



CABINET - MONDAY, 19 MAY 2025

NOTICE OF DECISIONS PUBLISHED ON 21 MAY 2025

Agenda Item 5

Shared Prosperity Funds - Transitional Funding

Purpose

The Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) is the Government's domestic replacement for the European Structural and Investment Programme. All areas of the UK are receiving an allocation of SPF funding calculated by a funding formula where the funding available to Fenland District is for SPF £279k over a transitional one-year period 2025-26. Two SPF projects have been approved by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, a continuation of the business grant scheme Investment in Business with a budget of £220k and the Firebreak and Anti-Social Behaviour project with a budget of £59k.

Decision

AGREED to accept Shared Prosperity Funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for a one-year period 2025-26.

Reason for Decision

The SPF helps to support the delivery of the Council's economic growth and communities' corporate objectives. The proposed projects have the greatest potential to deliver new, inclusive and sustainable growth opportunities for the district's residents and businesses.

Alternative Options Considered

The SPF is a specific funding opportunity with no comparable alternative options. Acceptance of the funding provides an opportunity to deliver the outcomes specified in the CPCA's SPF GFAs and is a requirement of receiving the funding. The SPF agreements have been subject to appropriate legal oversight to ensure that Fenland District Council's position is adequately protected.

Interests

None.

Background Documents

Report to Cabinet on 19 May 2025

Agenda Item 6

Grounds Avenue Development and Lease to Support Housing Duties

Purpose

To consider proposal to commission Cornerstone Place to develop land at Grounds Avenue, March and enter into relevant legal documentation to lease the land to a Registered Provider (RP) for 125 years with the Council providing directly the required management and support to the residents in the properties.

Decision

AGREED to delegate to the Section 151 and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Housing and the Leader to:

- **enter into agreement with Cornerstone to develop the Grounds Avenue site to provide 12 properties to support the housing duties;**
- **enter into a 125-year lease with an RP for the land;**
- **enter into a management lease with the RP to enable the Council to control the nominations into and undertake the management and support responsibilities; and**
- **allocate at-risk costs of circa £92k dependent on a planning permission, securing a RP and the relevant grant funding and private finance, all to be refunded at funds drawdown.**

Reason for Decision

The IFSHM allows the development on Council assets and buildings where the Council retains the freehold and control and is funded through eligible rents and grants.

The Council has land at Grounds Avenue, March with existing permission for 6 units. Following a marketing exercise, there was no interest from the market. In light of this priority focus to reduce the pressure financially through undertaking our housing duties, the site is therefore perfect to achieve significant Council savings with no capital outlay.

The IFSHM model also:

- Delivers Net Zero New Build properties:
 - Triple glazing
 - Air Source Heat Pumps
 - Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery system
 - Solar Panels
 - Extensive insulation
 - Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) using a panelised offsite system or category 1 manufacturing and local employment where possible
 - Will work with psychologists and interior designers to create psychologically informed environments
 - Building Management System which will enable monitoring in each room of multiple data points including:
 - Moisture levels Temperature Energy usage

- Volatile airborne compounds levels
- Lighting levels
- Movement within the property
- Delivered at cost – no developer profit.

Alternative Options Considered

The other option would be for the Council to do the project in house, including planning, raising the finance, project management and raising the capital financing.

Finance colleagues commissioned MUFG Corporate Markets Treasury Services to look at the implications to FDC's balance sheet to the Cornerstone model. The document from MUFG Corporate Markets is attached at Schedule 1 along with a summary from the FDC accountancy team at Schedule 2. Please note the example is not the Grounds Avenue site, another site used for illustrative purposes.

In summary there is little difference to how each model would be accounted for on the Council's balance sheet.

Therefore, it is whether FDC want to project manage delivery of the scheme and raise the capital / relevant loans directly or we commission Cornerstone to project manage and deliver the same scheme with FDC having equivalent control as if we did the scheme ourselves.

Clearly the latter option eases the competing requests for finance from "Fenland Inspire!" funding requests. There is no need for FDC to put any capital in or raise loans. The model means FDC will manage the scheme (staffing and full nomination rights) so have complete control on the lets and performance of the scheme.

The proposal is subsidy compliant.

Cornerstone are proposing to use an established MMC construction to speed up delivery.

Also, it recognises to project manage this scheme in house as well as other projects underway and the Fenland Inspire! work, it is felt that the Cornerstone model will achieve the units more quickly than an inhouse solution.

