

Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

**May 2025
(For performance in January, February
and March 2025)**

Cabinet Members



Cllr Chris Boden
Leader of the Council
& Portfolio Holder for
Finance



Cllr Ian Benney
Portfolio Holder for
Economic Growth & Skills



Cllr Jan French
Deputy Leader of the
Council, Portfolio Holder
for Revenues & Benefits
and Civil Parking
Enforcement



Cllr Sam Hoy
Portfolio Holder for
Housing & Licensing



Cllr Dee Laws
Portfolio Holder for
Planning & Flooding



Cllr Alex Miscandlon
Portfolio Holder for
Leisure & Internal
Drainage Boards



Cllr Peter Murphy
Portfolio Holder for
Refuse & Cleansing,
Parks & Open Spaces



Cllr Chris Seaton
Portfolio Holder for
Transport, Heritage &
Culture



Cllr Steve Tierney
Portfolio Holder for
Communications,
Transformation, Climate
Change & Strategic
Refuse



Cllr Susan Wallwork
Portfolio Holder for
Community, Health,
Environmental Health,
CCTV, Community
Safety & Military
Covenant

Communities

Projects from Business Plan:

Support Vulnerable Members of Our Community

ARP updates (Cllr French)

ARP continue to work to identify and prevent fraud leading to an increase in Council Tax income in the following areas:

- Local Council Tax Support
- Single Person Discount
- Council Tax
- Non-Domestic Rates.

The ongoing review of Single Person Discounts continues to provide positive outcomes. The ARP team continue to work with the largest Social Housing provider in the Authority to tackle Right to Buy and subletting abuse.

The team continue to seek opportunities to identify dwellings and businesses not registered or having had an undeclared change in use, leading to increased charges, including possible retrospective charges.

The Fraud teams work, also jointly funded by the County Councils, identified over £3.8 Million in fraud and error last year, an increase on the previous year. This is due to the further resource funded by Cambridgeshire County Council and has allowed ARP to expand proactive fraud and error identification.

We have now completed the Annual Billing process, which has continued to offer PDF attachment e-bills.

In terms of the end of year performance for 2024-25, all performance indicators have ended on target despite a challenging year dealing with the to the ongoing rollout of Universal Credit.

Supporting residents to manage the effects of the costs of living (Cllr Boden)

Our customer facing teams provide support to residents struggling with cost-of-living issues in many ways:

- Issuing food vouchers
- Advising on additional benefits they can claim
- Signposting to other partners who can support
- Assisting with on-line Universal Credit (UC) applications
- Working closely with our ARP colleagues we signpost to avenues where discretionary benefits might assist
- We work with a huge range of partners who can also provide additional support, and we will link our customers into these channels
- Our Early Help Hub (operating within our My Fenland customer facing team) to provide an additional channel of support to residents who may be ready to return to the work

environment, having has a protracted spell of ill-health has provided support to 265 customers since June 2024.

- Our Work Well Hub (also operating within our My Fenland customer facing team) was launched in October 2024 has provided support to 181 customers since its launch at the end of last year. The aim of Work Well is to support people with health conditions and disabled people to start, stay or thrive in work, offering a range of support including:
 - A personal assessment of an individual's needs to understand 'what matters to you' and what support might work best for their circumstances.
 - Personalised, goal-based plans to address physical health, mental wellbeing, and social needs to help individuals to thrive in and/or return work.
 - Connect people with local and community-based work and health support services
 - Support for employers to understand their employee's needs and advice on how to provide workplace adjustments that support individuals to thrive at work.

Homelessness (Cllr Hoy)

In 2024/25 the Housing Options team has successfully addressed the housing issues for 247 households where we assessed they were owed a duty to either remain in their own home or found alternative accommodation within either a 56 day prevention period or 56 day relief period. This is broken down to 141 at the prevention stage and 106 at the relief stage.

Prevention means the household has accommodation but are threatened with homelessness within the next 56 days. Here we usually attempt to keep the household in their current accommodation.

Relief means they have left that accommodation. Therefore, there is a need to source some alternative accommodation. This is usually the point at which a household would go into temporary accommodation as they are homeless.

Number of households seeking advice (homeless presentations) for this period were 2002. The figure last year was 2201. This represents a decrease of 9% and a change in an upward trend from the last 2 years. (21/22 – 1973, 22/23 -2093, 23/24 - 2203)

Housing advice has been given to 1346 households where no duties were owed by the Council. This means that following a housing needs assessment, and any interventions, there was no need to issue a formal homeless decision.

In 2024/25 we accepted 184 prevention duties and 342 relief duties with 108 households being owed a main housing duty (the latter means the Council could not resolve the housing issues presented by the household in either the prevention stage nor the relief stage and we now have a legal duty to find permanent accommodation and must accommodate them until so).

The best outcome is to resolve the housing issue for as many households as possible within the prevention stage as this keeps them in their current accommodation. The second-best outcome is finding alternative accommodation for the household within the relief stage prior to having to make a main housing duty decision. The latter means that we sometimes need to make an adverse decision for the household such as not being in priority need or that they are intentionally homeless. If a household is owed a main housing duty, then the Council must

accommodate the household until we are able to end the duty (usually by an offer of accommodation).

