively, we have achieved this aim in the majority of cases with most of the savings needed being achieved from the back office. The challenge throughout this year is to continue to innovate as a Council and seek to work collaboratively with our partners.

The way Councils are funded in future and how local government finances are managed is changing significantly in particular with the localisation of business rates and the delivery of a Local Council Tax Reduction scheme (Local Council Tax Support). We will seek to maximise economic growth to create jobs and support local businesses and deliver a fair benefits scheme in line with the budget constraints we operate within.

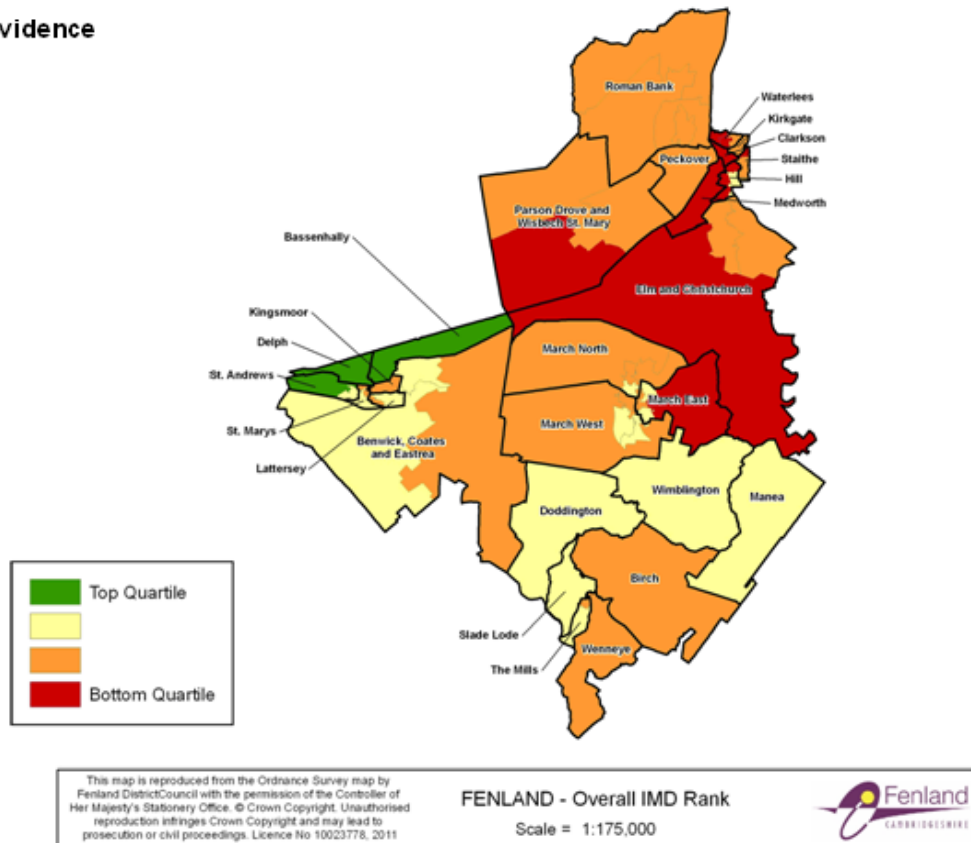
Many residents and businesses continue to be hit hard by the economic downturn. As a Council, we look to support all groups wherever possible. This has included supporting residents to avoid homelessness using the Court Desk project with the Citizens Advice Bureau, processing an increased level of benefit applications and encouraging business growth through the launch of a Fenland Investment Pack and promotion of business support services through The Green

Business Club and Fenland for Business as well as support to the broadband project to bring super fast broadband to Fenland.

In addition, the Council in partnership with other organisations continues to make investments in services and projects that matter to local people. This includes exciting projects such as the opening of the new £1.1million Chatteris Leisure Facility in October 2012, the opening of South Fens Enterprise Park, the launch of the Wisbech 2020 Vision and the in depth consultation on the Council's Core Strategy. These projects are supporting Fenland residents and businesses to thrive and make Fenland a great place to live, work and visit for years to come.



