



**CABINET - MONDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2026
NOTICE OF DECISIONS PUBLISHED ON 25 FEBRUARY 2026**

Item 5
Business Plan 2026/27
Purpose
For Cabinet to consider and recommend to Council the approval of the Final Business Plan 2026-27.
Decision
AGREED to recommend to Council the approval of the Business Plan 2026/27.
Reason for Decision
Cabinet is being asked to approve the Business Plan 2026-27 because it will provide a structure of proposed aspirations and outcomes which will guide delivery of the Council's core priorities. It will also aim to ensure that the Council runs effectively, transparently and sustainably.
Alternative Options Considered
N/A
Interests
N/A
Background Documents
Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

Item 6
Budget & MTFS 2026/27
Purpose
To consider and approve the revised General Fund Budget and Capital Programme for 2025/26 and consider and recommend to Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the General Fund Budget Estimates 2026/27 and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 and to 2030/31 • the Council Tax levels for 2026/27 • the Capital Programme 2026/27-2028/29 • the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Capital Strategy and Annual Treasury Investment Strategy for 2026/27.

Decision

AGREED that:

- (i) The revised estimates for 2025/26 as set out in Section 6 and Appendix A showing an estimated surplus of £107k which will be transferred to the Budget Equalisation Reserve be approved,

and to recommend to Council that:

- (ii) the General Fund revenue budget for 2026/27 as set out in Section 7 and Appendix A be approved,
- (iii) the Medium-Term Financial Strategy as outlined in the report and Appendix B be adopted,
- (iv) the Capital Programme and funding statement as set out in Appendix D be approved,
- (v) the adoption of the additional Business Rates Relief measures as detailed in Section 5 using Discretionary Relief Powers be approved
- (vi) the expenses detailed in Section 10 be approved to be treated as general expenses for 2026/27,
- (vii) the Port Health levy for 2026/27 be set as shown in Section 11
- (viii) the current working age Council Tax Support Scheme be adopted with effect from 1 April 2026 as set out in Section 13, with appropriate changes to the prescribed pensioner scheme as determined by regulations,
- (ix) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement (including amending the MRP calculation to be based on the 'Annuity method' from 2025/26 onwards), Treasury Investment Strategy, Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2026/27 and Capital Strategy 2026/27 as set out in Section 14 and Appendix E be approved,
- (x) the Band D Council Tax level for Fenland District Council services for 2026/27 be set at £253.35, a reduction on the current year.

Reason for Decision

N/A

Alternative Options Considered

N/A

Interests

Background Documents

Final Finance settlement – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
Autumn Statement and Budget 2025 (HM Treasury)
Medium Term Financial Strategy working papers.
Government announcements since February 2025.

Item 7

RECAP Waste Strategy

Purpose

To recommend to Council the approval and adoption of the updated Waste Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership. In support of the updated Waste Strategy, recommend to Council the approval and adoption of the updated Fenland Recycling Plan.

Decision

AGREED to recommend to Council:

- **that the revised Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Waste Strategy be approved, subject to any final drafting amendments to be made by the Director responsible for Environmental Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Recycling & Refuse Collection.**
 - **that the updated Fenland Recycling Plan be approved,**
- and to note that that the development and approval of a shared waste strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough fulfils a Business Plan objective for 2025/26.**

Reason for Decision

The context in which waste and recycling services are provided has local control, but this is influenced by:

- emerging and existing waste legislation, such as Simpler Recycling and the introduction of separated food waste collection,
- longer term waste infrastructure requirements,
- potential impacts of LGR as to the future structure of local councils,
- environmental legislative requirements,
- and wider issues impacting the waste industry, often driven by global issues and material values.
- The draft strategy looks towards the medium-term issues which will need collaborative work and will be covered in an action plan for the Partnership following the approval of the strategy.

This shared Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Strategy seeks to provide a way forward for all councils in the partnership with waste collection and/or disposal responsibilities, where current work continues as planned and longer-term matters can be given due consideration within the complex environment.

Whilst representative members on the Recap Board have agreed the current wording of the appended draft, there may still be a need for minor amendments as a result of the consultation and approval process.

To allow for this, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, delegated authority to approve any such minor amendments is part of the recommendation.

The Fenland Recycling Plan is out of date and requires updating to meet with current legislation.