The "at risk" circa £92k costs for the planning permission that is refunded when successful permission is achieved as funds draw down would be the same for either the Cornerstone model or the Council directly delivered model. There is already an existing permission at this site which is of comfort for this risk.

The Cornerstone project is delivered at cost with the project management fee, with full transparency.

Therefore, on the basis that the Cornerstone model can deliver all the benefits as if the scheme was directly delivered by the Council (direct FDC control of the management and support) but

without the need to raise the capital finance, it also provides the capacity to deliver the planning and new build construction through being managed by Cornerstone. This allows FDC capacity to focus on the Fenland Inspire! work and other existing projects already in the pipeline. In summary, with this established approach the project will be done at a speed that is quicker than an in-house model along with the other benefits highlighted above.

Interests

Councillor Mrs French declared that she is a member of Planning Committee and took no part in the discussion and voting thereon

Background Documents

Report to Cabinet on 19 May 2025

Agenda Item 7

Decision to enter a contract through the Football Foundations PlayZones Framework to construct PlayZones at Barton Road and Manor Field

Purpose

In November 2024 Cabinet reviewed a report regarding the Football Foundation Project and the potential delivery of up to four PlayZones in Fenland, with two initially identified to be developed at the Manor Field in Whittlesey and at Barton Road Playing Field in Wisbech.

Cabinet approved the submission of bids to the Football Foundation for these two facilities.

Cabinet also noted the necessary match funding of £62,500 per facility and the planned funding applications to be submitted to the FCC Community Action Fund to support the Manor project and Wisbech Town Board to support the Wisbech project.

This report highlights the current position of these two projects and details that the necessary match funding, previously identified, has not been forthcoming following rejection of a bid to FCC and the timetable changes for the Wisbech Town Board and the Government's Neighbourhood Plan funding. This report therefore asks Cabinet to consider supportive match funding the two projects from FDC's capital programme.

This report also asks Cabinet to consider whether support for two other possible PlayZone locations – should Football Foundation funding become available – whilst noting that it is likely that match funding for the facilities would be necessary from the District Council once again.

Decision

AGREED to:

- **note the report and the benefits that the development of PlayZones in Fenland will offer, namely;**
 - **increasing community physical activity levels and subsequently community health**
 - **encouraging under-represented groups such as women and girls, disabled people and older people to become more physically active**
 - **supporting a reduction in anti-social behaviour**

- supporting community cohesion;
- note the General Fund Budget Estimates and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Report, agreed by Cabinet and Council in February, which projects a financial shortfall for 2025/26 of £1.432m increasing year on year amounting to around £3.4m by 2027/28. Although there are currently many uncertainties regarding the budget for 2025/26 and the MTFS, there remains a significant structural deficit which the Council will need to address. Any additional costs for items not already included in the budget will incur additional revenue costs of circa. £81k p.a. for every additional £1m required based on an assumed 30 year borrowing profile;
- allocate the necessary match funding requirement of £80,925.29 for the Manor Field facility and the match funding requirement of £74,988.99 for the Barton Road facility;
- identify that this project is a capital project as the original PlayZone report was dated November 2024;
- delegate authority to the Corporate Director, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Environment and Leisure and the Leader of the Council in his capacity as Portfolio Holder for Finance to develop the PlayZones as required in paragraph 3.3, through the Football Foundation PlayZones Framework and to award, mobilise and implement such proposal with further authority to take all reasonable ancillary actions to ensure implementation;
- authorise the Monitoring Officer to execute and complete all requisite legal documentation in relation to the matters outlined above; and
- to support further bids to the Football Foundation for a PlayZone facility in Wisbech Park and a location in March or Chatteris and instructs officers accordingly, noting that any successful funding for two facilities will also be likely to require match funding from the Council in the region of £80,000 per facility if other funders decline to support the projects.

Reason for Decision

To enable the Council to enter into the Football Foundation framework to deliver the facilities at Manor Field and Barton Road, if desired, and with the necessary cost of the match funding identified in the report.

To identify if Cabinet wishes to pursue an opportunity, subject to FF funding availability, to submit grant applications for a facility in Wisbech Park and either a suitable site in March or Chatteris, being mindful of the likely match funding required for each facility.

The opportunity to deliver these impressive PlayZone facilities in Fenland is a once in a decade opportunity with significant funding being provided by the Football Foundation.

