

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Date	13 JANUARY 2014
Title	DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2014-17

1. PURPOSE/SUMMARY

For the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to scrutinise the Draft Corporate Plan 2014-17

2. KEY ISSUES

- The Draft Corporate Plan 2014-17 sets out the priorities and challenges for the Council for the next three years to continue to bring prosperity to the area whilst ensuring we continue to deliver high quality services against a backdrop of a significant reduction in central government funding.
- To ensure we are meeting these challenges, we have reviewed and streamlined our corporate priorities from five to three focusing on communities, the environment and the economy. This is to ensure our staff and resources are focused on the projects that matter the most to local people.
- Like the rest of the public sector, the council continues to experience a number of challenges, particularly around our budget. However, we have successfully saved £6 million since 2010 which is approximately 30% of our total budget. The council remains committed to achieving savings with minimal impact on frontline services whilst maintaining excellent customer service.
- Savings to date have primarily been achieved through embracing service transformation, exploring new ways of working and reviewing processes to reduce bureaucracy. An example of this is the opening of the Chatteris Community Hub, which has delivered savings by maximising the use of public assets whilst providing an enhanced service.
- In order to meet future challenges and reshape the council to meet future needs, we will continue to embrace new ways of working and maintain strong working relationships with partners. We will also look to increase community capacity and resilience to better manage customer demand.
- Despite continued financial pressures, we are still able to do a lot of good work to bring prosperity to the District. This is evidenced by projects such as the Coalwharf Road Design Competition, housing development at the Nene Waterfront, opening of the Delamore Horticultural Centre and development of the Cromwell Park cinema and supermarket. Manea will receive an improved train service, we continue to invest in our

leisure centres and we are proposing to commit to investing in the A14 to improve the network.

- The Draft Corporate Plan will be presented to a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 13 January 2014.
- The Draft Corporate Plan will be opened for consultation with the public through the form of a questionnaire, asking residents what issues are the most important to them. The consultation will run from 6 January - 10 February 2014 and is available via the Fenland @ your service shops, Chatteris Community Hub, leisure centres, business centres and the Council's website. Any feedback will be incorporated into the final version to be considered by Cabinet and Council on 21 February 2014.
- The Final Corporate Plan will be considered by Cabinet and Council on 27 February 2014 incorporating feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and from residents.

3. RECOMMENDATION(S)

For the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to scrutinise the Draft Corporate Plan 2014-17.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference No. (if applicable)	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Melton – Leader of the Council Councillor Seaton – Deputy Leader of the Council
Report Originator	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Carol Pilson, Corporate Director Rob Bridge, Corporate Director
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Carol Pilson, Corporate Director Gary Garford, Corporate Director Rob Bridge, Corporate Director Richard Cassidy, Corporate Director Alan Pain, Corporate Director
Background Paper(s)	Cabinet papers 19/12/13 – Draft Corporate Plan 2014-17

Fenland District Council

Draft Corporate Plan 2013 – 16

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Introduction by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive

Welcome to Fenland District Council's Corporate Plan for 2014-17.

This plan sets out the priorities for the Council for the next three years to continue to bring prosperity to the area whilst ensuring we continue to deliver high quality services against a backdrop of a significant reduction in central government funding. To ensure we are meeting these challenges, this year we have reviewed our corporate priorities to ensure our staff and resources are focused on the projects that matter most to local people. We have streamlined our corporate priorities from five to three focusing on communities, the environment and the economy.

Like all councils across the country, we are experiencing a number of challenges particularly around our budget. However, we have successfully risen to this challenge with £6 million saved since 2010 which is approximately 30% of our total budget. We have achieved this through minimal impact on frontline services, embracing service transformation and new ways of working, changing the way services are delivered and reviewing processes to reduce bureaucracy. This has achieved the savings required with little impact on residents accessing vital services. A particular success story has been the opening of the Chatteris Community Hub with our Fenland @ your service shop and County Council library now located in the same building with longer opening hours than before. This has enabled us to save on lease and maintenance costs whilst enhancing the service provided.

The next three years will continue to be challenging, however with our positive track record for innovation, embracing new ways of working and our strong relationships with our partners, we are in a good position to deal with these challenges and reshape Fenland District Council for the future. We will increasingly collaborate with our partners where there is a strong business case to ensure we drive savings whilst maintaining service quality. We will more actively manage demand from our customers through building community capacity and resilience to support residents to do more for themselves and their communities. We will also need to align our resources to our core priorities and assess what services we will deliver in future to ensure we support residents who need our services the most whilst making the necessary savings to our budgets.

Despite the financial challenges the Council faces, we are still able to do a lot of good work to bring prosperity to the District. Many exciting initiatives continue to come forward and be delivered including the Coalwharf Road Design Competition, opening of the Delamore Horticultural Centre, Cromwell Park cinema and supermarket is underway and houses will shortly be built at the Nene Waterfront. Manea rail station will receive an enhanced train service and we are making investments in our leisure centres. We are proposing to commit to and strongly lobby for substantial infrastructure investment, including investment in the A14, improvements in the A605 King's Dyke level crossing, improvements to the A47 and the Wisbech to March rail link to support Fenland's housing and economic growth proposals. We are committed to stimulating, attracting and supporting business growth to improve the economy, create local jobs and improve the aspirations and prospects of our young people for the future. This is why we will ensure that Fenland's voice is heard at the Greater Cambridge, Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership to attract funding and projects to the area.

