

## AGENDA

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

**MONDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2024**

**10.00 AM**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, FENLAND HALL,  
COUNTY ROAD, MARCH PE15 8NQ**

Committee Officer: Helen Moore  
Tel: 01354 622424  
e-mail: [memberservices@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:memberservices@fenland.gov.uk)

- 1 To receive apologies for absence
- 2 Previous Minutes (Pages 3 - 12)  
  
To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting of 9 September 2024.
- 3 To report additional items for consideration which the Chairman deems urgent by virtue of the special circumstances to be now specified
- 4 Members to declare any interests under the Local Code of Conduct in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting
- 5 Annual Meeting with the Leader and Chief Executive (Pages 13 - 22)  
  
Presentation on Fenland District Council's key achievements and performance 2023/24.
- 6 Commercial Investment Strategy and Investment Board Update (Pages 23 - 32)  
  
To provide an update on the work of the Investment Board from April 2023 to March 2024.
- 7 Progress against the Transformation & Communications Priorities (Pages 33 - 48)

To consider progress against the Transformation and Communications priorities from April 2024 to August 2024.

8 Update on previous actions (Pages 49 - 50)

To receive an update on the previous meeting's Action Plan.

9 Future Work Programme (Pages 51 - 54)

To consider the Draft Work Programme for Overview & Scrutiny Panel 2024/25.

10 Items which the Chairman has under item 3 deemed urgent

Friday, 11 October 2024

Members: Councillor Mrs M Davis (Chairman), Councillor E Sennitt Clough (Vice-Chairman), Councillor B Barber, Councillor G Booth, Councillor J Carney, Councillor L Foice-Beard, Councillor R Gerstner, Councillor A Gowler, Councillor A Hay, Councillor S Imafidon, Councillor Dr H Nawaz, Councillor D Roy and Councillor A Woollard

# OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2024 - 10.00 AM

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs M Davis (Chairman), Councillor E Sennitt Clough (Vice-Chairman), Councillor B Barber, Councillor G Booth, Councillor L Foice-Beard, Councillor R Gerstner, Councillor S Imafidon, Councillor Dr H Nawaz, Councillor D Roy and Councillor A Woollard

In attendance: Amy Brown (Assistant Director), Helen Moore (Member Services and Governance Officer), Councillor C Boden, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Carol Pilson (Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer), Anna Goodall (Assistant Director), Dan Horn (Assistant Director), Mark Greenwood (Head of Property, Assets and Major Projects), Alan Boughen (Safer Fenland Partnership Development Officer), Simon Jackson (Economic Growth Manager) and Ann Wardle (Business Account Manager).

**Guests:** Simon Burgin - Road Safety Manager Cambridgeshire County Council, Alexis McLeod - Senior Programme Manager, CPCA, Domenico Crillo – Business Programmes and Business Board Manager, CPCA, Steve Clarke – Senior Responsible Officer Local Grown Fund, Market Insight and Evaluation, CPCA and Preshalin Govender – Economy and Grown Support Officer, CPCA.

## OSC8/24    PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 12 July 2024 were confirmed and signed.

## OSC9/24    ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP AND VISION ZERO

Members received a presentation from Simon Burgin, Road Safety Manager, joined by Alan Boughen and Dan Horn from Fenland District Council.

Members made comments, asked questions, and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated the presentation was very data lead after accidents have happened and asked how the Police get ahead of potential danger areas? She continued to ask when describing serious offenders how does this skew data in terms of accident hot spots as it might not be the road but an area with higher drug or crime rates. Simon Burgin responded that potential danger areas are looked at by local highways authorities to assess white lines and skid risks, this is carried out by local highways engineers who make sure the road itself performs as it should do and everything is in place as a matter of routine, depending on the classification of the road, be it an A, B or C class road, will depend on how often that road gets visited. He added that when it is a skid risk issue that information will come from a screen test which tests the friction of the road and it is then down to the highways engineer to maintain that area and there is a change coming to the way white lines are monitored especially at night time as this is something that up to now has not been looked at and historically white lines are most effective at night time for drivers especially on dark country roads. Simon Burgin referred to the question about where collisions were occurring and stated that data is collected about where the people were from that were causing the accidents, looking at if there was a correlation between who was involved and what the causation factors were.
- Councillor Roy stated presentation slide 17 states ‘a cluster site is identified as a junction or 100 metre length where there’s been six or more injury collisions of any severity or three or more serious or fatal collisions’ and asked why there has to be a time span to wait for these accidents to happen before prevention is put in place, with there being continued issues

around school parking with no back up from the Police. He would like to know if there is a long term policy being introduced to stop people from parking around school areas at school times, there are already 20mph speed limits in place but could a hatch box junction be put in place to clear the ways for schools. Simon Burgin responded there is a two prong approach to this, firstly work is carried out with Junior Travel Ambassadors who are the children within the schools themselves that identify the problem then work on a solution, work is also carried out with School Streets to look at further measures to restrict people having access to the road at the time when schools are likely to be arriving and leaving but this does depend on the location and what that road effectively allows people to do because there has to be freedom of movement for traffic and not preventing people from going where they lawfully need to be going, this is something that is being trialled in Cambridge City. He referred to box junctions and stated, in accordance with the highways manual, these cannot be placed outside of a school area and the school keep clear lining has been found to be more effective.

- Councillor Roy stated in the villages he represents there are narrow pathways with limited walking spaces and asked how can Parish Councillors get more support with making changes from the Road Safety Partnership? Simon Burgin recommended Parish Councillors invite the local highways office to look at the situation, if there are issues with the current infrastructure then this will get fed back to the various maintenance teams to be dealt with accordingly.
- Councillor Booth stated the process that seems to be in place is reactive and not proactive, with the criteria for looking at accident hot spots being the same for years regarding fatalities and serious injuries which he feels needs to be changed. He also has some concerns around the data being used as this is based on accidents that have occurred involving ambulances and the Police, but the truth is that many more accidents happen at local hot spots areas that are not reported as drivers exchange details or chose not to report the incident which does not get registered on the database being used and, therefore, in his view, there needs to be a rethink around another category for collating numbers of non-accident incidents that occur in hot spot locations because if this is going to be data driven then this is data that should be recorded and used. Simon Burgin responded the injury classification used is non injury, slight injury, serious injury and fatality which comes from the statistics that the Police provide to the Road Safety Partnership on a yearly basis and he agreed that if a collision is classified as a non-injury incident this does not get collated within the data, however, what does happen is where there are a spate of collisions the Police inform the Road Safety Partnership of potential problems or where there are issues or it may come through from the local highways office where the parish councillors have been in contact to highlight a potential issue then the Road Safety Partnership can step in and assess the road layout and look at potential changes to signage, speed limits and road markings. He added that there is evidence that the 20mph speed limits in other districts has had a positive affect but some of the responsibility does need to come back to the driver and there is evidence which has been taken from the local village speed watch surveys of some complacency with local drivers when driving the Fen roads. Councillor Booth agreed with the statement around local drivers which is a national problem and added that most local parish councils do not have the sufficient funding to pay for traffic calming measures within their villages as the investment is very limited from Central Government and he feels this is why the policies needs to be investigated and possibly changed.
- Councillor Barber asked if mobility scooters are allowed to travel on the roads? Simon Burgin responded that mobility scooters can travel on the road and the advice from the Highway Code is to travel on the road where there is a minimum amount of risk or harm and ideally to wear a high visibility jacket or clothing so they can be seen by other road users. He stated that this is an area which is being monitored along with E-scooters and E-bikes to assess the accident risk as local hospitals have started to report traffic accidents involving E-scooters and E-bikes, but no mobility scooter related accidents have been recorded locally. Councillor Barber asked if there were any plans for mobility scooter, E-scooter or E-bike users to receive road safety training? Simon Burgin replied there are no plans as

present but it is something he would take away from the meeting and investigate.

- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated she could understand why local parish councils do not want to spend money on 20mph speed limits in their local village when the Police are unable to enforce the speed restrictions and she asked what advice can be given around this area? Simon Burgin responded that the impact of 20mph speed limits from the county perspective is that any reduction is a benefit to the community as it is a lot less harmful in a collision than undertaking 30mph and above and the data shows that in other areas where this speed limit is in place there has been a 40% drop in collision cases within 20mph zone areas. Councillor Sennitt Clough asked if any of the data presented has picked up an increase in speeding after the driver has come out of the 20mph speed zone? Simon Burgin responded as this is a new scheme there is not any data yet but there is data being gathered and this will be available within the next two years. He stated historically there is evidence that drivers do speed up and get frustrated in any restricted situation, be it traffic lights or speed cameras, the speed camera installed in this area are set for 30mph and not capable of being set any lower so when the 20mph limits are put in the old speed cameras will be taken out.
- Councillor Mrs Davis stated she would like to know what the next step is for the Stonea Boots Bridge road because changes have been made to the road and the local railway crossing but accidents are still happening. Simon Burgin stated this site has had significant road changes and the Road Safety Partnership are waiting for Network Rail to sign off permission for speed cameras to be placed on their poles near the railway line, once this is achieved the road can be monitored. Councillor Mrs Davis stated there was another accident at the weekend and she was aware of a further hazard with a layby close to Manea which frequently has farm machinery, and lorries parked there, this was agreed at a development meeting that this was not supposed to be happening as it can cause a distraction close to the corner where the layby is situated. Simon Burgin stated he will take this away with him and investigate it after the meeting.
- Councillor Woollard asked if E-bikes will be banned from cycle routes and classified as an electric or petrol engine alongside motorbikes? Simon Burgin responded at the moment there is no provision but as far as the law is concerned, they are illegal and should not be used anywhere in a public space unless part of a legitimate scheme such as the one running in Cambridge. He stated that this is a policing issue, with currently E-scooters if caught being confiscated and destroyed, there will soon be an update from the Department of Transport as to whether they will be allowed and if so, what the speed limits and age restriction will be so until then the Police can only advise until further guidelines are introduced.
- Councillor Nawaz asked for it to be confirmed that E-scooters are illegal unless part of a designated scheme? Simon Burgin confirmed this to be correct.
- Councillor Nawaz stated parking on pavements can make it difficult for pedestrians and disabled people to pass when walking and asked where does the law stand in this situation? Simon Burgin responded parking on the pavement is an offence unless it is to do with a designated scheme where there will be signage showing the car parked at an angle with the pavement parking aligned and clearly marked.
- Councillor Nawaz asked if anymore could be undertaken concerning drink driving and speeding? Simon Burgin stated the drink driving legislation has been around for a long time and this does come down to driver responsibility, if there are series of accidents happening at particular hot spot areas then the road will be assessed, and the speed limit taken into consideration.
- Councillor Gerstner stated he felt the sheer number of E-scooters on the roads is out of control and the Police cannot manage the situation anymore. Simon Burgin agreed stating that until the Department of Transport have finished undertaking all of the reviews and a decision has been made to make them legal all the Police can do is educate or worst case scenario confiscate and destroy.
- Councillor Roy stated that in the presentation it was touched on about speed cameras and the Speed Watch Scheme, and asked what the process is if a speeding driver gets caught

on several cameras across different borders within the same day and is there any data sharing between the counties? Simon Burgin stated he was not aware of any data sharing between the Speed Watch Scheme, but this could be something that could be investigated by the Police as this is a national scheme.

**Members noted the information reported to them and recommended that the definition of a 'cluster site' be amended such that the current definition of 'a junction or 100 metre length where there has been 6 or more injury collisions of any severity, or 3 or more serious or fatal injury collisions' also includes non-injury incidents where a defined threshold of 12 incidents is met meaning that it is also an accident blackspot.**

## **OSC10/24 UPDATE ON CPCA GROWTH SERVICE AND IMPACT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN FENLAND**

Members received a presentation from Steve Clarke, Domenico Crillo, Alexis McLeod and Preshalin Govender from the CPCA, together with Anna Goodall and Simon Jackson from Fenland District Council.

Members made comments, asked questions, and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated she would like to understand from the slide where it said there was 57% of the Fenland postcode learners employed, what percentage was this taken from overall and what about the homeschooled pupils, the excluded pupils and the privately educated pupils in real terms? Alexis McLeod responded the 57% of postcode learners that were employed shows that a percentage of the 44 were recruited into wave four giving an indication of the upturn in employers using boot camps to upskill existing members of staff in a balanced way and to recruit talent for the future, with the percentages coming from states schools who score themselves using the Gatsby Framework, this is the way Careers Enterprise Company and the DFE have designed the funding. Councillor Sennitt Clough requested some dialogue to be sent out after the meeting.
- Councillor Gerstner asked if there was any benchmarking exercises carried out between them and other combined authorities? Steve Clarke responded there is on certain programmes, there is a growth hub nationally which shows rankings around levels of engagement and levels of success. Domenico Crillo added that although there is no ranking on performance in terms of combined authorities the team is part of the Mayoral Network and the Mayoral Ten which includes all ten combined authorities coming together with the mayors and senior management on a regular basis.
- Councillor Imafidon asked how much the total grants were and for which towns in the Fenland area? Steve Clarke responded he did not have the information for the towns, but the biggest grant award was £150,000 of which there were two awarded and the smallest grant given was £20,000 with a range in between the 12 SME CapEX grants awarded
- Councillor Imafidon asked which areas of the CPCA received grants? Steve Clarke answered the Capital Grant programme was awarded across the whole Combined Authority of which Fenland did very well.
- Councillor Booth stated in the presentation 40 apprenticeships were created and asked would these apprenticeships have been created anyway by companies as part of organic growth and are these apprenticeships being promoted within the Combined Authority? Alexis McLeod responded that the apprenticeships that were recorded in previous deliveries are all supported by diagnostics and action plans that were taken directly from the employers, with levy transfers being championed to SMEs that are struggling to access additional funding to pay for the cost of apprenticeships. She added that there are webinars and workshops in partnership with various business leaders, plus marketing campaigns that have specific targets through social media like Linkin and other various routes. Councillor Booth stated that he observed that 40 does not seem that many apprenticeships across the whole of the Fenland area but he was pleased to hear the additional work that was being put in place. He asked for clarification on the education percentage of 57% who were

employed and does that mean that the others were unemployed and did those others go on to gain employment as a result of undertaking those courses? Alexis McLeod responded the 57% specifically relates to the boot camp delivery which is targeted over a 6-8 week programme which was designed to directly move people either into workplaces or progress within workplaces specifically linked with the training, the training programme has proven to have the highest progression rate and success in the country and the pathway that is being built is from education into employment and beyond, starting with engagement with schools building on aspiration and inspiration then working with young people to ensure those opportunities exist. Councillor Booth showed his appreciation for the progression being made.

- Councillor Nawaz stated he would like to have some extra information on general job distribution and apprenticeships in the Whittlesey area. Steve Clarke responded that the mapping of where the activity outcomes are happening is something that is being developed under the Growth Works contract and in house using GPS mapping and collating data. Domenico Crillo added that there is work happening with Social Enterprises to help develop the demand locally to help provide a service with local businesses.
- Councillor Roy stated percentages are an indication of the region as a whole but as a local councillor it would be helpful to have the information for individual wards and where that help and support is going as he is aware that a lot of home grown talent goes off to higher education at universities and cities and then never return back to the area, asking what sort of encouragement is put in place to entice these higher educated young people back into the area. Alexis McLeod responded that the controls are limited in terms of how to encourage young people to return to the area they grew up in but there are plans in place to engage schools and local business to showcase to young people what exists on the doorstep for local careers opportunities and to start building relationships with local businesses around education and what could be on offer in the area, the surrounding area and across the wider region to encourage the young people to stay in the region after their education has finished, which is a work in progress and something the CPCA feels very strongly about. Domenico Crillo added that the CPCA has invested in a new university in Peterborough which has had a positive impact on residents offering young people another choice and opportunity. Councillor Roy added it would be helpful to have the mapping data for the local wards as local councillors would have a better idea of what schools and businesses are engaged and who are not.
- Councillor Booth stated he would like to know more about the future funds available and the rural levelling up fund and asked if this was for social enterprises or just for businesses and will it be a streamline application process? Steve Clarke responded the programme business case is being worked up presently, the plan is that the other fund, the strategic growth, will work together rather than launching separately but will have slightly different criteria and it will work around delivering growth to villages, for example employment space creation or a community asset that could be repurposed for social enterprise. Councillor Booth asked when the funding will be available? Steve Clarke responded he would like to think Christmas time but could not make a commitment, as soon as the funding is available the local CPCA in the rural districts will be informed and be able to engage interest from the local parish councillors.
- Councillor Nawaz asked if Peterborough University will be providing courses in agriculture considering where it is located within the Fens? Steve Clarke stated Peterborough University has been the CPCA biggest project to date and Anglian Ruskin who run the university have included Agri Tech and are building on introducing other skills, with phase three having a new science laboratory opening which will create other opportunities for learning. Alexis McLeod added that colleges are in active dialogue with careers staff at the University of Peterborough exploring ways to connect the business community and the graduate community to proactively increase those connections.
- Councillor Nawaz asked if there will be possibility of an agricultural campus with the view to apprenticeships or research? Steve Clarke responded he could not comment on the viability of such a project, however, the College of East Anglia does offer a variety of courses along

a similar vein which the CPCA has supported in the past. Councillor Nawaz questioned the accessibility of getting to Wisbech. Steve Clarke confirmed that was a different department within the CPCA and was unable to comment.

