

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 5**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

**Date**            **15 JULY 2013**

**Title**            **PROGRESS OF CORPORATE PRIORITY - OPEN FOR BUSINESS INCLUDING FENLAND TOURISM BOARD UPDATE**

**1. PURPOSE/SUMMARY**

- The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny committee with a performance update on Fenland District Council's corporate priority – Open for Business, including the Fenland Tourism Board.

**2. KEY ISSUES**

- OB1: Develop business and employment in Fenland
- OB2: Promote the economic profile of Fenland
- OB3: Raising aspirations and improving learning opportunities
- OB4: Promote Fenland as a tourism and visitor destination

**3. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- Overview and Scrutiny are requested to consider the progress made by the Council in delivering the Open for Business corporate priority and the Fenland Tourism Board.

<b>Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Forward Plan Reference No.</b> (if applicable)	
<b>Portfolio Holder(s)</b>	Cllr Chris Seaton, Portfolio holder for Economy Cllr Pop Jolley, Cabinet Member Cllr Mike Cornwell, Chair of the Fenland Tourism Board
<b>Report Originator</b>	Clive Gibbon, Economic Development Manager

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<b>Background Paper(s)</b>	Corporate Plan 2013 - 16 Economic Development Strategy 2012 - 2031 Fenland Tourism Strategy

## **1. BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Open for Business portfolio within the council's corporate plan sets out key priorities which will both encourage and facilitate sustainable investment and growth through development and support for business, employment, learning and tourism opportunities.
- 1.2 The under mentioned Open for Business priorities respond to and compliment the drive and vision of Fenland District Council's Economic Development Strategy 2012 – 2031 'Building a competitive vision for Fenland' to create a strong, resilient and successful economy that is built on economic participation and one which stimulates opportunities for all.
1. Develop business and employment in Fenland
  2. Promote the economic profile of Fenland
  3. Raising aspirations and improving learning opportunities
  4. Promote Fenland as a tourism and visitor destination
- 1.3 Delivering on these priorities will help strengthen Fenland's economic competitiveness, which in turn will underpin and support the growth of over 7000 new jobs as detailed in the Core Strategy and together with key stakeholders ensure that local needs of business and residents are met.

## **2. EFFECT ON CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 The attached performance report reflects on progress made in meeting target indicators that contribute to the delivery of the Council's Open for Business objectives and help influence other corporate priorities.
- 2.2 The performance of economic development contributes towards wider policies including the emerging Fenland Communities Development Plan: Draft Core Strategy 2012 – 2031, Fenland Infrastructure Plan, Fenland Rail Strategy and the Fenland Neighbourhood Planning Vision.
- 2.3 Economic indicators identified within the Economic Development Action Plan will be used to track change and 'health check' the economy, monitor and measure the success and impact of the Open for Business priority. The Tourism Action Plan will also measure success through increased visitors and visitor spends.

## **3. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

- 3.1 Economic growth and competitiveness of Fenlands economy is paramount to help raise the aspirations for the whole community.
- 3.2 The council also acknowledges that economic growth steered by Open for Business policy; Fenland Tourism Board and the Economic Development Strategy will be best delivered through a cohesive and coherent partnership of public, voluntary and private sectors working together as stakeholders.
- 3.3 The activities and performance of Economic Development delivered through Open for Business priorities, Tourism through the Fenland Tourism Board, the Economic Development Strategy and the emerging Tourism Strategy will help to deliver a competitive and sustainable economy which nurtures a long-term legacy and will support the districts attractiveness to new residents, visitors and inward investors.



# Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Monday, 15 July 2013

## Progress of Open for Business Corporate Priority (Including Fenland Tourism Board Update)



**JUNE 2012 – JUNE 2013**

**Cllr Chris Seaton – Deputy Leader of the Council**

**Cllr Pop Jolley - Cabinet Member**

**Cllr Mike Cornwell - Chair of Fenland Tourism Board**

# OB1 Develop business and employment in Fenland

## Objective 1 – Target new investment in key business and retail sectors and support economic development and jobs in Fenland

### Action taken to date:

To ensure Fenland still has the level of support that enables businesses easy access to start, grow and develop post Business Link East, the council develop a core network of organisations that currently support businesses and brought them together under the banner of '**Fenland for Business**' ensure the business support offer is accessible to all and agree a co-ordinated approach that will provide the maximum level of support activities to Fenland businesses. Fenland for Business partners include:

- Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce
- NWES
- Federation of Small Businesses
- College of West Anglia
- Jobcentre Plus
- High Street Banks and accountants

As part of the **Wisbech 2020** project, the Council has worked with partners Horsefair Shopping Centre, Wisbech Town Council and the private sector to develop 'My Loyalty Card', a pilot shoppers voucher scheme which will support;

- **Shoppers with weekly discounts**
- **Retailers with improved footfall**
- **Increased vibrancy of the town centre**
- **Attractiveness to inward investors**

The Council developed a new **Economic Development Strategy** as part of a suite of strategies including Fenland Communities Development Plan: The Core Strategy, Fenland Neighbourhood Planning Vision, Fenland Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Fenland Rail Development Strategy and was adopted by Council on 24 January 2013. The strategy will contribute to the delivery of the Council's Open for Business objectives and support a long-term framework of sustainability.