Alternative Options Considered

Consideration was given by the RECAP Board to manage without a shared strategy but discounted given the impending local government reorganisation plan whereby coordinated working across the region will be essential, the strategy is designed to provide a framework for action rather than a definite and defined forward plan.

Interests
N/A
Background Documents
Fenland Waste Strategy (<i>Food Waste</i>) 24 February 2025 Report and appendices.pdf

Item 8
New and Updated Interim Planning Guidance
Purpose
<p>To present a suite of Interim Planning Guidance Notes to assist the Council in managing development effectively while the new Local Plan is being prepared. The guidance addresses three key areas; developer contributions to community infrastructure, the protection of high-quality agricultural land, and the planning and design considerations for new Houses in Multiple Occupation (including smaller HMOs in Wisbech) to ensure they are located in suitable areas and do not negatively affect the amenity of existing neighbourhoods.</p> <p>These documents will provide clear expectations for applicants and communities, helping to secure well-planned, sustainable growth that supports local needs, strengthens the local economy, and safeguards the environment.</p>
Decision
<p>AGREED to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revoke the 2015 Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document, the 2014 Resource Use and Renewable Energy SPD, the 2004 Nene Waterfront Development Brief and the 2015 Interim Guidance on Policy LP4 Part B• Approve the publication of an Interim Planning Guidance Note on Planning Obligations• Approve the publication of an Interim Planning Guidance Note on Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land.• Approve the publication of an Interim Planning Guidance Note on Houses in Multiple Occupation, and to• Delegate authority to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders, to make minor updates to the Interim Planning Guidance Notes as required, ensuring they remain up to date and fit for purpose.
Reason for Decision
<p>The recommendations are proposed to ensure that the Council has up-to-date, practical guidance in place while work progresses on the new style Local Plan. The withdrawal of the previous emerging Local Plan in December 2025, combined with evolving local circumstances and new national requirements, means that several existing SPDs are now outdated and no longer provide sufficient clarity for applicants, Members or officers. Without refreshed interim guidance, there is a risk of inconsistency, uncertainty and avoidable delays in decision-making.</p> <p>Introducing Interim Planning Guidance Notes (PGNs) offers a proportionate and timely way to</p>

address priority issues where clear guidance is urgently needed. The Planning Obligations IPGN replaces the 2015 SPD and reflects current expectations around infrastructure funding, biodiversity net gain, and open space contributions. The Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land IPGN provides a transparent approach to assessing proposals affecting high-quality agricultural soils – an issue of national and local significance for Fenland. The HMO Design and Amenity Standards IPGN responds directly to Member and community concerns about the concentration and quality of HMOs, particularly in Wisbech following the introduction of Article 4 Directions.

Endorsing and publishing these documents will help applicants prepare better proposals, support fair and consistent decision-making, and ensure the Council can continue to secure necessary infrastructure, protect key environmental assets, and manage the impacts of intensive HMO uses. Delegating authority for minor updates will allow the guidance to remain accurate and responsive as further evidence and national guidance becomes available.

Overall, these recommendations will strengthen the Council's planning framework during the transition to a new Local Plan, supporting good growth and providing greater confidence for communities, investors and decision-makers.

Alternative Options Considered

Do Nothing Approach

One option would be to take no action and continue relying on the existing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and other legacy guidance while work progresses on the new style Local Plan. This approach is not recommended. Many of the current SPDs were prepared between 2004 and 2016 and do not reflect more recent national requirements or the local circumstances now facing Fenland, including the need to secure appropriate infrastructure contributions, protect nationally important agricultural land, and manage the growth and concentration of HMOs in certain areas. Continuing to rely on out-of-date guidance would create uncertainty for applicants, communities and decision-makers and could lead to inconsistent or less transparent planning outcomes.

The do-nothing approach would also leave a significant gap during the transition to the new Local Plan. Without clear interim guidance, applicants may not understand what information is required to support their proposals, potentially leading to delays, lower quality submissions and increased pressure on decision-making processes.

For Members and officers, the absence of updated guidance would reduce the clarity and consistency needed to respond to development pressures in a timely and well-evidenced manner. For these reasons, doing nothing is not considered an appropriate option. The proposed Interim Planning Guidance Notes provide a proportionate and effective way to support good decision-making, manage development pressures and maintain a clear approach to growth while the new Local Plan is prepared.

