

AGENDA

CABINET

MONDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

2.00 PM

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, FENLAND HALL,
COUNTY ROAD, MARCH**

Committee Officer: Linda Albon
Tel: 01354 622424
e-mail: memberservices@fenland.gov.uk

- 1 To receive apologies for absence
- 2 Previous Minutes (Pages 5 - 8)

To confirm and sign the public minutes of the meeting held 15 July 2024.
- 3 To report additional items for consideration which the Chairman deems urgent by virtue of the special circumstances to be now specified
- 4 To receive members' declaration of any interests under the Local Code of Conduct or any interest under the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting
- 5 Annual Report 2023/24 (Pages 9 - 34)

To present the Annual Report of the Council for Cabinet to note the achievements made in delivering the Council's corporate priorities in 2023/24.
- 6 Review of Fixed Penalty Notice fine levels for Environmental Crime Offences (Pages 35 - 48)

The report provides information about the new Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023 and sets out an option for

increasing Fixed Penalty Notice fines for enviro-crime offences as permitted by these Regulations.

7 Proposed increase to current Hackney Carriage Vehicle - Table of Maximum Fares (Pages 49 - 62)

To review and adopt the proposed increase of the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Table of Fares.

8 Emergency Interim Accommodation Procurement for local homelessness (Pages 63 - 74)

For Cabinet to approve the outcome of the procurement process in relation to Emergency Interim Accommodation for local homelessness.

9 Wisbech High Street Update (Pages 75 - 78)

To provide Cabinet with a monthly update regarding ongoing construction work at 24 High Street, and progress regarding the options for 11-12 High Street, Wisbech.

10 Draft 6 Month Cabinet Forward Plan (Pages 79 - 80)

For information purposes.

11 Purchase of a property Portfolio in Fenland as a commercial investment (with confidential appendices) (Pages 81 - 98)

This report updates members on the proposed acquisition of residential property which, if acquired, will assist Fenland District Council both in terms of supporting objectives from a housing duties and commercial investment perspective.

(Schedules 3 and 4 to this report comprise exempt information – to exclude the public (including the press) from a meeting of a committee it is necessary for the following proposition to be moved and adopted: “that the public be excluded from the meeting for Items which would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as indicated.”

12 Future Space Requirements - Accommodation Review (with confidential appendix) (Pages 99 - 238)

For Cabinet to consider the Outline Business Case (OBC) in respect of the Corporate Accommodation Review and agree a singular preferred option to progress through to the development of a Full Business Case (FBC).

(The Appendix to this report comprises exempt information – to exclude the public (including the press) from a meeting of a committee it is necessary for the following proposition to be moved and adopted: “that the public be excluded from the meeting for Items which would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as

amended) as indicated.”

13 Items which the Chairman has under item 3 deemed urgent

CONFIDENTIAL - ITEMS COMPRISING EXEMPT INFORMATION

To exclude the public (including the press) from a meeting of a committee it is necessary for the following proposition to be moved and adopted: "that the public be excluded from the meeting for Items which involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as indicated."

14 Options for the Renewal of a Lease of Operational Land in March - CONFIDENTIAL
(Pages 239 - 300)

This paper seeks to update Cabinet on the status of options.

15 Confidential Minutes (Pages 301 - 304)

To confirm the confidential minutes of the meeting held 15 July 2024.

Friday, 20 September 2024

Members: Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor A Miscandlon, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor S Tierney and Councillor S Wallwork

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CABINET



MONDAY, 15 JULY 2024 - 2.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor A Miscandlon, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor S Tierney and Councillor S Wallwork

CAB1/24 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 20 May 2024 were agreed and signed.

CAB2/24 COUNCIL REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2023/24

Members considered the Council Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Mrs French thanked both Councillor Boden and officers for the work they had done. Councillor Boden thanked Councillor Mrs French but stated that much of the work was undertaken by the officers and he gave his thanks to the Finance Team for the report which, as ever, had been produced professionally and very clearly.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED that:

- (i) The Outturn for the Council's General Fund services in 2023/24, as detailed at Appendix A and Section 2 of the report, be noted and that Members note the transfer of the deficit to the Budget Equalisation Reserve;**
- (ii) The reasons for the variations from revised estimate be noted;**
- (iii) The current position on the Cambridgeshire Horizons Reserve, as detailed in Section 3 of this report be noted;**
- (iv) The proposed Capital Funding schedule for 2023/24 at Appendix B(i) be approved.**

CAB3/24 INVESTMENT BOARD UPDATE AND REVIEW OF THE COMMERCIAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Members considered the Investment Board update and review of the Commercial and Investment Strategy report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden stated that due to commercial confidentiality he could not provide too much detail, but Fenland Future Ltd is likely to shortly instruct their development partners to commence The Elm's full planning application and starting the full planning application process for at least Phase 1 of the Nene Waterfront.

Councillor Tierney said that some people may find the work of the Investment Board slow and methodical but that is an asset. The decisions being taken are sensible, at the correct pace and the correct level of risk. This is ultimately public money and public investment.

Councillor Boden thanked Councillor Tierney saying that some councils have put themselves in a terrible financial position by overstretching themselves. When it comes to outside commercial

investments, Councillor Boden has received 72 propositions and ended up with one through being cautious.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Benney and AGREED to note the report of the Investment Board and to note the ongoing review of the current Commercial and Investment Strategy as determined by the constitution and delegated to the S151 officer for tabling at a future meeting.

CAB4/24 PRODUCTIVITY PLANS

Members considered the Productivity Plan report presented by Councillor Boden.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Benney and AGREED to approve the FDC Productivity Plan.

CAB5/24 DEFRA CAPITAL FUNDING FOOD WASTE VEHICLE PURCHASE

Members considered the Defra Capital Funding Food Waste Vehicle Purchase report presented by Councillor Murphy.

Councillor Miscandlon asked if the public will be suitably notified of this new system of waste collection. Councillor Murphy confirmed that this would be the case.

Proposed by Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Tierney and AGREED:

- (i) To note that following a successful appeal, Defra's capital funding has improved to £1,06,991; an increase of £235,176 on the initial amount.**
- (ii) That the Council is committed to the procurement of appropriate vehicles in a timely fashion to allow for the commencement of weekly domestic food waste collections from April 2026.**
- (iii) Delegation to the Corporate Director and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder, for the authorisation to secure through appropriate procurement the vehicles required to complete the weekly food waste collections.**
- (iv) To note that the legally required changes to food waste collection, along with other Environment Act amendments, will result in future Cabinet or Council meetings being presented with updates on Fenland's Waste Strategy, Waste Service Standards, and other reports over the coming 12 months.**

CAB6/24 CONSULTATION STRATEGY 2024-27

Members considered the Consultation Strategy 2024-37 report presented by Councillor Tierney.

Councillor Boden commented that he is pleased with the report, it shows a light touch where it is appropriate and provides flexibility.

Proposed by Councillor Tierney, seconded by Councillor Seaton and AGREED to approve the Consultation Strategy 2024-27.

CAB7/24 APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Members considered the Outside Bodies report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden pointed out that a new Appendix A had been tabled with some further changes, which he read out.

Councillor Mrs French asked if the Fenland Twinning Association had now folded. Councillor Miscandlon responded that unfortunately the FTA had ceased as principal members were in ill health and felt they could no longer continue, combined with no new members coming forward. However, it could potentially restart should there be interest in the future. Councillor Tierney suggested that this is a sign of the times, twinning associations are becoming outdated with the advent of social media and many twinning associations are in a similar situation.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED:

- (i) **the appointments set out at revised Appendix A of the report, along with proposed additional changes to the revised Appendix A as read out in the meeting as follows:**

Cambridgeshire Health & Wellbeing Board – Cllr Nawaz substantive member rather than Cllr Wallwork, and

Combined Authority Environment and Sustainable Communities – Cllr Tierney substantive member, with substitute being Cllr Mrs Laws.

- (ii) **to note where requirements to provide representatives to outside bodies cannot currently be fulfilled.**
- (iii) **To delegate to the Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Group Leaders, the addition or deletion of outside bodies as the need arises during the municipal year and appointment of members to vacancies on outside bodies during the municipal year.**
- (iv) **To provide a steer as to who can represent FDC on Outside Bodies.**

CAB8/24 WISBECH HIGH STREET UPDATE

Members considered the Wisbech High Street update report presented by Councillor Seaton.

Proposed by Councillor Seaton, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED to note the monthly update relating to the works at 24 and 11-12 High Street, Wisbech.

CAB9/24 DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Councillor Boden advised that a special Cabinet meeting may need to be held in August as a matter of urgency, otherwise the draft Forward Plan was noted for information.


CAB10/24 OPTIONS FOR THE RENEWAL OF A LEASE OF OPERATIONAL LAND IN WISBECH (CONFIDENTIAL REPORT)

Officers considered the confidential Options for the Renewal of a Lease of Operational Land in Wisbech report presented by Councillor Mrs French.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Boden and AGREED to the revised recommendation in the confidential report.

(Members resolved to exclude the public for this item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

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Agenda Item No:	5	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	30 September 2024	
Report Title:	Annual Report 2023/24	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 To present the Annual Report of the Council for Cabinet to note the achievements made in delivering the Council's corporate priorities in 2023/24.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The Annual Report of the Council 2023/24 sets out the Council's performance over the last year, linking to the priorities detailed in our Business Plan. These priorities are designed to deliver outcomes that improve the quality of life for Fenland residents and are listed under the key headings of Communities, Environment, Economy and Quality Organisation.
- 2.2 The achievements outlined in the Annual Report are not exhaustive but reflect some of our successful projects over the last year. Notable examples are given of how we have worked closely with the community and partners to tackle important local issues in a collaborative and efficient way.
- 2.3 Like other local authorities, Fenland District Council faces significant financial challenges and increased demand upon services. Nevertheless, we continue to provide high quality services whilst keeping our budget balanced.
- 2.4 Our Cabinet members have also committed to building on the success of the transformation agenda and to develop a second phase. Spanning across all services within the council, the Transformation Agenda 2 programme ties together all major change initiatives that are looking to improve how the council works and delivers services. The programme will aim to ensure we are an effective and efficient council for the future.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Annual Report of the Council 2023/24.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Boden, Leader of the Council Cabinet Members
Report Originator(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director Carol Pilson, Corporate Director David Wright, Head of Policy & Communications
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director Carol Pilson, Corporate Director David Wright, Head of Policy & Communications
Background Papers	Business Plan 2023/24

1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

1.1 The Annual Report of the Council 2023/24 summarises key examples of the Council's performance against each of our corporate priorities over the past year. This document is published and circulated on an annual basis to provide a summary of performance for councillors, customers and partners.

In addition, our Cabinet members have also committed to building on the success of the transformation agenda and to develop a second phase. Spanning across all services within the council, the Transformation Agenda 2 programme ties together all major change initiatives that are looking to improve how the council works and delivers services. The programme will aim to ensure we are an effective and efficient council for the future.

1.2 The Council continues to deliver high quality services and effective projects within each of its corporate priorities. Key examples include:

2 Communities - highlights

2.1 Our Housing Options team received 2201 requests for homeless advice and assistance (up 7.3% from last year); 1,143 of these approaches were resolved through the advice provided. 275 households were prevented from becoming homeless through various forms of intervention including (but not limited to) mediation, emotional support, budgeting advice, financial support and assisting with sourcing alternative accommodation.

2.2 Through our Disabled Facilities Grants scheme, the Council provides home adaptation works for elderly, disabled and vulnerable householders to help

them continue to live safely and independently in their homes. Last year we assisted 141 households with adaption works.

- 2.3 The 16th Pride in Fenland awards was held in March 2024 to celebrate individuals and groups that give selflessly to others. There were a record 117 nominations for 79 different groups and individuals.
- 2.4 Our Golden Age project, which helps provide older residents with advice on services and support available to them at events across Fenland, hit a remarkable 20 years of service to the community in 2023. Over the past year, events have been held in Whittlesey, Christchurch (where our first ever event was held in 2003), Wimblington, March and Parson Drove, attracting over 500 visitors in total. The events were supported by 35 different organisations and providers of care, financial assistance, social activities, health provision and other services for the over 60s. To date, almost 7,500 visitors have attended the Golden Age events.
- 2.5 Our Active Fenland team successfully secured grant funding from the Integrated Care System and Cambridgeshire County Council Public Health to help people of all ages and backgrounds to get more active, more often, and to lead healthier lifestyles. The funding helped to deliver 590 sports and physical activities to Fenland communities.
- 2.6 We have continued to invest in our parks and open spaces. Together with our contractor Tivoli, we look after more than 135 hectares of parks and open spaces across Fenland. Work in the past year has included the opening of a new community pavilion joint funded by Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, and an extensive play area makeover in Wisbech Park.

3 Environment – highlights

- 3.1 We carried out more than 2.9 million bin collections from across the district, in all weathers, and collected more than 8,450 tonnes of materials for recycling. This generates more than £318,000 of income to support our services. Customer satisfaction with our Refuse and Recycling and Garden Waste (Brown Bin) services remains high with 94% and 90% respectively. The Garden Waste service has continued to remain popular with subscriptions at an all-time high of over 24,212 in 2023/24.
- 3.2 We delivered a competitive trade waste service to almost 600 business customers, collecting over 1,260 tonnes of waste, including 133 tonnes of recycling and 98 tonnes of food waste. The service generated more than £522,600 of income to support our services
- 3.3 Our Cleansing and Rapid Response team continued to provide the excellent seven-day street sweeping, litter picking and fly-tipping removal service in our towns and villages. Last year they responded to 2,006 service requests from the public, with 93% actioned on the same or next day. Over 1,200 quality inspections were made in areas of high footfall – 97% met cleansing standards first time.
- 3.4 Our Street Scene team spent 4,500 hours out and about in the community, in all weathers, working on various proactive environment and street scene enforcement projects.

- 3.5 Our shared CCTV service with Peterborough City Council maintained its 100%, round-the-clock service function – operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The service delivered over 4,300 pro-active camera patrols, responded to over 1,100 incidents of crime and disorder across the district and supported our policing partners to make over 150 arrests for offences, helping to protect local communities and make the district safer.

4 Economy – highlights

- 4.1 The Economic Growth team awarded:
- £194,910 to eight Fenland businesses through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The funding helped businesses to invest in new technology, diversify their income or create new employment opportunities.
 - £75,005 to fifteen businesses through the UK Rural England Prosperity Fund. The funding helped rural businesses to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy, including farm businesses looking to diversify income streams).
 - Launched three additional grants through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (year three) in December 2023, with expression of interest applications closing on 6 April 2024.
 - For the Investment in Business Fund - 123 expressions of interest were received. Grants requested totalled £2,632,284 with a projected return of investment totalling £4,513,000. Though, only £316,500 is available.
 - For Fenland Start-Up Business Support Programme – 26 expressions of interest received.
 - Fenland Rural England Prosperity Fund – 20 expressions of interest received.
- 4.2 2023/2024 saw a significant uplift in the delivery of affordable dwellings in Fenland in comparison to the previous two years. 16 of the affordable ownership units in 2023/2024 were delivered as part of the First Homes scheme and were the first ones within the district. In total, there were 244 affordable homes delivered (144 affordable rented and 96 affordable other tenures e.g. Shared Ownership).
- 4.3 Our planning team determined 645 major, minor and other planning applications – between 67% and 92% of these were decided on time, depending on application type. The team also dealt with 674 other types of application (such as prior notifications, certificates of lawfulness, discharge of condition, general enquiries, and licensing requests) and received 81 pre-application enquiries, in addition to ‘traditional’ planning applications. We also received 214 planning enforcement complaints and resolved 143 cases.
- 4.4 Work continued on March town centre’s multi-million pound regeneration, a programme of inter-related schemes being delivered by various partners to transform and futureproof the town centre. Highlights of 2023/24 include:
- Completion of the Market March Place improvements scheme.
 - Purchase of the former Barclays Bank in Broad Street, to prevent it falling into disrepair and secure the site for future development.

- Start of work on the Broad Street scheme in June 2023, including transformation of the road layout and new public realm area. The scheme is due for completion in October 2024.
- Specialist removal of historic Grade II Listed fountain for careful storage, ready for specialist repair and reinstatement once Broad Street works are complete.
- Redevelopment of partially derelict and one of March's oldest Conservation Area buildings, 26 Market Place, into retail and residential use, with support from the regeneration project's grant scheme.
- Grant funding investment into March Dental, now a flagship business on Broad Street.
- Demolition of old toilet block to enable redevelopment of the riverside and further progress on Broad Street.
- Design and costing of a new toilet block will be built in Grays Lane.
- Increase in car parking spaces in the City Road car park, on the site of the old recycling centre.
- Increase in the number of taxi bays within the town centre.