## The Evidence

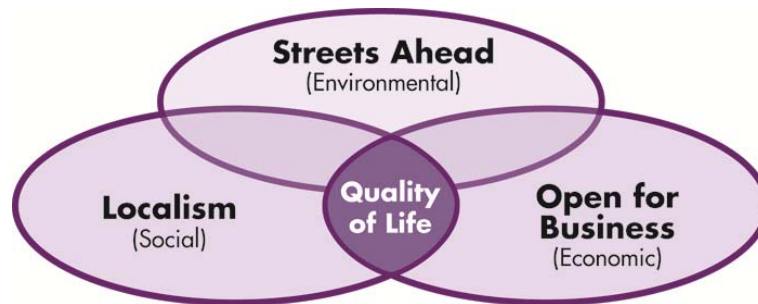


The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Cambridgeshire (JSNA) shows that in general, residents who live in Fenland do not enjoy the same quality of life as residents who live in other areas of Cambridgeshire. Latest national deprivation figures (Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2011) show substantial inequalities both across the county and the district.

Fenland is ranked 139<sup>th</sup> of 326 local authorities (where one is the most deprived.) Fenland has three wards numbered among the 10% most deprived nationally. Overall these deprivation figures are made up of information from the following seven areas:

- Education
- Employment
- Housing
- Income
- Crime
- Environment
- Health

To tackle deprivation in Fenland, we will focus on delivering projects to achieve three overarching objectives to improve social, economic and environmental contributors to quality of life. The following diagram represents our approach to improving the quality of life of our residents. By focusing on the centre of the model, where the three elements overlap, we will optimise our opportunity to address issues which contribute to overall quality of life.



### Demography of Fenland

According to the newly released Census 2011 figures, an estimated 95,300 people live in Fenland, and our residents account for over 14% of Cambridgeshire's population. Fenland's population has increased by 11,600 people since 2001, and by over 1000 people since 2011. It is predicted that by 2031, Fenland will have a population of over 113,000. Fenland was the 9<sup>th</sup> fastest growing district in the country with a 17% increase in households since the last census in 2001.

Fenland has an ageing population. Around a quarter of current Fenland residents are pensioners, and 1 in 7 households consist of pensioners living alone. Between 2001 and 2011, the population under 20 increased by 24%, whereas the population aged 65+ increased by 109%. From 2016 onwards, the growth of the population aged 65+ is expected to increase even more drastically, with a rapid decline in the proportion of children and young people (0-19.)

Fenland is becoming increasingly ethnically diverse; however, 96.9% of our population is White British, which is greater than the national average. It is predicted that over 6% of Fenland's permanent migrant population were born overseas, with data showing many people choose to live and work in Wisbech.

It is estimated that around 75% of our residents live within the four Fenland market towns – Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech. The rest are spread across our 29 villages and in rural locations throughout the district. The greatest growth increase is happening in March West (12% of Fenland's total population growth), Parson's Drove (10% of total) and March East (8% of total). There are currently over 41,400 dwellings in Fenland, and this number is expected to increase to 52,000 by 2031.

## Fenland Strategic Partnership

The Fenland Strategic Partnership (FSP) brings together key public and voluntary sector organisations to coordinate effective joint working in Fenland. Organisations involved in the FSP include:

NHS Cambridgeshire & Local GP commissioning groups	Police	Age UK	Job Centre Plus
Roddons Housing Association	Cambridgeshire ACRE	College of West Anglia	Neale Wade Community College
Citizens Advice Bureaux	Cambridgeshire County Council	Cambs Fire and Rescue Service	Cambs County Council & Peterborough Association of Local Councils
Fenland District Council	Fenland Chamber of Commerce	Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce	Wisbech Inter-Faith Group

In 2012, the FSP adopted an efficient working model to streamline their partnerships, reduce bureaucracy and ensure a task and finish based approach. The wider stakeholder group meets twice a year; once to set priorities, and again to review progress of target delivery. FSP priorities for 2012 are:



- \* Apprenticeships
- \* Migrant Population/Cohesion
- \* Local Health Partnership refresh
- \* Integrated Offender Management
- \* Recruitment & Retention/Promoting Fenland
- \* Wisbech 2020 Vision

At a recent FSP Stakeholder event, it was demonstrated that good progress has been made within each project including:

- More young people are starting apprenticeships in Fenland than anywhere else in the county.
- A multi agency recruitment pack is in development to promote Fenland as a great place to live and work.

- The Local Health Partnership has agreed a series of priorities in response to the changes to the health system nationally and locally.
- A 17.6% reduction in crime has been achieved partly as a result of the integrated offender management approach.
- The New Arrivals Welcome Pack has been refreshed.
- The Wisbech 2020 Vision project launched with theme workshops and public engagement completed as well as the 2020 Summit which took place on 26 October, with the Vision launch planned for January 2013.