Produce All Documents as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

A second option would be to prepare all three guidance documents as formal Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) rather than as Interim Planning Guidance Notes. While SPDs carry greater weight as material considerations, this approach is not recommended. Preparing an

SPD requires a statutory consultation process, a Statement of Consultation, and supporting evidence to demonstrate conformity with the adopted Local Plan. This significantly increases the time and resources needed to introduce the guidance at a point when timely clarity for applicants and decision-makers is essential.

By contrast, Interim Planning Guidance Notes can be issued quickly, updated more easily, and tailored to today's local priorities without the constraints of formal SPD procedures. They offer a more practical solution during the Local Plan review period, ensuring that decision-making remains consistent, transparent and rooted in up-to-date expectations.

For these reasons, producing full SPDs for each topic is not considered an appropriate or efficient option at this stage.

Interests

Background Documents

[Fenland Local Plan - Adopted Web](#)

[Developer Contributions SPD](#)

[Resource Use and Renewable Energy SPD](#)

[Nene Waterfront Development Brief SPG](#)

[Full Council Papers - February 2025 - Item C51/24 - HMOs in Wisbech](#)

[Full Council Papers - September 2025 - Item C30/25 Solar Farms and Food Security Motion](#)

Item 9

Fenland Transport Economic Assessment including March to Wisbech Rail Funding from CPCA

Purpose

This report relates to the Fenland Transport Economic Assessment project including Wisbech to March Rail. Subject to final confirmation of the third-party funding from CPCA, members are requested to:

- Confirm the acceptance of £500,000 between April 2026 and March 2028 from CPCA for FDC to deliver the Fenland Transport Economic Assessment Project.
- Appoint a Project Board including setting its remit, its terms of reference and membership.
- Note the procurement exercise to select a contractor to deliver the Fenland Transport Economic Project. Approval of delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Transport and S151 Officer is requested to award the contract following completion of the procurement.
- Subject to final confirmation, third party funding being approved from CPCA. A Grant Funding Agreement between CPCA and FDC is required. Delegated approval to the Portfolio Holder for Transport and S151 Officer is requested to approve and sign the agreement on behalf of FDC.

Decision

AGREED to:

- **Subject to the final confirmation from CPCA, confirm the acceptance of £500,000 between 2026 and 2028 from CPCA for FDC to deliver the Fenland Transport Economic Assessment Project.**

- **Confirm the establishment of the Project Board to oversee the business case project, confirm the board’s remit, including its terms of reference and membership.**
- **Note the procurement exercise to select a contractor to deliver the Fenland Transport Economic Assessment project and give approval for delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Transport and the S151 Officer to award the contract.**
- **Subject to the final confirmation from CPCA, third party funding has been approved for this work. A Grant Funding Agreement between CPCA and FDC is required. Delegate approval to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and S151 Officer to sign the agreement on behalf of FDC and complete all other documentation necessary to bring this arrangement into effect.**

Reason for Decision

FDC has an integrated transport strategy as set out in the current Adopted Local Plan (2014). The Council has worked in partnership with the CPCA, the County Council and others to progress study work and complete schemes such as Fenland Stations and Whittlesey Relief Road to support its transport strategy. The Council provided its comments to CPCA in October 2024 to guide the decision making of its Transport Committee in November 2024 and this Economic Assessment project provides an opportunity for FDC to further influence and shape this project moving forward. CPCA has awarded FDC £500,000 to complete this Fenland Transport Economic Assessment in line with the above. It is therefore considered that this approach and the funding should be approve by Cabinet along with related governance processes.

Alternative Options Considered

Alternative options have not been considered; this project is part of long-standing ongoing work to deliver a railway scheme for Wisbech and to address the transport infrastructure deficit across all modes within Fenland. FDC has a commitment in its Fenland Rail Development Strategy 2011 – 2031 approved by Cabinet in April 2012. Equally, Cambridgeshire Country Council as the Local Highway Authority and CPCA as the Local Transport Authority have programmes to develop transport proposals across all modes of transport. A new Transport Strategy for Fenland District was developed by CCC in February and March 2023 and has since been adopted into the Local Transport Plan and covers all modes of transport. Fenland District Council is also working with CPCA and other partner organisations to deliver a multi modal approach to address transport issues in Fenland. This Fenland Transport Economic Appraisal Project therefore already has in place a sound policy basis.

Interests

Councillors Boden, Christy and Seaton declared that they are Trustees of FACT.