5 Quality Organisation – highlights

- 5.1 We collected over £68.3million in Council Tax and £25.46million in Business Rates. This plays a major part in funding the key services we provide to the community.
- 5.2 The MyFenland team answered more than 50,800 phone calls and resolved 99% of customer queries at the first point of call. We also received 6,653 payments via PayPoint, totalling over £850,000.
- 5.3 Our website saw over 335,000 visits and received over 21,750 online form submissions across 49 different topics.
- 5.4 The Licensing team issued 520 licences and dealt with 123 service requests for a variety of licensable services including Taxi, Premises, Alcohol, Scrap Metal and Animal Licensing, to help ensure such businesses are well managed and operating safely and legally. As part of the Responsible Authority Officer group, the team also worked with internal and external partners to deliver multi-agency enforcement days within the district.
- 5.5 Our Environmental Health team has delivered a wide range of services, including giving advice and undertaken inspections at more than 350 business premises, ensuring the highest of standards can be achieved. A large number of these businesses received a food hygiene rating of 5, the highest award possible under the national scheme. We've also investigated more than 1,800 reports of noise or other environmental problems that may be affecting residents, the majority of these being resolved informally.

6 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Annual Report of the Council 2023/24 shows clear performance towards the achievement of our corporate priorities. It is only a summary document;

many more projects are ongoing that aim to improve quality of life for Fenland residents.

- 6.2 For Cabinet to note the achievements made in delivering the Council's corporate priorities and for Cabinet to approve the Annual Report of the Council 2023/24.

7 CONSULTATION

N/A

8 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 No alternative options were considered as the Council has made an ongoing commitment to produce an Annual Report of the Council.

9 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Legal Implications

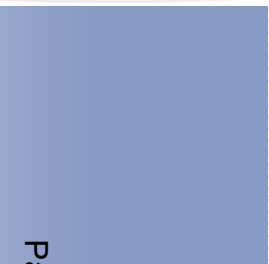
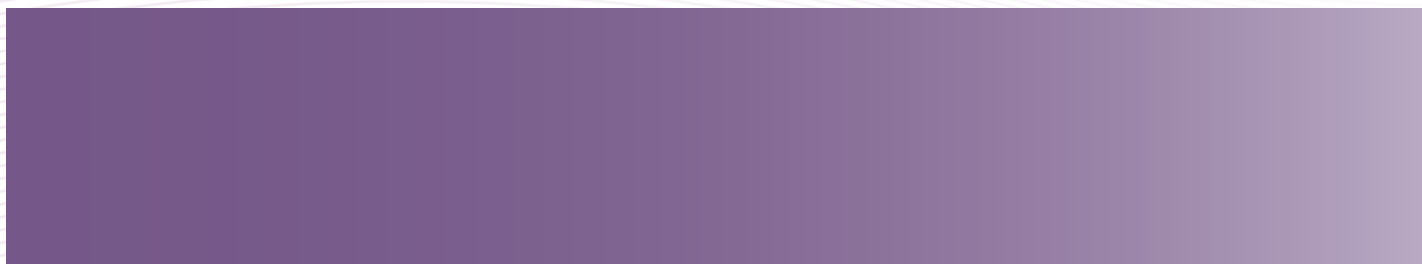
- 9.2 There are no specific legal considerations connected with the content of this report.

9.3 Financial Implications

- 9.4 The Annual Report 2023/24 sets out high level corporate achievements that are linked to the priorities in our business plan which are reflected in the Council budget.

9.5 Equality Implications

- 9.6 N/A



Fenland District Council Annual Report 2023/24



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Welcome to Fenland District Council's Annual Report for 2023/24

We are pleased to introduce you to our Annual Report, reflecting upon our achievements and performance and the many services and activities we have delivered to communities across Fenland over the past 12 months.

It has once again been an incredibly challenging year. With ongoing global emergencies and conflicts, persistent inflation, cost of living pressures and continued increased demand on our services, we continue to live through a period of significant financial and economic uncertainty.

These challenges resonate up and down the country and throughout our district, impacting residents and businesses alike, including the council itself. Despite these exceptional difficulties, we have remained resolutely steadfast in our commitment to serve the needs of our district, made good progress towards our ambitions and taken steps to mitigate the financial impacts on our budget.

Supporting our communities has remained our top priority and we have continued to work hard with our partners to do everything in our power to provide the support our residents need.

We froze the portion of our council tax to lessen the financial burden on taxpayers – the sixth consecutive year of no rises in our share of the bill – and we have helped people to claim the support they are entitled to.

We have helped provide secure, well managed and affordable housing, ensuring more families have a safe place to call home, and invested in our parks and open spaces, recognising their importance for the wellbeing and enjoyment of all our residents.

We also invested in our leisure centres, delivered much-loved community events, and launched a pilot 'Early Help Hub', a bespoke 'one stop shop' of support and advice.

We also successfully secured more funding for Fenland, to deliver thousands of pounds of grant funding for businesses, boost arts, culture and heritage activities, tackle fly-tipping, help reduce youth anti-social behaviour, and much, much more.

Our ongoing transformation agenda has continued to be another key area of focus. By further enhancing our online platforms, developing more modern and resilient working practices for staff and improving customer experience, we have made it easier for residents to access the information and support they need, ensured greater efficiency and accessibility, and provided even better value for money.

We know there is more work to be done, but we're confident we are in a strong position to achieve it in the coming year.

Thank you to all our residents, businesses, members, staff, partners and colleagues for their support and resilience over the past year and the fundamental role you play as we continue making our district the best it can be.



Paul Medd
Chief Executive



Chris Boden
Leader of the Council

About Fenland

Fenland is renowned for its vibrant community spirit, rich heritage and picturesque land and skylscapes. Located in North Cambridgeshire, the Fenland District spans 211 square miles and is home to 102,500 residents (ONS: 2021). Over 70% of the population resides in the four market towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey, and Wisbech, while the picturesque rural areas encompass 29 villages.

Fenland has some of the most affordable housing in Cambridgeshire, with an average house price of £225,000 (UK HPI June 2024), 22% less than the national average. Its close proximity to large urban centres like Cambridge and Peterborough contributes to a growing population, projected to reach 118,826 by 2043, a 16% increase (ONS: 2021).

Additionally, 23% of residents (23,400 people) are aged over 64, a figure that surpasses both the county and national averages (ONS: 2021). We are committed to working with our partners to ensure residents have access to the necessary support and resources for a happy, healthy, and independent life.

Despite deprivation challenges (we are the 80th most deprived area out of 317 in the country (IMD: 2019)), we are dedicated to collaborating with partner organisations to effectively address and overcome these issues.



Fenland covers approximately 211 square miles



Over 200 miles of beautiful waterways



Over 135 hectares of open green space



The population is around 102,500*



Average property price is £225,000**



Over 3,160 businesses in Fenland

* Office for National Statistics
 ** UK House Price Index

Cabinet



Chris Boden
Leader of the Council
Whittlesey East
and villages



Jan French
Deputy Leader of the Council
March South



Ian Benney
Chatteris South



Peter Murphey
Chatteris South



Chris Seaton
Leverington and
Wisbech Rural



Alex Miscandlon
Whittlesey East
and villages



Dee Laws
Whittlesey North West



Sam Hoy
Wisbech South



Steve Tierney
Wisbech South



Susan Wallwork
Wisbech South

Other Councillors



James Carney
Chatteris North
and Manea



Alan Gowler
Chatteris North
and Manea



Charlie Marks
Chatteris North
and Manea



Anne Hay
Chatteris South



David Conner
Doddington and
Wimblington



Maureen Davies
Doddington and
Wimblington



Dal Roy
Elm and
Christchurch



Matthew Summers
Elm and
Christchurch



Brenda Barber
Leverington and
Wisbech Rural



Sam Clark
Leverington and
Wisbech Rural



John Clark
March East



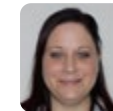
Stuart Harris
March East



Mark Pursar
March East



Steve Count
March North



Kim French
March North



Paul Hicks
March North



Gary Christy
March South



Tim Taylor
March West and
Benwick



Andrew Woollard
March West and
Benwick



Gavin Booth
Parson Drove and
Wisbech St Mary



Dianne Cutler
Parson Drove and
Wisbech St Mary



Michael Humphrey
Parson Drove and
Wisbech St Mary



Dr Haq Nawaz
Whittlesey East and
villages



Jason Mockett
Whittlesey Lattersey



Elisabeth Sennitt Clough
Whittlesey North West



Roy Gerstner
Whittlesey South



Gurninder Singh Gill
Whittlesey South



Lucie Foice-Beard
Wisbech North



Nick Meekins
Wisbech Riverside



David Oliver
Wisbech Riverside



Sidney Imafidon
Wisbech Waterlees and
Walsoken



David Patrick
Wisbech Waterlees and
Walsoken



Billy Rackley
Wisbech Waterlees and
Walsoken

Conservative 
Independent 
Liberal Democrat 

Money Matters

Where your Council Tax goes

In 2023/24, the Band D Council Tax bill was set at £2,162.55 (plus Parish amounts). In 2024/25, this increased to £2,278.35 (plus Parish amounts). Fenland District Council collects money through Council Tax on behalf of other authorities, as shown on the diagram.

Fenland District Council reduced its element of Council Tax in 2023/24 by 2% following four years of no increases.

Members decided to further reduce the financial burden on taxpayers in 2024/25 when it cut its element of the Council Tax bill by 0.2%. Just 10.9% of each household's Council Tax bill goes to Fenland District Council, with the remainder going to the other authorities.

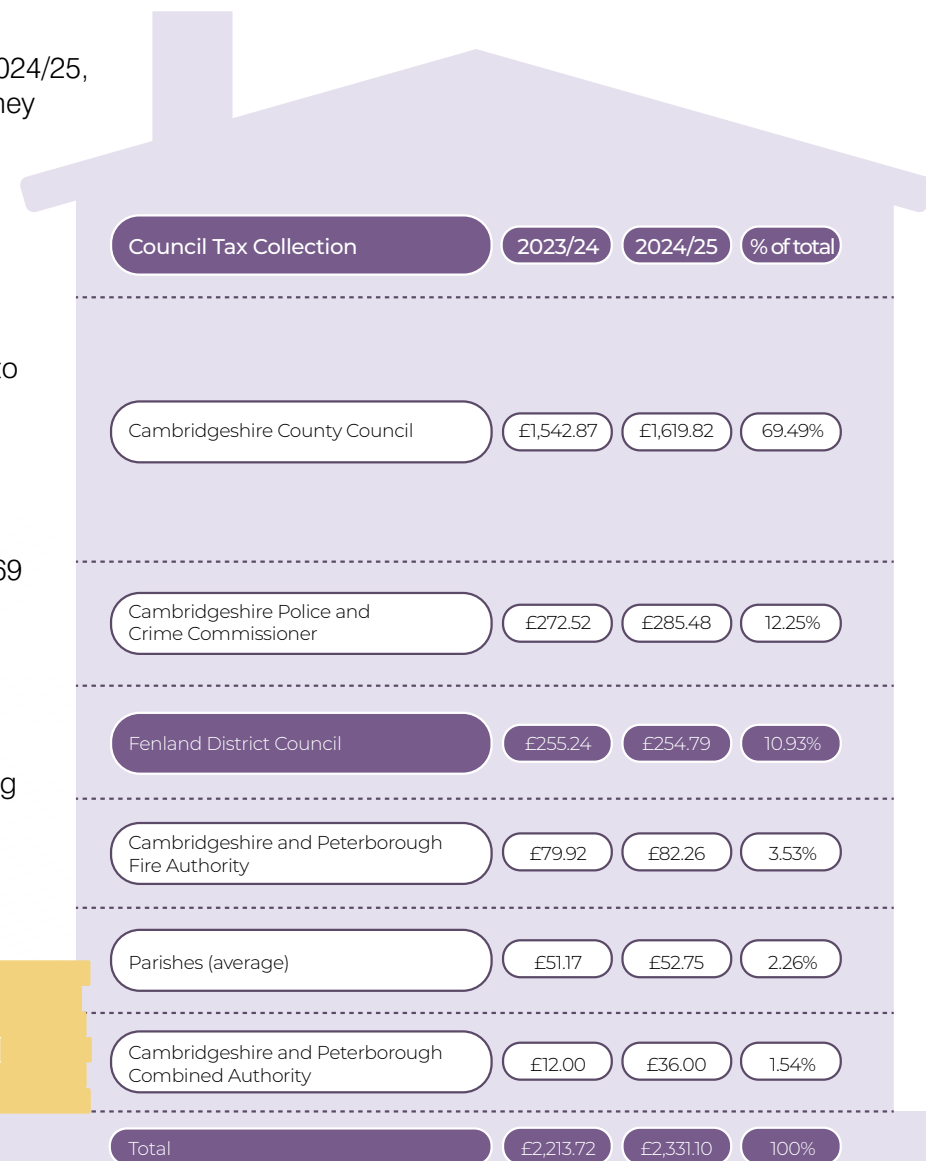
The numbers above relate to a Band D property. However, 83% of properties in Fenland are in Bands A-C. The average Council Tax per property in Fenland was £1,492.10 in 2023/24 and is £1,585.11 in 2024/25 and is the lowest average per property in Cambridgeshire. This also compares to an average Council Tax per property of £1,667.69 in 2024/25 across all English authorities.

Our finances

The Council's net spending on services in 2023/24 was £15.985m. This sum is financed by the Council's share of Business Rates (£7.585m), Council Tax (£8.014m) and Government Revenue Support Grant (£0.173m) which resulted in a deficit of £212k being returned for 2023/24. At the budget meeting in February 2024, a net deficit of £548k was forecast at the year end. The deficit of £212k has been funded from the Budget Equalisation Reserve. This reserve represents the amount taken in tax which has not been spent and now stands at £1.654m.

Full details of the Council's Budget for 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Strategy can be found at: www.fenland.gov.uk/finance

You may also wish to read our Business Plan. This explains our organisational priorities for the next financial year: www.fenland.gov.uk/businessplan



Council for the Future

In 2019, we began our Transformation Agenda programme when our Cabinet members selected a number of projects that would help contribute towards our 'Council for the Future' ambitions.

Although varied in scope and complexity, these 12 projects tackled areas of particular need in Fenland, and helped to sustainably transform our services whilst ensuring our organisation was fit for the future. Outcomes for each of the projects can be viewed in our 2022/23 Annual Report.



In 2023, at the start of a new term of office following the Local Elections, our members committed to building on the successes of the Transformation Agenda, and to develop a second phase – Transformation Agenda 2.

Spanning across all services within the council, the Transformation Agenda 2 programme ties together all major 'change' initiatives that are looking to improve how the council works and delivers services.

Whether this is reviewing a service, how systems support delivery or how staff are able to conduct their jobs in a more effective and flexible manner, the programme will aim to ensure we are an effective and efficient council for the future.

Our Communities

Support vulnerable members of our community

- With many people under financial pressure due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, we continued to help those in need of support. Together with our partners, we helped people to claim the financial support they are entitled to, know how to make their homes warmer and cheaper to run, manage debt or know where to turn if they need advice. Work has included additional training for customer services staff, helping them to identify those who may be struggling with the cost of living and equipping them to process applications for financial support, and continued funding for Citizens Advice Rural Cambs, helping ensure they can carry out their activities supporting Fenland residents. We also administered our Council Tax Support Fund for vulnerable households and provided additional support through our Council Tax Reduction scheme and exceptional hardship funds. In October 2023, following Storm Babet, we also assisted customers affected by flooding, providing impacted households and businesses with support.
- Our Housing Options team received 2201 requests for homeless advice and assistance (up 7.3% from last year); 1,143 of these approaches were resolved through the advice provided. 275 households were prevented from becoming homeless through various forms of intervention including (but not limited to) mediation, emotional support, budgeting advice, financial support and assisting with sourcing alternative accommodation.
- Through our Disabled Facilities Grants scheme, the Council provides home adaptation works for elderly, disabled and vulnerable householders to help them continue to live safely and independently in their homes. Last year we assisted 141 households with adaption works. These included the installation of walk-in showers, stairlifts, ramped access facilities and specialist equipment such as person hoists.
- The 16th Pride in Fenland awards was held in March 2024 to celebrate individuals and groups that give selflessly to others. There were a record 117 nominations for 79 different groups and individuals. Brave and selfless children, an octogenarian, who has spent decades running her chapel - and still varnishes the floors herself, and groups and individual volunteers who go to amazing lengths to get food to struggling families, elderly people and the homeless were among those celebrated.
- Our Golden Age project, which helps provide older residents with advice on services and support available to them at events across Fenland, hit a remarkable 20 years of service to the community in 2023. The events were launched in 2003 by the late Cllr Mac Cotterell MBE and have continued to be valuable to residents – and an enduring Council priority – ever since. Over the past year, events have been held in Whittlesey, Christchurch (where our first ever event was held in 2003), Wimblington, March and Parson Drove, attracting over 500 visitors in total. The events were supported by 35 different organisations and providers of care, financial assistance, social activities, health provision and other services for the over 60s. To date, almost 7,500 visitors have attended the Golden Age events.
- The Council recognised the substantial use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families whilst they were being supported through the homelessness process. This type of accommodation is not only unsuitable for families but also incurs significant costs. In response, the Council submitted bids to the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund and successfully secured a grant to contribute towards the purchase of 33 properties. These properties will offer safe and comfortable temporary housing for homeless families while their situations are assessed and addressed. This initiative aligns with the Council's Medium Term Council Strategy, providing both better living conditions for families and cost savings for the Council.