**Members noted the update on CPCA Growth Service and the impact on Economic Development in Fenland for information.**

*(Councillors Booth and Imafidon left the meeting following this item)*

**OSC11/24 PROGRESS IN DELIVERING THE ECONOMY CORPORATE OBJECTIVES TO INCLUDE PLANNING 2023/24**

Members considered the progress of delivering the Economy Corporate Objective, including Planning, presented by Councillor Chris Boden, Mark Greenwood, Anna Goodall, Simon Jackson, Councillor Mrs Laws, Matthew Leigh, Carol Pilson and Ann Wardel.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated she would like to understand why no business has benefited from the business rate relief scheme that is in place, is this due to lack of advertising or lack of suitability? Councillor Boden responded the discretionary business rate relief is a mechanism which can be used to try to attract businesses into Fenland which otherwise would not come to the Fenland area, it is a useful tool which can be used by the Economic Growth Officers in those circumstances. He added that the danger of setting this up was if it is used as a blanket policy anyone could apply for it, even those who were not going to come into the Fenland area, which is why it was made into a discretionary policy to be used sparingly and appropriately and to date no businesses have come to fruition but the tool is there and will be used when necessary. Simon Jackson added there are new businesses coming into Fenland and everything is looked at on a case-by-case basis.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough stated she receives questions about hiring the Boathouse on a regular basis at weekends, but she understands that it is not open for hire at the weekends? Mark Greenwood responded that due to staffing issues it is difficult to staff the Boathouse at weekends which is also the same for South Fens. Councillor Sennitt Clough asked if this could be clarified with residents as there seems to be some confusion around the hiring of the venues. Mark Greenwood stated he would take that away and make availability clearer.
- Councillor Nawas stated he would like a breakdown of the 59 companies and why they did not come to the Fenland area. Simon Jackson responded that a breakdown can be provided but some are commercially sensitive. He added that enquiries come through directly to Fenland District Council or via other routes like the Government using its networks with other embassies around the world and there is also some proactive marketing through the CPCA. Simon Jackson stated that in terms of servicing these enquires, the biggest problem is there is not a lot of land available with the infrastructure and road networks needed to house these projects which then pushes these businesses to look outside of the Fenland area, when developments do become available companies are contacted and local buildings are occupied very quickly. Anna Goodall added the types of businesses coming into the Fenland area translate into investment into the area.
- Councillor Nawaz stated he would like to understand what the UKREiiF exhibition and soft-landing package is, and the proposition created for a target market per annum is this per one year or per every year? Simon Jackson responded UKREiiF is a UK exhibition seminar helping leaders, investors, developers and Governments, which get together annually to see people who would normally not get together to promote the area they represent. He stated that the CPCA use this as an opportunity to flag wave the Fenland area and use this to promote what the Fenland area can offer regarding new business opportunities, with a soft-landing meaning it is a way of helping a business who may have no footprints in Europe or the UK to connect with authorities who can help launch their business with the right connection of people in the right area. Anna Goodall added it is a very competitive market



and this is a way of attracting business and investment into the area so anything that can be done do make Fenland stand out in a positive way and provide a good experience will be achieved through the soft-landing approach. Simon Jackson stated that any proactive marketing experience needs to be specific to the customer who are being attracted to the area by ways of a proposition, looking at the customer's needs and what the Fenland area can supply to make that business work and thrive.

- Councillor Roy stated he had noticed that in London there are a lot of Cloud based and IT based businesses that are looking to relocate their office space and asked how effective the promotion for Fenland is to the smaller business markets as the land prices offered in this area are highly competitive? He asked for more details about the enforcement of 392 pending cases and how it is being addressed? Councillor Mrs Laws stated Planning Enforcement have worked on lowering those numbers shown in the presentation and some of these are historic cases and some have pending court cases which do take time. Matthew Leigh added that Planning Enforcement is complex and when it comes to dealing with commercial premises and enterprises it can be challenging, with there being a need to look proactively at individual cases and resolve the breach planning control to close further cases. Simon Jackson stated in terms of the Cloud based companies who are looking to relocate to the Fenland area, there are not strong enough office places to offer companies who wish to relocate, however, there is communication happening with companies on Linkin to build a picture of what Fenland can offer businesses for the future expansion of the area.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked why the South Fens Business Centre is only 63% occupied and what might be making this unattractive to businesses? Mark Greenwood responded there is flexibility with the rent rate that can be charged to encourage businesses into the building, which has also helped to encourage tenants to stay who were thinking of leaving but in some cases smaller companies do decide to work from home to cut cost to their business outlay, however, the Boathouse is 96% full with the last few places under offer which will bring the Boathouse to 100% occupancy. He stated that there is a dedicated marketing budget in place for South Fens and the advertising is ongoing as to what can be offered and what is available, however, the one issue with South Fens is the connection, but now high-speed fibre optic is being fitted in the area this should speed up communication and connection.
- Councillor Barber stated there is a piece within the presentation on page 8 about communicating with smaller businesses around business rates bills and services offered, but in her experience business bills are paid via a Direct Debit each month and she felt it would be more beneficial to send the services offered from the Council on a separate letter rather than with the bill to encourage more response. Simon Jackson responded that the business rates bills gave the team an opportunity to get some extra messages out, this is also carried out with the Council Tax bills as well, which is only part of what the team have to offer in terms of communication, with there being regular press releases published and a Fenland for Business website. He added that the aim is to have a strong customer relationship management system in place to enable stronger engagement with local businesses, it has taken a few years to build but there are now around 25,000 businesses in the Customer Relation Management System (CRM), as a minimum that system enables the team to send out monthly newsletters to every business registered, but the CRM system does allow the team to engage with every single business logged to the opt in scheme on a one to one basis to identify the needs and aspirations of each business and help them grow. Anna Goodall added there is a monitoring system in place and there have been some positives that have come back, especially with promoting the grant system.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough asked Councillor Mrs Laws for an update on the Whittlesey Butter Cross project? Councillor Mrs Laws responded that following an on-site discussion which included herself and Phil Hughes, the following improvements are planned to this space:
  - removing the step around the Market Place is unrealistic, which is a surface on the Market Place where the Butter Cross monument is and at present there is a step up which is not very distinctive and several members of the public have had falls, trips and in some cases a broken bones

- public events are held on the Market Place which can consist of around 200 people at any one time
- removal of the phone box, which is not in use
- the salt bin will be repositioned next to the George Public House
- removal of the galvanised bike rack outside of Betfred
- adding a different colour to every third block to highlight the potential trip hazard in the area not painted yellow around the monument
- the benches will be refurbished and painted as will the wheat stalks
- the bike racks will be galvanized and painted black along with the traffic signage and the planters
- broken drop bollards will be replaced with lightweight lockable bollards
- removal of the temporary fencing
- a storage unit will be located adjacent to the litterbin beside the George Public House.

Councillor Mrs Laws stated that the Market place is owned by Cambridgeshire County Council and the phone box is owned by BT but everything else is owned by Fenland District Council and with this plan in place the work should be completed by 2025 as an enhancement and improvement to the historic area and within a Conservation Area in Whittlesey. Councillor Sennitt Clough stated she understood the funding needed spending by March 2025 or does the project just have to commence at this time? Councillor Mrs Laws confirmed the funding needed to be spent by March 2025. Councillor Sennitt Clough asked how sound is the structure of the Butter Cross monument? Councillor Mrs Laws responded this is something that is being investigated, the structure is safe, but work will need to be carried out within the next few years and grant funding is being investigated to achieve this.

- Councillor Mrs Laws provided an update on Planning stating the Council successfully recruited to the vacant Planning Policy Manager and Planning Policy Officer positions which will allow the Council to progress the local plan producing a process timetable to take the Council through to examination, with officers currently working on the consultation response to lead members and are awaiting the results of the national consultation whilst continuing to develop the local plan in the background. She assured members that planning will be engaged and updating as they move through the process, and they will resurrect the working party, which will involve members from parishes and the districts. Councillor Mrs Laws stated that planning recruitment has been successful since committee introduced the retention payments, with there being no further resignations from the planning team and the posts that have been recruited to are Matthew Leigh - Head of Planning, two Senior Planners, a S106 Officer and a new Enforcement Officer and there are vacancies for the following posts, which are currently covered by contractors, Senior Enforcement Officer, Tree Officer, Senior Planner and Principal Planner, with the advert for the vacancies remaining live on the Council's website and are marketed via social media frequently. She stated that Matthew Leigh is working on some emerging plans and ideas of how to continue to reduce the agency staff within the service which will be cost effective. Councillor Mrs Laws advised that the performance statistics are:
  - Majors 87.50% accumulative within 13 weeks
  - Minors 86.9% accumulative within 8 weeks
  - Others 86.2% accumulative within that period
  - Majors 84.62% on a 24 month rolling period within 13 weeks
  - Minors 75.84% on a 24 month rolling period within 8 weeks
  - Majors allowed at appeal following refusal 3.80%
  - Minors allowed at appeal following refusal 0.64%.
- Councillor Barber asked what does Others cover? Councillor Mrs Laws responded that these are smaller items, such as sheds and brick walls.
- Councillor Gerstner asked Councillor Boden if there was any update as to when the consultants for the outline business case for the relief road may be delivered? Councillor Boden confirmed there has been no update and the position is the same as it has been previously, there is yet to be a public consultation and once this has happened a report will

be produced by Spring 2025.