Background Documents

CPCA Board Meeting – 30 November 2022

[353.pdf](#)

CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee – November 2024

[Agenda for Transport Committee on Monday, 4th November, 2024, 10.00 am](#)

Cambs CC Fenland Transport Strategy (2023)

[Fenland Transport Strategy | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Local Transport & Connectivity Plan (2023)

[CPCA-LTCP-Strategic-Document.pdf](#)

Local Growth Plan (2025)

[C220817 CPCA Prospectus](#)

Item 10

Fenland Inspire! - Play Equipment

Purpose

Fenland District Council has been granted £1.5 million from the Government's Pride in Place Impact Fund to support the enhancement of community facilities. Members have expressed a preference that this spend be allocated to open spaces facilities and play areas across the district in line with the Fenland Inspire! project aims.

Decision

AGREED:

- **To note that the deadline for committing the Pride in Place Impact Fund that is funding open space and play area improvements should be committed by no later than 31 March 2027**
- **To note that work to replace Westmead play area is underway and is outside of the Pride in Place Impact Fund play area budget**
- **That the Portfolio Holder for Finance Inspire! – Play Equipment immediately contacts all FDC members to request ideas of specific locations where the funding should be spent. There are significant constraints set by Government on how this grant money may be spent, FDC members suggesting that money in their area should be spent on schemes other than play areas should carefully check that any such alternative spending falls within the Government's criteria. Schemes generally must also be deliverable relatively quickly to satisfy the Government's timing criteria for spend to be completed.**
- **That, in the interest of fairness across the district, an indicative split of spend shall be that £250,000 shall be spent in each of the four towns, whilst £500,000 shall be spent in the parished areas outside the boundaries of the four Fenland towns. It is appreciated that this precise split will not be able to be achieved because of the discreet individual cost of each selected scheme, but this split is an initial guide to assist in creating a fair allocation across the district.**
- **That proposals will be submitted to Cabinet in March 2026 for approval to progress.**

Reason for Decision

N/A

Alternative Options Considered

This project focusses on FDC play areas (but does permit alternative uses) and highlights the importance of local elected member involvement as community leaders. Each improvement to be delivered will feature community consultation, per PiPiF guidance to ensure community involvement.

Interests

N/A
Background Documents
November 2025 Cabinet Report January 2026 Cabinet Report December 2023 Cabinet Report

Item 11
Manor Leisure Centre redevelopment project - update at the completion of RIBA Stage 3
Purpose
To update Cabinet regarding progress of the Manor Leisure Centre redevelopment project.
Decision
<p>AGREED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to note the report and progress of the project • to note the redevelopment project scheme details and the expectation of a firm cost for the redevelopment project to be presented to Cabinet for a construct or do not construct decision in June 2026, for a start on site in late July/early August. • to note the significant financial pressures that the Council faces and pays close attention to Section 3 and the financial assessment section of this report in Section 12. • to note The Council is working with Sport England to secure supportive funding that will offset design improvements required by Sports England that have enhanced initial designs. • that Cabinet authorises, in advance of Cabinet’s June 2026 decision regarding the construction project, the Monitoring Officer to prepare all requisite legal documentation required to ensure that the Council will have received the necessary legal advice, completed all necessary procurement documentation and prepared all necessary legal documentation and will be in a position to move forwards into contract for the main Development Management Agreement of the leisure centre project in a prompt and efficient manner, following Cabinet’s decision in June, if that decision is to proceed with the redevelopment.
Reason for Decision
The redevelopment of the Manor Leisure centre is necessary due to the condition of the existing facilities that are at the end of their useful life. The redevelopment will benefit the growing community of Whittlesey and surrounding villages.
Alternative Options Considered
<p>The Cabinet report of February 2025 identified two other options instead of the redevelopment of the pool, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a new facility adjacent to the current facilities. This option is estimated to cost a further £10m and was deemed unaffordable. • Instead of a redevelopment, the existing facilities condition survey spending of £4.331m would allow the buildings to stand still. It was considered that this would be wasted money on a facility that is no longer fit for purpose and would not serve the community for the next 20+ years.

Interests
N/A
Background Documents
Cabinet Report June 2025 Cabinet Report February 2025 Cabinet Report November 2023 Cabinet Report January 2025 Cabinet Report November 2025

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

The 4 March 2026 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 5 March 2026, with the exception of any that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel calls in.