- Position the district as an important economic centre
- Create a strong, resilient and successful economy
- Delivering opportunities for increased prosperity for residents
- Working with partners on skills development and learning opportunities, and
- Make the district a location of choice for inward investment.

## Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:

As part of the Council's business development programme, **30 businesses** have been visited to further develop links, help with growth and expansion plans

The **Fenland for Business** partnership has over the past year supported over **200 people** through a series of business start-up programmes.

To underpin business support and growth of local businesses, the council has proactively worked with the Fens Adventurer programme to approve funding applications that total over **£950,000** to enable 12 local business to expand and recruit including:

- Westfield Farms - Grader machine **£36,000**
- Skylark Garden Centre - extension **£53,000**
- Newling Fruit growers - Packing Facility **£124,000**
- A&E G Heading – Onion Store **£125,000**
- English Mustard Growers – equipment **£50,000**
- L&A E Munns – bottling facility **£40,000**

## Action taken to date:

### Economic & Business Estate

Over the past year the Business Premises Estate has performed well and the overall occupancy of the business portfolio has remained positive, especially when considered against the National economic picture.

Of particular note is the continued success of the South Fens Enterprise Park, which accepted its first occupier in April 2011 and now boasts 4 occupiers. The South Fens Enterprise Park continues to provide 'move-on' space for occupiers from SFBC and has also proved attractive to local businesses and inward investment enquiries. Occupancy is poised to increase to 65% at the beginning of August with the arrival of an Automation Engineering firm that operate with the food sector.

The Council continues to deliver its planned refurbishment programme across its mini factory estate. Work has already been completed at Boleness Road in Wisbech and is underway at Longhill Road in March and Prospect Way in Chatteris.

The Boathouse Business Centre has also seen a recently flurry of activity and continues to provide regionally recognised business 'incubation' space, proving to be a convenient launch pad for embryonic businesses hoping to grow into their own accommodation. Notwithstanding the successes of the year,

occupancy has been lower than anticipated, and as a result FDC have engaged the services of local marketing experts, Tinfish Creative, who has been commissioned to assist with the proactive promotion of both the BHBC & SFBC. They will also help increase exposure of South Fens Enterprise Space and other smaller units



Regional recognition of the Business Centre's extends to include the first class conference facilities, which in the last financial year created a turnover of £147,580, hosting 1,475 events, which include:

- o Sessions for the Coroners Court (following the closure of Wisbech Court House);
- o Training events which have included Job Centre 'sector-based' work academies seeking employees for the likes of Argos and other town centre employers;
- o Property Auctions for local Estate Agents;
- o Additional users and training establishments using The Boathouse include Peterborough & Huntingdon Regional Colleges, providing accountancy and social care outreach courses to up-skill employees within Fenland.

The entire Business Premises Estate provides accommodation for around 80 businesses and it is estimated that these businesses employ 400-500 people, providing a diverse range of professional, trade and service sectors.

The Café at The Boathouse was recently reopened following a short period of closure and initial indications are that a strong trade has been established. The owner of the current business has strong links to the Portuguese community within Wisbech, which is creating appeal to a far more diverse customer base.

The Gallery within the Boathouse has hosted several free to visit displays within the last 12 months, which have included exhibitions by local art groups and photographic displays by local camera and photography clubs.



The Financial surplus (circa £75,000) generated by the Business Premises Portfolio continues to positively contribute towards the Council's Revenue budget. With the gradual improvement of economic climate, it is expected that occupation levels across the entire estate will continue to increase.

## Outcomes

Overall occupancy of the business portfolio is:

- Boathouse Business Centre **60%**
- South Fens Business Centre **81%**
- South Fens Enterprise space **41%**
- Other business Units **86%**
- Total estate portfolio at **76%**

Business enquires for business accommodation:

- **46** enquiries from April 2012 – March 2013

### 'Focus on Fenland' Regeneration Action Group

An overarching Regeneration Action Group, led by the Chief Executive, consisting of key officers and reporting to the Leader and Deputy Leader, has been formed.

This group promotes and coordinates cross team activities to aid regeneration in Fenland.

Key areas of focus include:

- Investigating the opportunity for a Business Improvement District (BID) in Wisbech
- Looking to bring back into positive use, key dilapidated buildings
- Looking to bring empty properties back into positive use
- Continuing to pursue development opportunities in the Nene Waterfront area
- A community performance space at Thomas Clarkson Academy
- A quality housing demonstration project for Coalwharf Road in Wisbech
- Developing leisure and commercial facilities at Port Sutton Bridge
- Exploring the redesign of Whittlesey Market Place and bus station
- Improvements to Whittlesey railway station
- Working with Centrica to explore opportunities for offshore renewable energy at Wisbech Port and in Fenland
- Supporting the delivery of a community project at Octavia Hill Gardens in Wisbech
- Supporting the delivery of the Cromwell Park development in Wisbech

## Objective 2 - Provide and facilitate proactive business support

### Action taken to date:

The Council over the past year have been working proactively with the local enterprise agency NWES (previously known as Norfolk & Waveney Enterprise Services) to support business growth and start-ups. A programme of workshops and seminars has seen a rise in business start-ups.