- Councillor Nawaz stated he would like to understand why there is a 10% drop at the Wisbech Boat Harbour? Carol Pilson responded there has been a lot of work being undertaken with the Transformation Team around how boats are organised in the Yacht Harbour so the figure seen has been fluctuating recently but this means more paying customers can occupy the births that are available rather than having non-paying customers taking up space within the Yacht Harbour.
- Councillor Sennitt Clough referred to the CPCA putting some funding towards Whittlesey railway station and asked for an update and if the two station adopters in Whittlesey could be part of the dialogue around improvements to the railway station? Anna Goodall responded she would pass the question on and request a response be sent to members after the meeting.

**Members noted the update on delivering the Economy Corporate Objective, including Planning.**

### **OSC12/24 UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ACTIONS**

Members considered the update on previous actions.

It was noted that a report from Clarion was received 26 June 2024 regarding oil fire burners. Councillor Booth requested to know, despite the report received, how many boilers are oil?

### **OSC13/24 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered the Future Work Programme and no changes were made.

1.55 pm

Chairman

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# **Presentation by Leader and Chief Executive of Fenland District Council**

FDC Overview & Scrutiny  
Meeting

21 October 2024

# Sources of further information

Please click on the links below to access further information:

[Business Plan 2024-25](#)

[Annual report 2023-24](#)

[Corporate Priority Reports already tabled at O&S Committee meetings](#)

[Joint Portfolio Holder Reports tabled at Council Meetings](#)

# Finance

- Balanced budget set for 2024/25 but in year pressures are currently suggesting a deficit if interventions not met.
- Projected deficit of £2088k (2025/26) rising to £2728k in 2028/29.
- No Council Tax increases included in these figures.
- Outcomes of Fair Funding, Business Rates and New Homes Bonus reviews now not expected until 2026/27 at the earliest.
- Financial control and progress with the Commercial and Investment Strategy, transformation, savings and income continues to be very important for FDC.
- Draft Budget for 2025/26 will need to be considered by Cabinet in December.

# Corporate Projects

## Transformation

- 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.
- TA2 will help to deliver efficiency savings which will contribute to mitigating against the projected budget deficits in coming years.



For further information, please see 'Transformation & Communications Portfolio Holder Update' report also being tabled at the Overview & Scrutiny meeting scheduled for 21.10.24



# Corporate Projects

## Accommodation review

- The Accommodation Review continues to assess our accommodation needs for the future and forms a fundamental element of the Council's work in seeking to reduce costs and/or make savings, without any impact on service provision to our customers.
- A confidential report was considered by Cabinet on 30 September which presented a short list of possible future Accommodation options.
- Cabinet agreed their preferred option is the acquisition of Hereward Hall
- The confirmation of a preferred option does not commit FDC to any course of action at this stage as a final decision is dependent on the following;
  - The results of a Full Business Case
  - A formal decision by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) that Hereward Hall is an asset they wish to dispose of (Decision scheduled 15/10)
  - A separate formal decision by CCC to agree the sale of Hereward Hall
- The Full Business Case is currently being commissioned which will ultimately be presented to Full Council for consideration.
- If Members agree the Full Business Case this will initiate the implementation of the Accommodation Review

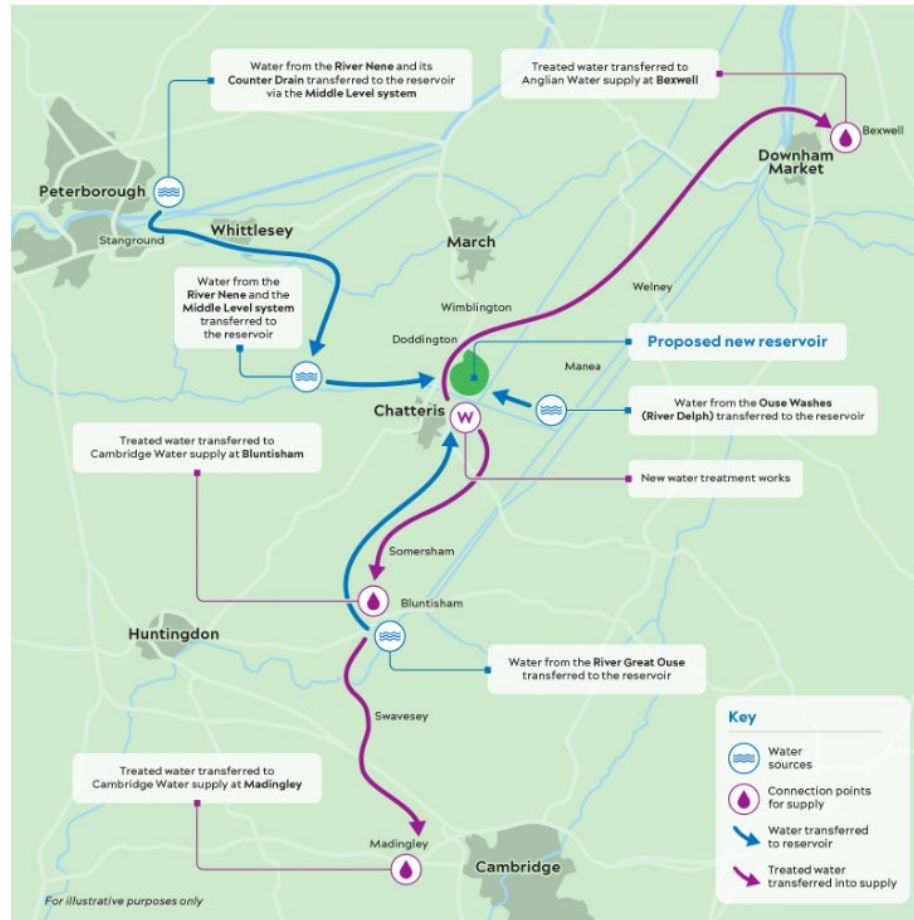


# Strategic Projects

## Fens Reservoir

Further information can be found here:

[A proposed new reservoir in the Fens - Anglian Water - Fens Reservoir](#)



# Strategic Projects

## Fens Reservoir

- Officers are working with Anglian Water ensure that we capitalise on potential opportunities for Fenland, such as skills and employment.
- Future housing needs are likely to be affected by this major project.
- Connectivity and transport links will be a key to leisure use.
- Development Consent Order (DCO) due to be submitted to Planning Inspectorate in late 2026/early 2027.
- FDC continues to respond to statutory consultations.



# Strategic Projects

## Transport

- Work continues on improvements to transport links and connectivity including:
  - Fenland Rail Development Strategy
  - Fenland Cycling Walking & Mobility Improvement Strategy
  - Fenland Station Regeneration
  - March Area Transport Study
  - Wisbech Access Strategy
- Improvements to March town centre are almost complete, following the successful application for Future High Street Funding.
- An update on options for the **Wisbech to March rail link** were shared at an All Member Seminar held on 1 October 2024. The preferred option was Option 2 – Provision of Tram/Train (Hybrid Heavy Rail/Light Rail System) and this will be taken to the next CPCA Transport Infrastructure Committee on 4 November.



# Strategic Projects

## **Economic Growth**

- The CPCA are coordinating a Local Growth Plan for the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough area.
- This will feed into the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, due to be published in summer 2025.
- FDC schemes have been promoted in the hope of securing additional funding. For example, transport schemes, sports facilities and science / research / advanced manufacturing parks.

## **Local Plan**

- Work has started on reviewing and resubmitting the Local Plan.
- Changes to national planning policy, guidance and processes will need to be included as well as any new Government priorities/ministerial statements.
- It will be important to consider NSIPs for other major projects in the area, such as the Fens Reservoir, National Grid improvements (Grimsby to Walpole) and the MVV Medworth Energy from Waste CHP Facility.

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Agenda Item No:		
Committee:	<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY</b>	
Date:	<b>19 September 2023</b>	
Report Title:	<b>INVESTMENT BOARD ANNUAL REPORT</b>	

## 1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel of the work of the Investment Board from April 2023 to March 2024.

## 2 Key issues

- 2.1 The last annual report on Investment Board activity was presented to and noted by Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024.
- 2.2 Work has carried on during the 2023-24 financial year to progress the two identified sites, the Nene Waterfront in Wisbech and the Elms in Chatteris and outline planning permission has now been granted for both sites.
- 2.3 At the Cabinet meeting held on 12th December 2022, it was agreed that the land at Chatteris and Wisbech be transferred to FFL at market value in accordance with a Red Book valuation and the transfers are now completed.
- 2.4 Work on the revised draft Business Plan for FFL was completed and circulated to the Investment Board on 31st January 2024.
- 2.5 In terms of new investment opportunities, Cabinet at its meeting in September has agreed to purchase property in Elm to support both our housing duties and commercial investment objectives.
- 2.6 The Constitution states as follows at paragraph 3.1.1 of Table 3 which sets out the responsibility for executive functions:
  - Cabinet will be responsible for the following specific functions in relation to the Commercial Investment Strategy and the Council's companies and partnerships:
    - (a) Conducting a formal review of the Commercial Investment every 2 years and recommending any necessary amendments for approval by Full Council;
- 2.8 The informal review of the Commercial and Investment Strategy has been carried out, although economic conditions are challenging and interest rates in particular make it extremely difficult to identify new opportunities except that seen in Elm. With interest rates potentially on the decline an updated review will be put in place to conclude in this financial year.