These facilities have been identified as needed by our local communities in a [third-party report developed on behalf of the Football Foundation](#). The benefits are significant and with Fenland identified as a priority area for the funding it is an opportunity to support our local communities with their health and physical activity, reduce anti-social behaviour, increase community cohesion and support under-served groups with enjoyable opportunities to be active.

Alternative Options Considered

Given the funding from the Football Foundation there is no alternative approach to this programme, other than doing nothing.

Interests
Councillor Mrs French declared that she is a member of Planning Committee and these facilities may need planning permission so took no part in the voting thereon
Background Documents
Report to Cabinet on 19 May 2025 and November 2024
Local Football Facility Plan Fenland

Agenda Item 8
Whittlesey Relief Road Project
Purpose
To acknowledge the completed Whittlesey Relief Road Strategic Outline Business Case (SOC) and its recommendations and agree next steps to source funding for the completion of further, more detailed work to continue the development of this project, with the amount required being £220,000.
Decision
AGREED to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note the report and its recommendations; • support in principle the proposal for further work to refine the scheme and assess further benefits; • ask Officers to explore alternative potential approaches to source the £220,000 required to complete the work recommended in the Whittlesey Relief Road Strategic Outline Business Case (SOC); and • bring to the attention of the Planning Team the wording of paragraph 2.2 of this Agenda Report and request that officers include this conclusion of the SOC and take this into account within officer reports for any applications of 20+ houses and any significant commercial developments in Whittlesey, Eastrea and Coates.
Reason for Decision
<p>The total cost for the Whittlesey Relief Road SOC was £277,783. This was funded by the original £260,000 Market Towns Fund plus some additional underspend from other Growing Fenland projects. This investment has delivered a SOC which makes a clear case for the need for traffic interventions in Whittlesey.</p> <p>The best performing scheme to address the issues in Whittlesey has been identified as a southern relief road, HGV rerouting and active travel improvements. The cost of a scheme of this scale is significant and requires further work to understand the monetised value the wider benefits it may bring. The Benefit to Cost Ratio for the project is currently too low for the project to progress to Outline Business Case. The recommended assessment work would focus on addressing the gap between the benefits costed so far and the scale and cost of the proposed scheme with the aim of creating a stronger BCR.</p> <p>To undertake the additional assessment, the scheme requires development funding of £220,000.</p>

Upon completion of this assessment, the scheme should be reviewed for further consideration, with the intention of seeking funding for the Outline Business Case.

Alternative Options Considered

A non-relief road option was included in the shortlisted options and the public consultation. This performed poorly against the scheme objectives, particularly due to it not affecting the current routing of HGVs. This option was garnered the least support of all of the options.

The conclusion of the project highlights that transport interventions are needed for Whittlesey and that one single solution is unlikely to resolve all of the towns transport issues. This suggests a multi-mode, multi-faceted approach is needed. Part of the solution is therefore likely to include the Cambridgeshire Country Council as the Local Highway Authority and CPCA as the Local Transport Authority programmes to develop transport proposals across all modes of transport; a new Transport Strategy for Fenland District covering all modes of transport; and walking and cycling proposals for Whittlesey included within the new district transport strategy, the Fenland Walking, Cycling and Mobility Aid Strategy and the County Council emerging Active Travel Strategy. Fenland District Council's work with CPCA and others to develop plans to significantly improve Whittlesey railway station will also be a significant factor.

A key component for any solution for transport issues in Whittlesey will need to continue to consider alternative ways to address the key issues that need resolving. Alternative options must be considered to satisfy funding requirements and therefore they will continue to form part of this work.

Interests

None.

Background Documents

Report to Cabinet on 19 May 2025

Whittlesey Relief Road SOC Final Report

<https://moderngov.fenland.gov.uk/documents/s17117/Whittlesey%20Relief%20Road%20SOC%20FINAL.pdf>

Whittlesey Relief Road SOC Final Report Appendix A to O

<https://moderngov.fenland.gov.uk/documents/s17118/Combined%20Appendices%20A%20to%20O.pdf>

Whittlesey Relief Road SOC Options Appraisal Report and Appendix A to E

<https://moderngov.fenland.gov.uk/documents/s17119/Combined%20OAR%20Appendices%20A%20to%20E.pdf>

FDC Cabinet – 16 March 2023

<https://moderngov.fenland.gov.uk/documents/s11850/Cabinet%20Paper%20March%202023%20-%20Whittlesey%20Relief%20Rd%20V2%2006.2.2023%20updated%2002.03.23.pdf>

FDC Cabinet – 9 January 2022

[Report and appendices.pdf \(fenland.gov.uk\)](#)

CPCA Board Meeting – 30 November 2022

[353.pdf](#)

Whittlesey Town Council 2021 – Whittlesey Relief Road Inception Study

[Whittlesey Relief Road - Whittlesey Town Council](#)

Agenda Item 9

Fenland Future Ltd - Appointment of Director

Purpose

To seek approval to appoint a new Director to fill a vacancy on the Board of Fenland Future Ltd.