The aim is to nurture these businesses through their first year with support from the Fenland for Business partnership who include:

- **Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce**
- **Federation of Small Businesses**
- **College of West Anglia**
- **Jobcentre Plus**
- **High Street Banks and accountants**

The benefit of bringing this type of partnership together is the critical mass of organisations that can support not just early stages venture but growing and mature businesses as well.

Fenland District Council also worked with NWES in creating an opportunity for budding entrepreneurs looking to start a business a chance to access **£2500 worth of cash and £2500 funding for professional advice** from accountants Whiting & Partners, solicitors Fraser Dawbarns and NWES through a scheme modelled on the TV series Dragons' Den. Business ideas were submitted to NWES and ten applicants were selected to pitch in front of the Dragons at Young People March in June 2012. As part of the initiative 5 free business workshops were delivered to help **20 potential entrepreneurs** prepare a business plan to improve their chance of success. Partners on the 'Dragons Den' panel included;

- **Fenland District Council**
- **NWES**
- **Roddons Housing Association**
- **Whiting & Partners, and solicitors**
- **Fraser Dawbarns**

The Council has developed an initiative '**Thinking of starting your own business**' in partnership with NWES and the Fredericks Foundation, a registered charity set up to help people finance their business start. The Fredericks Foundation () has been successfully lending in different regions across the country since 2001. This partnership will allow local people to develop their business ideas through a tailored business support programme from NWES whilst working with Fredericks on a plan to finance the business.





The Council also has been successful in developing a partnership with UK Trade & Investment (UKT&I) to deliver support programmes to help Fenland businesses develop trade outside of the UK. To support this initiative the council and UKT&I have developed '**Supporting businesses together**' branding which will enhance the confidence and stability of the initiative to local business.

### **Community House - Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Service (NWES) – Business Start Up Advice Sessions**

Over the past year NWES have delivered Business Start-up workshops in **Community House** in Wisbech to support and engage residents to become economically active. The workshop have been received well from local resident looking to become self employed.

#### **Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:**

- The Fenland for Business partnership has run over **30 workshops and seminars** on **Business Development, How to use Social Media, Updates from the Budget, Financial Planning, Succession Planning and Employment and Taxation** around the district and over **200** business have attended and feedback from various partners suggests that over **50%** of business have improved the way the business has developed.
- Working with NWES and delivering **20 workshops and seminars**, including presentations from the Bank of England, UKT&I, HMRC and the Local Enterprise partnership have seen the creation of over **25 new Fenland businesses**.
- Since the '**Thinking of starting your own business**' initiative started in January 2013 with **4 new businesses** created with a further 4 currently going through the Fredericks Foundation funding panel.
- Since delivering Start-up workshops at **Community House**, NWES has support **20 residents** through the process of self employment with 3 residents starting their business ventures as a courier, a supplier of wooden materials and a IT Repair man.

### **Objective 3 - Promote the Nene Ports to increase opportunities for leisure and commercial usage**

#### **Action taken to date:**

From a commercial shipping aspect, the Council, as port authority, has been proactively engaged with both port operators and as a result, has seen a stabilisation in shipping numbers, with 240 projected for the Nene ports for 2013/14.

It is pleasing to note that the Council's boat lift and boatyard facilities have attracted strong interest from not only leisure craft, but also new commercial customers. These include fishing vessels from local ports and wind farm support vessels.

Leisure marketing and opportunities are being explored, including active links with Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council for a 'Sail the Wash' approach.

#### **Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:**

From a leisure perspective, the Yacht Harbour continues to support 84 vessels, however, there is a 7% reduction on the 2012/13 target of 90. This is mainly due to the current economic climate.

There is a strong recognition from customers that the Yacht Harbour / boatyard facilities are an enormous asset to the local marine sector.

#### **Explanation of any issues that may have affected the planned achievement of this objective:**

Plans remain in place to develop a combined leisure and commercial mooring facility at Sutton Bridge in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council. Land issues have regrettably delayed delivery, but all parties remain committed to the project with a view to construction later this year.

In addition, the Council has prepared a bid to the Coastal Community Fund to support diversification, infrastructure development and business opportunities based around the port and marine sector.

## Objective 4 - Explore the business and job opportunities related to offshore renewable Wind Farms

### Action taken to date:

#### Lincs Wind Farm

The Council, as Harbour Authority and from a regeneration perspective, has been successful in attracting wind farm craft and business to the Nene ports linked to the Lincs Wind Farm.