About Fenland

Fenland is a vibrant rural district with four distinctive market towns and many picturesque villages with strong community spirit and pride in its heritage. Around 95,300 people live here with 75% of our residents living in the four towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech. The rest are spread across our 29 villages and in other rural locations throughout the district.

Our population is rapidly increasing and it is predicted that by 2031 we will have a population of over 113,000 people. Our Core Strategy and Economic Development Strategy details how we will

build new homes, increase employment opportunities and improve transport links to harness positive growth to bring economic prosperity to the district over the next twenty years. Projects like the Nene Waterfront Regeneration Project and the Wisbech 2020 Vision are already well underway, encouraging investment and growth within in the district.

We know that population increases also bring challenges to public services therefore we are planning for this now with our partners. We know our population is getting older and currently a quarter of our residents are pensioners with this set to increase to over 41% in the next 10 years (ONS 2011). 1 in 7 pensioners live alone, many in isolated areas with no modes of transport. This means that many vulnerable residents face challenges in accessing services that are crucial to living a good quality of life. We will continue to work with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group, Cambridgeshire County Council and other community groups to support older people to live independent and fulfilled lives.

Some residents face particular challenges in their lives, especially compared to the rest of Cambridgeshire, in relation to education, income, health, housing and employment. The priorities outlined in our Corporate Plan are designed to support residents in partnership with other organisations and we are already seeing partnership projects like Together for Families supporting families to address these challenges and live contented lives.

Working with Partners

As well as the services we are responsible for delivering as a council, other public, private and voluntary organisations also provide important services to our residents. Many of these link with our services and contribute to our priorities that we are trying to achieve for the district. We will continue to work together closely with these partners to make sure residents receive the best services possible.

The Fenland Strategic Partnership (FSP) is an important partnership forum made up over 15 public, private and voluntary sector organisations including the Council, the Police, health services, Roddons Housing Association and education providers. The aim is for the group to work together effectively on projects across Fenland which address the most important needs of our residents. These are set once every year, and are currently focused on:

- Cohesion – focusing on standards of living in private rented accommodation and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs), as well as supporting new arrivals in the local community
- Addressing alcohol misuse
- Reducing early deaths from coronary heart disease
- Together for Families - helping families to access the range of services they need to secure a positive future
- Supporting older people to live well and independently
- Facilitating apprenticeships - helping residents to learn new skills and get into work

The Wisbech 2020 Vision is another good example of how the council continues to work with partners to drive economic growth and investment in Fenland. Launched in January 2013, by the Leaders of the Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and the local MP for north east Cambridgeshire, the vision's strapline for Wisbech is for the town to be a great place to live, work and visit. Many organisations have signed up to be a part of the Vision Action Plan including the University of Cambridge, the Greater Cambridge/Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership, Town and Parish Councils, local schools, colleges, businesses and charities to work together on projects to address eight key themes of:

- The Future Economic Role of the Town
- Stronger Families and Communities
- Housing

- Education, Skills and Aspirations
- Social Cohesion
- Transport and Infrastructure
- Leisure, Culture, Cycling and Tourism
- Pride, Reputation and Image

Significant progress has been made in the past year to deliver against the Vision Action Plan which will be marked at an event in Spring 2014. For updates on progress, please visit www.wisbech2020vision.co.uk

Our Priorities

Our priorities support the overarching aim of improving quality of life in Fenland through addressing the social, environmental and economic needs for residents to live happy, fulfilled lives.

To focus and prioritise the actions the Council will undertake in support of the three corporate priorities, we have further defined what areas of focus we will concentrate on through a series of sub priorities and actions to ensure we have a targeted approach to service delivery.

To deliver our corporate priorities we also need an effective organisation with sound governance to ensure we can deliver high quality services to the public. Our commitment to running an effective organisation in support of the key corporate priorities is set out with our cross cutting theme of 'Quality Organisation.'

The Council's priorities and sub priorities for 2014/17 are set out below with further detail in the next few pages:

Quality Organisation	Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support vulnerable members of our community • Support our ageing population and young people • Promote health and wellbeing
	Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service • Work with partners and the community on projects to improve the environment and our streetscene • Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting social cohesion
	Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract new businesses and jobs, and support existing businesses in Fenland • Raise aspirations and improve learning opportunities • Promote Fenland as a tourism and visitor destination • Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration across Fenland

Communities

Support vulnerable members of our community

- Support residents to claim the benefits they are entitled to and process applications quickly
- Respond to changing government policy regarding the processing of housing benefits applications
- Deliver the Homelessness Strategy and our statutory Housing Duties

Support our ageing population and young people

- Deliver a programme of Golden Age events, encouraging a range of partners to support the programme and its development
- Maintain our commitment to engaging with young people and raising their awareness of democratic processes, through the Youth District Council and events such as Democracy Day
- Work in partnership with the Children's Trust and Fenland and East Cambs Children's and Young People Partnership to improve life chances for children and young people.