This context is important as it not only demonstrates our commitment to preventative work and that we are keeping people in their home but that we are able to get involved in a household's homelessness situation early. Our prevention success rate in 2024/25 is 77% (the number of households prevented at this stage [141] divided by the number of prevention duties owed [184]). Last year this was 52% (142/271).

We are trying our utmost to bring this successful prevention work into resolving more households' issues at the relief stage. Our relief success rate in 2024/25 is 31%. (the number of households prevented at this stage [106] divided by the number of relief duties owed [342]). Last year this 32% (115/356).

Performance has improved this year and positively impacted our reported performance indicator metric, which is;

"The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing Options work for the year"
= 47% (247 preventions divided by 526 households where duties were owed)

Reducing Rough Sleeping (Cllr Hoy)

In the financial year 2024-2025, the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) project supported a total of 81 clients. Of these 81 individuals, we have successfully supported 34 into stable move on accommodation which includes projects such as Housing First; Supported living routes such as Ferry Project or Amicus, in to private rented accommodation, or reconnected with family and friends. Due to the increase in complexity, 25 clients had an alternative outcome. This includes prison, hospital, or loss of contact. We continue to support 22 clients under RSI, of which, 14 continue to sleep rough.

Moving into the next financial year, the focus from the RSI team and its partners is to continue to support our most vulnerable clients move off of the streets and in to suitable and sustainable accommodation. We will continue to liaise with MHCLG to create new ideas and solutions for our target priority group. This group of rough sleepers are our most entrenched and vulnerable service users. Alongside MHCLG, we will also liaise with partners such as Changing Futures, Housing First and the Ferry Project to come up with creative ideas to bring this client group into services.

For those who we have lost contact with and who remain on the periphery of rough sleeping, it is our aim to encourage these clients to re-engage with support services to prevent them from returning to the streets. Homelessness prevention remains a priority for the RSI team and its partners.

	EU	UK
Positive Move On	17	17
Outcome Ongoing	8	14
Other Outcome	10	15

Housing Enforcement Policy & Empty Homes (Cllr Hoy)

Year end 2024/25:

Town	HMOs investigated	Other Homes investigated
Wisbech	30	112
March	6	43
Chatteris	9	14
Whittlesey	2	25
Villages	4	41

Total homes investigated is 286.

VILLAGE BREAKDOWN

Benwick = 1
 Coates = 1
 Coldham = 0
 Christchurch = 2
 Doddington = 2
 Eastrea = 1
 Elm = 4
 Fridaybridge = 2
 Foul Anchor = 0
 Gorefield = 5
 Guyhirn = 3
 Leverington = 4
 Manea = 2
 Murrow = 1
 Newton = 1
 Parson Drove = 1
 Stonea = 0
 Throckenholt = 0
 Thorney Toll = 2
 Tydd = 3
 Turves = 0
 Wimblington = 2
 Wisbech St Mary = 4

No.s of Notices Served April - December 31st 2024	S.11 Improvement Notice *	S.12 Improvement Notice **	Notice of Intent ***	Final Civil Penalty Notice ****	EIC R *****	MEE S *****	EPC *****	Prohibition Orders
April	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	2
May	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2

June	1	1	1	0	2	1	0	0
July	1	1	3	0	2	0	3	0
Aug	0	1	0	2	2	0	3	0
Sept	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oct	2	1	0	0	4	0	2	0
Nov	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Dec	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Jan	4	3	1	4	0	0	0	0
Feb	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Mar	1	0	3	0	7	6	0	0
Total	14	13	10	6	21	9	9	5

* Notices served in relation to Category 1 (serious) hazards identified during inspection

**Notices served in relation to Category 2 hazards identified during inspection

***Notice issuing intent to serve a civil penalty fine due to a breach of legislation & can be reviewed by Assistant Director upon appeal if a request is submitted by the landlord.

****Final Civil Penalty fine issued after review by Assistant Director- (landlord can only make a further appeal to the First Tier Tribunal)

***** EICR- Requirement for Landlord to comply with Electrical Installation Regulations- Final Number of fines issued after internal review

***** MEES- Requirement for Landlord to comply with Minimum Energy Performance Regulations- Final Number of fines issued after internal review

***** EPC- Requirement for Landlord to comply with Energy Performance Certification Regulations- Number of fines issued after internal review

In summary, since the new approach to enforcement was implemented in September 2019, out of the 148 Enforcement Notices served:

- 122 have been paid in full.
- The remaining debts will continue to be registered as a Local Land Charge on the title deeds until they are paid, or the property is sold, at which stage the debt will be recovered.