#### Benefits include:

- Additional income for FDC for pilotage, and port fees related to cable laying and wind turbine construction and maintenance
- Additional moorings-related income
- Additional boat yard / boat lift activity and income
- Engagement with the local supply chain and development opportunities for local companies, eg engineering.

#### Race Bank Wind Farm

Planning approval has been given for the construction of a wind farm of up to 80MW capacity, which means it could meet the equivalent annual electricity demand of more than 450,000 homes, if fully developed. The project remains subject to a final investment decision by Centrica Q3 2013.



## Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:

Preliminary meetings with Centrica have been held to outline:

- The Council marine service offer, eg Pilots, crew transfer
- Utilisation of FDC land and marine facilities, mooring, boat lift
- The opportunities to utilise the supply chain companies
- Training opportunities linked to schools and the College of West Anglia
- Utilisation of the Boathouse for business and meeting requirements
- Economic development and business support around the marine sector.



## **Objective 5 – Promote the delivery of mixed use housing /retail proposal for the Nene Waterfront along with wider regeneration**

### **Action taken to date:**

The Council has been actively developing a delivery strategy for the Nene Waterfront Regeneration area (NWF) and has engaged with Cambridgeshire County Council to consider alternative delivery models to provide Affordable Housing on the site, utilising the advice provided to Cambridgeshire County Council, Officers also met with specialists from Savills to explore;

- Financial modeling
- Potential delivery structures, which included Joint Venture and Local Asset Backed Vehicles.

In addition, the Council has also continued to engage with Circle Anglia to develop detailed delivery options for a mix of Affordable and Market Housing on the former Gas Works site at the NWF. Discussions have advanced to the offer stage, with a private development partner anticipating the delivery of the entire 70 dwelling scheme.

### **Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:**

The Council has engaged with Cambridgeshire County Council to deliver visual and physical improvements to the sites and infrastructure surrounding the NWF sites, which has included:

- Replacement and refurbishment of the existing hoardings,
- Resurfacing of the highways and footpaths, and
- Weed and overgrowth clearance
- Herb Bank in partnership with R.Delamore Ltd, Wisbech in Bloom and Street Pride

It is anticipated that the significant amount of work already undertaken in investigating alternative delivery options will enable the Council to bring forward the development of part of the NWF within the next 12 months.

### **Explanation of any issues that may have affected the planned achievement of this objective:**

The development sector across the entire country remains fragile, locally development viability and in particular the residual land values after deducting build costs from completed developments schemes are impacting on the ability of developers to deliver schemes, whilst remaining in profit. Officers will continue to monitor the local and regional situation.

## Objective 6 - Lever in external funding to deliver projects in Fenland

### Action taken to date:

The Council was instrumental in delivering the funding bid to develop a skills centre around Horticulture and Botany sectors with partners Delamore Ltd and the LEP. Over **£200,000** 'Agreement of Funding' is now in place with Delamore Ltd from the Local Enterprise Partnership that will now allow the Horticulture and Botany Skills Centre to be built. Official opening of the Skills Centre is provisionally planned for September 2013 the skills centre will have:

- **1000m<sup>2</sup> Training Glasshouses** to support growing and cross pollinate techniques and Sciences.
- **43m<sup>2</sup> Learning Centre** that will support a Scientific Lab and learning environment.

The centre will help support:

- **6 apprenticeships** growing to **15+ in 2016**
- **5 new job** growth in the first year, and **15+ in 2016+** within areas of Horticulture and land based sectors.

The Council is currently developing a programme partnership that will look at the learning provision of the skills centre and that partnership includes:

- Fenland District Council
- Delamore Ltd
- Local Enterprise Partnership
- College of West Anglia
- Jobcentre Plus
- 14-19 Schools Partnership, and
- Thomas Clarkson

The Council are also fully supportive of a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) led Regional Growth Fund Bid to develop a £4million '**Agri-Tech Growth Initiative**' The proposal brings together world-class capabilities in **food and crop science** and **technology** including engineering and manufacturing business across the LEP geography and including parts of Suffolk. The project aims to create/  
Safeguard:

- over 500 jobs
- deliver 25 new businesses, and
- Further grow cluster development and supply chain management across East of England.



## Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:

- The Council was instrumental in delivering a funding bid of over **£200,000** to develop a skills centre around Horticulture and Botany sectors with partners Delamore Ltd and the LEP. The centre will support:
  - **6 apprenticeships** growing to **15+ in 2016**
  - **5 new job** growth in the first year, and **15+ in 2016+** within areas of Horticulture and land based sectors.
- The **£4million 'Agri-Tech Growth Initiative'** Regional Growth Fund Bid was submitted by the LEP in March and feedback is expected from the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) mid-July onwards.
- The Council has proactively worked with the Fens Adventurer programme to approve funding applications that total over **£950,000** to enable 12 local business to deliver projects to help expand and grow including;
  - Westfield Farms - Grader machine **£36,000**
  - Skylark Garden Centre - extension **£53,000**
  - Newling Fruit growers - Packing Facility **£124,000**
  - A&E G Heading – Onion Store **£125,000**
  - English Mustard Growers – equipment **£50,000**
  - L&A E Munns – bottling facility **£40,000**

## Objective 7 - Ensure Fenland's best interests are represented within the Countywide Strategic Planning Unit and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

### Action taken to date:

The Council now sits on two LEP project streams **Inward Investment and International Trade**. These project streams look to implement the most effective mechanism to attract Inward Investment and International Trade across the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough area. Objectives for both project streams include;

- Develop optimal web presence to ensure that the LEP area is successfully positioned for Inward Investment.
- Develop effective systems and relationships with UKTI to further position Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP as a first choice for investment and conversion of enquiries.
- Explore new opportunities to increase our visibility and presence as a location to invest in.