FSP stakeholders will reconvene in early 2013 to agree a new set of priorities for next year.

## Your Fenland, Your Future



### **Fenland Communities Development Plan – the Core Strategy.**

Our Vision Statement for the Core Strategy states:

*“Fenland will nurture, grow and promote its market towns and villages. They will be attractive places to live, set within our unique and protected Fens*

*landscape.*

*Everyone will recognise the increase in opportunities presented to them, whether that be new homes, a wide range of job opportunities or places to play.*

*Between 2011 and 2031, Fenland will be a high growth district, growing by at least 11,000 new homes, meeting the housing needs of all our communities. There will be increased employment opportunities across the district, a bolstered tourism economy and existing businesses will be encouraged to expand. Growth in homes and jobs will be closely linked to each other, with new infrastructure such as schools, roads and open space provision planned and provided at the same time as the new buildings.*

*Growth will be focused on our four market towns, but villages will not be left behind with appropriate and sensitive development being permitted to ensure they remain thriving local communities.”*

Our residents and partners have been keen to have their say. Two comprehensive consultation periods have been undertaken, and the council received significant responses from stakeholders and the community. This consultation process also incorporated changes as a result of the announcement of the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Comments made will inform the final Core Strategy, which will be submitted to the December 2012 Cabinet and Council. Once approved, the document will be submitted for Government inspection and final consultation will be conducted in early 2013.

## Wisbech 2020 Vision

An exciting project that was jointly launched by Councillor Alan Melton, Leader of Fenland District Council, Councillor Nick Clarke, Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council and Stephen Barclay MP was the Wisbech 2020 Vision. This project is looking to deliver an exciting vision for Wisbech which will bring success and prosperity to the town for years to come.



A wide range of organisations, stakeholders and group have been involved in the engagement that has taken place through the Vision including the University of Cambridge, the Greater Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership, town and parish councils, local businesses, charities and community groups.

The main themes that the vision seeks to address are:

- The Future Economic Role of the Town
- Stronger Families and Communities
- Housing
- Education, Skills and Aspiration levels
- Social Cohesion
- Transport and Infrastructure
- Leisure, Culture, Cycling and Tourism
- Pride, Reputation and Image



Eight themed workshops were held to discuss the issues and opportunities for Wisbech. Following these initial stakeholder workshops, further consultation and engagement took place with Wisbech communities including two public engagement sessions on Wisbech Market Place and an online and paper-based survey ran throughout September.

All of the information gathered was considered at the Wisbech 2020 Summit whereby key participants came together to review progress and agree timescales for future projects. Indeed, some exciting projects are already underway, such as a £7.2million technology centre at the College of West Anglia's Isle Campus, naming of the new Awdry House office and heritage work on the Octavia Hill Birthplace museum 'Centenary Gardens'.

Detailed recommendations are now being drawn up to form the agreed programme that will be launched in January 2013. This spells an exciting future for Wisbech with many organisations keen to work together to achieve success.

## **Priorities**

### **Neighbourhood Planning**

Fenland District Council continues to consistently punch above its weight to tackle the big issues that affect local people. We care passionately about our district, and want to improve quality of life for all of our residents.

To realise this vision, we will continue to develop work already achieved between partners and the local community, to build a long term strategy for the district. Growth will go hand in hand with improving the life chances of our residents through initiatives to improve educational attainment and aspirations, skills, housing, health and community cohesion.

It is imperative that growth in our area is carefully managed to ensure new homes will mean new opportunities for Fenland's residents. Increased business, job opportunities, and a diverse retail offer will not only improve the quality of life for existing residents, but hopefully attract new people to enjoy the area. Infrastructure improvements will support new and existing communities such as roads, GP surgeries, schools and leisure opportunities to benefit the people of Fenland in the future.

Neighbourhood Planning aims to do just that by coordinating public and private sector investment in the district. This means that projects that matter most to local residents are undertaken, creating sustainable growth allowing homes, infrastructure and jobs grow in tandem. This will provide a great future and lasting legacy for people living, working and visiting Fenland in years to come.