Promote health and wellbeing for all

- In December 2023, we celebrated five years of working in partnership with Freedom Leisure to provide leisure centre services across the district. Despite an extremely challenging few years for the leisure industry with the Covid pandemic, energy cost crisis and cost of living challenges, the partnership has not only ensured that our leisure centres stay open, when swimming pools elsewhere in the country have closed, but that provision continues to be delivered at reduced cost to the taxpayer (compared with the in-house arrangement prior to the partnership). In 2023/24, there were improvements to the gym changing rooms at the George Campbell Leisure Centre in March which has also seen a state-of-the-art Changing Places toilet and reception area improvements completed in May 2024. Major investment to improve energy efficiency at the three swimming pool facilities is also planned for 2024/25. Total visits for the year exceeded 500,000 across the four centres and membership has remained stable despite economic pressures on customers. Additionally, customer satisfaction remains above the industry averages.
- Our Active Fenland team successfully secured grant funding from the Integrated Care System and Cambridgeshire County Council Public Health to help people of all ages and backgrounds to get more active, more often, and to lead healthier lifestyles. The funding helped to deliver 590 sports and physical activities to Fenland communities, including badminton, running, walking football, table tennis, yoga and strength and balance sessions, as well as tea dances and 'Love to Move' classes. In 2024, the team will be launching specific Active for Health sessions to encourage inactive and overweight people to become healthier and more active.
- We have continued to invest in our well-used and highly valued parks and open spaces. Together with our contractor Tivoli, we look after more than 135 hectares of parks and open spaces across Fenland. Work in the past year has included the opening of a new community pavilion joint funded by Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, and an extensive play area makeover in Wisbech Park. The team continues to manage our cemeteries and closed cemeteries, maintaining a good service to the local community of these important reflective green spaces.
- With funding from Public Health, we began work on developing the Fenland Early Help Hub, a pilot approach aiming to improve collaborative service delivery across organisations for the benefit of residents. The hub will bring together a network of partners and services including health, housing, benefits, voluntary sector, primary care networks and more to provide a bespoke "one stop shop" of support and advice to individuals or families in their times of need. The objective will be to connect people to help and support earlier to prevent issues escalating and reduce the need for higher cost interventions. Phase 1, due to launch in the summer of 2024, will focus on supporting residents into/back into employment and training – with a view to expanding if future additional funding can be secured.

Work with partners to promote Fenland through culture and heritage

- We successfully delivered the first round of the new Fenland Culture Fund, granting 19 organisations funding of more than £34,000 to boost arts, culture and heritage activities across the district. Funded projects that have already taken place include art and photography exhibitions, a food and culture festival, remembrance murals, art workshops for students and the purchase of equipment to improve access to creative resources in Fenland. The second round of the grant scheme, funded by Arts Council England and the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund, is due to launch later in 2024.

- We secured £50,000 of funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System and worked together with Fenland-based 20Twenty Productions, an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, to enable the delivery of the 'Express Yourself' project. The project supports children and young people's health and wellbeing through arts and cultural activity, based on the NHS 'Five Ways to Wellbeing'. So far, the project has positively engaged 200 children and young people across the district and gained fantastic feedback. It has also provided freelance creative opportunities for nine artists and professionals who have delivered the sessions and received training to further their own skills and development.
- In partnership with the council's Culture, Arts and Heritage Executive Advisory Committee, we successfully delivered the 2024 Fenland Poet Laureate Awards. The prestigious competition saw a total of 63 entries across the two adult and young poet categories, with an awards ceremony held in March 2024. His Majesty's Deputy Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, Dan Schumann, who was among the guests at the ceremony, said the creativity and talent shown on the night was "truly remarkable".
- We, once again, supported the delivery of March Christmas Market and the Fenland Four Seasons events: March St George's Festival, Chatteris Midsummer Festival, Whittlesey Festival (which returned for the first time since Covid) and Wisbech Christmas Fayre. Thousands of visitors attended, and hundreds of businesses and community groups were able to boost funds with stalls. Town centre footfall tripled on the day of Wisbech Christmas Fayre. A new online booking system for pitches at events was successfully launched at the beginning of 2024.
- The Council's long running commitment to improve Wisbech High Street as part of the National Lottery Heritage-funded Wisbech High Street Project, continued as contractors began work on developing 24 High Street, which has been a gap in the run of shops for 40 years. Building is expected to be complete by the end of 2024. Architects worked on a plan for 11-12 High Street, a site also owned by the Council to prevent it being a continued blot on the High Street. The Council is also working closely with owners of fire damaged 5 Market Place.

Performance Indicators

	Target 2023/24	Performance
Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	250	294
Proportion (%) of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing Options work	57%	45%
Number of empty properties brought back into use	50	86
New Homes Bonus achieved as a result of bringing empty homes back into use	£45,000	£109,173
Number of Active Health local sessions per year that improve community health	650	621
Customer feedback across Freedom Leisure facilities in Fenland	30	47
Value of Grants for creativity and culture managed by FDC	£201,000	£199,000

Our Environment

Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

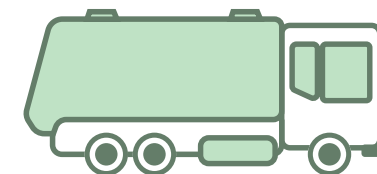
• We carried out more than 2.9 million bin collections from across the district, in all weathers, and collected more than 8,450 tonnes of materials for recycling. Cost of living pressures on residents resulted in less general waste and recycling being produced, but the majority of households continued to recycle their waste well – helping to generate more than £318,000 of income to support our services. Customer satisfaction with our Refuse and Recycling and Garden Waste (Brown Bin) services remains high with 94% and 90% respectively. The Garden Waste service has continued to remain popular with subscriptions at an all-time high of over 24,212 in 2023/24.

• We delivered a competitive trade waste service to almost 600 business customers, collecting over 1,260 tonnes of waste, including 133 tonnes of recycling and 98 tonnes of food waste. The service generated more than £522,600 of income to support our services.

• Our Cleansing and Rapid Response team continued to provide the excellent seven-day street sweeping, litter picking and fly-tipping removal service in our towns and villages. Last year they responded to 2,006 service requests from the public, with 93% actioned on the same or next day. Over 1,200 quality inspections were made in areas of high footfall – 97% met cleansing standards first time.

Work with partners and the community on projects that improve the environment and our street scene

• We worked with a number of community environmental volunteering groups, including Street Pride, In Bloom and Friends Of groups, who carried out litter picks, planting and other community projects to help to keep Fenland clean, green and safe for all to enjoy. We once again supported Keep Britain Tidy's national Great British Spring Clean campaign, with 13 Street Pride groups, residents and schools getting involved in the country's biggest environmental clean-up. Benwick Street Pride celebrated its 10th anniversary and scooped a Silver Gilt award in the Anglia in Bloom competition, winning the small village category, while Chatteris In Bloom won the town category with a prestigious Gold award. The council also secured funding from the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Safer Communities Fund to purchase new trolleys and boost Street Pride volunteers' litter picking efforts. Over £37,000 was also awarded to community groups living within the vicinity of wind turbines to improve their local environment. Projects included enhancements to green spaces, water harvesting, installation of compost toilets, switching to LED lighting and upgrading a bowls club to double glazed windows and doors.



More than **2.9 million** bin collections

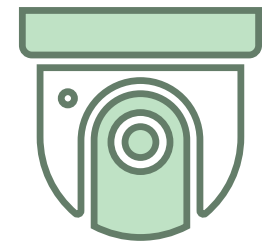


supported **13** Street Pride groups

- Our Street Scene team spent 4,500 hours out and about in the community, in all weathers, working on various proactive environment and street scene enforcement projects. Their work includes investigating fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles, carrying out littering and dog fouling patrols, enforcing dog control orders, and issuing fines to motorists parked illegally in our car parks. In 2023/24, the team issued 23 Fixed Penalty Notices for waste offences and successfully prosecuted two individuals for fly-tipping, with a combined fine total of £1,540 imposed by the courts. The team also investigated 236 reported abandoned vehicles and issued six car parking fines to drivers parked illegally at March Market Place. The team also successfully secured £3,900 from the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Safer Communities Fund to tackle fly-tipping through signage, community engagement, waste removal and two new cameras for covert surveillance.

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

- Our shared CCTV service with Peterborough City Council maintained its 100%, round-the-clock service function – operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The service delivered over 4,300 pro-active camera patrols, responded to over 1,100 incidents of crime and disorder across the district and supported our policing partners to make over 150 arrests for offences, helping to protect local communities and make the district safer. The CCTV service also provides the council's 'out of hours' telephone contact services, for example, homelessness, stray and lost dogs, cleansing incidents, dangerous buildings and structures, damaged trees, to name but a few areas. During 2023/24, the CCTV service has responded to over 388 calls for services from our telephone contact service.

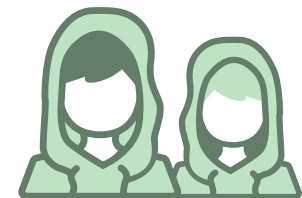


4300 camera patrols

- Our Community Support and Community Safety teams successfully secured £84,000 from the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund to deliver two projects in Wisbech:

- £50,000 is being invested in youth provision, working with young people to enhance their life chances and choices. Work is ongoing to March 2025 but projects in 2023/24 included two 'Firebreak' fire service training courses with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, football training with Peterborough United's POSH foundation, self-confidence, wellbeing and boxing training with Jordan Gill Next Generation, youth involvement in the development of a physical training programme with Living Sport, music production, coding and dance workshops and more.

- £34,000 is being invested to help reduce youth anti-social behaviour (ASB). The project is being delivered by Youth of Fenland CIC who completed 26 youth outreach sessions in Wisbech, engaging 347 young people on subjects that concerned them. Opportunities included individual support, referral to young people support services, supporting young carers and better access to education. The funding also supported the expansion of Operation Luscombe, a successful, police-led partnership response to street level ASB in Wisbech. From November 2023 to March 2024 there were 31 police patrols, providing opportunity for 169 individual community engagements, 13 ASB incidents dealt with, and 18 formal enforcement interventions. Enforcement interventions included the seizure of alcohol, cannabis and illegal vapes.



£34k to reduce youth anti-social behaviour

- Our Community Safety team received 247 referrals for anti-social behaviour (ASB) from various sources, including through our online reporting tool as well reports directly from councillors and partner agencies. Of the cases formally investigated by Community Safety, 60% related to nuisance behaviour, 23% were environmental ASB and 17% were considered to be personally directed at the person reporting. The team is also part of the Fenland Community Safety Partnership (CSP), a statutory group responsible for reducing ASB and crime and the fear of ASB and crime. In 2023/24, the partnership delivered a variety of projects with a focus on domestic abuse, serious organised crime, cybercrime, scams, and hate crime. Activities included community engagement sessions to raise awareness and give people the opportunity to discuss concerns, and training sessions for frontline professionals and volunteers. The partnership also worked with the retail sector to reduce shoplifting, linked with local taxi providers to help combat domestic abuse, supported Cambridgeshire Constabulary with their Business Against Abuse rollout in Fenland and worked with the Diverse Communities Forum and Cambridgeshire Constabulary to raise awareness of third party hate crime reporting centres. In addition, the CSP worked closely with the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to deliver externally funded projects such as Safer Streets initiatives, and to support the OPCC Crime Plan.

Performance Indicators

	Target 2023/24	Performance
Rapid or Village Response requests actioned the same or next day	90%	93%
% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards	93%	97%
% of collected household waste recycled through the Blue Bin service	28%	26.5%
Customer satisfaction with Refuse and Recycling services	90%	93.6%
Customer satisfaction with Garden Waste service	85%	89.8%
Number of Street Pride, Green Dog Walkers and Friends of Community environmental events supported	204	245
% of local businesses who thought they were supported and treated fairly	95%	100%
% of those asked who are satisfied with Fenland District Council's events	90%	97%

Our Economy

Attract new businesses, jobs and opportunities whilst supporting our existing businesses in Fenland

- The Economic Growth team, Fenland for Business, continued to provide advice and support to numerous businesses, including around funding, skills and training, business premises and research and development. Among the businesses supported were Whittlesey's Rai and Rai Bathrooms, which is deaf-led and provides inclusive employment opportunities, with several deaf team members. And Vita Nova Solutions, in Chatteris, which credits the support received as being a key contributor to its ongoing growth as a local employer. The team also engaged with 59 companies considering Fenland as an inward investment or expansion location, with three successful inward investments, one foreign direct investment from Peru and four expansions.

- The Economic Growth team awarded:

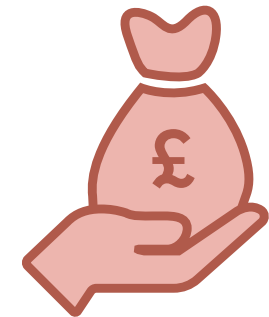
- £194,910 to eight Fenland businesses through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. All available funds (for years one and two of the funding award) were distributed and projects delivered by the 31 March 2024 deadline. The funding helped businesses to invest in new technology, diversify their income or create new employment opportunities.
- £75,005 to fifteen businesses through the UK Rural England Prosperity Fund. The funding helped rural businesses to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy, including farm businesses looking to diversify income streams).
- Launched three additional grants through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (year three) in December 2023, with expression of interest applications closing on 6 April 2024.

- For the Investment in Business Fund - 123 expressions of interest were received. Grants requested totalled £2,632,284 with a projected return of investment totalling £4,513,000. Though, only £316,500 is available.

- For Fenland Start-Up Business Support Programme – 26 expressions of interest received.

- Fenland Rural England Prosperity Fund – 20 expressions of interest received.

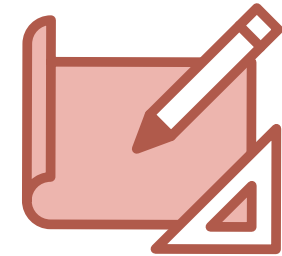
- The team engaged and informed businesses through their relaunched website, newsletter, social media, in-person meetings and business events held in association with partners such as the Chamber of Commerce, Smart Manufacturing Alliance, the Department for Work and Pensions and Innovate East. They also worked with skills organisations to help ensure they link with local businesses and their skills needs, including Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Growth Hub, the College of West Anglia, the North Cambridgeshire Training Centre and Anglia Ruskin University in Peterborough.



**£269k to support
local businesses**

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

- 2023/2024 saw a significant uplift in the delivery of affordable dwellings in Fenland in comparison to the previous two years. 16 of the affordable ownership units in 2023/2024 were delivered as part of the First Homes scheme and were the first ones within the district. In total, there were 244 affordable homes delivered (144 affordable rented and 96 affordable other tenures e.g. Shared Ownership).
- Work continued on plans to develop two new housing schemes on sites formerly owned by the Council – The Elms in Chatteris and Nene Waterfront in Wisbech. The schemes, being developed by the Council's investment arm Fenland Future Ltd, will help to address local housing needs while generating a financial return that can be reinvested back into local communities.
- Work continued on projects outlined in our Growing Fenland masterplans, part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) strategic Market Town Masterplans. In 2023/24, this included the relocation of Chatteris Museum into new premises (the former Barclays Bank building), improvements to the sports courts at the Manor Leisure Centre in Whittlesey, progress on the March Future High Streets Fund project, and work to develop the case for a Whittlesey Relief Road.
- Work continued on March town centre's multi-million pound regeneration, a programme of inter-related schemes being delivered by various partners to transform and futureproof the town centre. Highlights of 2023/24 include:
 - Completion of the Market March Place improvements scheme.
 - Purchase of the former Barclays Bank in Broad Street, to prevent it falling into disrepair and secure the site for future development.
 - Start of work on the Broad Street scheme in June 2023, including transformation of the road layout and new public realm area. The scheme is due for completion in October 2024.
 - Specialist removal of historic Grade II Listed fountain for careful storage, ready for specialist repair and reinstatement once Broad Street works are complete.
 - Redevelopment of partially derelict and one of March's oldest Conservation Area buildings, 26 Market Place, into retail and residential use, with support from the regeneration project's grant scheme.
 - Grant funding investment into March Dental, now a flagship business on Broad Street.
 - Demolition of old toilet block to enable redevelopment of the riverside and further progress on Broad Street.
 - Design and costing of a new toilet block will be built in Grays Lane.
 - Increase in car parking spaces in the City Road car park, on the site of the old recycling centre.
 - Increase in the number of taxi bays within the town centre.
- Our planning team determined 645 major, minor and other planning applications – between 67% and 92% of these were decided on time, depending on application type. The team also dealt with 674 other types of application (such as prior notifications, certificates of lawfulness, discharge of condition, general enquiries, and licensing requests) and received 81 pre-application enquiries, in addition to 'traditional' planning applications. We also received 214 planning enforcement complaints and resolved 143 cases. During 2023/24, the team also implemented efficiency improvements to planning processes as part of the council's ongoing transformation work.