### 3 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel note the annual report from the Investment Board.

<b>Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Forward Plan Ref</b>	Not applicable
<b>Portfolio Holder(s)</b>	<p>Cllr Chris Boden – Leader, Finance Portfolio Holder and Chairman of the Investment Board</p> <p>Cllr Steve Tierney – Transformation and Comms Portfolio Holder and Investment Board Member</p> <p>Cllr Ian Benney – Economic Growth Portfolio Holder and Investment Board Member</p>
<b>Report Originator(s)</b>	<p>Paul Medd – Chief Executive</p> <p>Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director &amp; Chief Finance Officer</p> <p>Carol Pilson – Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Amy Brown - Head of Legal and Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer</p>
<b>Contact Officer(s)</b>	<p>Paul Medd – Chief Executive</p> <p>Peter Catchpole – Corporate Director &amp; Chief Finance Officer</p> <p>Carol Pilson – Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Amy Brown - Head of Legal and Governance and Acting Monitoring Officer</p>
<b>Background Paper(s)</b>	<p>Investment Board minutes</p> <p>Commercial and Investment Strategy</p> <p>Cabinet update reports dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.</p>



Appendix: Annual report

Report of the Investment Board

April 2023 – March 2024



## **1 What is the Investment Board?**

- 1.1 The Investment Board was created on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020 to help drive forward the Council's Commercial and Investment Strategy which was approved by Full Council on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The Investment Board is a sub-committee of Cabinet designed to be more "fleet of foot" in order to be able to respond to opportunities in an agile and commercial manner.

## **2 Purpose of the Investment Board**

- 2.1 The Investment Board is responsible for implementing the Commercial and Investment Strategy including oversight of the Council's companies and partnerships.
- 2.2 The Investment Board will act as a decision-making body in relation to the functions delegated to it and will report to Cabinet in relation to the exercise of those functions.
- 2.3 Support and advice will be provided to the Investment Board by key members of the Corporate Management team.

## **3 Membership and Operation of the Investment Board**

- 3.1 The Investment Board will comprise a maximum of two Cabinet Members (one of whom should be the portfolio holder for finance if that position is not held by the Leader) in addition to the Leader who will determine their appointment annually.
- 3.2 The Investment Board shall meet on a basis agreed by itself with a minimum of 3 meetings per year.
- 3.2 The quorum shall be the Leader in the presence of a minimum of;
  - a. one other Cabinet Member;
  - b. one senior advisory officer (or their appointed deputy)

An invitation to attend must have been provided to the Chair of O&S at least 5 clear days in advance of the meeting taking place. This notice period may be waived if the Chair of O&S or their nominated deputy so agrees.

An invitation to attend must also have been provided to the Section 151 officer and the Monitoring Officer (or their nominated deputies) which will normally be at least 5 clear days in advance of the meeting taking place.

- 3.3 The provisions relating to substitution set out at paragraph 28 of the Standing Orders shall apply to meetings of the Investment Board save that the Leader and Cabinet Members may only be substituted by Cabinet Members [and the Chair of O&S may only be substituted by the Vice Chairman]. Such substitutions to be notified to Council as part of the annual nomination process.

3.4 The Cabinet Procedure Rules shall apply to meetings of the Investment Board save in respect of paragraphs 1.6, 1.8, 2.2 (second paragraph), 2.3(g) and (h) and paragraph 2.5(d) which shall be disapplied.

#### **4 Functions of the Investment Board**

- 4.1 To determine investment appraisals submitted under Part 2 of the Council's Commercial and Investment Strategy together with the most appropriate means of delivery;
- 4.2 To determine business cases submitted under Part 3 of the Council's Commercial and Investment Strategy by the Council's companies and partnerships;
- 4.3 To determine the amount and terms of any investments, loans and assets required for the delivery of proposals approved in accordance with paragraphs (a) and (b) above from the agreed budget allocation;
- 4.4 To produce a report to Cabinet twice a year summarising its activities in accordance with paragraphs (a) to (c) above.
- 4.5 Approve the business plans of the Council's companies and partnerships;
- 4.6 To monitor performance and financial delivery in line with the approved business plans;
- 4.7 To ensure that those companies and partnerships comply with relevant Council policies, strategies and objectives;
- 4.8 To exercise decisions, where delegated by Cabinet, in relation to a company or partnerships' reserved matters;
- 4.9 To oversee the relationships between the Council and the Council's companies and partnerships in accordance with the Council's objectives.
- 4.10 To prepare and present an annual report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- 4.11 To determine for each individual company or partnership whether the Investment Board recommends to Cabinet the delegation of any functions to the officers of the Council.
- 4.12 All other matters not falling within the remit of the Investment Board functions set out at 4.1 to 4.11 above will be referred to Cabinet for decision.

#### **5 Background**

- 5.1 The Commercial and Investment Strategy was approved by Full Council on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020.
- 5.2 At the same meeting Full Council also agreed to establish a Local Authority Trading Company (LATCo) for the purpose of facilitating the delivery of the agreed strategy and noted the proposed intention that the Investment Board will be able to utilise reserves and/or borrow sums up to a combined maximum of £25 million in order to deliver the objectives of the Strategy.

- 5.3 Following on from this approval the creation of the Investment Board and the delegation of functions was approved by Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020.
- 5.4 The business case for the creation of the LATCo was approved by Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and Fenland Future Ltd (FFL) was incorporated on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020.
- 5.5 FFL held its inaugural board meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and a first draft business plan was circulated to the Investment Board for discussion and approval. The final business plan was formally presented to the Investment Board in March 2022.
- 5.6 At a meeting of the Investment Board on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020 approval was given to take forward to a detailed business case the development of FDC owned land at the Nene waterfront in Wisbech.
- 5.7 At a meeting of the Investment Board on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021 approval was given to take forward to a detailed business case the development of FDC owned land in Chatteris.
- 5.8 At a meeting of the Investment Board on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 approval was given to acquire a commercial property in Wisbech and this was subsequently completed on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- 5.9 The last annual report on Investment Board activity was presented to and noted by Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023. A further report was presented to and noted by Cabinet on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

## 6 Work programme and outcomes

- 6.1 The Investment Board sat on the meeting dates detailed below and considered the matters also shown in the table below as part of its work for 2022/23:-

Meeting date	Outcome
20 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	An update on current opportunities FFL scheme update report

## 7 Commercial and Investment Strategy (CIS) Update

### FDC

- 7.1 As part of the Commercial and Investment Strategy a facility of £25m was granted to the Investment Board to finance capital expenditure to be undertaken in accordance with the aims and objectives of the agreed strategy. At the end of March 2023 £4m of this facility has been utilised to fund the acquisition detailed in 7.2 below and a strategic purchase which offers an opportunity to open up access to a Council owned potential development site. These acquisitions were approved at Investment Board meetings held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021 respectively.
- 7.2 The Commercial Investment in Wisbech has delivered a rental income of £230k p.a since acquisition in March 2021 and is up to date for 2024-25. As we used our own funds to acquire this asset there was no external cost of capital. This acquisition has enhanced the Councils revenue position and has had a positive impact on the MTFS as presented to Full Council in February 2024.
- 7.3 Since the last time Commercial Investment was scrutinised by O&S one further opportunity is being progressed in relation to a property portfolio in Elm. Work is currently underway to complete the purchase of this property asset. No other opportunities have been progressed as the initial due diligence as prescribed in the Commercial and Investment Strategy was not passed.
- 7.4 The current Commercial and Investment Strategy (CIS) strategy is constantly under review as per the constitution and in light of the current economic situation to determine whether it is still fit for purpose.

#### **FFL update including finance**

- 7.5 Further utilisation of the above mentioned “facility” will be needed when the funding position of Fenland Future Ltd is fully agreed. A full cash flow was produced as part of the Business Plan required by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 and further refinement will be required as updated site appraisals are prepared. At a suitable point funding drawdown will be requested following the process as detailed in the financing agreement agreed by the Investment Board in July 2022.
- 7.6 The land transfers of the two sites, The Elms, Chatteris and the Nene Waterfront, Wisbech were approved by Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and legal work relating to these transfers is now complete.
- 7.7 Both sites now have Outline Planning Permission and work has progressed on the delivery models needed to develop them.
- 7.8 A development manager has been appointed for The Elms site and work to prepare and complete a Reserved Matters Application is progressing. This includes detailed design work and technical reports as well as revised financial appraisals for the scheme.
- 7.9 Work on the Nene Waterfront includes the delivery of a new electricity substation funded through the Brownfields Land Release Fund and the potential delivery of an Extra care facility for which design and pre-application work has commenced. The electricity sub station is under construction.
- 7.10 FFL have signed heads of terms with Fenland Extra Care Consortium for plot 5 of the Nene Waterfront. Reserved Matters planning application being prepared. This will be an all-affordable home scheme for older people with care needs (circa 70 homes).