The priorities for the Neighbourhood Planning priority are:

#### **1.1 Growth and future shape of Fenland**

- Initiate a Fenland neighbourhood planning approach to growth in the district that helps improve the quality of life of its community.
- Enable and promote quality sustainable housing, energy, economic growth and supporting infrastructure.
- Adopt a Core Strategy document and appropriate development proposal and policy documents
- In line with the evolving Core Strategy, develop economic and regeneration strategies/projects for the Fenland Market Towns with an initial focus on Wisbech
- Promote sustainable transport initiatives within Fenland
- Contribute to the development of community transport initiatives in conjunction with public/private sector partners to aid equal access to services
- Encourage good quality design and construction in Fenland

## **1.2 The built environment**

- Facilitate a suitable range of housing types to meet the needs of all Fenland residents
- Deliver the “Pride in Fenland” project (including the Renaissance project) to enhance and protect the Fenland streetscene
- Plan for and enable infrastructure provision to support the delivery of housing and economic growth
- Secure investments in the local area as a result of development
- Conserve the unique heritage of the Fenland area in a way that facilitates growth
- Be proactive and responsible in our approach to compliance and enforcement



## **Localism**

The Council is passionate about improving quality of life for Fenland residents, ensuring that our services and those of our partners meet the requirements of customers who need them most. Residents in Fenland do not enjoy the same quality of life as people in the rest of the county. We are committed to working with our partners to address these issues, and influence service provision to make improvements to people's lives.

Our district is diverse. Many customers require different types of services from the Council to help them to live happy, safe and fulfilled lives. We are committed to endeavour to not only minimise effects of budget constraints on frontline services, but continue to improve them so they effectively help local people. In times of national policy changes, such as welfare reforms, we seek to ensure that our residents are supported, consulted and communicated with.

We have previously transferred Wisbech Market Place to Wisbech Town Council and we are committed to providing further opportunities for Town and Parish Councils and community groups to take on Council assets and services where appropriate.

The priorities for the Localism priority are:

### **2.1 Supporting vulnerable members of our community**

- Process benefit applications quickly to ensure residents can access financial aid
- Support residents in claiming the benefits they are entitled to, including the new Local Council Tax Reduction scheme (Local Council Tax Support)
- Respond to changing government policy regarding the processing of housing benefits applications
- Deliver the Homelessness Strategy and our statutory Housing Duties
- Work with other agencies to promote new ways of working through the Inequalities Charter

### **2.2 Promoting Cohesion throughout Fenland**

- Deliver the Fenland Community Cohesion Strategy through the Diverse Communities Forum
- Deliver services in the areas of greatest need
- Provide information and guidance to new arrivals to raise their awareness of their rights and responsibilities

### **2.3 Supporting our ageing population**

- Deliver a programme of Golden Age events, including Golden Age Fairs and Fenland @ your service shop events
- Plan our services to meet the changing needs of an ageing population
- Continue to support community transport services

#### **2.4 Promote healthy lifestyles**

- Encourage more people in the community to be more active, more often through our leisure facilities
- Promote healthy lifestyles for Fenland residents
- Work with local commissioning groups and others to develop effective approaches to improve community health outcomes

#### **2.5 Engaging young people**

- Maintain our commitment to engaging with young people and raising their awareness of democratic processes, particularly through events like Democracy Day
- Commit to consulting with young people on issues that affect them
- Maintain the funding distributed to youth projects via the Youth District Council

## **Streets Ahead**

We want to ensure that Fenland is green, clean and safe for all residents to enjoy. But we cannot do this on our own. We are committed to working closely with residents, businesses, community groups and partners in order to promote personal responsibility and foster community pride in our local areas.

Our waste and recycling record is excellent. We are proud to offer a three bin waste system that gives residents a weekly collection for domestic waste. Recycling in Fenland is high because residents and businesses are taking responsibility for reducing the amount of waste that is taken to landfill sites.

Feeling safe in the local neighbourhood is important to both us and our residents. We are working with our partners and the community to make Fenland a safe place to live through the Safer Fenland Partnership. The Council also encourages local businesses to take ownership for their neighbourhood by working together to maintain a pleasant working and living environment.