**Work continues on the
£8.4m regeneration
of March town centre**

Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements across the district

- Supported by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority funding, work continued to improve transport connectivity in Fenland. Highlights in 2023/24 include:
 - Progress on the Fenland Railway Station Masterplans project including the opening Manea Station car park. The car park, designed to serve the station's current demand and accommodate future growth, was opened as rail journeys from the station increased to over 21,000 a year for the first time.
 - Securing £3million for a programme of enhancements at Whittlesea Station (to be spent between April 2024 and March 2027). An Outline Business Case and option development work will form the first phase of work in 2024/2025.
 - Contractor appointed for the Whittlesey Relief Road project, as part of the town's Growing Fenland masterplan. Work on an Outline Business Case will begin evidencing the need for the relief road which would help to improve journey reliability, reduce congestion, and increase capacity for new housing as well as improve air quality and road safety conditions.
- A number of scheme recommendations from our Fenland Cycling, Walking and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy were completed. These included lining and signage improvements across March, as part of the March Area Transport Strategy, and improved footpaths and bus stops on the A605, Whittlesey, as part of the new Aldi supermarket and residential development.
- The Hereward Community Rail Partnership, managed by Fenland District Council in partnership with train operators, railway user groups, station adoption groups and local residents, continued work to promote and enhance the Hereward railway line and its stations at Peterborough, Whittlesea, March, Manea and Ely. Highlights included regular 'Meet the Manager' events, securing funding for Manea walking and cycling map and a series of mini maps, and developing materials to promote the railway line including a drone video.

Performance Indicators

% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks

Target 2023/24

70%

Performance

92.3%

% of minor applications determined in 8 weeks

70%

67%

% of other applications determined in 8 weeks

80%

86%

% occupancy of our Business Premises estate

90%

94.2%

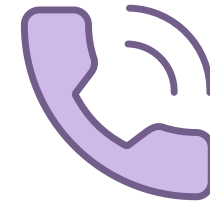
% occupancy Wisbech Yacht Harbour

95%

95%

Quality Organisation

- We collected over £68.3million in Council Tax and £25.46million in Business Rates. This plays a major part in funding the key services we provide to the community. Over 85% of the council tax collected is also passed onto the Police, Fire Service, County and Parish Councils – see the 'Money Matters' section for more information.
- We continued to roll out our ongoing transformation agenda programme to optimise our workforce, improve services and customer experience and make it even easier for people to interact with the Council. Phase 1 and 2 of the programme is on track to deliver over £1m savings over the medium term and has not only helped develop more modern and resilient working practices for staff, but also improve customer experience. The MyFenland team also answered more than 50,800 phone calls and resolved 99% of customer queries at the first point of call. We also received 6,653 payments via PayPoint, totalling over £850,000.
- Our website saw over 335,000 visits and received over 21,750 online form submissions across 49 different topics. The front page of the website was regularly updated with the latest news, events and consultations to maintain and develop user engagement. As part of our ongoing work to improve our digital services and user journeys, we also expanded our suite of online forms, with a new bulky waste form and updates to our suite of environmental services. The forms enable residents to apply for services or submit information online 24/7, and automatically transfer information received directly to teams on the ground and into back-office systems – saving hours of resource in processing time.
- Our Social Media channels continue to thrive, with 8,850 followers on X (formerly Twitter), 7,700 on Facebook, and 1,670 on LinkedIn. Over the past year, we have utilised these platforms to help engage and inform residents and businesses alike, with council news, events, campaigns, service updates and awareness, and consultations. We also use the channels to promote our online services and customer self-service forms and advocate behaviour change to tackle issues such as fly-tipping and dog fouling and improve recycling rates. We have also increased our use of video content to further develop our online engagement.
- The Licensing team issued 520 licences and dealt with 123 service requests for a variety of licensable services including Taxi, Premises, Alcohol, Scrap Metal and Animal Licensing, to help ensure such businesses are well managed and operating safely and legally. As part of the Responsible Authority Officer group, the team also worked with internal and external partners to deliver multi-agency enforcement days within the district.



50,800 phone calls answered



335,000 website visits

- We consulted with residents, stakeholders and partners about a wide range of topics to help us understand local people's priorities and shape our service. Consultations included asking for views on our draft Budget and Business Plan and plans to extend Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) to help tackle issues associated with irresponsible dog ownership, such as dog fouling, and anti-social behaviour and street drinking in Wisbech. We also carried out regular satisfaction surveys for our green and blue bin service, garden waste service and street cleansing. In November 2023, our Environmental Health team also undertook a new initiative to engage with residents by asking them to suggest sites for air quality testing.
- We were reaccredited with the Government's prestigious Customer Service Excellence (CSE) award last year. The CSE standard serves as a national quality mark, recognising organisations in both the public and private sectors that embody a genuine customer-centric culture and strive for continuous improvement. The independent assessor also bestowed the Council with CSE 'Compliance Plus' accreditation in six areas, recognising its adherence to best practices.
- Our Environmental Health team has delivered a wide range of services:
 - Supported hundreds of food businesses to ensure compliance with a wide range of regulatory requirements. Given advice and undertaken inspections at more than 350 business premises, ensuring the highest of standards can be achieved. A large number of these businesses received a food hygiene rating of 5, the highest award possible under the national scheme. In 2023, we commenced a series of social media campaigns supporting those premises who receive the highest ratings.
 - Investigated more than 1,800 reports of noise or other environmental problems that may be affecting residents, the majority of these being resolved informally.
 - Carried out a review of air quality testing monitoring sites, informed by public consultation. The work included the identification of four new testing locations from residents, the relocation of 13 NO2 placements and locations that residents raised ongoing concerns about being retained. Work with the Combined Authority also saw the installation of three new air quality monitors across Whittlesey and Wisbech, with funding bids submitted for a further monitor in Whittlesey.
 - With the reopening of Port of Sutton Bridge, our international responsibility for Ship Sanitation Inspections recommenced at the beginning of 2024, with regained focus going into the next year. We are designated by the World Health Association to provide a port health function to international and domestic ships that access our ports.



1,800 noise and environmental nuisance complaints investigated



350 business premises inspected

- We inspected 32 industrial processes, ranging from incinerators to maggot breeding facilities, seeing the application for one new process and the variation of four existing permits.
- Assisted UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) with infectious disease outbreaks including salmonella, norovirus, campylobacter and cryptosporidium, including proactive sampling of high-risk food products as part of a national sampling programme.
- Working with the Integrated Care Partnership, we introduced a new referral process for households suffering with environmental hazards such as rodents, bed bugs and other public health pests.
- Continued to support and advise those businesses licensed to undertake skin piercing, including tattooing, acupuncture, Botox and eyebrow microblading.

Performance Indicators	Target 2023/24	Performance
% of customer queries resolved at the first point of contact	90%	99%
% of customers satisfied by our service	90%	97.94%
% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	46.5%	43.96%
% of contact centre calls handled	80%	83.46%
Days taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and changes	8.0 days	7.37 days
Days taken to process Council Tax Support new claims and changes	9.0 days	9.52 days
% of Council tax collected	95.72%	99.40%
Council Tax net collection fund receipts	£68,755,817	£68,341,134
% of NNDR Collected	96.79%	96.58%
NNDR net collection fund receipts	£24,779,458	£25,460,126
Number of online forms submitted via FDC website	21,000	21,848




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Agenda Item No:	6	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	30 September 2024	
Report Title:	Review of fixed penalty notices for environmental crime	

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 The report provides information about the new Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023 and sets out an option for increasing Fixed Penalty Notice fines for enviro-crime offences as permitted by these Regulations.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 In the 2023 Anti-social Behaviour Action Plan, the Government explained that it wanted to see councils take a much tougher approach to these forms of anti-social behaviour (environmental crimes such as fly tipping) and set out new upper limits for fixed penalties notices.
- 2.2 The Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023 increased the upper limit for the fixed penalties that can be issued for these offences.
- 2.3 Littering, graffiti, flyposting and fly-tipping blight communities, impose avoidable costs on the public purse and can harm the environment, with fly-tipping being aggravated by householders giving waste to unauthorised carriers. Fixed penalty notices provide the Council as an enforcing authority with an effective and visible way of responding to these environmental crimes.
- 2.4 Enforcement activity to tackle these offences is subject to government scrutiny with the number of actions taken, fines served, and prosecutions taken being published each year. As a council we have increased our activity in this area over many years and our performance is in keeping with councils of a similar make up and geography.
- 2.5 Ensuring robust fines will support this ongoing activity and provide appropriate messaging as to the seriousness of these offences. The income from fines is used to support the cost of street cleansing across Fenland.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet approve the proposed changes in fine levels as enabled by the Environmental Offences Regulations.

Wards Affected	ALL
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Peter Murphy – Portfolio holder for Environment
Report Originator(s)	Annabel Tighe – Head of Environmental Health
Contact Officer(s)	Layna Warren – Streetscene and Markets Team Leader lwarren@fenland.gov.uk Annabel Tighe – Head of Environmental Health atighe@fenland.gov.uk Carol Pilson – Corporate Director cpilson@fenland.gov.uk
Background Papers	Corporate Enforcement Policy Corporate Enforcement Policy 2014 (fenland.gov.uk)

1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 1.1 The Council's enforcement policy sets out the framework to the various enforcement actions associated with the council's legal powers and duties. One enforcement action is the service of fixed penalty notices (FPN). The FPN provides an opportunity to avoid prosecution for the alleged criminal offence.
- 1.2 Fly-tipping significantly impacts on local communities, blighting our neighbourhoods and places a significant financial burden upon the council (or the landowner where rubbish is fly tipped on private land). In addition, the actions of unscrupulous waste operators undercut legitimate businesses which are operating within the law.
- 1.3 The Environmental Protection Act 1990 created an offence of fly tipping (depositing, knowingly causing or knowingly permitting the deposit of controlled waste or extractive waste on land without, or other than in accordance with, an environmental permit). Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) for Fly Tipping are issued the Environmental Protection Act 1990 for this offence.
- 1.4 Littering is also (the deposition of one bag of waste) an offence under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 for which a FPN can be issued.
- 1.5 Household Duty of Care offences are commonly identified and include scenarios such as handing over waste to a non-authorized waste carrier who subsequently fly tips the waste. An FPN can be issued when an individual appears to have failed to comply with their duty of care under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

For example:

- a. Where fly tipped waste can be traced back to an individual who is found to have failed to take reasonable steps to ensure that they transferred the waste to an authorised person.

- b. Where an unauthorised carrier is found to be carrying household waste that was directly transferred to them by the occupier of a domestic property.
 - c. Where an individual is found to have transferred their household waste to an unauthorised person at a site that does not have a permit or exemption.
- 1.6 Graffiti and Flyposting are two environmental offences which can be addressed using an FPN served using powers within the Anti-Social Behaviour act 2003.
- 1.7 Fly tipping, littering, graffiti and flyposting blight communities, impose avoidable costs on the public purse and can harm the environment, with fly-tipping being aggravated by householders giving waste to unauthorised carriers. Fixed penalty notices provide the Council as an enforcing authority with an effective and visible way of responding to these environmental crimes.
- 1.8 FPN's provide an alternative to prosecution. They allow an individual to discharge liability for an offence by payment of a financial penalty. The council is not obliged to offer an alleged offender the option to discharge liability through an FPN however, it can be deemed more proportionate than prosecution through the courts in some cases.
- 1.9 In the 2023 Anti-social Behaviour Action Plan, the Government explained that it wanted to see councils take a much tougher approach to these forms of anti-social behaviour and set out new upper limits for fixed penalties notices. The Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023 increased the upper limit for the fixed penalties that can be issued for these offences.
- 1.10 This report invites members to consider the new maximum FPN levels and whether to apply them to the penalties issued in the council's area.
- 1.11 In determining the appropriate level of an FPN, the council needs to consider the deterrent effect of different levels, peoples' readiness to pay and the levels of fines currently imposed in the magistrates' courts. FPNs that are set too high for local conditions or are likely to be higher than a Court imposed fine in the event of non-payment therefore consideration of these factors is important when setting a local fine level. It is recommended that a lower amount be offered also.
- 1.12 FPNs are not appropriate for repeat offenders or those responsible for large-scale environmental offences. In these situations, the Council may prosecute as an alternative to issuing an FPN, in line with its Corporate Enforcement Policy.
- 1.13 Offenders do not have to accept an FPN offered to them (which discharges their liability to conviction for the offence) and the Council cannot make anyone pay an FPN. There is no right of appeal to any FPNs, but offenders retain the right to not pay any FPN issued to them.
- 1.14 DEFRA Part 1A - Effective Enforcement Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse September 2019 (updated February 2022) recognises that issuing a fixed penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution. If an alleged offender does not pay a fixed penalty, the enforcing authority should be prepared to prosecute them for the original offence.

1.15 In increasing the level for FPNs it may create the perception that this could be used to generate income for the council. The guidance is clear that FPNs should not be used in this way, and in accordance with legislation income received by the Council must be spent on specified cleansing and environmental functions.

1.16 Table 1 below sets out the current Council agreed maximum FPN levels and the proposed new Council maximum FPN levels being recommended to Cabinet and the statutory maximum limit that could be set.

Table 2 details the number of FPN's served, the number paid, cancelled or referred for prosecution between 2018 and 2023.

Table 1

Offence	Current FDC Fine level	Proposed New Fine level
Littering	£150	£300 Reduced to £250 if paid within 10 days. (Statutory maximum £500)
Fly Tipping	£400	Tier 1 - For small low-level offences Fine level - £600 Reduced to £450 if paid within 10 days. Tier 2 large scale offences Fine Level £1000 Reduced to £850 if paid within 10 days. (Statutory maximum (£1000))
Household waste duty of care	£400 *Reduced to £250 if paid within 21 days	Fine level - £600 Reduced to £450 if paid within 10 days. (Statutory maximum £600)
Graffiti	N/A	£300 Reduced to £250 if paid within 10 days. (Statutory maximum £500)
Fly Posting	N/A	£300 Reduced to £250 if paid within 10 days.

		(Statutory maximum £500)
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Table 2

Year	Payment rate	Number issued	No cancelled	No referred for prosecuted
2018	87%	15	1	1
2019	88%	22	2	1
2020	84%	12	0	2
2021	80%	10	0	2
2022	50%	14	4	3
2023	85%	14	2	3

1.17 If an FPN is not settled within the relevant period or no request for payment by instalment is made the case will be referred for prosecution through usual council procedures. In some cases, it is not possible to locate the recipient of the notice, even though due diligence was followed during the investigation, and these notices are cancelled. During the period noted above 12 cases were referred for prosecution, 10 have been considered by the courts and 2 are awaiting hearing. All those heard were found guilty. Each case was fined by the court, these fines varied based on circumstances but all were in the region of £600 to £15,000.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The new Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023 which came into force on 31st July 2023, have increased the upper fixed penalty limit for the specified offences. The Regulations were introduced as part of the Governments Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan, supporting Councils in tackling environmental crime offences.
- 2.2 Introducing these recommended changes provides the council with a more up to date reflection of the cost to the public of these offences, is in keeping with neighbouring councils and operates as a deterrent to these priority environmental crimes.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Consultation is not required however benchmarking has been undertaken to compare like for like offences and fine levels implemented by similar and neighbouring councils.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The use of fixed penalty notices is detailed within the corporate enforcement policy as an enforcement option.
- 4.2 Consideration has been given to keeping the fine levels the same however to be in keeping with neighbouring councils, to meet the rising cost of combating fly tipping and associated environmental crimes and implementing government guidance, this option was discounted.
- 4.3 The use of prosecution is considered for each case and is used for significant offences however is not a cost-effective immediate action for more minor offences.
- 4.4 Where fixed penalty notices are not paid a referral for prosecution is then made.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Legal Implications

- 5.2 The proposals set out in this Report reflect changes to legislation and propose variations to existing arrangements which are legally permissible.