Decision

AGREED to the appointment of Sian Warren to the Board of FFL and delegate to the Company Secretary all necessary arrangements to make his happen.

Reason for Decision

Fenland Future Ltd is constituted to run with a minimum of three directors and it is therefore necessary to appoint a third director as soon as possible.

Alternative Options Considered

None. The composition of the Board is as designated by the original LATCo Business case as presented to Cabinet on 9 June 2020 and as determined by the Articles of Association approved by Cabinet on 29 June 2020. The Articles of Association state that the Board of Directors will comprise a minimum of three and a maximum of five directors.

Other officers were considered in discussion between the Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer and the suggested recommendation is as contained in this paper.

Interests

None.

Background Documents

Report to Cabinet on 19 May 2025

Cabinet meeting 9 June 2020 LATCo Business case

Cabinet meeting 29 June 2020 Fenland Future Ltd, Articles of Association and Reserved matters

Agenda Item 10

Wisbech High Street Update

Purpose

To provide a monthly update regarding the ongoing construction work at 24 High Street, Wisbech.

Decision

AGREED to note the report, recognising that progress on the build continues with completion of construction works due imminently.

Reason for Decision

To provide a monthly update on the work. Internal works are proceeding as anticipated, and the building is now looking close to completion. The building is a significant improvement to the streetscape of the High Street, filling in the “missing tooth” that has impacted the town for the past 40 years.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

Interests

None.

Background Documents

Report to Cabinet on 19 May 2025

Previous monthly Cabinet reports regarding Wisbech High Street

July 2022 Cabinet and Council reports regarding 24 High Street, Wisbech

Agenda Item 13

Port Fees and Charges (with CONFIDENTIAL appendices)

Purpose

To set fees and charges for port operations at both Port Sutton Bridge and Wisbech Port for financial year 2025/26.

Decision

AGREED that the fees and charges for the Port of Wisbech be increased by 10% and for the Port of Sutton Bridge they remain the same.

Reason for Decision

Members need to set fees and charges on an annual basis. Cabinet deferred setting port fees and charges at January Cabinet, therefore, there is a requirement to set fees and charges for both ports at this meeting for the financial year 2025/26.

Alternative Options Considered
No change to Fees and Charges will result in ongoing deficits for FDC and reliance on the General Fund to finance the service.
Interests
None.
Background Documents
Report to Cabinet on 19 May 2025 with confidential appendices
Port Operations report (Confidential) – Cabinet; 16 December 2024
Fees and Charges report incl Port Fees– Cabinet; 27 January 2025 - Report and Appendix A.pdf
Port Operations report (Confidential) - Cabinet 19 May 2025

Agenda Item 14
Port Operations and Maintenance (CONFIDENTIAL)
Purpose
To provide an update and options relating to investment and repair of the suspended quay at Wisbech Port, associated information and outcomes building upon the previous Cabinet report from 16 December 2024.
Decision
AGREED to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note the issues and options outlined, acknowledging and balancing the competing financial and statutory obligations and liabilities identified; and • authorise officers to act accordingly to the recommendations agreed and a further report be brought back to the July Cabinet meeting.
Reason for Decision
To ensure port operations are able to continue.
Alternative Options Considered
All currently known options have been presented for consideration.
Interests
Councillors Boden, Christy and Tierney declared that they had been contacted by an interested party but did not enter into discussions with them
Background Documents
Confidential Report to Cabinet on 19 May 2025
Port Operations report – Cabinet; 16 December 2024

Additional information regarding these decisions is available from
Amy Brown – Tel: 01354 622452

The 29 May 2025 at 1700 hours is the expiry date for call-in by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel of any of the above decisions. These decisions will come into force and may then be implemented on 30 May 2025, with the exception of any that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel calls in.