The Council attends the **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Strategic Planning & Transport Members Group** which meets three to four times per annum to consider work undertaken by the Countywide Strategic Planning Unit. The meetings are normally attended by the **Deputy Leader of the Council** and the **Portfolio Holder for Environment & Growth** with the **Head of Planning** and **Neighbourhood Strategy Manager** attending in a supporting role.

The Group has held three meetings in the past year. A key objective so far has been;

- Demonstrate that local authorities across the County have fully engaged in the 'duty to cooperate', which must be demonstrated at Local Plan examinations.
- Working Group to consider and endorse work undertaken in the preparation of the **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SMHA)**, which assists in identifying Local Plan housing targets for individual Council areas.
- To agree 'Memorandum of Cooperation' which sets down the housing figures for each Council identified in the SMHA. This is considered an appropriate means of demonstrating effective cooperation between authorities as required under the National Planning Policy Framework.

In addition the Group has provided assessment and input to the Long Term Transport Strategy for Cambridgeshire currently being completed by the County Council.

#### **Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:**

- The Council has met twice over the last 2 months to work with the LEP on a draft inward investment and International Investment plan to ensure that Fenland is strategically placed to benefit from future investment.

## OB2 Promote the economic profile of Fenland

**Objective 1 - Promote and develop our business assets to encourage Investment, jobs and skills**

**Action taken to date:**

The Council has exhibited at 4 Business events and exhibitions over the last year including;

- **Business Focus Event at the East of England Showground**
- **Two Counties Business Expo at Newmarket Racecourse**
- **Energy Expo in Norwich**
- **B2B event at Stansted, and**
- **Leaflet racks at events in London and Birmingham.**

These events are ideal platforms to promote to SME's what Fenland has to offer in the way of proactive business support, planning engagement, land and business accommodation availability.

**Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:**

- On average between **50 -100 people** visit our stand at business exhibitions and over the last two years we have had **3 successes** in new businesses moving to our business centres and more recently one to South Fens Enterprise Park.

## **Objective 2 – Promote Fenland as a good place to live, work and visit**

### **Action taken to date:**

The 4th Council sponsored 'Fenland Enterprise and Business Awards' took place in October 2012 at the Braza Club, March and was attended by nearly **200 guests**. The Council sponsored two awards;

- 'Apprentice of the Year' won by Florence Cliss – Holiday with Us who have retail outlets in Wisbech and March, and
- 'Tourism award' won by Secret Garden Touring Park.

The awards allow winning businesses to utilise the FEBA logo on marketing material to reflect their creditability and professionalism in winning future contracts and promote Fenland as a good place to do business.

**Business information** sheets have been designed to help potential inward investors understand who of their like-minded peers also operate in Fenland. The fact sheets act as a mini directory of businesses and the services and products they deliver. Current factsheets cover;

- Manufacturing and Engineering
- Port and Marina
- Food and Drink
- Business Support, and
- Business Premises

The Fenland Renaissance programme continues to deliver visual improvements to the street-scene across the District. The programme focuses attention upon 'high visual impact' areas to drive improvements to the street-scene. The Building & Shop Front grants offered to owners will provide upto a maximum of 50% of the cost of any improvement works, to the property. During 2012/13 the programme has awarded over **£45,000** in building grants.

### **Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:**

The 4<sup>th</sup> Fenland Enterprise and Business Awards took place in October 2012 and were attended by nearly **200 guests** who saw 12 awards handed out including;

- Business of the Year award was won by Fosters Property Maintenance, as too was Businessperson Mr Steve Foster.
- Green Award - CCORRN
- Tourism Award – The Secret Garden
- Small Business of the Year – Sparkle Oven Clean
- Employer of the Year – Ferry Project
- Customer Service Award – A2G Assessments

During the 2012/13 financial year, the Renaissance Team have offered Building Grants worth **£45,800**, improving **6 properties in Whittlesey, Wisbech**. In addition, the Shop Front Grants scheme has also funded improvements to **2 shop premises in Chatteris**. Funds remain available for shop front improvements.

## Objective 3 - Actively participate in the county wide partnership project to deliver super fast broadband across Fenland and Cambridgeshire

### Action taken to date:

The Connecting Cambridgeshire team is working closely with BT through its Openreach division carefully planning the roll-out to make the best use of public money so that it reaches as many businesses and communities as possible by the end of 2015.