5.3 Financial Implications

- 5.4 The income from these fines is used to undertake more awareness campaigns and to support the councils cleansing service costs. This is a requirement of the legislation, and the council cannot use these funds for other reasons.
- 5.5 The number of referrals for prosecution may increase due to unpaid fixed penalty notices however this has been considered within the fine level setting process and is considered a low risk.

5.6 Equality Implications

- 5.7 The equality impact assessment for this area of work is shown in appendix 1.

5.8 Other Relevant Implications

- 5.9 The use of fixed penalty notices to address environmental crimes is reported upon by Defra each year and local authorities are subject to scrutiny of their activity to tackle various offences.



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Customer Impact Assessment

Name and brief description of policy being analysed

Briefly summarise the policy including any key information such as aims, context etc; note timescales and milestones for new policies; use plain language – NO JARGON; refer to other documents if required

Environmental Health and Street Scene – Enforcement, Investigatory and Educational Work

The teams may need to undertake proportional enforcement work where, promotional or investigatory work has not resolved an issue, and where it is in the public interest. Enforcement work may include issuing fixed penalty notices, cautions/formal warnings, PACE interviews, serving of statutory notices (Abate, prohibit, improve, restrict), seizure of assets, hearings, taking samples, seizure, detention or destroying food items, closures of businesses, revocations, suspension or variation of licenses, prosecutions.

Information used for customer analysis

Note relevant consultation; who took part and key findings; refer to, or attach other documents if needed; include dates where possible

These functions are statutory duties set out in relevant legislation, including Environmental Protection Act 1990, Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2014, Food Safety Act 1990, Food Safety and Hygiene (England) 2013, Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Licensing Act 2003, Animal Welfare Regs 2018.

Note Enforcement Work by external agencies has been considered in a specific CIA.

✓	Could particularly benefit	Neutral	May adversely impact	Explanations	Is action possible or required?	Details of actions or explanations if actions are not possible Please note details of any actions to be placed in your Service Plan
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Officers have access to language line to offer translation services where required.</p> <p>Promotional and educational work is preceded with a communication plan to ensure that target audiences have access to the information.</p>	Y	<p>To use customer feedback and 3c's procedure to monitor that this is being used appropriately.</p> <p>Service standards and performance targets are used to measure the success of promotional work.</p> <p>Publicity material is produced in</p>

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						<p>a number of languages where the need is justified.</p> <p>Translation services have made contacting customers much easier and make sure that language is not a barrier for enforcement work.</p>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male and female officers cover all aspects of the enforcement, educational and investigatory work.	Y	To use customer feedback and 3c's procedure to monitor that no gender is treated unfairly in our processes.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	We would not be aware of a person's gender reassignment. If made aware we can take the persons individual needs into consideration where required.	Y	To use customer feedback and 3c's procedure to monitor that there is no discrimination, and all customers are treated fairly.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Access is considered when requesting customers to visit council offices for hearings, interviews, meetings or training sessions.</p> <p>Normally there is access to meet at the four market towns closest the customer. However, access to facilities limited due to lockdown restrictions. We can still provide access to March and Wisbech to continue this service.</p> <p>Where known, a person's abilities</p>	Y	<p>To use customer feedback and 3c's procedure to monitor that this is being used appropriately.</p> <p>Hearing loops available if needed. Braille and large print available on request.</p> <p>Access to disabled friendly interview room & facilities if needed.</p> <p>Implementation of which elements of our formal interviews will be carried out by</p>

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				or disabilities are considered when requesting a person uses monitoring equipment, completes log sheets or is requested to gather information. Our procedures are customer focused to adapt to a person's needs, i.e. setting remote triggers to noise monitoring equipment, using simplified tick sheet log sheets or providing in person monitoring.		letters to also benefit those with mobility issues/anxiety etc.
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Enforcement work will exclude those below the criminal age of responsibility.</p> <p>Communication plans preceding any information or educations are designed to be inclusive, so all ages can access local authority. i.e., Tidy Fenland Campaign using children's artwork from school's competition, working with Age UK to ensure access to services.</p>	Y	To use customer feedback and 3c's procedure to monitor that this is being used appropriately.
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	We would not be aware of a person's sexual orientation. If made aware we can take the persons individual needs into consideration where required.	Y	To use customer feedback and 3c's procedure to monitor that this is being used appropriately.
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male and female officers are available, and consideration is undertaken of people's race and religion.	Y	To use customer feedback and 3c's procedure to monitor that this is being used appropriately.

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				Training, interviews and meetings times can be tailored around religious holidays and prayer timing if required.		
Pregnancy & maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	We would not be aware of a person's pregnancy or maternity. If made aware we can take the persons individual needs into consideration where required.	Y	To use customer feedback and 3c's procedure to monitor that this is being used appropriately.
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	We would not be aware of a person's marital status. If made aware we can take the persons individual needs into consideration where required.	Y	To use customer feedback and 3c's procedure to monitor that this is being used appropriately.
Human Rights	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The undertaking of enforcement work is to protect the wider community. Examples such as protecting the community from statutory nuisances, unfit food entering the food chain, and the environmental impact on communities from enviro-crime positively impacts on the whole communities' lives.</p> <p>Enforcement work benefits the wider community by providing safer neighbourhoods, safe places to work, safe productions of foods, and protects the community's health and well-being by regulating air quality, contaminated land,</p>	Y	<p>Enforcement action may result in prosecution and restriction of an individual's actives and occupations. All notices or action is accompanied with details of how a person may appeal these measures.</p> <p>If enforcement action reaches prosecution stage, human rights are assessed by the courts to ensure that Human Rights are not breached, and appeals may be made.</p> <p>Investigations have found other impeaches of human rights – such as modern day slavery and</p>

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				spread of infectious diseases and the impact of nuisances.		we work closely with police and other partners to improve human rights.
Socio Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Enforcement encourages better business, support a production and sustainable local economy. Raising standards through regulation promotes and encourages better business. i.e., less sick days from staff due to poor health and safety, and better reputation of food businesses achieving high food hygiene ratings.</p> <p>Where enforcement action prevents an individual or organisation undertaking an activity, i.e., switching off noisy equipment to abatement of a noise nuisance, the impact of excessive cost to the business or individual and if the business is undertaking Best Practicable Means is considered in the public interest test before taking enforcement action.</p> <p>Enforcement action may adversely impact on those of socio-economic status that are unable to access legal or specialist advice.</p>	Y	To use customer feedback and 3c's procedure to monitor that this is being used appropriately.

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<p>Multiple/ Cross Cutting</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>✓</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Specific officers are delegated with specific enforcement responsibilities dependant on the relevant experience, qualification, or competencies to undertake the regulatory functions.</p> <p>Initially legislation sets out where enforcement action may or shall be undertaken.</p> <p>Each regulatory function must fall within the requirements of the Councils Enforcement Policy.</p> <p>Systems are in place to ensure that decisions to undertake enforcement are proportional to the impact caused and within the public interest. These include a prosecution matrix and a public interest test.</p> <p>Where it is not in the public interest to undertake enforcement action, alternative interventions are used to support customers, such as referrals to agencies such as Stay Well (public health team), directing to official advice (i.e HSE, PHE, FSA), and signposting to agencies</p>	<p>Y</p>	<p>As regulation is reactive this will be assessed on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Periodic review of enforcement delegation matrix and changes in legislation.</p> <p>If changes to legislation is likely to positively or negatively impact of and aspect of the community, i.e., by age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religious or belief or marital status and equality impact assessments details how we will ensure equality.</p> <p>Training and Staff development is reviewed on a yearly basis to ensure that officers are appropriately trained to undertake regulatory functions.</p> <p>Peer review and consistency exercises are undertaken to ensure proportionate decision making.</p> <p>Customer feedback is invited in all written communications to ensure people have an</p>

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				<p>that can support people resolve their own issues such as Citizen Advice Bureau, Financial Support Agencies and Gang masters Support Agencies.</p>	<p>opportunity to air any complaints, compliments or correspondence.</p> <p>Officers attend working groups and are members of professional bodies to ensure that learning opportunities and knowledge sharing.</p>
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Outcome(s) of customer analysis

a) Will the policy/ procedure impact on the whole population of Fenland and/ or identified groups within the population; negative neutral positive

No major change needed Adjust the policy Adverse impact but continue Stop and remove / reconsider policy

Arrangements for future monitoring:

Twice yearly staff appraisals will assess for learning needs and training opportunities. Staff one to ones and twice yearly appraisals will review officer's core competencies and behaviours that includes equalities. Monthly review of 3c's (Complaints, compliments and correspondence) will review that procedures and systems are appropriate.

All procedures are reviewed on a five yearly period or when changes to the organisation or legislations guides otherwise.

Details of any data/ Research used (both FDC & Partners):

None

Completed by: Layna Warren - Street Scene & Markets Team Leader

Date 17.01.2024


Approved by (manager signature):

Date published:

Details of any Committee approved by (if applicable):

Date endorsed by Members if applicable:

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Agenda Item No:	7	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	30 September 2024	
Report Title:	PROPOSED INCREASE TO CURRENT HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE - TABLE OF MAXIMUM FARES	

1 Summary

- 1.1 To review and adopt the proposed increase of the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Table of Fares, as set out in **APPENDIX A**.

2 Key issues

- 2.1 A request with support by others from the taxi trade for an increase to the Table of Fares
- 2.2 An increase in the Taxi tariff, is subject to a 14-day notice period in the newspaper whereby we can receive objections and/or comments.
- 2.3 Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 1976 gives Local Authorities power to determine maximum rates and fares charged by Hackney Carriages.
- 2.4 The last table of fares were amended in 2022.
- 2.5 To be clear the Taxi trade can charge less than this amount if they would like to do so as the proposed charges are discretionary.
- 2.6 The table of fares applies only to Hackney Carriage vehicles. Private Hire Operators can agree their hiring charges in advance with their customers at the time of booking the journey
- 2.7 It is at the discretion of the Council as the Licensing Authority to set a Table of Fares for licensed Hackney Carriages operating within the district if it chooses to do so

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 For Council to approve the proposed Table of Fares as set out in **Appendix A**

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Sam Hoy, Portfolio holder with responsibilities for licensing shoy@fenland.gov.uk
Report Originator(s)	Michelle Bishop - Licensing Manager, mbishop@fenland.gov.uk
Contact Officer(s)	Amy Brown, Assistant Director abrown@fenland.gov.uk Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director, 01354 654321, pcatchpole@fenland.gov.uk
Background Paper(s)	Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 Part Two

Report:

1 Background and Intended Outcomes

- 1.1 In April 2024, we surveyed the trade to gauge their initial thoughts on the proposed tariff increase, during this period we received 13 responses.
- 1.2 Following discussion with the Licensing Chair and Portfolio Holder, it was agreed to formally consult with the trade on the tariff increase request and to include an officer recommendation based on the original survey responses.
- 1.3 During the formal consultation, the Council received 21 responses to the proposed changes.
- 1.4 On the 10 July 2024, Licensing Committee met to review and consider the responses received to the proposed increase in the Hackney Carriage Table of Fares. All information relating to the request and the Committee discussion can be found at [Agenda for Licensing Committee on Wednesday, 10th July, 2024, 1.00 pm - Fenland District Council](#)
- 1.5 During this meeting, Licensing Committee agreed that the proposed increase of Option B should be implemented. A copy of the proposed tariff agreed by the committee can be found at **APPENDIX B**
- 1.6 Following the Licensing Committee decision on 10 July 2024, and in line with legislation, we must formally advertise the proposed tariff. This was advertised for 14 days and ended on 4 August 2024.
- 1.7 During the advertised period, we received 7 responses and a copy of these can be seen at **APPENDIX C**.
- 1.8 The tariff as recommended by the Licensing Committee and was advertised, has been discussed with the Licensing Portfolio Holder and members of the trade considering some further comments. It was suggested that the original recommended tariff be amended slightly, this can be seen at **APPENDIX A**.
- 1.9 The suggested amendments are:
 - Change each subsequent part of a mile from 1/11(146.02m) to 1/10 (160.9m) for ease of understanding, however the cost of a 2-mile journey remains the same as per the approval by Licensing Committee
 - Amend the waiting time to read as 1 minute (60 seconds) and not 114.2 seconds
- 1.10 The Council has 133 Licensed Vehicles, they are split into 76 Hackney Carriage and 57 Private Hire.
- 1.11 The current tariff is at **APPENDIX D**
- 1.12 The Private Hire and Taxi Monthly (PHTM), a national taxi trade publication, produces a monthly league table of all UK Council hackney carriage fares. This league table shows that Fenland District Council's current fare tariff (**Appendix D**), for a 2-mile journey, sits in 283rd place out of 341 licencing authorities listed.
- 1.13 When drawing comparisons between hackney carriage fares in different areas, the normal method used is to compare the cost of a 2-mile journey. Officers have researched and produced a table showing a comparison of the hackney carriage fares charged in neighbouring local authority areas for a 2-mile journey, which can be seen below

Local Authority	2-mile fare - £	Last Increase	Ranked out of 341
Fenland	6.20	2022	283
Cambridge City	7.30	2022	134
South Cambs	7.30	2022	139
Huntingdonshire	8.30	2022	36
South Holland	6.30	2019	275
East Cambs	6.80	2022	198
Kings Lynn and WN	7.00	2022	176
Breckland	8.00	2022	58
Peterborough	6.00	2022	302

Using the table above and if APPENDIX A is agreed, the below highlights where we would sit in the comparison table and neighbouring authority.

	2 mile - £	Rank
Current Tariff as per APPENDIX D against the National Average	6.20	283
Proposed Tariff as recommended by Licensing Committee and shown at APPENDIX B the National Average	7.50	112
Proposed Tariff as per APPENDIX A against the National Average	7.50	112
Proposed Tariff as per APPENDIX A with regards to Neighbouring Authorities	7.50	6 highest out of 9 as per table above

2 Legal Considerations

- 2.1 Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 1976 gives Local Authorities power to determine maximum rates and fares charged by Hackney Carriages.

3 Equality Implications

- 3.1 We will ensure the Council has regard to the desirability of exercising its functions with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and to increase equality of opportunity.

4 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications

- 4.1** Any decision to increase taxi fares would have a positive impact on the taxi trade, primarily economically.
- 4.2** In addition, the report has identified the balance that is required to be struck by supporting our taxi trade and not exposing users of taxis to such an increase in fares, that would lead to journeys becoming too expensive, thus having social implications linked to a lack of social mobility, and economic implications by additional money having to be spent on transport.
- 4.3** Members should note that the tariff is the maximum permitted fare that can be charged, and that vehicle proprietors can choose to charge less should they wish. The tariff is only applicable to Hackney Carriages, and not Private Hire Vehicles.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1** That Cabinet approve the increase in the Hackney Carriage Table of Fares as set out in **APPENDIX A**.