The priorities for the Streets Ahead priority are:

### **3.1 Maintain current levels of waste, recycling & cleansing**

- Deliver a high performing waste and recycling service
- Deliver a high performing street cleansing service
- Deliver a high performing Rapid Response fly tipping service
- Deliver the Street Scene Officer service
- Deliver a fair approach to enforcement of environmental standards across the district
- Work with key stakeholders to develop an advanced waste partnership in Cambridgeshire

### **3.2 Delivering community projects that improve the environment and our streetscene**

- Deliver the “Pride in Fenland” campaign
- Support community Street Pride and ‘Friends of’ groups to deliver events within their local areas
- Create more opportunities for the community to help preserve and manage the local environment
- Work with businesses to inform and promote innovative environmental practices
- Provide market town events and activities to improve the viability of our town centres.
- Participate in the ‘In Bloom’ awards scheme

### **3.3 Promote a safer Fenland**

- Work with our partner organisations to reduce crime and anti social behaviour in Fenland

- Help residents improve their safety and reduce the risk of them becoming victims of crime
- Help businesses to tackle crime against them including theft, arson and damage to premises
- Establish partnership actions to target locations of community concern or where incidents of crime and anti social behaviour are high

#### **3.4 Provide quality parks and open spaces in Fenland**

- Maintain standards in our parks and open spaces
- Increase the availability of community green space
- Work with partners to create more opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors and the countryside
- Promote local nature ensuring that habitats and species are sensitively managed
- Maintain existing Green Flag awards for Fenland parks

## **Open for Business**

Fenland is an attractive place to do business in. It has a prime location, close to important economic centres and good transport links, with Cambridge, Peterborough and Stansted easily accessible by rail or road. Fenland has an enviable record for proactively encouraging business and inward investment because of the area's unique offer of a prime location, teamed with reasonably priced land, space to grow, and an ever-improving support network.

We will do all we can to encourage economic recovery and growth, by pursuing every opportunity to support existing businesses and attract new business into the district. New knowledge-based businesses have already started to set up in the district, and the quality of facilities for tourists is improving. We will work with our partners in the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership to do all we can to promote Fenland and the wider LEP area as a great place to visit and in which to do business.

We will build on the success of our flexible business premises, including the South Fens Business Centre and Enterprise Park, Boathouse Business Centre and our estate of light industrial units. We will promote these premises to encourage new business entrepreneurs and provide a diversity of accommodation to enable businesses to grow within a supported environment. Furthermore, we continue to invest in local educational projects, such as with the College of West Anglia, to both inspire and raise the skills of local residents.

To recognise the importance of the focus on the economy and general business environment, the Council has also developed a refreshed economic development strategy. This sets out a detailed vision and associated action plan to deliver further improvements to the economic well-being of the District

The priorities for the Open for Business priority are:

### **4.1 Develop business and employment in Fenland**

- Target new investment in key business and retail sectors and support economic development and jobs in Fenland
- Provide and facilitate proactive business support
- Promote the Nene Ports to increase opportunities for leisure and commercial usage
- Explore the business and job opportunities related to offshore renewable Wind Farms
- Promote the delivery of mixed use housing /retail proposal for the Nene Waterfront along with wider regeneration
- Leverage external funding to deliver projects in Fenland
- Ensure Fenland's best interests are represented within County Strategic Planning and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

### **4.2 Promote the economic profile of Fenland**

- Promote and develop our business assets to encourage investment, jobs and skills
- Promote Fenland as a good place to live, work and visit
- Actively participate in the county wide partnership project to deliver super fast broadband across Fenland and Cambridgeshire

#### **4.3 Raising aspirations and improving learning opportunities**

- Support further and higher education providers to promote a range of learning opportunities for Fenland residents
- Work with education providers to assist in improving educational attainment and links to industry
- Work with businesses, local schools and Cambridgeshire County Council to ensure a successful Building Schools for the Future programme
- Work with businesses and other partners to raise skills and aspirations in the local workforce

#### **4.4 Promote Fenland as a tourism and visitor destination**

- Encourage tourists to visit Fenland and enjoy exploring the areas many unique attractions
- Work with partners to continue to deliver a comprehensive tourism strategy for the district

## **Quality Organisation**

We are committed to providing high quality customer services in places that are accessible by our residents, whether that is on the high street in one of our market towns, or in the village hall in one of our more remote communities. Through the ethos of Customer Service Excellence, we consult with our customers on our services, act on any feedback and inform our customers what we have changed as a result of their comments. This ensures that our services are designed around the needs of our customers and not around what we think our customers need. Within that we can evidence there is fairness for all in our service delivery and fulfil our requirement of the 2010 Equality Act.

Staff across the Council are dedicated to achieving this vision through our 100% People driven approach. This ensures that high quality services are maintained to residents through investment in training and development to ensure that we have the right skills within the organisation to deliver excellent services out in the community. We will continue to communicate what services are available to ensure our residents can live the best quality of life possible.