- 7.11 To date Fenland Future Ltd expenditure and commitments are as shown in the table below. The company have drawn down a loan from FDC to meet commitments relating to both sites.
- 7.12 Based on the revised cash flows further funding will need to drawn down from Fenland District Council to both cover the costs detailed below and to enable FFL to meet its future financial commitments to develop the sites. A further update will be taken to the Investment Board later in the year along with the request to drawdown any extra funding required.
- 7.13 For information the Board of Directors for Fenland Future Ltd comprises:-
- Dan Horn – Managing Director and Chairman
  - Mark Saunders – Director
  - Anna Goodall – Director
  - Jane Bailey – Company Secretary

## **8 Legal Implications**

- 8.1 Reviewing the CIS ensures compliance with our best value duty and is also compliant with the delegations to Cabinet in which it is provided that it will be reviewed every 2 years.

<b>Fenland Future Ltd Financial Update</b>	<b>31.05.24</b>	<b>Total FFL Costs £</b>	<b>Nene Waterfront £</b>	<b>Chatteris £</b>	<b>Ex Barclays March £</b>	<b>FFL Set up Costs £</b>	<b>Consultancy Costs £</b>	<b>Legal Costs General £</b>	<b>FDC Recharges £</b>	<b>Loan Interest £</b>
Set up costs	Integra - Agresso set up	2,925.00				2,925.00				
<b>Total Paid</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2,925.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,925.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Set up costs	Integra - Agresso set up	975.00				975.00				
Architectural Services	Norr	29,575.08	14,575.08	15,000.00						
Ecology survey	Tetra Tech	5,000.00	2,500.00	2,500.00						
Pre Planning consultancy	Tetra Tech	62,200.00	22,200.00	40,000.00						
Ecology Species Survey	Tetra Tech	5,000.00		5,000.00						
Topographical Survey	Survey Solutions	950.00		950.00						
Site clearance work	Tivoli Group	1,924.75	1,924.75							
Planning Advice	ELG Planning	2,215.00		2,215.00						
Site Appraisals	Carter Jonas	4,000.00	2,250.00	1,750.00						
Highways Consultancy	JDS Consulting	2,000.00		2,000.00						
Consultancy	Bloom - Consultancy	34,807.50					34,807.50			
Legal services	Bevan Brittan	1,497.60						1,497.60		
Support Recharges	FDC SLA 2021/22	100,000.00							100,000.00	
<b>Total Paid</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>250,144.93</b>	<b>43,449.83</b>	<b>69,415.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>975.00</b>	<b>34,807.50</b>	<b>1,497.60</b>	<b>100,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Data Protection Fee	Information Commissioner	40.00				40.00				
Planning Application Fees	FDC	21,728.00	8,778.00	12,950.00						
Planning Consultancy Support	Barmach	2,500.00	2,500.00							
Electricity Supply	UK Power Networks	20,798.56	9,888.84	10,909.72						
Site Appraisals/Valuations	Carter Jonas	37,700.00	19,100.00	17,600.00	1,000.00					
Legal services	Bevan Brittan	35,172.20	4,060.45	4,189.95				26,921.80		
Consultancy	Bloom - Consultancy	96,391.58					96,391.58			
Architectural Services	Norr	18,142.25	8,997.25	9,145.00						
Ecology Species Survey	Tetra Tech	19,200.00		19,200.00						
Pre Planning consultancy	Tetra Tech	32,010.00	10,100.00	21,910.00						
Planning Advice	ELG Planning	12,285.49	3,325.00	8,960.49						
Support Recharges	FDC SLA 2022/23	125,000.00							125,000.00	
<b>Total Paid</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>420,968.08</b>	<b>66,749.54</b>	<b>104,865.16</b>	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>40.00</b>	<b>96,391.58</b>	<b>26,921.80</b>	<b>125,000.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
Data Protection Fee	Information Commissioner	40.00				40.00				
Registration Fee	Companies House	13.00				13.00				
Employers Agent Services	AECOM Ltd	8,227.50					8,227.50			
Legal services	Bevan Brittan	65,260.25	19,262.00	34,070.00				11,928.25		
Land Purchase from FDC- Deposit	Bevan Brittan - Land Deposit	20,000.00		20,000.00						
Land Purchase from FDC - Balance	Bevan Brittan - Land Purchase	180,000.00		180,000.00						
Consultancy	Bloom - Consultancy	73,710.00					73,710.00			
Consultancy	Instinctively Green	23,400.00					23,400.00			
Grass Cutting, The Elms	Tivoli	2,225.00		2,225.00						
Directors Insurance	AON UK Ltd	3,920.00				3,920.00				
Architectural Services	Norr	3,000.00	3,000.00							
Planning consultancy	Tetra Tech	20,365.00	19,865.00	500.00						
Local Rented Market Report	Carter Jonas	9,000.00	9,000.00							
Nene Waterfront appraisal	Redloft	4,530.00	4,530.00							
FFL Website	Chameleon Studios	4,252.50				4,252.50				
Support Recharges	FDC SLA 2023/24	125,000.00							125,000.00	
Interest Costs	FDC Loans 2023/24 - (27.03.24)	2,274.66								2,274.66
<b>Total Paid</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>545,217.91</b>	<b>55,657.00</b>	<b>236,795.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>8,225.50</b>	<b>105,337.50</b>	<b>11,928.25</b>	<b>125,000.00</b>	<b>2,274.66</b>
Bank Charges	Barclays Bank	26.30				26.30				
Consultancy	Instinctively Green	15,600.00					15,600.00			
Legal services	Bevan Brittan	976.50	976.50							
Planning consultancy	Tetra Tech	1,250.00	1,250.00							
Archeology Services	Headland Archeology	5,050.00	5,050.00							
Planning Fee	Fenland District Council	363.00	363.00							
Support Recharges	FDC SLA 2024/25 - 2 months	20,833.33							20,833.33	
Interest Costs	FDC Loans 2024/25 - 2 months	24,441.78								24,441.78
<b>Total Paid</b>	<b>2024/25 - to 31.05.24</b>	<b>68,540.91</b>	<b>7,639.50</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>26.30</b>	<b>15,600.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>20,833.33</b>	<b>24,441.78</b>
<b>Grand Total Paid to Date</b>	<b>31.05.24</b>	<b>1,287,796.83</b>	<b>173,495.87</b>	<b>411,075.16</b>	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>12,191.80</b>	<b>252,136.58</b>	<b>40,347.65</b>	<b>370,833.33</b>	<b>26,716.44</b>
<b>Total Benefit to FDC Revenue Account - to 31.05.24</b>		<b>397,549.77</b>								
<b>Total Benefit to FDC - Capital Receipt - to 31.05.24</b>		<b>200,000.00</b>								

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# **Overview & Scrutiny Panel**

## **Progress Against the Transformation & Communications Priorities**

**For performance from  
1 April 2024 to 31 August 2024**

# Portfolio Holders



**Councillor  
Chris Boden**  
Leader of the Council



**Councillor Steve Tierney**  
Portfolio Holder for  
Transformation,  
Communication &  
Environment

## Quality Organisation

### Communications Projects

The team supports all Council services with a wide range of internal and external communication projects. Support is tailored to the requirements of the project or service. For key services, we also hold monthly communications meetings.

Some of the large projects we support will include developing communications plans, consultation and engagement plans, promotional design work (logos, documents, leaflets, social media assets, posters etc.) and printing materials. These projects can run over a longer period of time and will involve an extensive project plan.

Key communications projects include:

- Business Plan and Budget
- Annual Report
- Transformation projects
- Fenland for Business projects
- Environmental Services projects
- March Future High Street Fund

We also offer support for 'everyday' communications. These include projects that need external communications (a press release, web page and programme of social media posts), or marketing materials (logo, document, poster or leaflet).

These projects include:

- Active Fenland programme
- Business Grants
- Community support projects (i.e. Grants available, Community Safety Partnership projects)
- Street Pride events
- Four Seasons events
- Golden Age events
- Commercial Investment Strategy
- Hereward Community Rail Partnership projects

### Consultation

An updated Corporate Consultation Strategy was agreed at Cabinet in July 2024.

In line with our Corporate Consultation Strategy, we support teams to engage and consult with residents about Council services.

We offer advice in ensuring that all consultations are well planned and prepared ensuring consistent communication messages.

Also, a consistent process allows the consultation to give clear results and therefore, help inform future decisions.

Teams are supported by the communications team with assistance through questionnaire development, design and printing of associated posters and surveys, and a communications plan to publicise the consultation.

Key consultations between 1 April and 31 August included:

- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy – 8 July – 15 September 2024
- Taxi Tariff Consultation – July – 11 August 2024
- Fenland Play Zones – August – 8 September 2024

Details of all our consultations are displayed on our website: [Consultations - Fenland District Council](#)

## Policy

The Policy & Communications team continue to support the development of Corporate Policy. Over the past 12 months we have developed the Business Plan (and related consultation), Service Planning templates and the Annual Report for the organisation.

We continue to oversee all Corporate Policies and Strategies ensuring they are publicised on our website or intranet.

In addition, we provide advice on corporate performance reporting and demographics to all teams across the organisation.