6 Schedules

- 6.1** Appendix A - Proposed New Tariff
Appendix B - Tariff recommended by Licensing Committee on 10 July 2024
Appendix C - Redacted Responses
Appendix D - Current Tariff

Appendix A

Proposed New Tariff

<p style="text-align: center;">Current</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TABLE OF FARES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FARES FOR DISTANCE (inclusive of VAT)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For vehicles carrying no more than 8 Passengers</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Recommendation for Approval – 30 Sept 2024</p>	
<p>Tariff 1: Between 07:00 – 23:00 Mon – Sat inclusive</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p> <p>If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)</p> <p>For each subsequent 146.2m (1/11 mile) or part thereof</p>	<p>£4.00</p> <p>£4.00</p> <p>£0.20</p>	<p>Tariff 1: Between 07:00 – 20:00 Mon – Sat inclusive</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p> <p>If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)</p> <p>For each subsequent 160.9m (1/10 mile) or part thereof</p>	<p>£4.20</p> <p>£4.20</p> <p>£0.33</p>
<p>Tariff 2: Between 23:00 – 07:00 Mon – Sat inclusive & all-day Sundays</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p> <p>If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)</p> <p>For each subsequent 146.2m (1/11 mile) or part thereof</p>	<p>£6.00</p> <p>£6.00</p> <p>£0.30</p>	<p>Tariff 2: Between 20:00 – 07:00 Mon – Sat inclusive & all-day Sundays</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p> <p>If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)</p> <p>For each subsequent 1609.9m (1/10 mile) or part thereof</p>	<p>£6.20</p> <p>£6.20</p> <p>£0.44</p>
<p>Tariff 3: to come into force from 18:00hrs for Public bank Holidays including Christmas, New Year Period</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p>	<p>£8.00</p>	<p>Tariff 3: to come into force from 18:00hrs for all Public Bank Holidays including The Christmas & New Year Period</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p>	<p>£8.20</p>

If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)	£8.00	If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)	£8.20
For each subsequent 146.2m (1/11 mile) or part thereof	£0.40	For each subsequent 160.9m (1/10 mile) or part thereof	£0.55
Waiting Time For each period of 114.2 seconds or part thereof	£0.40	Waiting Time For each period of 60 seconds (1 Minute) or part thereof	£0.24
Extra Charges: For each person carried in excess of four (two children under 16 years old shall count as one person and children under the age of 3 years shall not be counted)	£0.50 (Maximum charge of £2.00)	Extra Charges: For each person carried in excess of four (two children under 16 years old shall count as one person and children under the age of 3 years shall not be counted)	£2.00 per person in excess of 4 (maximum charge of £8.00)
Extra Charges: not calculated by taximeter For persons soiling the carriage resulting in cleaning of vehicle, the maximum sum of	£80.00	Extra Charges: not calculated by taximeter For persons soiling the carriage resulting in cleaning of vehicle, the maximum sum of	£80.00
		Extra Charges: No calculated by the taximeter Non-Assistance Dogs	£2.00 per dog

Appendix B

Recommended by Licensing Committee on 10 July 2024

<p>CURRENT TABLE OF FARES FARES FOR DISTANCE (inclusive of VAT) For vehicles carrying no more than 8 Passengers</p>		<p>Proposal – Option B</p>	
<p>Tariff 1: Between 07:00 – 23:00 Mon – Sat inclusive</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p> <p>If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)</p> <p>For each subsequent 146.2m (1/11 mile) or part thereof</p>	<p>£4.00</p> <p>£4.00</p> <p>£0.20</p>	<p>Tariff 1: Between 07:00 – 20:00 Mon – Sat inclusive</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p> <p>If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)</p> <p>For each subsequent 146.2m (1/11 mile) or part thereof</p>	<p>£4.20</p> <p>£4.20</p> <p>£0.30</p>
<p>Tariff 2: Between 23:00 – 07:00 Mon – Sat inclusive & all-day Sundays</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p> <p>If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)</p> <p>For each subsequent 146.2m (1/11 mile) or part thereof</p>	<p>£6.00</p> <p>£6.00</p> <p>£0.30</p>	<p>Tariff 2: Between 20:00 – 07:00 Mon – Sat inclusive & all-day Sundays</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p> <p>If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)</p> <p>For each subsequent 146.2m (1/11 mile) or part thereof</p>	<p>£6.20</p> <p>£6.20</p> <p>£0.40</p>
<p>Tariff 3: to come into force from 18:00hrs for Public bank Holidays including Christmas, New Year Period</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p>	<p>£8.00</p>	<p>Tariff 3: to come into force from 18:00hrs for Public bank Holidays including Christmas, New Year Period</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p>	<p>£8.20</p>

If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)	£8.00	If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)	£8.20
For each subsequent 146.2m (1/11 mile) or part thereof	£0.40	For each subsequent 146.2m (1/11 mile) or part thereof	£0.50
Waiting Time For each period of 114.2 seconds or part thereof	£0.40	Waiting Time For each period of 114.2 seconds or part thereof	£0.50
Extra Charges: For each person carried in excess of four (two children under 16 years old shall count as one person and children under the age of 3 years shall not be counted)	£0.50 (Maximum charge of £2.00)	Extra Charges: For each person carried in excess of four (two children under 16 years old shall count as one person and children under the age of 3 years shall not be counted)	£1.50 per person in excess of 4 (maximum charge of £6.00)
Extra Charges: not calculated by taximeter For persons soiling the carriage resulting in cleaning of vehicle, the maximum sum of	£80.00	Extra Charges: not calculated by taximeter For persons soiling the carriage resulting in cleaning of vehicle, the maximum sum of	£80.00
		Extra Charges: No calculated by the taximeter Non Assistance Dogs	£2.00 per dog

APPENDIX C – Responses received following recommended increase by Licensing Committee

Comment No.	Comments
1	<p>After using a taxi for the first time since COVID I would say it's not a good idea to make the time/price changes. I booked a taxi for 11am and it cost £7.60, couldn't book the return as didn't know how long I would be. XX was not available for another hour when I was ready so XX was booked. The return journey was just over £17! XX avoided the town centre yet XX deliberately chose it and sat forever in the traffic. This experience has definitely changed my behaviour and sadly I won't be using XX again. But even the £7.60 fare was expensive for less than 10 minute journey so by increasing the prices and by changing the times you will only put people off. They won't book a taxi to go out in the evening, local eating and drinking establishments could loose trade, you could have a higher risk of drink driving if people think they will risk it because of the cost of the taxi and if people do decide to go out but walk then more people could be at risk of violence/attack, it's certainly not safe some days to walk let alone at night. Taxi needed in the day could deter people from booking medical appointments or from being able to socialise.</p>
2	<p>Hello I miss XX of wisbech have seen the post on Facebook on Wisbech discussion page notifying people of the new price rule changing what is now being considered from 8pm-7am and also it says taxi drivers are trying to get it 7pm-7am there is going to be a lot of people who aren't going to be able to afford for taxis as I know a lot of Wisbech people who use the local 66 bus and the Tesco 68 bus who say they couldn't afford to get a taxi uptown and back so that's why they use there bus pass and also people what pay for there bus fare and to get to the retail park near Tesco in Wisbech already costs £10-£11 in which is stopping a lot of Wisbech people being able to shop down that way who can't drive or can't walk that distance because of disabilities and age and there's not enough shops in the town to be able to buy the things like you can get in b&m and Iceland and farmfoods and there is quite a few people mixed ages who like to go to a prize bingo or bingo in the town on cheap nights just to get out and be able to see people so they are not in there house/home all the time I would really like all this to be taken into consideration please and if so me and a few other people will start a petition off to stop this happening please could you reply to this email and concerns a lot of people have about this in which is getting discussed on Facebook and also I would like to state that my brother has to go to kings lynn hospital regularly for appointments and if it's a late appointment has to get a taxi home from kings lynn hospital to wisbech and that's £25/£30 taxis charge roughly and the leaflet what hospitals give you about fact transport last time we asked about that it was £25 so people on benefits because of health issues under hospital treatment all</p>

	<p>this needs to be taking into consideration please if you need to contact me my number is XX and is there a date of a meeting about all of this what people could attend or petitions handed in and also I will ask our local mp about this situation thankyou</p>
3	<p>I think the charges are fine. Driver's don't work in the evening's because they are simply not earning enough money. Hopefully this might help</p>
4	<p>Morning. Having seen the proposed tariff as recommended I have to say I am rather shocked.. The proposed mileage rates are in my opinion excessive and represent a 50% increase pushing up the mileage rate to £3.30 a mile from £2.20 a mile on tariff 1. After further consideration I beleive we should charge no more than £2.40 a mile and pro rata across the tariffs</p> <p>I also disagree with bringing tariff 2 forward to 8.00pm and feel that 10.00pm would be a better option however I totally agree with the waiting time rates. I have just looked at our neighbouring rates in Kings Lynn. The flag is £5.00 the mileage rate is £2.00. A 2 mile journey costs £7.00 and a 3 mile journey £9.00 a 4 mile journey £11.00 Under our proposed tariff a 2 mile journey would cost £7.50 a 3 mile journey £10.80 and a 4 mile journey £14.10.</p> <p>As most journeys are local I believe this should be revisited and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The flag be raised to £5.00 2 That on Tariff 1 the rate be £2.40 per mile divided into increments of ten which equates to 24p per 160.9 metres and pro rata for tariff 2 and 3 3 That the waiting time is increased as per the recommendation of the licensing committee. <p>I believe the proposals by the Licensing committee, although not intended, could seriously damage the trade.</p> <p>Given that i effectively am now only part time and predominately a subcontractor providing home to school transport any future rise is unlikely to affect me. However I still feel I have a duty to try and protect the livelihoods of those still very actively engaged in general taxi work. I believe it would be appropriate at this time to halt the consultation to give the matter further consideration to seeking a more moderate tariff increase.</p>
5	<p>Morning. Having seen the proposed tariff as recommended I have to say I am rather shocked.. The proposed mileage rates are in my opinion excessive and represent a 50% increase pushing up the mileage rate to</p>

	<p>£3.30 a mile from £2.20 a mile on tariff 1. After further consideration I beleive we should charge no more than £2.40 a mile and pro rata across the tariffs</p> <p>I also disagree with bringing tariff 2 forward to 8.00pm and feel that 10.00pm would be a better option however I totally agree with the waiting time rates. I have just looked at our neighbouring rates in Kings Lynn. The flag is £5.00 the mileage rate is £2.00. A 2 mile journey costs £7.00 and a 3 mile journey £9.00 a 4 mile journey £11.00 Under our proposed tariff a 2 mile journey would cost £7.50 a 3 mile journey £10.80 and a 4 mile journey £14.10.</p> <p>As most journeys are local I believe this should be revisited and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The flag be raised to £5.00 2 That on Tariff 1 the rate be £2.40 per mile divided into increments of ten which equates to 24p per 160.9 metres and pro rata for tariff 2 and 3 3 That the waiting time is increased as per the recommendation of the licensing committee. <p>I believe the proposals by the Licensing committee, although not intended, could seriously damage the trade.</p> <p>Given that i effectively am now only part time and predominately a subcontractor providing home to school transport any future rise is unlikely to affect me. However I still feel I have a duty to try and protect the livelihoods of those still very actively engaged in general taxi work. I believe it would be appropriate at this time to halt the consultation to give the matter further consideration to seeking a more moderate tariff increase.</p>
6	<p>I think that it's too much of an increase , I don't agree with charging extra for a dog, we don't charge extra for a cat or a child! (they both equally can make a mess!). I think the change of time for tariff 2 will completely kill the night time trade I used to work nights before covid and recently covered 2 weeks of nights for a driver that's off the road after an accident and the trade has become appalling it is nothing like it was before covid I'm not sure about the weekend trade but I never worked them previously either.</p> <p>Tariff 3 should be double time and the figures on the email don't equate to the starting point from tariff 1.</p> <p>I do agree that waiting time should increase and that we should have an increase but maybe a little every year or every 2 years as you can appreciate everything has escalated in price.</p> <p>I also think there doesn't seem to be anyone new coming in to the trade because it's just way too expensive to be a licensed driver now as well as maintenance costs of the car and fuel.</p>

	<p>Unless people work silly hours which many of us no longer want to do, to be fair our company in particular is an ageing work force they all have worked days nights weekends but since covid we all realised that things needed to change for most of us and families and social time are equally as important.</p> <p>Also alot of drivers that have left our company have gone to private hire, I'm sure money is a major part in these decisions too.</p>
7	<p>I realise that this e mail may be too late as councillors have already passed the Option B proposed fare increase, but I would like to make the following points and hope they were aware of the implications. 1. An increase of 50% on the mileage rate from £2.20 a mile to £3.30 a mile of course sounds wonderful, but look at the increase on regular jobs. Last week I took a chap to Hampton Leisure Centre and the fare was £46.60. Viz 4.00 + 19.36 miles at £2.20, 42.60. Under the new proposed fares this would work out at £68.08 viz 4.20+ 19.36 @ 3.30 63.88 total £68.08. £68 to Peterborough, who would be happy/able to pay that ?</p> <p>2. Similarly Manea based on 8.8 miles would jump from 21.16 to 29.94</p> <p>3. Also Benwick based on 9.5 miles would jump from 22.70 to 32.25</p> <p>All these rises seem far too high in the current climate and are likely to lose work, although I appreciate they would be a maximum and we can charge less, but why should different drivers/companies charge the public different rates for the same job ?</p> <p>4. I can see no justification in bringing in rate 2 at 2000 either, that is not justifiable and for instance would make that Hampton College job £103.00!</p> <p>Presumably the public will make their feelings known in due course, but I am sure that a rise of these proportions will lead to taxi drivers experiencing problems with the general public in the future through no fault of their own .</p>



Fenland District Council

**TABLE OF FARES
FARES FOR DISTANCE
(Inclusive of VAT)**

**For vehicles carrying no more than
8 Passengers**

Fenland District Council resolved on 12th May 2022 for the following table below of maximum fares to come into force.

<p>Tariff 1: Between 07:00 – 23:00 Mon – Sat inclusive</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p> <p>If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)</p> <p>For each subsequent 146.2m (1/11 mile) or part thereof</p>	<p>£4.00</p> <p>£4.00</p> <p>£0.20</p>
<p>Tariff 2: Between 23:00 – 07:00 Mon – Sat inclusive and all day Sundays</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p> <p>If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)</p> <p>For each subsequent 146.2m (1/11 mile) or part thereof</p>	<p>£6.00</p> <p>£6.00</p> <p>£0.30</p>
<p>Tariff 3: For Public Bank Holidays including Christmas, New Year Period and to come into force from 18:00hrs for Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve</p> <p>If the distance does not exceed 1609m (one mile) for the whole distance</p> <p>If a distance exceeds 1609m (one mile), first 1609m (one mile)</p> <p>For each subsequent 146.2m (1/11 mile) or part thereof</p>	<p>£8.00</p> <p>£8.00</p> <p>£0.40</p>
<p>Waiting Time</p> <p>For each period of 114.2 seconds or part thereof</p>	<p>£0.40</p>
<p>Extra Charges</p> <p>For each person carried in excess of four (two children under 16 years old shall count as one person and children under the age of 3 years shall not be counted)</p>	<p>£0.50 (Max. charge of £2.00)</p>
<p>Extra Charges: Not calculated by taximeter</p> <p>For persons soiling the carriage resulting in cleaning of vehicle, the maximum sum of</p>	<p>£80.00</p>

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Agenda Item No:	8	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	30 September 2024	
Report Title:	Emergency Interim Accommodation procurement for local homelessness	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 The council are bound by procurement regulations to ensure a fair and open process for securing emergency interim accommodation for homeless clients who Fenland District Council have a duty from their connection to the area to assess and support as the legislation allows. This is different from any hotel accommodation for Asylum seekers which is not a service paid for or managed by the district council. There are currently no such hotels in the Fenland area.
- 1.2 This paper outlines the process and outcome.
- 1.3 The costs incurred on the Council over cumulative years means that it is a Cabinet decision to approve the outcome of the procurement process.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The Council has a legal obligation to house households in emergency interim accommodation whilst undertaking assessment as part of our duties with regard to homelessness.
- 2.2 Over recent years the numbers that require emergency accommodation has increased to an extent it has hit thresholds for a formal procurement process.
- 2.3 The council commenced a procurement exercise, and a tender process commenced on 29 February 2024, responses were received by 5 April 2024.
- 2.4 A total of 9 companies submitted a response with multiple types of accommodation (e.g. bed and breakfast, self-contained flats etc). All who submitted a response were accepted onto the Framework, including some whose accommodation borders Fenland District.
- 2.5 The council has produced a cost-based framework to be used operationally, ensuring best value for money to ensure wherever possible we choose the cheapest provider subject to availability etc.
- 2.6 The accommodation has been checked to ensure it meets the required standards to place households working with the Housing Options Team.
- 2.7 A key focus for the Council is to minimise the use of this type of accommodation over the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to reduce costs and improve the type of accommodation offered for households working with the housing options team

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 To approve accepting 9 companies for the provision of emergency interim accommodation to place homeless households.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/18JUN24/01
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Sam Hoy Portfolio for Housing
Report Originator(s)	Dan Horn – Assistant Director Sarah Gove – Housing & Communities Manager
Contact Officer(s)	Carol Pilson – Corporate Director cpilson@fenland.gov.uk Dan Horn - Assistant Director dhorn@fenland.gov.uk Sarah Gove - Housing & Communities Manager sgove@fenland.gov.uk
Background Papers	

Report:

1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 1.1 The council are bound by procurement regulations to ensure a fair and open process for securing emergency temporary accommodation for homeless clients at best value. This paper outlines the process and outcome.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The council commenced a procurement exercise and a tender process commenced on 29 February 2024, responses were received by 5 April 2024.
- 2.2 A total of 9 companies with multiple types of accommodation (e.g. bed and breakfast, self-contained flats etc) were accepted onto the Framework, including some who's accommodation borders Fenland District Council's geographical area.
- 2.3 The council has produced a cost-based framework to be used operationally, ensuring best value for money.
- 2.4 The accommodation has been checked to ensure it meets the required standards to place households working with the Housing Options Team

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The council carried out a procurement process to enable providers to tender for the work. As part of this we alerted all existing providers of the opportunity.

4 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Legal Implications

- 4.2 Procurement process has been undertaken in accordance with relevant regulations

4.3 Financial Implications

- 4.4 A key focus for the Council is to minimise the use of this type of accommodation over the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to reduce costs and improve the type of accommodation offered for households working with the housing options team

- 4.5 A plan is underway to achieve this aim however in the meantime this procurement helps get the best value from accommodation that at the moment we have to use to meet our statutory responsibilities.