Of the 71 Final Civil Penalty Notices served:

- 40 have been paid in full,
- 10 are subject to payment arrangements,
- 0 are subject to formal court action,
- 3 are with the High Court Bailiff,
- 4 are proposed to be written off as not recoverable
- 9 are subject to an ongoing appeal.
- 5 subject to early enforcement
- Of the 18 fines issued due to EPC breaches, 15 have been paid. (total £3,000)
- Of the 28 Final CPN's served for breaches of Electrical Safety Regulations (totalling £138,021) 12 have been paid in full (£31,461.50) with the remaining debts subject to

formal enforcement action

- Of the 12 Penalty Notices served for breaches of Minimum Energy Efficiency Regulations, totalling £34,500, £19,500 has been paid with the remaining debts subject to formal enforcement action

Empty Homes

Represents the total number of properties brought back into use through officer involvement.
From 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

	LTE 6-11MTHS	LTEP 12MTHS +
Total Officer involvement	18	46
Total for the period	1.4.24 – 31.3.25	64

Golden Age & Supporting older people (Cllr Wallwork)

The last Golden Age Fair took place in Friday Bridge on Monday 10 February 2025 with 34 partners and over 140 older people in attendance. The following organisations provided vital information, advice and guidance; Alright Mate, Neighbourhood Watch, Cambridgeshire County Council Armed Forces Covenant Officer, Careline, APS Associates, PeoplePlus, HowAreYou Fenland, Clarion Housing, Read Easy, Cambs Fire and Rescue, Fenland Volunteer Centre, Wisbech Rotary, TECS, Camsight, Cambridgeshire Libraries, March Armed Forces Veterans Hub, AgeUK, Wisbech PCN Social Prescriber, CCVS, SunNetwork, The Bobby Scheme, Healthy You, Wisbech Lions, Cambridgeshire ACRE, Active Fenland, PECT, March Model Railway, Citizens Advice Bureau, CPFT, Orchard Activities, Community Safety, Care Microenterprises, WEA.

Our next event will be held on Friday 20 June 2025 at the Manor Leisure Centre in Whittlesey as part of the Big Bash weeklong celebrations.

During the last financial year, our other events have included our large Christmas event in Wisbech, Eastrea and Tydd St Giles with a combined yearly total reaching 528 attendees over our four events. This is testament to the Golden Age brand that it is still relevant and supported well by our communities and continue to bring valuable resources to our communities across Fenland. During the summer months we continued our 'stay hydrated' campaign with handy Golden Age water bottles and as winter approached, we focused our efforts on our pilot Golden Age Christmas appeal. Over 200 shoe boxes were filled with items and information after Fenland residents were invited to donate gifts at drop off points in Fenland libraries and Tesco stores in Wisbech and March. School pupils also made and wrote in cards to be handed out at the event. The Christmas appeal was prompted by a comment from one visitor last year that the small wrapped giveaway gift would likely be her only present. This year's appeal has received overwhelming support and feedback from those that attended and external stakeholders that attended the event.

We're already planning exciting events for 2025/2026 which can be found in the coming months on our website www.fenland.gov.uk/goldenage

Promote Health & Wellbeing for all

Leisure & Freedom Updates (Cllr Miscandlon)

Overall recovery post-Covid continues for the 4 leisure centres although performance individually for the sites varies widely.

Swimming lessons (LTS (Learn to Swim)) continues to thrive especially at the Manor with the centre taking advantage of the closure of some Peterborough based pools. Shortage of swim coaches, which had affected the ability to deliver more lessons, has been successfully addressed and the centre is showing a 43% increase on previous year in numbers attending. Lessons at Hudson LC remain steady with a small increase but George Campbell lost some ground with the extensive repairs over January and February which caused a lengthy and unpredicted closure early in the year. The closure was well managed, customers were kept up to date with progress. Now re-opened to positive public acclaim, the GC pool is seeking to regather its audience and catch up some of the lost ground.

Fitness Memberships again vary with Manor and Hudson LC experiencing small growth over the period (5%) but George Campbell again experiencing a decline in numbers (22%). The closure of the pool and recent growth in other fitness facilities in the town is partly responsible for the decline but the absence of a permanent manager has also had a detrimental effect. This situation has now been resolved and the centre has now acquired an excellent candidate (commenced April 2nd) whose primary objective will be to bring the centres performance back up to planned levels.

Group exercise at all sites is showing healthy growth, in particular at Hudson LC, despite an ongoing problem associated with the temporary loss of one exercise studio as a result of water ingress under the flooring.

The leisure centres remain in a period of major maintenance and repair as part of condition survey work. Each of these projects has an ongoing impact on the centre be that management, public or performance and the centre staff are to be congratulated on their resilience at this time. Some of the works currently in progress or recently completed include:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • CHP (Combined Heating & Power) - Manor LC | - Due May |
| • Car park extension resurface- Manor LC | - Completed March |
| • Pool covers - Manor LC | - Completed April |
| • Heat Exchanger - Manor LC | - Due May |
| • Sewerage pumping station - Manor LC | - Due May |
| • Pool Skimmer – GC, causing early in 2025 | - Completed late February |
| • Leaking roof – GC | - Roof replacement project in the early scoping stages |
| • Internal redevelopment | - Linked into the roofing project as a larger improvement and condition survey project |
| • Sports Hall Heating pumps – Hudson | - Completed April |
| • Disabled lift to sports hall and gym - Hudson LC | - May 2025 |

- LED replacements lighting - Hudson LC
- Pool lighting - Hudson LC and GC
- Solar PV increased capacity - all pool centres
- Underway and completing May
- Completed December / January
- Finally commencing in May

Promotion and marketing

The centres now have 42,000 downloads of their app, each of whom receive regular marketing updates. Bookings for classes remain the most popular hit on the app.

Promotions continue with recent successes relating to 12 months for the price of 9 (Fitness membership), half-price months and no joining-fee.