## Press Releases / Media

We continue to use a clear and positive approach to all media and press releases to promote the good work of the Council.

All press releases are published on both the front page and news and events sections of our FDC website. They are also published on our FDC social media accounts,

Facebook and Twitter. In addition, all press releases are distributed to local news outlets, including where appropriate, radio and TV outlets.

These press releases include promoting the good work the Council delivers within the community, promoting FDC and partner initiatives and programmes, and also communicating information about the Council including consultations, events or good news stories.

Key press releases included:

- £20 million for Wisbech Town Centre is a real opportunity.
- Deaf-led business benefits from business grant to increase inclusive employment opportunities.
- Fly-tippers hit with penalties totalling more than £3k.
- Council partners with new HIA to enhance support for vulnerable residents.
- What to expect at the polling station for elections on 2 May.
- Whittlesea Railway Station £3m investment moves forward.
- Active Fenland Activities this Summer
- Don't miss Chatteris Midsummer festival 2024
- Council Maintains gold standard in customer services
- Fenland rail partnership launches art competition as part of anniversary celebrations
- Grants up to £25,000 available to help bring empty shops back into use
- Bids invited for March shopfront improvement grants of up to £50,000
- Changing Places toilets improve accessibility in Fenland

All press releases are generally shared with the following channels:

- FDC Members and town and parish councils
- Local media/newspapers – Fenland Citizen, Cambs Times, Wisbech Standard, Peterborough Telegraph and Cambridge News/Cambridgeshire Live
- Local Magazines – Discovering Magazines (March, Whittlesey and Wisbech editions), The Fens Magazine (Whittlesey and Wisbech editions) and Fenland Resident Magazine.
- Local Radio – BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, Heart Radio and Fenland Youth Radio

In addition to publicising messages to the community, we also proactively manage all press enquiries from the local press, newspapers, radio and tv. To assist press enquiries, we also compile member quotes, statements and briefing notes.

## Social Media

We promote all Council news and services on our Social Media channels, Facebook and Twitter.

They are significantly increasing in popularity; we now have 7,987 followers on Facebook and 8,808 on Twitter.

We currently add 25/30 tweets on our twitter page per week and 25/30 posts on our Facebook page per week. There is a direct link on every page of our website to both our Facebook and twitter accounts.

Our social media accounts are a useful platform to communicate key service information including latest news, promotions and events. We also publicise and monitor key community-based information of partners and other local groups.

We promote a variety of news and are linked to the appropriate organisations that we can endorse (and who will endorse us.) A greater number of customers contact us through these mechanisms to raise service requests – these require same day responses.

We monitor social media channels for emerging issues so we can be on the front foot and respond to inaccurate media reports.

## Website

### **Current performance:**

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 August 2024, our website received over 50,000 hits.

As part of our transformation agenda, we are continually working on developing the Council's website to provide residents and businesses even better online services.

Our aim is to have an inviting and user-friendly website and to have a suite of online forms and online digital journeys that enable our residents and customers to self-serve via the website with little or no back-office intervention.

We work with all services to ensure the content and information is accurate and offers residents a user-friendly browsing experience.

The front page is tailored for users to find key information, services, top tasks and top transactions. Council latest news, information and events is also a key section of the

front page.

### **Online Transactions**

In total, we received 8,762 online form submissions via the council's website [www.fenland.gov.uk](http://www.fenland.gov.uk)

Our website offers 50 online forms.

We continue to develop the Fenland for Business website with new content and is now hosted on the FDC website.

We launch a new online bulky waste form in April 2023 to enhance our suite of environmental service request forms which are fully automated. This means that once the resident completes one of these online reporting forms, information is automatically added to the operatives in-cab work packs in real time without the need for staff intervention.

## **Deliver the 'Transforming Fenland' project to modernise customer service arrangements across the district (Cllr Steve Tierney)**

### **Transformation – Our Journey To Date**

In 2019, we began our Transformation Agenda programme (TA1). The objectives of this were to:

- Review and transform our customer facing services.
- Processes were streamlined to improve consistency and efficiency across the organisation.
- Improve customer experience and make it easy for people to interact with the council.
- Develop our technology to enable our customers to self-serve.
- Develop our operating model and staff skill set.
- Grow our own talent with clear entry point and career pathway.
- Introduce technical officers to free up the capacity of specialist/professional officers.
- Develop back office integrated technology to assist with efficient ways of working.
- The main aim of the programme has been to support the delivery of a sustainable approach to transforming the organisation; an approach that would allow the Council to meet its financial savings targets, whilst also

protecting the standards and quality of front-line services.

**TA1 has successfully delivered on these objectives including the contribution of over £1m of cashable savings over the medium term** and has helped in the development of more modern and resilient working practices.

### **Transformation - Our Aims**

Transformation Agenda 2 (TA2) is already building on the successes of TA1. The TA2 programme outlines how the Council is moving forward to provide more value and benefits to residents and businesses in the district and aims to further accelerate the process of modernisation across the council, enabling the delivery of high quality, cost-effective, efficient services in a challenging environment.

TA2 aims to drive significant change and innovation throughout the Council and help us provide the very best outcomes with the resources available. It includes the following:

- Be a modern, innovative, and dynamic organisation.
- Achieve a sustainable financial future successfully addressing the financial deficit (£2m for 25/26)
- Develop a skilled and flexible workforce
- Deliver more purposeful, high-quality services to meet customer needs at reduced cost to the Council.

### **Transformation – Our Principles**





## **Transformation – Our Approach**

Service reviews represent the majority share of the TA2 Programme. There are currently 31 services across the council, each of which are included in the service review programme

All services have completed a matrix that has been analysed by the transformation team

The completed matrices inform the Service Prioritisation score.

The Service Prioritisation Score is calculated by multiplying the potential risk factors score by the potential opportunities score. This ensures reviews are prioritised for services which represent the greatest potential savings, risk management and wider opportunities.

The scores inform the timing of the associated Transformation Team service review, prioritising those with the greatest potential for cashable savings, risk mitigation as well as wider scale efficiencies. The Service Review timings have been agreed by CMT and Management Team and are mapped on the resulting Transformation Programme Plan.

## **Transformation – Our Successes**

- In addition to the £1m cashable savings achieved in TA1 a further £105.5k of cashable savings have been achieved as a direct result of TA2
- Service reviews have resulted in a further £6.8k of income generation, £17k of cost avoidance and £7.6k in debt reduction
- In addition the service reviews have also released Officer capacity as a result of introducing more efficient processes and maximising the use of technology releasing 1,800 officer hours in 23/24 and on course to release a further 2,000 officer hours in 24/25.
- **Service Reviews currently In Progress**
- Public Health Funerals, add resilience.
- Cemeteries Service Review, remove risk and improve processes.
- Finance Service Review. Better administrative processes.
- My Fenland Contact Centre
- Garden Waste Direct Debit process automation
- Sports Development Service Review.
- ARP Service Review, optimise relationships
- Marine Service Review, reduce risk and officer efficiencies.
- Housing Options Service Review.
- Private Sector Housing
- Environmental Services
- Environmental Health

- Fleet, reduce costs and risk
- Planning Service, save officer time

## 3Cs Update (Cllr Steve Tierney)

Performance for the 3C's service from 1 April to 30 August 2024:

	Total received	On time	% On time
<b>Correspondence</b>			
	38	29	76%
<b>Stage 1</b>			
Communities Environment Leisure and Planning (CELP)	53	48	91%
Growth and Infrastructure (GI)	-	-	-
Policy Resources and Customer Services (PRCS)	24	21	88%
Total	77	69	89%
<b>Stage 2</b>			
CELP	4	2	50%
GI	-	-	-
PRCS	4	4	100%
Total	8	6	75%
<b>Stage 3</b>			
CELP	2	2	100%
GI	-	-	-
PRCS	2	2	100%
Total	4	4	100%

From 1 April 2022 we have adapted our 3cs reporting system to identify the breakdown of complaints, correspondence and comments into service areas and key topics. This has allowed us to identify any common themes or patterns in service areas.

This analysis takes place on a monthly basis and for the financial year ending 31 March 2024 no patterns or trends were identified.

## ICT Transformation

ICT's workload can be categorised into 3 sections:

- Reactive Support – Day-to-day 'break-fix' support (e.g. password changes / broken laptop / unable to connect to the network).
- Proactive Maintenance – Replacement / upgrade of ICT infrastructure. (e.g. hardware replacement / software upgrades).

- Corporate Projects – Supporting the ongoing corporate transformation programme (e.g. Introducing new business applications / achieving VFM from current investments).

The ICT service aims to deliver continuous improvement in its journey to modernise the way we work, to deliver efficiencies to our services, and to improve service delivery to our customers.

Our past achievements have enabled us to achieve these goals and to transform the way we work. These projects have included the following:

### **Online Cyber Security Training**

As part of our drive to improve user knowledge in relation to cyber security and information management all staff undertake online training annually. This training is split into modules so that staff can drop in and out to complete this according to their available time. The material is updated on a regular basis and forms part of our compliance conditions. The 23/24 training programme was successfully completed by all employees earlier this year. We have now released the 24/25 programme, and this has been issued to all employees for completion.