4.6 Equality Implications

- 4.7 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed and is set out at Appendix A

5 SCHEDULES

- 5.1 Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

INTRODUCTION

The Equality Act 2010 reminded all public authorities of their duty to have ‘due regard’ to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The protected groups (previously known as equality strands) are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnerships (eliminate unlawful discrimination only)

Other legislation and practice has determined that we extend this to cover:

- Human Rights
- Socio Economic factors

The duty reminds us of the need to analyse the effect of existing and new policies and practices on equality.

The equality analysis should be proportionate and relevant – not just a tick box exercise. In some cases the written record will be a quick set of bullet points or notes under each heading. Others will need a more detailed explanation.

However, legal case law makes it clear that we must carry out the analysis **before making the relevant policy decision**.

A meaningful equality analysis will help the Council make the best decisions or formulate a policy which best meets our customers needs.

Once a Customer Impact Assessment (replacing our existing Equality Impact Assessment) has been completed there is no need to automatically carry out a new assessment each year. A review assessment has been put in place, and can be completed if there has been no change to the original policy, the way it’s implemented and its customer impact.

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO ASSESSING EQUALITY

What is Customer Impact Assessment (CIA)?

- CIA is the act of systematically assessing the likely (or actual) effects of policies or services on people based on the following:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Gender
 - Sexual orientation
 - Marriage and civil partnerships
 - Human Rights
 - Socio Economic factors

This means considering the above, as set out in the table below, in relation to a policy, practice or service, before a decision is made.

PLEASE SEE EXPLANATIONS BELOW

	Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Advancing equality of opportunity between different groups	Fostering good relations between different groups
Disability			
Age			
Pregnancy/ maternity/ paternity			
Race			
Religion or belief			
Sex/ Gender			
Gender reassignment/ Transgender			
Sexual orientation			
Human Rights			
Socio Economic Factors			

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

Marriage and civil partnerships			
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- You are looking for opportunities to promote equality, and good relations between all groups as well as removing or mitigating negative or adverse impacts.
- Remember it might not be possible to remove all barriers to service or your policy or practice may have a negative impact on certain groups ... please note anything of this nature

Why is it important?

- Assessing equality issues helps us understand the needs of our customers, ensures our decisions meet those needs, and are also cost effective, and demonstratable.
- As a public authority we also have a **legal** duty to show “*due regard*” for equality in decision making and the way services are provided
- To be able us to show “*due regard*”, we need to show that consideration of [possible impact to the groups mentioned have taken place **prior** to a decision being made; that equality issues were considered, and that this consideration was rigorous, open minded, and involved thinking about the three arms of the Equality Act as part of this process, and that potential adverse impacts were either removed or reduced, and that all our decisions can be defended if challenged.
- Documenting our equality analysis enables the Council show it has had “*due regard*” for equality if decisions are challenged. If “*due regard*” for equality can not be shown, decisions may be overturned at judicial review. This could result in lost time, money and negative publicity.
- The sooner equality is considered in a process; the more efficiently that process can be carried out.

How can equality be assessed?

1. Gather information This can be consulting with relevant groups, using a previous EqIA as a starting point, consultations carried out by other services, details of the service 'hard to reach groups', customer satisfaction surveys, MOASIC data, consider relevance to equality



2. Assess impact Could different groups be affected differently? Is this difference positive or negative? Consider the three arms of the Equality Act in relation to all the protected groups as per the table. NOTE: The quality of the assessment will depend on the quality of the information gathered



3. Take action This could be to reduce negative or increase positive impact. Produce an action plan where appropriate; make actions SMART. Unlawful discrimination MUST be actioned immediately



4. Summarise your findings on the EqIA form. Where it is clear from initial information gathering that a policy will not have any effect on equality, this may simply be a sentence recording this; the greater the relevance to equality, the greater the level of detail required. Publish your findings



5. Monitor the on-going effects of the policy on equality. This is usually in the form of the annual review carried out in October of each year, to fit in with the service planning cycle. The Equality Act is a **continuing** duty!

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

Customer Impact Assessment

Name and brief description of policy being analysed

Briefly summarise the policy including any key information such as aims, context etc; note timescales and milestones for new policies; use plain language – NO JARGON; refer to other documents if required

There is no specific policy relating to the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation, hostel or temporary accommodation. It is a statutory function for the council to provide temporary accommodation for those who are homeless. The categories of people that this refers to is contained in government legislation (Housing Act 1996 and 2017). That legislation and associated processes has been assessed nationally against the equalities act. The close association with our allocations policy through Homelink is also important which has an impact assessment as well.

Information used for customer analysis

Note relevant consultation; who took part and key findings; refer to, or attach other documents if needed; include dates where possible

	Could particularly benefit	Neutral	May adversely impact	Explanations	Is action possible or required?	Details of actions or explanations if actions are not possible Please note details of any actions to be placed in your Service Plan
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	One of our partners are able
Sex		X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

Gender reassignment/ Transgender	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	N	to offer gender specific accommodation to meet the needs of this group of clients
Disability- physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Age 60+		X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	Following a recent tender process, the council is able to offer additional ground floor accommodation options to meet our clients needs
Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)		X			N	The council works closely with Social Care and other statutory and non statutory agencies to support vulnerable clients whilst in emergency temporary accommodation
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	There is a joint protocol for 16 & 17 year olds and also for Care Leavers involving joint work between all councils and Social Care in Cambridgeshire. B&B is used only as a last resort when Social Care accommodation or FDC's other temporary accommodation is exhausted, the council works
Pregnancy, maternity and paternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

						closely with other statutory agencies in such cases and will work creatively given the resources available at that time
Human Rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Socio Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	
Multiple/ Cross Cutting	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>		N	

Outcome(s) of customer analysis

a) Will the policy/ procedure impact on the whole population of Fenland and/ or identified groups within the population; negative neutral positive

No major change needed Adjust the policy Adverse impact but continue Stop and remove / reconsider policy

Arrangements for future monitoring:

Note when analysis will be reviewed; include any equality indicators and performance against those indicators
Reviews of policy and procedures will be undertaken when legislation changes

Details of any data/ Research used (both FDC & Partners):

There is a joint protocol for 16 & 17 year olds and Care leavers involving joint work between all councils and Social Care in Cambridgeshire. B&B is used only as a last resort when Social Care accommodation or FDC's other temporary accommodation is exhausted

The council is not allowed to accommodate more than 5 families in B&B for longer than 6 weeks, the Housing Options Team undertake regular scrutiny of this along with monitoring to move clients into alternative self contained accommodation

The council is aware that there are inequalities in relation to funding of emergency bed and breakfast accommodation for clients when compared to clients (predominantly families) who access self contained emergency accommodation. This is due to a variety of reasons. We are looking at options for how this can be addressed through the transformation work for the service.

Assessing Equality – The Equality Act 2010

Completed by: Name: Sarah Gove Position: Housing & Communities Manager	
Approved by (manager signature):	Date published: This should be the date the analysis was published on the intranet
Details of any Committee approved by (if applicable):	Date endorsed by Members if applicable:

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Agenda Item No:	9	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	30 September 2024	
Report Title:	Wisbech High Street Update	

1 Purpose / Summary

1.1 To provide Cabinet with a monthly update regarding:

- Ongoing construction work at 24 High Street, Wisbech.
- Progress regarding the options for 11-12 High Street, Wisbech.

2 Key Issues

2.1 24 High Street Construction Progress

2.2 Etec, FDC's main contractor, continues with the construction work on 24 High Street, Wisbech. More progress is visible, with work now taking place at height, with brick and blockwork at the second-floor level. It is expected that the roof will be added in October and then inside works will commence.

2.3 The expected completion date is currently March 2025 and that remains subject to negotiation with the contractor. This is a difficult site with recent issues including;

- Additional insulation within walls required (due to the state of wall either side of our building)
- The walls on both sides tapering into our building space as the walls rise
- The nature of the frontages of the buildings meaning that they will be offset from each other – like the rest of the street

2.4 The contractor has asked for an extension of time due to the laying of the slab and an additional slab extension being required. The project team are responding to this next week with the 18-week extension suggested being unrealistic and likely to cost the Council a considerable sum. This matter is complex with no one answer and a negotiated extension term will be decided in September.

2.5 Additionally, the contractor submitted a variation in cost due to their insistence that the volume of bricks required was significantly higher than that in the original bill of quantities for the building. FDC's quantity surveyor has rejected the original sum suggested. It appears that there will be some additional cost but around half the value initially claimed by the contractor. This matter will be resolved in September and return to Cabinet if necessary.

2.6 Finally, because of the differing frontages either side of 24 High Street, a small delay was encountered when deciding how to address the space issue.

The contractor is expected to claim additional time for this issue too. FDC's team is assessing what this value might be prior to any potential claim in order to expedite the understanding of excess cost to FDC and settle this issue more promptly than the previous claims.

2.7 11-12 High Street

2.8 The cost of developing a meaningful building in the space where 11-12 High Street formally stood remains considerable. Various options have been considered following the private developer pulling out due to affordability issues some 2 ½ years ago. It should be remembered that the private developer was buying the plot for £1 and would have received £1m in National Lottery Heritage Funding – and still could not make the project viable. Following discussions with Members, another option is being assessed for the space in terms of its cost.

2.9 Once a design has been settled on, the project will take several years to complete. Steps will include;

- Affordability; The cost of FDC's far smaller project at 24 High Street is around £3m. 11-12 is a space that is far larger – if this were built out the cost will exceed 24 High Street's significantly. Even a building on part of the plot will match – or exceed (given inflation in the past 18 months) the cost of 24 High Street. Potential funding partners such as the Wisbech Town Board, CPCA and National Lottery Heritage Fund will require an application process, associated governance and the time such processes take – with no guarantee of funding success.
- Designing the building.
- Planning permission – and the building is in a conservation area.
- Development of the specification for the building and the procurement pack for tender
- Tender, appointment of contractor, pre-contract period and the build itself. 24 High Street will take 2 years to construct due to the site difficulties and complexities, as well as the location of a compound away from the site and the High Street, meaning no road closures (unless very brief) are allowed.

3 Recommendation

3.1 For Members to note the report.

Wards Affected	Medworth ward	
Forward Plan Reference	N/A	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Seaton Cllr Ian Benney Cllr Chris Boden	Portfolio Holder for Social Mobility and Heritage Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance
Report Originator(s)	Phil Hughes Mark Greenwood	Head of Service Head of Property, Assets and Major Projects
Contact Officer(s)	Phil Hughes Mark Greenwood Paul Medd Peter Catchpole	Head of Service Head of Property, Assets and Major Projects Chief Executive Corporate Director and S151 Officer
Background Papers		

1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with a monthly update regarding:
- Ongoing building work at 24 High Street, Wisbech.
 - Progress regarding the viable options for 11-12 High Street, Wisbech

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 This paper is for regular information regarding 2 key Council projects and does not require a Cabinet decision.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 N/A

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Several options have been considered for 11-12 High Street. Revisions have taken place to try and deliver a project that is affordable, works with necessary consideration of the historic nature of the High Street in Wisbech and delivers a building that provides value to the town centre in terms of a shop and residential accommodation.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Legal Implications

None at this time.

5.2 Financial Implications

5.3 24 High Street; As highlighted in the report above, there will be a cost implication to the Council regarding original estimates of construction materials, their deployment and the associated prelim's and management costs for an extended period of work.

5.4 In addition, the issues regarding the building slab have caused a delay. This remains a key point of discussion between the contractor and FDC's project team. This will be resolved this month with a firm cost available at that time which may require a return to Cabinet.

5.5 Equality Implications

N/A

6 SCHEDULES

N/A

**DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN –
Updated 20 September 2024**



(For any queries, please refer to the published forward plan)

CABINET

CABINET DATE	ITEMS	LEAD PORTFOLIO HOLDER
15 Nov 2024	1. Investment Board Update	Cllr Boden Cllr Benney Cllr Tierney
	2. Wisbech Air Quality Area	Cllr Wallwork
	3. Wisbech Town Board, 10-Year Vision Document and 3-year Investment Plan	Cllr Boden Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney Cllr Wallwork
	4. Grounds Maintenance Contract – Future Options	Cllr Murphy
	5. Leisure Facility Strategy – Initial Assessment Phase	Cllr Miscandlon
	6. Options for the disposal of a land and buildings in March	Cllr Seaton Cllr French
	7. Approval for the Economic Growth Refresh 2025-28	Cllr Benney
	8. Capital Programme	Cllr Boden
	9. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
	10. Wisbech High Street Update (confidential) (TBC)	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney
	11. Proposed use of Land at North Drive March for Community Uses (CONFIDENTIAL)	Cllr Boden Cllr Benney
	12. Wisbech Port – Future Operations Appraisal (CONFIDENTIAL)	Cllr Benney Cllr Boden
16 Dec 2024	1. Draft Business Plan 2025/26	Cllr Boden
	2. Draft Budget & Mid-Term Financial Strategy 2025/26	Cllr Boden
	3. RECAP Partnership Waste Strategy Review	Cllr Tierney
	4. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
	5. Wisbech High Street Update (confidential) (TBC)	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney
27 Jan 2025	1. Fees and Charges 2025/26	Cllr Boden
	2. Grounds Maintenance Contract – Specific Discussion	Cllr Murphy

CABINET DATE	ITEMS	LEAD PORTFOLIO HOLDER
	3. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
	4. Wisbech High Street Update (confidential) (TBC)	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney
24 Feb 2025	1. Business Plan 2025/26	Cllr Boden
	2. Budget & Mid-Term Financial Strategy 2025/26	Cllr Boden
	3. Fenland Transport Study	Cllr Seaton
	4. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
	5. Wisbech High Street Update (confidential) (TBC)	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney
24 Mar 2025	1. Investment Board Update & Review of the Commercial & Investment Strategy	Cllr Boden Cllr Benney Cllr Tierney
	2. Cabinet Draft Forward Plan	Cllr Boden
	3. Wisbech High Street Update (confidential) (TBC)	Cllr Seaton Cllr Hoy Cllr Tierney

TBC = To be confirmed

Agenda Item No:	11	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	30 th September 2024	
Report Title:	Purchase of a property portfolio in Fenland	

This item comprises EXEMPT INFORMATION which is not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 This report is provided to update members on the proposed acquisition of residential property known as Meadowcourt and located in Elm, near Wisbech.
- 1.2 The property if acquired will assist Fenland District Council both in terms of supporting objectives from a housing duties and commercial investment perspective.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 The Council became aware of a property portfolio for sale in Elm comprising of 7 units and a main house.
- 2.2 All the 7 units are tenanted and producing a rental income that could deliver an income to the Council to support objectives set out in the Commercial Investment Strategy in the shorter term, whilst in both the shorter and longer term assisting the Council to meet its statutory housing duties.
- 2.3 The main home has the potential to be converted into flats to help the Council meet its statutory housing duties in a more financially efficient way.
- 2.4 When financially assessing both the shorter term commercial investment of the existing rented flats and the potential additional financial benefits from the house conversion to help meet housing statutory objectives in a more cost-effective way it is assessed as a suitable property to purchase as a commercial asset.
- 2.5 The financial assessment is set out in a confidential schedule 3.
- 2.6 The legal implications for this proposal are set out in confidential schedule 4.

3 Recommendations

3.1 Members are recommended to review the report in particular the financial and legal implications as set out in confidential schedules 3 and 4 and:

- a) Authorise officers to purchase through the Council's section 151 Officer the portfolio of property available at Meadowcourt Elm in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance (The Leader) and Housing and following satisfactory due diligence procedures.

- b) Authorise officers to proceed with a planning application for the conversion of the main house to provide additional accommodation as detailed herein with costs to be approved in advance in consultation with the S151 officer and portfolio Holder for Finance (The Leader).