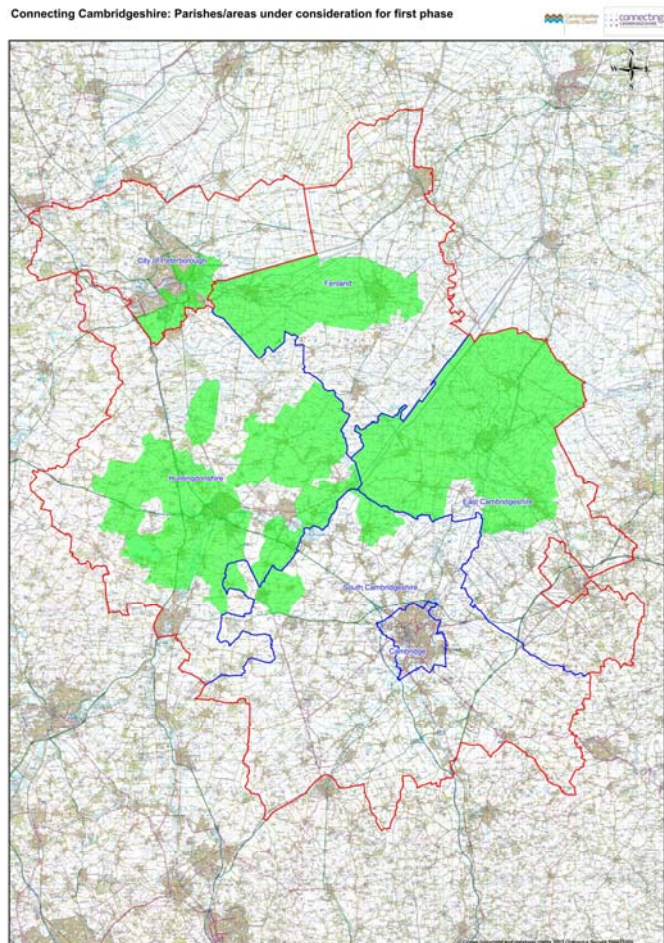
**In the first phase of the project, a 3<sup>rd</sup> of Fenland (all of March and Whittlesey and their surrounding hinterlands) will be upgraded to support the broadband superfast network.**

Over the coming months Openreach (and their contractors') engineers and surveyors will be out and about around the district carrying out detailed planning and surveys to re-design the network. The process also involves working with both Cambridgeshire Highways and Fenland District Council planning team to ensure that the process is as swift and efficient as possible. If surveys reveal unexpected issues it may affect when an area is connected.

The Connecting Cambridgeshire programme is on track to achieve targets to make superfast speeds of 24 Mbps upwards available to more than 90% of homes and businesses across Fenland with better broadband of at least 2 Mbps for very nearly 100% premises by the end of 2015 through alternative technologies like satellite and wireless.

### Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:

- The Connecting Cambridgeshire programme is on track to achieve targets to make superfast speeds of 24 Mbps upwards available to more than **90% of homes and businesses** across Fenland with better broadband of at least 2 Mbps for the **remaining 10%** of premises by the end of 2015 through alternative technologies like satellite and wireless.



## OB3 Raising aspirations and improving learning opportunities

**Objective 1 - Support further and higher education providers to promote a range of learning opportunities for Fenland residents**

### **Action taken to date:**

Construction has now finished on the new £7.2million Technology Centre at the College of West Anglia Isle Campus in Wisbech. Fenland District Council contributed **£1.5million** to the project which will offer a state-of-the-art training and learning environment which will support learners' aspirations and fore fill the needs of local business.

The Council is also working with JobCentre Plus on pilot **work experience placement scheme**, which are now available to young people (16-24 year olds) who are out of work and claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA). The placements last between 2 and 8 weeks and should be for up to 30 hours per week. Benefits of work experience include;

- Continuation to receive full JSA payments during their placement
- Gaining valuable skills and experience.

This scheme will also link with the Fenland Horticulture and Land Based Skills Centre project.

The Council continues to actively promoted NVOs and apprenticeships for all areas of the workforce, and has been working with training providers F1 and other partners to promote these opportunities within our communities.

### **Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:**

- Currently, the council has two **work experience** posts; one is in the **Economic Development Team** to support the Fenland Enterprise in Education project and the other with the **HR team** supporting the Learning and Development administration.
- The Council continues to actively promoted NVOs for all areas of the workforce and over the past year, developed **15 apprenticeships**. The council has also been working with F1 Training and other training providers to promote these opportunities within our communities.
- Further to the Council's **£1.5 Million** investment in the new Technology Centre, the College of West Anglia has now developed an enhanced Engineering prospectus to align with future learner aspirations and to respond to Fenland business needs.