Leisure – general

FDC has successfully applied for a grant of £25,000 from Sport England to support the development of strategies for a Playing Pitches and Build (Sports and Leisure) Facilities.

These documents will replace the current 2016 strategies and are important to support sports facilities, including FDC for our leisure centres, in applying for funding as the strategies will highlight need for provision within the District.

Active Fenland (Cllr Miscandlon)

Projects: **Wellbeing | Healthy You | Pathways**

The Active Fenland team continues to deliver impactful community health initiatives across the district. Below is a summary of activity and outcomes across three key programmes:

Wellbeing (Concluded Project – Continuing Impact)

- New funding to support the wellbeing project until October 2025
- The Integrated Care System (i.e. NHS) funded Wellbeing project has formally concluded, with all but two programmes continuing under new funding.
- The last Tea Dance in March 2025 held at the Braza Club March, drew 50 attendees, reflecting sustained local interest.
- Two new walking groups have launched:
 - Whittlesey Gentle Walk – a slow-paced, accessible walk.
 - March New Parents Walk – designed to support postnatal wellbeing and peer connection.
- An end-of-project infographic summarising monitoring and evaluation outcomes has been completed and circulated.

Healthy You Project - funded by County Council Public Health

- Currently running 12 active sessions, with a new family evening session launched and a Wellbeing Walk for Parents starting in May.
- Couch to 5K relaunched with two new blocks, attracting 15 New participants in Wisbech this week.
- Healthy Eating drop-in in Wisbech over Easter went well, while a smaller turnout than planned, it marked a valuable trial of new engagement methods, with fruit donated by Tesco's community team.
- Tennis Festival to take place in May at Sir Harry Smith School, coordinated by School Games Organisers to involve multiple schools across Fenland.
- Community-led sports clothing collection initiative, run jointly with a local social prescriber, has supported children and families with essential kit during sessions and events.
- Participated in the Peckover Forest Fun Day (Child & Family Centre) and a major

Careers Event (368 students, 12 schools), both used to distribute timetables and promote summer activities.

Integrated Care System Pathways Project

- Pre-Fit & Strength & Balance sessions in Whittlesey, March, and Wisbech remain popular; Doddington's participation is improving with new joiners.
- Cardiac Rehab classes in March and Whittlesey have seen 15 new referrals since the programme launched; ongoing visits to Phase 3 in Wisbech continue to strengthen handover and uptake.
- Diabetes Support Programme relaunches in April with potential collaboration with DESMOND for education-to-activity continuity.
- Older Adults: Additional Strength and Balance class at Doddington did not continue due to low uptake; alternative sites are under review.
- Promotional presence at the Wisbech Job Centre and Golden Age Fayre continues to help generate awareness and referrals.

Participation Figures

	Feb	March
No. of NEW participants	22	64
Participants per month	1,305	1,307
No. of sessions (incl. walks)	161	142

Help Hub (Workwell)

Our website page has had 192 views during March with 28 Self Referrals being received. With a year to date (YTD) of 345 views with 108 referrals, 31.3% of page views result in a self-referral being submitted. [WorkWell Fenland - Fenland District Council](#)

Since launch, we have a total of 220 participants on this externally funded scheme against a YTD target of 190 (100%). This means that despite our delayed start date we have not only managed to reach our 2024/25 target we have exceeded it by 30 (16%).

We have received positive feedback from participants which include:

- "My coach gets me!, They listen are patient and not pushy, just what I need"
- "I look forward to speaking to my coach, they are kind, and the support is better than I had before"

Health & Wellbeing Update (Cllr Wallwork)

The North and South Fenland Integrated Neighbourhood Boards continue to meet quarterly. The partnership shares a set of key priorities, and the meetings focus on updating this close working and ensuring a focus on community needs.

In February, a refresh of local priorities was undertaken with smoking cessation being removed from the Wisbech board's agenda due to the excellent work ongoing in partnership between commissioned services from Healthy You and also through health service links.

Isolation, mental health support and increased activity levels remain on both the north and south board's agendas.

More information about the boards can be found here: [Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care System | CPICS Website](#)

Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture & Heritage

Working with partners to promote Fenland through Culture & Heritage (Cllr Seaton)

Fenland Culture Fund – Grants totalling over £55,000 have been awarded from the second round of the Fenland Culture Fund, boosting arts, culture and heritage opportunities across the district. A total of 35 applicants were successfully awarded up to £2000 each for a range of projects happening right across the district. The Fenland Culture Fund is managed by Fenland District Council and made possible this year thanks to joint funding from Arts Council England and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The second round of the fund was even bigger than the first, with over £20,000 more funding available. It also offered an expanded scope, with capital funding to support local creatives and improve cultural spaces, in addition to revenue funding to help deliver arts projects and activities.

Fenland Culture Partnership – The communications and marketing sub-group of the Fenland Culture Partnership held two more free high-quality, professional training workshops. The sessions are open to anyone working or volunteering in the arts, culture and heritage sectors in Fenland. The second was in January 2025 and was held by Arts Council England's Digital Culture Network and focused on Email Marketing and social media and the third was online facilitated by Baker Richards focusing on Practical Strategies for data and ticketing.