Wards Affected	All Wards
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/19AUG24/01
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr C. Boden Leader , Portfolio Holder for Finance and Investment Board Chairman Cllr S. Tierney , Investment Board Cllr I Benney, Investment Board Cllr S. Hoy - Portfolio Holder Housing and Licensing
Report Originator(s)	Mark Greenwood – Head of Property, Assets and Major Projects Dan Horn – Assistant Director
Contact Officer(s)	Mark Greenwood – As above Dan Horn – As above Peter Catchpole – S151 Officer and Corporate Director Carol Pilson – Corporate Director
Background Papers	Commercial Investment Strategy

4 REASON FOR EXEMPTION

- 4.1 Schedule 3 and 4 of this Report is NOT FOR PUBLICATION in accordance with Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in that it contains information relating to the financial dealings of the authority and a private individual. The public interest test has been applied to the information contained within this exempt report and it is considered that the need to retain the information as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

5 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

- 5.1 The Council has an approved Commercial Investment Strategy (CIS) to allow the Council to make investments to help support delivery of both a balanced budget and support business plan objectives.
- 5.2 The proposed investment to purchase the property portfolio at Meadowcourt, Elm gives rise to a further opportunity to deliver financial savings to the Council's housing duties and also helps support delivery of the CIS.
- 5.3 The property currently has 6 one bed properties and 1 2 bed property which are fully let to tenants and these will remain in situ until such time as they are vacated by the occupiers of their own volition.
- 5.4 The main house is presently occupied by the vendor's family and will be sold with vacant possession however officers believe this unit is capable of subdivision to provide a further 5 studio apartments alongside the 7 existing flats subject to planning consent.
- 5.5 These additional units once completed will be used to support our housing duties.
- 5.6 The property is on the market for £800k. Confidential Schedule 3 sets out the price negotiated, and the financial assessment made to help inform members on the decision or not to purchase.
- 5.7 The property was constructed as a single-family dwelling with a quadruple garage and garden house, both have now been converted to various self-contained units as has part of the original house. The remaining areas of the main house still offer substantial accommodation and are presently occupied by the vendor.
- 5.8 The existing 7 self-contained units are presently all let on tenancies bringing in an income. These are residential lettings.
- 5.9 Six of the self-contained units provide one bedroom accommodation, along with one 2-bedroom property.
- 5.10 Whilst there would not be an immediate need to refit any of the existing units, in time refurbishment would be required and costs would reflect the scale of the units.
- 5.11 The grounds wrap all around the site and would require significant maintenance.
- 5.12 Planning consent (as per paragraph 5.4) would be required for the subdivision of the main house into 6 further units and would be subject to due process in

accordance with Planning regulations. 5 would be done immediately with the 6th at a point as and when the 2 bed flat decides to vacate (voluntarily).

6 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Ability to meet our housing statutory duties in a more financially efficient way.
- 6.2 Commercial Investment to secure a revenue return for the Council.
- 6.3 The existing tenants will not be affected in any way (it is intended that their occupancy will continue in accordance with their tenancy agreement) at such time as of their choice they decide to vacate. Any relet will be looked at from a housing duties and commercial investment perspective.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Internal consultations have taken place including with the Housing, Estates facilities and Planning teams as well as financial modelling data provided by the Finance team.
- 7.2 Informal consultation with lead members.
- 7.3 Subject to the purchase, the subsequent planning application will be subject to normal planning regulations as per any planning application process, including statutory consultation.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Legal Implications

- 8.2 The legal implications are set out in Confidential Schedule 4

8.3 Financial Implications

- 8.4 Confidential Schedule 3 sets out the financial assessment made in relation to the proposed purchase.
- 8.5 The assessment includes the conversion of the main house to flats.
- 8.6 Through the sale process surveyor reports will be undertaken to ensure the price agreed is in accord with the market value of the property.

8.7 Equality Implications

- 8.8 None identified

9 SCHEDULES

Schedule 1 – Current layout

Schedule 2 - Proposed layout

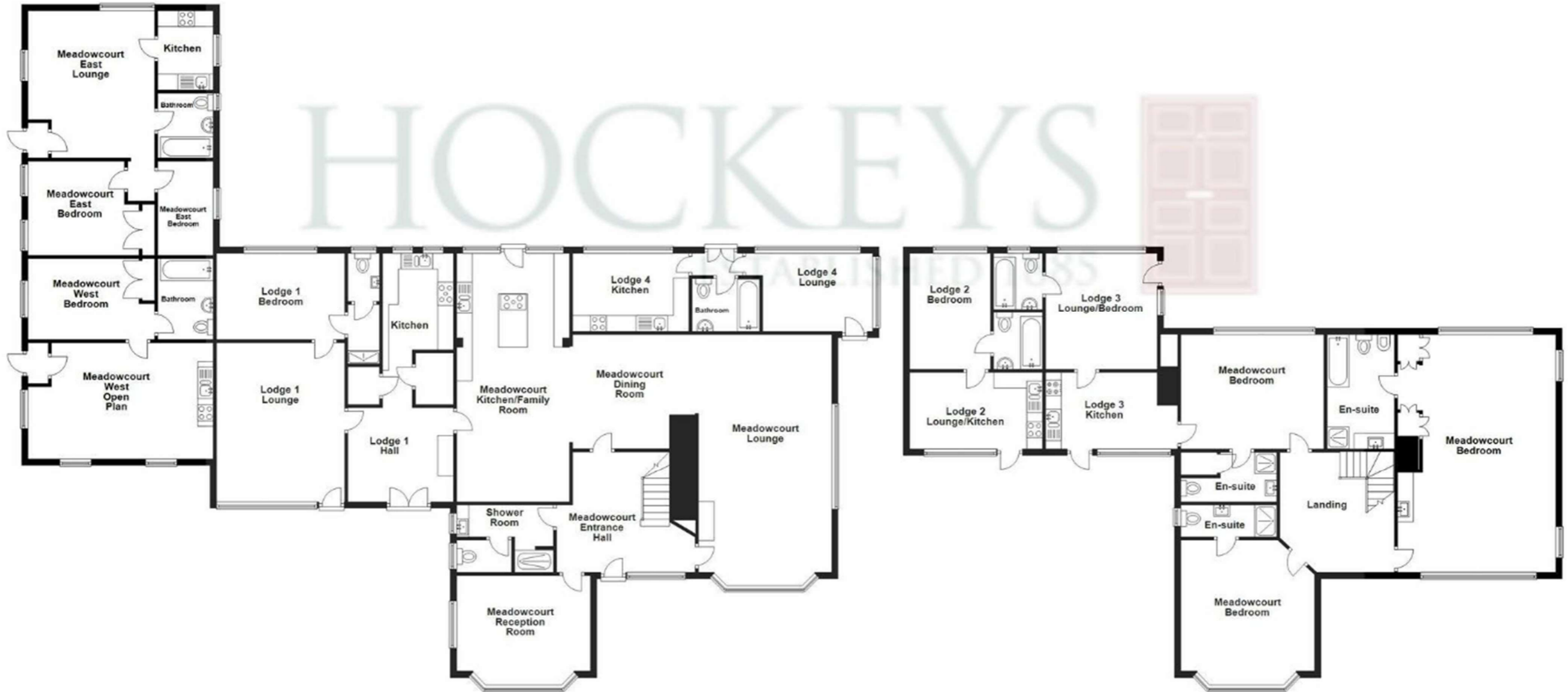
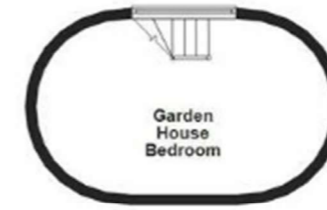
Schedule 3 – **Confidential** Financial analysis

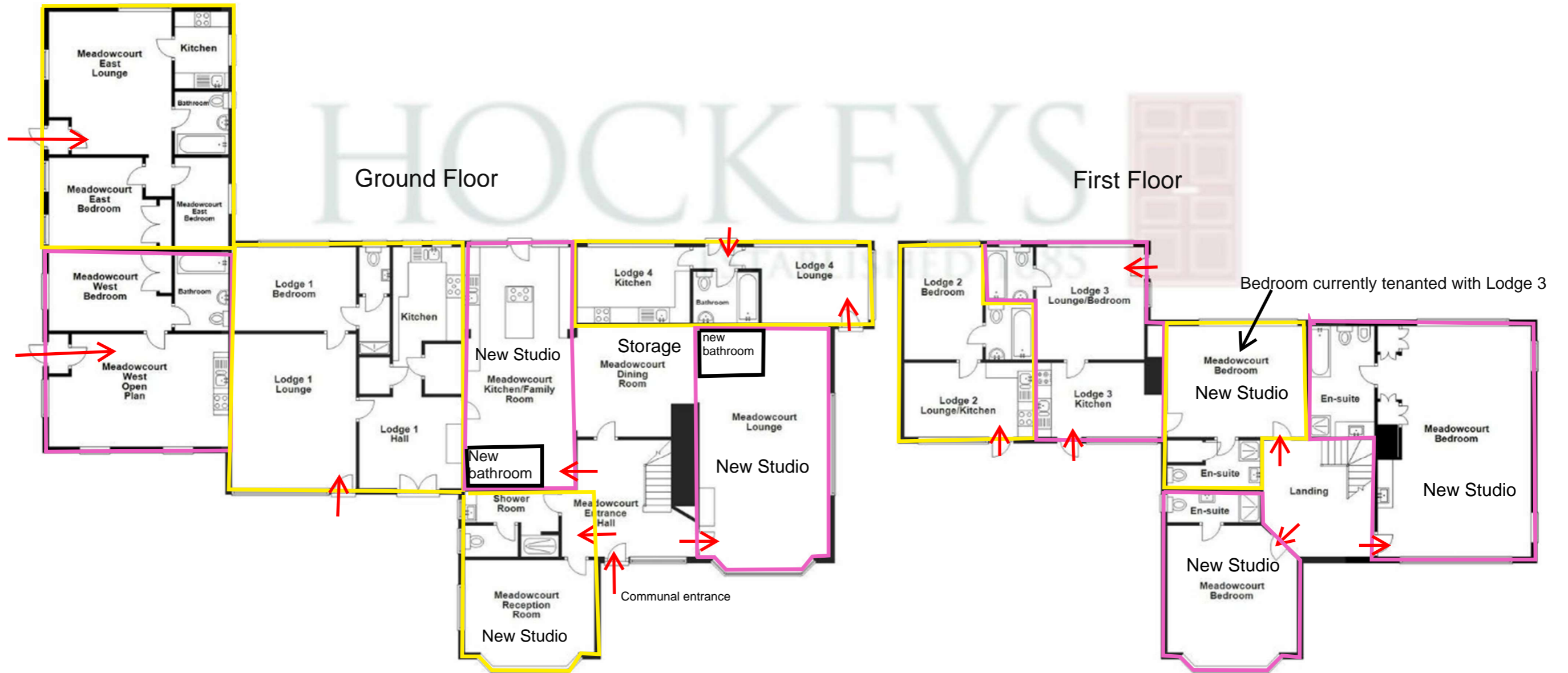
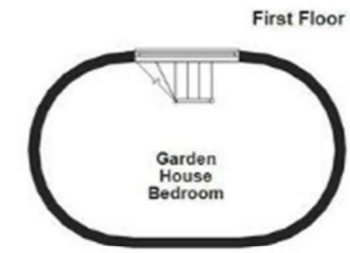
Schedule 4 – **Confidential** Legal Implications

Ground Floor



First Floor





HOCKEYS

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Agenda Item No:	12	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	30 September 2024	
Report Title:	Future Space Requirements – Accommodation Review	

This item comprises EXEMPT INFORMATION [which is not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs in accordance with paragraph 3, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in that it contains information relating to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 For Members of Cabinet to consider the Outline Business Case (OBC) in respect of the Corporate Accommodation Review and agree a singular preferred option to progress through to the development of a Full Business Case (FBC).
- 1.2 The OBC provides a further, more detailed assessment, considering both financial and non financial aspects of the shortlist of future accommodation options previously agreed by Cabinet, which resulted from Strategic Outline Business Case, considered in September 2023.
- 1.3 The OBC refines the assumptions and develops the options further to reduce the level of risk associated with each and enables the identification of a preferred option to take forward to a Full Business Case (FBC) which delivers the Council's Aims and Objectives.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 There are a number of factors that have converged which are driving the opportunity to undertake a Corporate Accommodation Review. These factors fall largely into four key themes, very briefly these include:
 - Enable the implementation of the Transformation Agenda, which provides opportunities to implement new technologies to streamline service delivery.
 - Achieve significant cost avoidance and ongoing operating cost savings.
 - Achieve Asset Management Plan (AMP) objectives by improving functional suitability and utilisation of operational assets.
 - Providing future flexibility providing for both our organisational needs and those of our customers both now and into the future
- 2.2 In 2021, Fenland District Council ("FDC") commissioned a condition survey of Fenland Hall which identified significant safety, compliance and condition issues within the building. The mechanical and electrical installations, heating

systems and roof were identified as being at the end of estimated useful life and in the near future will require full replacement to either ensure compliance or prevent significant ongoing maintenance capital expenditure.

- 2.3 As a result, informal discussions with Cabinet were initiated during which it was agreed that the Council undertake a swift and thorough assessment of its main corporate accommodation, namely Fenland Hall and 11 Melbourne Road (known locally as The Base) and develop an associated Business case outlining potential future accommodation options.
- 2.4 In December 2021, FDC instructed Carter Jonas, via a competitive procurement process, to engage with key stakeholders and to produce a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to support the decision-making process in relation to the future of the corporate accommodation.
- 2.5 A Business Case develops over time and contains three key sequential stages, namely:
 - **Strategic Outline Business Case** (SOBC considered by Cabinet in September 2023)
 - **Outline Business Case** (OBC currently being considered by Cabinet, September 2024)
 - **Full Business Case** (FBC) (anticipated to be complete by Spring/ Summer 25, assuming a preferred single option can be agreed)
- 2.6 A report containing the FBC in Spring/ Summer 25 will enable Members to make a final decision, committing the organisation to the implementation of the agreed option in respect of the future Accommodation of the Council.
- 2.7 During the Cabinet meeting of September 2023 Members considered the Strategic Outline Business Case report (SOBC) in respect of the Corporate Accommodation Review.
- 2.8 The SOBC considered a range of accommodation options to identify potential solutions, in line with the principles of the adopted Asset Management Plan, in addition to positively support the Council's Transformational Strategy.
- 2.9 The SOBC identified a long-list of potential property solutions that were subject to financial and non-financial assessments to identify which solution delivered the most amount of benefits for the lowest cost.
- 2.10 The SOBC Report resulted in approval to proceed to the next stage of the process, namely the production of the Outline Business Case (OBC) in respect of the short-listed Options 1 and 4. Option 1; which was to do the minimum, namely to continue to occupy Fenland Hall undertaking all the essential maintenance of the building and Option 4; Relocate to The Base and sell Fenland Hall. As a result of the Initial assessment a short list of 4 options has been identified and recommended for further exploration as part of an Outline Business Case (OBC).
- 2.11 A 'Do Nothing' option in respect of Fenland Hall is not a viable option as this approach may result in the building deteriorating beyond viable financial repair.

- 2.12 Members also agreed that Officers should engage with One Public Estate (OPE) colleagues in order to establish potential accommodation opportunities in respect of collocating with partners or utilising existing partner assets, therefore further supporting the development of a sub option(s).
- 2.13 The resulting Outline Business Case (OBC) explores various options available to the Council to identify the most cost-effective solution that delivers the most benefits to the organisation, its staff and customers.
- 2.14 In compiling the OBC there are a number of key estimated figures that have been used to inform the resulting financial assessments and it is worth highlighting those estimated figures are contained within Appendix 3 of the report, entitled, The Financial Case. These values are as per Carter Jonas appraisal Q4 2023 and are uninflated and undiscounted.

3 Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked the following:

- Note the content of the OBC.
- Agree to take forward the Option 1B iii or 1B iv in accordance with the recommendation from the Member led Accommodation Review Steering Group
- Progress to develop a Full Business Case (FBC) in respect of either Option 1B iii or 1B iv
- Delegate to the Leader of the Council and the Member Accommodation Review Steering Group in consultation with key officer(s) to decide which of the two agreed options to progress to FBC based on financial figures that are awaited.
- Delegate to The Corporate Director and S151 Officer in conjunction with Assistant Director and Head of Property to enter into negotiations in respect potential lease costs and terms in addition to the potential purchased costs and associated terms.
- Delegate to The Corporate Director and S151 Officer in conjunction with The Leader of the Council the decision to award the development of the FBC to an external specialist consultant
- Delegate to The Corporate Director and S151 Officer in conjunction with the Leader of the Council the decision to agree the funding to support the appointment of an external specialist consultant to develop the FBC in respect of the preferred option arising from the OBC.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	Accommodation Review - KEY/17MAY23/01
Portfolio Holder(s)/ The Member Steering Group	Cllr Benney Cllr Boden Cllr Mrs Davis Cllr Mrs French Cllr Tierney
Report Originator(s)	Anna Goodall – Assistant Director
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd – Chief Executive Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director Anna Goodall – Acting Assistant Director
Background Papers	Proposed Operating Model Report (Cabinet March 23) Exempt Accommodation Review Report (Cabinet September 23) Combined OBC appendix report produced by Carter Jonas (attached)

1 Reasons for Exemption

- 1.1 This Report is NOT FOR PUBLICATION in accordance with paragraph 3, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in that it contains information relating to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest test has been applied to the information contained within this exempt report and it is considered that the need to retain the information as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

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