To maintain a Quality Organisation we must continue to use all of our resources effectively, including our finances, people, technology and assets especially during these challenging financial times for local government. Through prioritising services that residents need most, we will continue to deliver quality services which are important to local people.

The priorities for the Quality Organisation priority are:

### **5.1 Providing good quality customer services that are accessible to the community**

- Offer a range of services at our Fenland @ your service shops and ensure a high number of enquiries are resolved at the first point of contact
- Offer a range of partner organisations services through our Fenland @ your service shops
- Offer a number of self serve opportunities through our website
- Offer a range of ways in which we will communicate with the public
- Ensure our requirements of the 2010 Equality Act are met through our core service delivery and publish on a yearly basis our success in achieving this

### **5.2 Maximise and continue to use our resources effectively**

- Maintain our commitment to finding savings whilst endeavouring to minimise the impact on frontline services
- Maintain robust and effective financial standards, and resilience across the council
- Maintain robust internal controls and strong governance
- Manage and utilise our assets effectively and participate in the County wide Making Assets Count (MAC) project to deliver efficiencies where appropriate

- Maintain an effective workforce with the right skills to deliver outcomes for Fenland residents
- Continue to maximise Council Tax and Business Rates collection to ensure we continue to provide quality services
- Maximise the resource available to the Council through the Localisation of Business Rates and pooling arrangements of 'Growing Cambridgeshire'
- Implement the Local Council Tax Reduction scheme (Local Council Tax Support) which minimises the impact to residents whilst delivering the financial reductions required to the Council's budget
- Where a strong business case exists pursue shared service and joint working arrangements with other key service providers.

### **5.3 Deliver regulatory services in a customer focused way**

- Provide businesses with information and training support to help them achieve regulatory compliance
- Maintain a supportive and fair approach to enforcement and regulatory services
- Provide a single point of contact for regulatory services enquiries within the Council



## **Corporate approach to efficiency**

We are committed to meeting the challenging budget reduction savings set by the coalition government. During these difficult financial times, we will maintain a commitment to providing excellent customer service and endeavour to minimise effects on frontline services.

The Council is committed to the principle of value for money, and will work to fulfil its responsibilities of continuously improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness of services. The Council's approach to securing value for money through procurement is set out in the Procurement Strategy and Code of Procurement. The Council achieved a three star rating for value for money during its last Use of Resources assessment.

## **Corporate approach to risk management**

The Corporate Plan 2013 -16 links closely to the Risk Management Strategy and Corporate Risk Register. The Council has a comprehensive approach to risk management which ensures that all strategic risks are appropriately identified, managed and mitigated against.

## **Financing our priorities**

This Corporate Plan is accompanied by the Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2013-16. These documents ensure that resources are available for the delivery of the corporate plan. Our approach to developing the budget proposals for 2013-16 has been to ensure provision of sufficient resources to maintain performance in priority services whilst protecting frontline services, as well as ensuring we have sufficient resources to develop the Council's ambitious agenda to shape the future of the district.

## **Measuring and evaluating our performance**

To ensure the priorities stated in the corporate plan are delivered we will develop a set of performance indicators which will be monitored jointly by the Cabinet and Corporate Management Team to ensure we are delivering on our promises to the community. Cabinet Members will also receive monthly reports on performance in delivering each of the corporate plan objectives as part of the monthly Portfolio Holder Briefing. Service team action plans will also be developed to achieve the corporate vision for the district. Progress against service plans will be monitored by the Corporate Management Team. Cabinet members and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel will receive regular corporate performance monitoring reports. These will enable monitoring of improvements across key services. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel also ensures the executive (the Cabinet) is acting within the policies agreed by the whole Council and in the best interests of the district.

Our commitment to **Customer Service Excellence** (CSE), the government's national standard for the provision of excellent customer services ensures that we are designing our services around the needs of our residents. We actively seek the views of our residents on our services and make changes based on their feedback.

We achieved corporate wide accreditation for CSE in 2009, the first organisation in the country to do it and have since achieved reaccreditation in 2010 and 2011, and are currently going through the reaccreditation process in 2012. We have achieved compliance plus in a number of areas in which our assessor says we are best practice. This includes our mobile Crimebuster to help reduce fear of crime and the Octavia View development to tackle homelessness.



The Government Standard

Leon Winston, our Customer Service Excellence Assessor commented that *“Fenland District Council places a great deal of emphasis on achieving the highest standards in front-line service delivery.”*

Gaining CSE has helped us to continuously improve our services through engaging with our customers in a proactive way.