Fenland Poet Laureate – The Fenland Poet Laureate Award 2025 closed for entries in January and we received 71 entries across the two age categories. The shortlist was created by members of the Fenland District Council, Culture Arts and Heritage Executive Advisory Committee, and the final judging was shared by Cllr Elisabeth Sennitt Clough and the 2024 winner Hannah Teasdale. We held the awards ceremony at March Town Hall on Friday 21st March, and Felix Dawson was crowned 2025 Fenland Poet Laureate, and Isla Jackson the winner of the Young Fenland Poet Laureate category. It was an evening of celebration for all the poets shortlisted, and everyone received a copy of the anthology and trophies for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in each category.

Supporting groups to hold public events (Cllr Murphy)

There have been no events throughout the period of January to March. However, there has been planning for St George's Festival which took place on Sunday 27th April. The volunteer committee worked in partnership with Market Place Arts, who are investing in the region of £15,000 of resource, to deliver a series of workshops leading up to an impressive community parade involving 15ft puppets, as part of this year's fayre. A full programme of arts demonstrations on March Market Place has been planned as part of the arts focus too.

The event took place back in the town centre, utilising the newly refurbished Broad Street but, due to the success and growth of the fayre it will extend as far as West End Park, March

Library and St Peter's Church. Many community partners including 20Twenty Productions, March Town Council, March Society, March Museum and Cambridgeshire Libraries are involved in bringing this event together following many months of planning.

Looking ahead to the Four Seasons events taking place later in the year, Chatteris Festival will take place on 28 and 29 June, Whittlesey Festival Sunday 14 September, March Christmas Market Sunday 7 December and Wisbech Christmas Fayre Sunday 14 December. So lots to look forward to in the coming year.

Pride In Fenland Awards (Cllr Wallwork)

The Pride in Fenland awards are underway with nominations being received before the award ceremony on the 25 June at Wisbech St Mary Sports and Community Centre.

5 Market Place Wisbech – Fire Damaged Building (Cllrs Laws & Seaton)

Planning permission was granted earlier this year for the internal demolition of the building and protection of the façade. Since then, further details, required by the permission, have been agreed between the Council and the Owner. The Council are in close contact with the owner who has suggested they are seeking to implement the planning permission and complete these works in a timely manner.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 2024/25	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
ARP1	Days taken: new claims and changes for Council Tax Support	9.52 days	9.00 days	9.4	
ARP2	Days taken: new claims and changes for Housing Benefit	7.37 days	8.00 days	8.36	
CELP1	Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	294	250	286	
CELP2	The proportion (%) of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing options work	45%	53%	47%	
CELP3	Number of empty properties brought back into use	86	50	64	
CELP4	Number of Active Fenland sessions delivered and total attendance per year	621	600	1463	
CELP5	Satisfaction with our leisure centres (Net Promoter Score)	47	38	Awaiting Freedom Leisure feedback	
CELP6	Value of Arts, Culture and Creativity Grants achieved in Fenland	£199,000	£201,000	In excess of £450,000	

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

Comments

Environment

Projects from Business Plan:

Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

Diverting waste from landfill (Cllr Murphy)

During this past year, the teams have collected more than 39,000 tonnes of domestic and commercial waste from our customers. Given the property growth in the past 12 months, it is surprising to see the total waste collected reducing. The Residual Waste (green bin waste) has increased slightly (267 tonnes 1% increase), but the good quality blue bin Dry Recycling waste collected has reduced by 6% (567 tonnes). There have also been 505 tonnes less Garden Waste collected because of differing growing seasons.

Collected Waste Tonnages (Quarters 1-4)	2023/24	2024/25	% Change
Overall tonnage	39,997	39,192	-2%
Residual Tonnage (green bins)	23,418	23,685	+1%
Dry Recycling Tonnage Actual (blue bins)	8,459	7,892	-6%
Compost Tonnage Actual (brown bins)	8,120	7,615	-6%
Dry Recycling & Compost Tonnage Total (blue and brown bins)	16,579	15,507	-6%

Collected Waste –		
Percentage Recycling (blue bins to green bins)	26.5%	25%
Percentage Recycling (blue and brown bins to green bins)	41.5%	40%

Customers are producing very similar amounts of residual waste, which is good news against the background of property growth that Fenland has experienced.

Unfortunately, the amount of good quality recycling has reduced when compared to the same period last year. This is somewhat the trend seen nationally with reduced packaging material weights, but for Fenland is also in part due to changes in the sampling methodology required by material recovery facilities and increasing levels of materials in blue bins not suitable for recycling.

These changes have resulted in increased levels of rejected materials at the sorting facility. During 2023/24, 824 tonnes of recycling collected in blue bins was classified as unsuitable for recycling, during 2024/25 it was 1,407 tonnes, an increase of 583 tonnes.

To protect the quality of recycling materials collected, the collection teams rejected 6,708 blue bins in the year. The majority of these customers are written to with information about how to get their recycling correct. Alongside the checks upon collections, supervisors performed inspections of 3,739 bins with properties receiving information directly from them encouraging best use of recycling bins. Of the 3,739 bins inspected, 5% contained incorrect materials (88).

By diverting this waste from landfill the Council has generated £470,500 of income from the

County Council in recycling credits against their cost of landfill. From April this material also attracts Extender Producer Responsibility payments, which are initially forecast by Defra to be in the region of £1 million for Fenland.