## **Objective 2 – Work with education providers to assist in improving educational attainment and links to industry**

### **Action taken to date:**

The **Fenland Enterprise in Education** (FEE) project has achieved a number of successes in its first year and gaining momentum and presence in both education and business arenas. The FEE project was developed in response to the business community consistently raising concerns about the skills and attributes the young people of Fenland are leaving school with. The FEE team developed the following objectives to help address issues identified;

- To build consistent, formal but friendly relationships between education providers and businesses
- To create flexible and dynamic arrangements between education providers and business, allowing maximum opportunity to enrich and add value to the curriculum studies of young people
- Improve responses by both educational establishments and employers to current/future skills issues
- Improved pathways for young people to make the transition from school to employment seamlessly and with confidence.

### **Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:**

- The FEE project is fast becoming an important enterprise/school vehicle to support business growth and learner aspirations with over 100 businesses involved in the project delivering business skills and training outputs include;
  - **1562** students engaged with local business
  - **389** hours of business time
  - **43** different businesses involved, and
  - **81** business people delivering activities.



### **Objective 3 – Work with businesses, local schools and Cambridgeshire County Council to ensure a successful Building Schools for the Future programme**

#### **Action taken to date:**

**Building Schools for the Future (BSF)** is a programme to rebuild or refurbish every secondary school in England. Thomas Clarkson Community College is one of the schools within Cambridgeshire that has experienced an exciting change as an outcome of significant capital investment as part of the national Building Schools for the Future programme. The Council has also contributed additional **£400,000** to the project to help address the limited facilities for large public performance space in Fenland. The Performance space was officially opened in March 2013.

#### **Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:**

- Since the official launch of the Thomas Clarkson Performance Space in March 2013, the council has been working with various partners including the **Angles Theatre** to develop a programme of events that will support the performance space including;
  - **The Rat Pack**
  - **Into the Woods, and**
  - **Orchestral events such as Big Bands**

## **Objective 4 - Work with businesses and other partners to raise skills and aspirations in the local workforce**

### **Action taken to date:**

In July 2012, the Council was involved in a joint 'Training and Careers' event with the Jobcentre Plus to promote opportunities to unemployed people looking to develop and raise their aspirations through training and apprenticeship programmes. The event was held at the Boathouse with over **20 exhibitors** from self-employment agencies, training and education providers on hand to discuss employment and training options including access to funding of programmes.

The FEE Project also contributes to this objective as well.

### **Moy Park Employee Support Programme**

The Council have been working with Moy Park since becoming aware of proposals to close and relocate part of the Wisbech business to Grantham.

The Employee Support Programme has been developed by the Council and our partners for 'at risk' employees of Moy Park in Wisbech. The 4 stages of the Employee Support Programme is designed to minimise job losses for employees.

**A similar Employee Support Programme is underway with employees of the Co-op, March** where we are working with 30 part-time and 3 full time employees looking for advice and guidance on employment opportunities, benefits and entitlements.

### **Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:**

- Over **300 people** attended the 'Training and Careers' event held at the Boathouse Business Centre which included partners from organisations such as;
  - **College of West Anglia**
  - **Peterborough Regional College**
  - **NWES**
  - **National Apprenticeships**
  - **The Consultancy Home Counties (TCHC)**
  - **RBS**
  - **Lloyds TSB**

**Moy Park Employee Support Programme** delivered a 4 stage redundancy /unemployment limitation process;

- **Stage 1:** initial presentations to over **250 Moy Park employees** from providers to encourage 'thought provoking' on options available if they choose redundancy.

- **Stage 2:** information disseminated around the notice boards of the company.
- **Stage 3:** So, far over **150 employees** have attended 1-2-1 on-site meetings with providers to ask more probing questions on **self employment, housing and council tax benefits, JobCentre Plus related benefits**, and a months on site training from The Consultancy Home Counties (TCHC) organisation delivering CV writing, covering letters, interview techniques and job seeking skills training. TCHC will also identify and fund training that is required to help secure future employment.
- **Stage 4:** bringing in businesses that are looking to recruit to guarantee interviews to employees facing redundancy. Fenmarc and QV Foods have already posted adverts and a further 2 business in Wisbech and one in Chatteris are looking to invite applications at the end of the month. The factory is looking to consolidate by the end of August.

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**Cllr Cornwell to follow on with update on the Fenland  
Tourism Board update...**

# OB4 Promote Fenland as a tourism and visitor destination

**Objective 1 – Encourage tourists to visit Fenland and enjoy exploring the areas many unique attractions**

**Action taken to date:**

In January 2013 The Council supported the Fenland Tourism Board for the launch event for Tourism by Adam Henson; farmer and BBC television presenter for Countryfile officially launched the new tourism website.

[www.visitcambridgeshirefens.org](http://www.visitcambridgeshirefens.org)



The FTB has produced annual **Welcome to Cambridgeshire Fens, Visitor and Accommodation Guide 2013** also developed 4 new Market Town mini guides and Town Trails.

As part of promoting to a wider audience the Board purchased advertising space in **'East Life Magazine'** and **'Discover Britain for Groups'** trade magazines promoting the Cambridgeshire Fens as a tourism destination.