### **Mobile Device Management (MDM)**

We now use Microsoft Intune (a cloud-based service delivering mobile device management and mobile application management) to control how mobile devices (mobile phones, tablets, and laptops) are used. It controls who has access, and what they have access to. It is being used with the Microsoft 365 suite of products enabling users to be productive on all of their devices, while keeping our information protected.

### **Hybrid Working**

We continue to improve our remote access systems to enable staff to work away from the office in terms of stability, performance, and security. All staff that require remote access to corporate systems have the necessary equipment assigned to them and the appropriate security processes in place. The process for accessing applications and data in the Microsoft cloud has been reviewed, and this has resulted in a much more efficient process for staff without reducing our security position.

### **Refresh Programme**

We operate a continuous programme of hardware which ensures all hardware (telephony /servers / storage / desktops / network) remains supported and fit for purpose. We also improve our test environment to ensure the performance and capacity is in line with development / testing needs.

### **Business Application Upgrades**

All business applications are upgraded / patched on a regular basis which is timetabled to suit the service areas, suppliers and ICT. Each year a number of major upgrades are conducted which take a significant amount of planning and resources.

ICT are continually involved in the replacement of business applications to improve the efficiency of service units and provide a better service to the citizens of Fenland. There is a continual stream of requests coming into the service for which we provide guidance, technical knowledge, and project management. This year's successes have included;

- **HR / Payroll System** – Introduced a replacement system to deliver benefits and efficiencies to the authority. This is now available to all staff through a mobile app.
- **Cemeteries System** – Currently reviewing responses from potential suppliers for a replacement system.
- **Tree Management System** – Introduced a new system to manage our trees within the district. This will assist with inspection regimes, public safety, timely identification of hazards, and response to complaints.
- **Planning System** – A major review of the processes / technology used to ensure the system is as efficient and effective as possible, including the automation of many manual processes and reporting / management of progress and performance.
- **DocuSign** – A service that allows the sending and management of documents that require a signature. This has saved a significant amount of officer time and travel within our Housing service.
- **Corporate Booking System** – An online booking system has been introduced for markets and events, and leisure services. This allows the customer to self-serve and make payments, at their convenience.
- **GrantFinder** – A service supported by a dedicated team of expert researchers who monitor, verify and report daily on thousands of funding sources including charitable trusts, societies, research councils, national government, and corporate sponsors.
- **Economic Growth CRM** – An online system to manage the relationship between the council and local businesses.

### **Cloud Infrastructure Review**

We continue to review our infrastructure to ascertain how and where systems and data are best located to leverage the most benefit for the authority in terms of cost, reliability and resilience. This reduces our dependency on a physical location for hosting our infrastructure.

### **Collaboration with Teams, SharePoint and OneDrive**

Microsoft 365 is designed to be a universal toolkit to give staff integrated and flexible ways to work for their projects and tasks. We now store and share files using SharePoint, OneDrive, and Microsoft Teams to facilitate collaboration and efficiency. A significant amount of redundant electronic data has been removed from our cloud storage in accordance with our data retention policy as well as our on-site file storage areas. All staff now use Microsoft Teams for making / receiving telephone calls.

### **Data Management / GDPR Compliance**

We continue to manage paper documents within Planning to reduce the volume of paper records and to allow these records to be accessed remotely. All office storage is being reviewed to; free-up space, ensure documents are stored securely, become more environmentally friendly, and improve customer service.

### **Contact Centre and Telephony Enhancements**

As a way of making our service delivery more flexible, we have migrated contact centre into the cloud. This has removed the need for having our own hardware / software and associated support contracts on site, as well as the need for future hardware refresh. This will enable calls / webchat / emails from customers to be answered from anywhere. As well as the contact centre, all back-office telephone calls are now made via Microsoft Teams, and all staff telephone handsets have been removed.

### **Digital Switch-Over**

It was announced that the telecommunications industry will replace all analogue lines and upgrade to digital internet-based infrastructure by December 2025. This deadline has now been extended to January 2027. Most of our analogue services have now been migrated to digital, with any remaining services being migrated in the coming months.

### **Business Centre Audio-Visual Equipment**

After replacing all audio-visual equipment in all of the larger meeting rooms at the Boathouse and South Fens Business Centre, we have also significantly improved the cellular coverage for mobile phones and WiFi performance within these buildings.

**Security**

We have introduced a safe and robust way of connecting corporate devices directly to Microsoft 365 in the cloud, rather than traversing through the FDC network. This has made the process of accessing emails and stored files more user-friendly, whilst still providing the appropriate levels of security. All security practices are continuously reviewed to defend against an ever-present and increasing threat of cyber incidents.

**Key PIs:** For the period 1 April 2024 to 30 August 2024

Key PI	Description	Target 24/25	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries processed at first point of contact	Rolling monthly target of 85% per month	99%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (measured annually in February)	90%	97.94% Customer satisfaction rates are formally recorded annually during February	
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	46.5%	54.48%	
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	80%	92.06 %	

Key:	
	Within 5% of target
	5-10% below target
	10% or more below target



REF	Date Requested	Question	Target Date																				
<b>COMPLETED ACTONS</b>																							
	04-03-24	Gavin Booth Asked if Oil fire Burners are being subcontracted out ... Carl Grimmer of Clarion Housing to respond																					
		Followed up with an email 26 June 2024 – waiting for a response Answer received and circulated to the panel	10-07-24 11-07-24																				
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Fuel Type</th> <th>No of Heating Systems</th> <th>Compliance</th> <th>Repairs April 2023 -March 2024</th> <th>Repairs April 2024 - June 2024</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Oil</td> <td>105</td> <td>94.29%</td> <td>94</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Solid Fuel</td> <td>13</td> <td>76.92%</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Grand Total</b></td> <td><b>118</b></td> <td></td> <td><b>98</b></td> <td><b>12</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Fuel Type	No of Heating Systems	Compliance	Repairs April 2023 -March 2024	Repairs April 2024 - June 2024	Oil	105	94.29%	94	11	Solid Fuel	13	76.92%	4	1	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>118</b>		<b>98</b>	<b>12</b>	
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<b>ONGOING ACTIONS</b>																							
1.		Councillor Booth asked how many boilers there are Oil? Question asked 09-09-24	24/09/24																				
2.		<p>Councillor Sennitt Clough wished to ask the transport officer a question which was, the CPCA put some funding towards Whittlesey railway station and would like an update and would also like to know if the two station adopters in Whittlesey could be part of the dialogue around improvements to the railway station. Anna Goodall responded she would pass the question on and request a response to be sent to the committee members after the meeting.</p> <p>The answer is that the Board, including all its representatives, will make the decision about the improvements to Whittlesey Station, the Board is made up of key stakeholders.</p>	24/09/24																				
<b>WATCHING BRIEF ITEMS</b>																							
		None at present																					



# Overview and Scrutiny – Draft Work Programme 2024-2025

All Informal pre-meetings are held via Teams until further notice,  
but Formal meetings will be held in the Council Chamber at Fenland Hall

## Meeting Dates

<u>Agenda Despatch Due Date</u>	<u>Informal pre-meeting</u>			<u>Formal Overview &amp; Scrutiny Meeting</u>	
	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Meeting</u>
22 November 2024	25 November 2024	2.00pm	Via Teams	2 December 2024	10.00am
10 January 2025	13 January 2025	2.00pm	Via Teams	20 January 2025	10.00am
March 2025	25 February 2025	2.00pm	Via Teams	3 March 2025	10.00am
April 2025	22 April 2025	2.00pm	Via Teams	29 April 2025	10.00am

New Municipal Year –

## 2 December 2024

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	Anglian Water		Clr Murphy Grant Tuffs Anglian Water
	Progress of Corporate Priority – Environment (to include CSP & CCTV)		Annabel Tighe Clr Count Clr Mrs French Clr Murphy Clr Tierney Dan Horn Garry Edwards Mark Mathews Phil Hughes
	LGO & 3CS	Quality Organisation	Clr Tierney
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2023/24	All	Chairman Amy Brown

## 20 January 2025

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	Draft Budget 2025/26	Quality Organisation	Cabinet CMT
	Draft Business Plan 2025/26	Quality Organisation	Cabinet CMT Dave Wright

	Fees and Charges 2025/26	Quality Organisation	Councillor Boden Peter Catchpole Cabinet Mark Saunders All of CMT
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2023/24	All	Chairman Amy Brown

### **3 March 2025**

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	Arts Council	Communities	
	Public Health & Education	Communities	
	Progress on Corporate Priorities – Communities	Communities	
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2023/24	All	Chairman Amy Brown

### **29 April 2025 ( Boat house)**

Time	Agenda Item	Fenland Corporate Priority	Portfolio Holder/ CMT/Officer/Guest
10.00 -12.00 Meeting	<b>KEEP CLEAR IF POSSIBLE</b>		
	Matters arising – Update on previous actions	All	Amy Brown
	Future Work Programme 2023/24	All	Chairman Amy Brown