As a result, we will continue to support our customers to maximise their recycling efforts and to treat their waste as a resource to generate income and reduce overall costs.

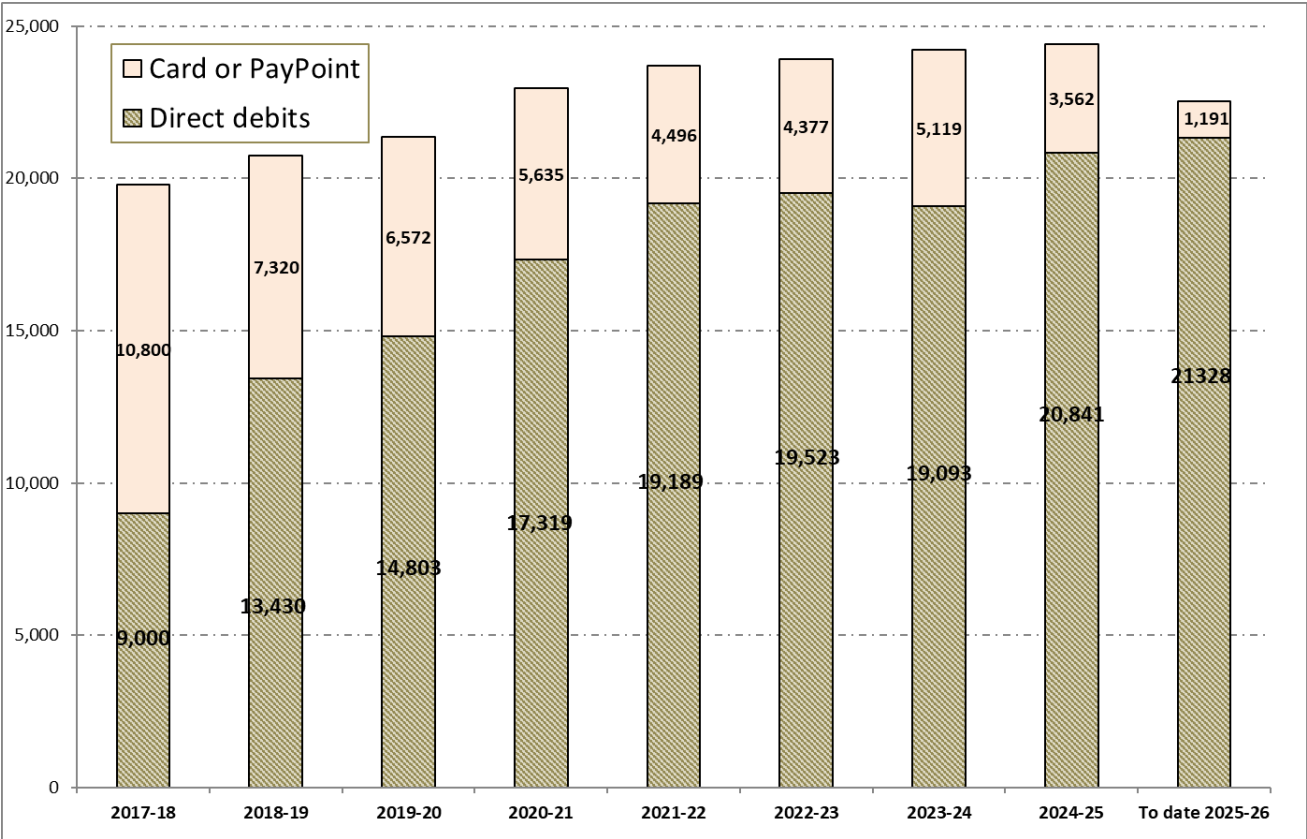
Garden Waste Collection (Cllr Murphy)

Last year, the service finished with 24,403 subscriptions, 85% direct debits and a total of £1,112,914 income to cover the costs of providing the garden waste service.

So far for the 2025/26 season we have 22,519 subscriptions in place, with 95% direct debits, already generating an income of £1,002,000 towards the 2025/26 service. This year we have had just over 200 customers make use of cash payments via PayPoint at local post offices and shops.

As usual for the time of year, we still have customers signing up by card and direct debit as the growing season commences.

Garden Waste Subscriptions by Year and Payment Type (2017-2025)



Delivering clean streets and public spaces (Cllr Murphy)

The cleansing team works 7 days a week, 364 days a year to keep Fenland’s streets and public open spaces clean.

This past year the team have received 1,651 requests from the public to resolve environmental issues, such as litter, broken glass, flytipping, drug related litter or similar. 87% (1,441) of these were attended and dealt with the same or next working day.

The scheduled cleansing and Rapid Response service, with support from Fenland's active local volunteers, including Street Pride groups, deliver clean streets and public open spaces in Fenland. The standard of cleanliness is monitored by Street Scene officers using Keep Britain Tidy surveying methodology across a range of land use types and all wards. Since April, officers have completed 1,022 surveys for litter and street sweeping and found 1,009 to be of a suitable standard (98.7%).

Working with key stakeholders to deliver an effective waste partnership and update the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Waste Strategy (Cllr Tierney)

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership has commenced the drafting of a revised waste strategy ready for initial review and member consideration this summer. The review was delayed awaiting clarification of Simpler Recycling, the Deposit Return Scheme and Extended Producer Responsibility. Now that Defra have provided a timetable for these, work on the strategy has commenced with a first draft expected in April, the final draft of which will form a Council report in the early Autumn.