Promote health and wellbeing

- Deliver the key priorities set out in the Leisure Strategy:
 - Continue to provide an efficient service
 - More people, more active, more often
 - Supporting community sport
- Work with local commissioning groups and others to develop effective approaches to improve community health outcomes focusing on alcohol misuse, coronary heart disease and the needs of older people

Environment

Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

- Recover and recycle at least 50% of household waste
- Deliver clean streets and public spaces
- Deliver the Street Scene Officer service
- Deliver a fair approach to enforcement of environmental standards across the district through education, guidance and the appropriate use of the Councils powers
- Work with key stakeholders to deliver an advanced waste partnership in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

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

- Deliver the 'It's Your Fenland' Action Plan to improve the appearance of the Fenland streetscene including dilapidated buildings
- Support community Street Pride and 'Friends of' groups to deliver events within their local areas
- Ensure properly maintained open spaces in partnership with The Landscape Group and community groups, including maintaining existing Green Flag awards for Fenland parks and participating in the 'In Bloom' awards scheme
- Work with partners to protect and enhance our natural environment to create more opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors and the countryside, compatible with wildlife needs
- Work with businesses to inform and promote innovative environmental practices through the Green Business Club
- Work with Town Councils and the community to provide market town events and activities to improve the viability of our town centres through the Four Seasons events
- Promote and support local markets

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

- Work with our partner organisations to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in Fenland through the Community Safety partnership action plan
- Support the Fenland Businesses Against Crime (FENBAC) group to tackle crime against them including theft, arson and damage to premises
- Establish partnership actions to target locations of community concern or where incidents or crime and anti-social behaviour are high.
- Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland Community Cohesion Strategy
- Provide information and guidance to new arrivals to raise their awareness of their rights, responsibilities and how to access local services.

Economy

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

- Raise the economic profile of Fenland
- Deliver the Economic Development Strategy including targeting new investment in key growth sectors of agri-tech, engineering and port and marine.
- Provide and facilitate proactive business support through the Fenland for Business forum and Chambers of Commerce
- Proactively engage with the Greater Cambridge, Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to attract external funding and business projects to Fenland
- Promote and develop our business premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and mini factory estate to encourage investment, job creation and skills diversification
- Promote the delivery of mixed use housing/retail proposal for the Nene Waterfront along with wider regeneration
- Actively support the county wide partnership project to deliver super-fast broadband across Fenland and Cambridgeshire.

Raise aspirations and improve learning opportunities

- Work with education providers to assist in improving aspirations and links to employers through the FEE Project
- Work with businesses and education providers to ensure local skills and courses support the needs of local businesses

Promote Fenland as a tourism and visitor destination

- Support the Fenland Tourism Board to develop and deliver a comprehensive Tourism Strategy for Fenland through the 'Visit Cambridgeshire Fens' branding

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

- Develop and adopt Core Strategy supporting documents e.g. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) and Masterplans, to support sustainable housing and economic growth
- Deliver a proactive and effective Planning Service to enable appropriate growth and development
- Investigate and develop an effective and viable developer contribution framework via Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and/or Section 106
- Develop and deliver economic, infrastructure and regeneration strategies/projects for Fenland through the Regeneration Action Plan
- Promote sustainable transport (infrastructure and community) initiatives within Fenland including rail, road and community transport

Quality Organisation

To deliver our key corporate priorities successfully we have committed to have a 'Quality Organisation' to support effective service delivery. There are many important foundations in delivering an effective organisation to ensure the day to day running of the Council and the achievement of our priorities are completed successfully.

Good Customer Service – Provide good quality customer service through our Fenland @ your Service shops and Community Hubs in line with the national standards of Customer Service Excellence.

Strong Governance, Financial Control & Risk Management – Maintain robust and effective financial standards, robust internal controls and effective risk management as evidenced by our Annual Audit Letter from External Audit through the Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy and Risk Management Strategy.

Transformation & Efficiency - Continue to embrace innovation and new ways of working to transform the Council and find savings, supported by an appropriate IT Strategy. Where a strong business case exists pursue shared services, joint working arrangements and collaborations with other key service providers ensuring robust performance management arrangements are in place. Build community capacity and resilience to help residents support themselves and their community to enable the Council to manage customer demands and focus on the most vulnerable.

Performance Management – Continue to set challenging performance targets to ensure effective delivery of the Corporate Plan and report regularly on performance to CMT, Councillors and the public.

Equalities – Meet the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act through our core service delivery and publish on a yearly basis and Annual Equality Report.

Asset Management – Continually review the Council's asset base, in conjunction with public sector partners, to promote joint working and maximise service and income benefits.

Workforce Development – Maintain an effective workforce with the right skills to deliver the priorities of the Council.

Enforcement – To take a fair and equitable approach to enforcement to positively improve living and environmental standards within the District