The FTB are now working more closely with Fenland District Council's **Leisure, Markets and Events** teams to further promote and enhance the districts markets and events through the Board's existing marketing channels and the emerging Tourism Marketing and Communication plan.

Building on previous year's success, the FTB is working with partners to help further develop and promote events in Fenland, including the Fenland Four Seasons, Wisbech Rose Fair, Whittlesey Straw Bear and Heritage Open Days.

**Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:**

- The launch event was the chance for the FTB to engage with Fenland's Tourism Stakeholders and officially launch the **new tourism brand** through the new **tourism website** and 2013 publications (4 mini guides and the annual visitor guide). Since March 2013 the new website has received **2635**

**visits**, 87% of these visits have been new visitors and 13% have been return visits.

- **20,000 copies** of the annual Welcome to Cambridgeshire Fens Visitor and Accommodation Guide were printed with 10,000 being distributed nationally, out of this 10,000, **6,283** have been picked up nationally. The second 10,000 copies have been kept locally and are being used Fenland's periphery boarders, at events attended, and by website/telephone call requests.
- The FTB took the decision to condense market town guides from 8 to 4 to reduce costs. **5,000 copies of each market town have been printed**, and are distributed locally at the tourist information hubs around the district.
- During the 2 day exhibition the Council spoke to and provided information to over **100 different group travel/coach travel organisers**. Following the event the council has updated all contacts with the new publications and website information. The Council is planning to attend the event again in September 2013.
- Discover Britain is Britain's leading historic travel magazine, designed to engage, inspire and motivate visitors to discover heritage sites. The advert produced 10 group enquiries; all enquiries received all new publications and the new website link for more information.
- The FTB supported the **Rose Fair** in conjunction with the Wisbech Yacht Harbour; to coincide with the Rose Fair Parades the Wisbech Yacht Harbour will be opening its Gate to visitors who wish to visit the Yacht Harbour from 1000 to 1600. The attractions for the day include:
  - Port Authority Craft in attendance
  - Some local Fishing Boats
  - Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Vessel \*\* plus EIFCA stand.
  - Wind Farm Support Vessel
  - Wisbech Sea Cadets ferrying visitor from one end of the Yacht Harbour to the other.
  - Some Berth holders will be in attendance.

## **Objective 2 – Work with partners to continue to deliver a comprehensive tourism strategy for the district**

### **Action taken to date:**

The Fenland Tourism Board, a partnership board are working together to develop a tourism strategy to deliver opportunities for Fenland over the coming year's to help attract visitors into Fenland, with the visitor economy contributing annually over **£3 Million** worth of sustainable growth for Fenland. The strategy document will not sit in isolation, and align closely with the **Economic Development Strategy 2012-2031, The Fenland Leisure Strategy 2013-2018 and The Wisbech 2020 Vision.**

To develop a better understanding of the visitor profile, the FTB are working with **Fenland District Council's Communication team** to develop a Tourism Communications Plan to support the emerging tourism strategy and Action Plan, focusing on marketing for the coming year, who the visitors are to Fenland, how events can be promoted and be advertised effectively to raise the awareness of Fenlands offer to draw visitors in.

The Board are also working closely work with **Leisure, Markets and Events teams** within Fenland with partners to further develop the markets and events to increase the number of visitors not just to these events but to wider district-wide tourism attractions.

The Board has also been working with partners and funding agencies to supported tourism businesses and tourism leisure opportunities to obtain funding to help develop and enhance to tourism offer and facilities in Fenland.

### **Outcomes/outputs achieved to date:**

- Using the resources and expertise of the individuals and organisations represented on the FTB a tourism strategy with adjoining action plan is being developed to exploit the opportunities for Fenland over the coming year's to help attract visitors into Fenland, with the visitor economy contributing to the sustainable growth of Fenland.

The strategy document will not sit in isolation it will align with the Economic Development Strategy 2012-2031, The Fenland Leisure Strategy 2013-2018 and The Wisbech 2020 Vision.

Fundamentally the strategies vision is focusing on three areas;

1. Understanding the target audience, ensuring the work being carried out is bringing more visitors into Fenland and encouraging longer/return visits.

2. Building strong partnerships to work better together to deliver joint projects.
3. Focus on making more off what's on offer in terms of events and attractions when the visitors are in Fenland.



## Performance

LPI	Performance	Baseline	Target 13/14	Year to date	Variance
	<b>Open for business</b>				
AP1	% occupancy of Business Premises	NEW	78%	-	
AP2	% of customers satisfied with our Business Estates	NEW	90%	-	
MS 1	Number of Nene Berth holders	85	90	84	-7%
ED1	Attended at least 3 sector specific business events in line with the Economic Development Strategy Growth sectors	3	3	-	
ED2	Number of businesses actively engaged in the Fenland Enterprise in Education (FEE) project	NEW	75	-	
ED3	Financial support to the BSF programme in Wisbech in line with the programme targets (milestones met)	100%	1%	-	
ED4	Support the Fenland Tourism Board action plan	100%	100%	-	

Add text to explain any over or under performance (or link to text earlier in the document)