Deliver a competitive trade waste service (Cllr Murphy)

The Council's commercial waste service offers residual, recycling and food waste collections for small to medium sized enterprises across Fenland via wheeled bins and sacks.

The service has 612 customers at present generating just over £506,000 of income during the past year. The team have collected a total of 1,025 tonnes of commercial waste, of which 213 tonnes was recycling or food waste.

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

Tackling fly-tipping, illegal parking, dog fouling, littering and ASB (Cllr Murphy) –

Total number of fly tips during this time. Wisbech rural villages have been the most affected across the district.

Month	Total	Chatteris	March	Whittlesey	Wisbech	Villages
January	167	7	22	26	56	56
February	124	4	19	9	49	43
March	134	5	16	20	47	46

The Street Scene Team aim to be as proactive as they can and aim to attend fly tipped sites to look for evidence and bring those responsible to account. Some of our proactive work is included below:

3 people have been issued with a fixed penalty notice for breaching their householder's duty of care when waste linked back to them was found dumped in Wisbech and Chatteris. 1 of these has now been paid.

1 person has been issued with a fixed penalty for littering after an officer witnessed them discard their waste on the floor. This has since been paid.

4 Formal Interview Under Cautions have been carried out. All were questioned in connection with waste found dumped.

2 people have been issued with a formal written warning for fly tipping where we had insufficient evidence to pursue but believed them to be responsible for waste dumped in March.

Additional enforcement work is taking place on March Marketplace to raise awareness of the parking order following the recent improvement works. Sadly, we have had to issue **3 parking fines** to cars who were found to be parking illegally.

The team have received **a total of 69 reported abandoned vehicles. All were investigated with 3 being removed by our contractor** due to being a danger to the highway.

A special project, which took place in the month of March and focussed on a fly tipping hot spot in South Brink Wisbech, saw the removal of 15 tonnes of waste plus the installation of a soil bund to stop further issues. This was a grant funded project.

Maintain parks and open spaces through grounds maintenance contractor (Cllr Murphy)
FDC's contractor, Tivoli, has had a good start to the grass cutting season with all works on track and rounds being completed in a timely manner.

FDC is extending the Tivoli contract by 1 year and work to implement this from November 2025 are under way.

Support community groups including Street Pride, In Bloom, Green Dog Walkers and Friends of groups (Cllr Murphy)

Between January and March 2025 our volunteer groups undertook more than 120 events, despite cold, wet weather conditions. During this time, we pushed our sustainability message, looking to provide economic, social and environmental support to Fenland via volunteering and community engagement.

Environmental Sustainability:

- Coordinated and supported numerous environmental projects initiated by Street Pride, In Bloom, and Friends Of groups, including wildflower planting, community woodland enhancements, and recycled planter installations (ongoing Jan-Mar).
- Facilitated the creation of a new pollinator and community garden project in March, involving land clearance (Phase 1 completed on 28th March 2025) and planning for public planting sessions.
- Promoted and planned biodiversity initiatives, such as 'BioBlitz May', encouraging

volunteers and the public to record local flora and fauna. Conducted a tester session in Westend Park, March and initiated similar activities within the volunteer groups.

- FDC supported litter-picking activities across multiple groups, covering most of the Fenland District.
- Facilitated the use of recycled materials, such as wood chippings provided by FDC/Thalia for paths (used by Friends of Wisbech General Cemetery in February).
- Our volunteers supported habitat improvements including the installation of bat and bird boxes (Friends of Wisbech General Cemetery) and managing woodlands (Gault Wood, March) for wildlife.
- Initiated planning and sought volunteers (from Jan onwards) for promoting the upcoming food waste recycling scheme (due April 2026).
- Engaged children and adults (14th February 2025) in imagining future environmental projects for March at the Imaginarium event (Heart of March).

Social Sustainability:

- FDC organised and facilitated networking events for Street Pride volunteers:
 - In-person Street Pride Network event focused on project ideas on Wednesday 29 January 2025.
 - Online network meeting (Thursday 27 February 2025).
 - Online network meeting (Thursday 27 March 2025).
- Actively promoted volunteer recruitment (ongoing), including successful recruitment from the groups themselves via local magazines and social media.
- Supported volunteer groups in developing strategic plans (Whittlesey Feb/Mar), mission statements, and overcoming challenges like committee formation (Leverington in February).
- Encouraged and supported inter-group collaboration and resource sharing to strengthen smaller groups (observed in March newsletter).
- Facilitated engagement between volunteer groups and local schools/youth groups (e.g., Tydd St Giles, Murrow, Benwick, Parson Drove).
- Developed and initiated a new volunteering strategy focused on project-based public events, with the March Library Garden Project (Phase 1 completed 28th March 2025) as the first example. The aim is to engage the public with the environment and reduce the commitment barriers to volunteering.
- Supported community engagement events run by volunteer groups, such as guided walks (Friends of Wisbech General Cemetery Jan/Feb), recruitment mornings (Benwick 22 March 2025), and fun days (Waterlees Easter Fun Day planned for March).
- Promoted the importance of social aspects within groups, such as post-activity gatherings (many groups are going strength to strength by promoting the social benefits of volunteering).
- Built networks with various community organisations and stakeholders to support and strengthen our environmental volunteer initiatives.
- Initiated planning for the annual Fenland Street Pride Garden Party (planned for Sunday 20 July 2025), opening award nominations in March.
- Provided guidance and support regarding communications during pre-election periods (advice issued Feb for period 25 March - 1 May 2025) and addressed volunteer concerns regarding Local Government Reorganisation (discussed Mar).

Economic Sustainability:

- Championed the Street Pride model (ongoing) as cost-effective for delivering

environmental and community benefits.

- Supported groups in planning potentially resource-intensive projects like new storage buildings (Whittlesey Street Pride) and exploring sustainable alternatives to costly practices like hanging baskets (Whittlesey query in March).
- Facilitated access to resources, such as recycled woodchip from council contractors (used by FoWGC before Feb) and community hub facilities (REMO Jan).
- Explored options (discussion Feb) for groups to obtain specific insurance for activities, potentially offset by grants, enabling wider environmental action while managing risk.
- Supported fundraising and community project initiatives like recycling sales (Morrow idea Jan) and community gardens potentially supplying community fridges (Benwick query in Mar).
- Investigated ways to reduce costs for groups, such as finding free social spaces (Tydd St Giles query Feb, Doddington query Mar).

Working with town councils and the community to provide local markets and market town events (including Four Seasons events) (Cllr Murphy)

Please see the update [here](#).

Deliver the Council's carbon reduction and climate adaption plan (Cllr Tierney)

Net Zero Village Fund

In December 2024, the Council received £90,000 from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority through the Net Zero Village Fund.

Throughout January to March, the Council received 6 applications and 4 of these have now been awarded their application fund amount which varied between £10,000 and £25,000. The planned schemes include solar panels and battery storage units, a green roof and a low energy lighting scheme.

The remaining 2 schemes continue to be developed into full applications.

Wider publicity regarding these projects will be announced following the pre-election period.

Review the current arrangements for parking enforcement in Fenland (Cllr French)

No further progress has been made on the implementation of civil parking enforcement (CPE) since the estimated cost of the works (last calculated in November 2023) highlighted a significant shortfall in funding in the region of £500,000.

This figure would likely have now increased due to additional sign and line corrective works being required since the estimated costs was based on a survey undertaken in 2022.

A further CPE update paper with estimated project costs is scheduled to go to Cabinet in June.

Street Lighting (Cllr French)

A total of sixty-three streetlight faults were reported and have been attended to during the months of January, February and March 2025 by Fenlands streetlight maintenance contractor.

Twenty-nine of the reported faults related to District Council streetlights during this period.

An overview of the fault attendance can be seen below. These figures exclude any capital-programmed replacement or upgrade works undertaken by the Councils streetlight contractor.

Fenland DC -	29 Fault Reports
Clarion -	4 Fault Reports
Parishes -	30 Fault Reports

Electrical and structural testing works associated with Council owned or managed streetlights was undertaken between September and February. Some additional testing works was commissioned in March, and a number of streetlights also require a return visit to site due to vegetational overgrowth preventing access.

This has delayed the receipt of the testing data which will be collated and analysed by the Engineering Team prior to sharing with third party asset owners. Details of streetlights that are known to have failed the structural test have already been shared with the relevant asset owners and communications are ongoing in relation to asset removal or replacement.

Capital Streetlight Replacement Works

The Engineering Team will analyse the structural and electrical testing data once all of the data has been received to determine the next phase of capital streetlight replacement or upgrade works.

FDC Car Park Maintenance (Cllr French)

All FDC car park inspections are undertaken 6 monthly and scheduled in April and October each year. The next asset inspections for FDC's car parks are due to take place in April and any associated defects shall be quantified and actioned. The detailed inspection information is used to inform minor improvement, and maintenance works for the Councils public car parks.

Car Park gully cleansing works were undertaken in February and March.

Whilst some early cold spells were encountered during the Winter months, the overall number of grit runs undertaken throughout the gritting season was relatively low compared to the year before. Winter gritting is undertaken based on a every other run basis for weather alerts and in total 15 grit runs were made during the Winter months.

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

Community Safety Partnership updates (Cllr Wallwork)

- Joint work with Police in respect of youth related nuisance and drug activity at a residential property which is causing alarm to another resident.
- Supported Police with patrols and engagements across Fenland during Business and Retail Crime week. Visiting ensuring shops and local businesses to help reduce

shoplifting and associated crimes. During these patrols, three shops were identified selling illegal vapes and cigarettes.

- In partnership with police, County Council and education, a Joint Enterprise project has been delivered over an extended period. The project is aimed at working with young people identified at risk of becoming involved in knife crime, educating them about the implications of joint enterprise, with regard to the impact of prosecutions and sentencing of those who participate in group related crimes. Over this extended period, six sessions have been delivered at three of our secondary academies and planning is ongoing for the fourth.
- Community Safety attended the Golden Age Fair at Friday Bridge with advice and signposting for a range of services. Residents took away the Little Book of Scams and FDC information on how report ASB and other community concerns.
- Chatteris King Edwards Community Safety Event: 30 people attended this event and engaged with Community Safety and partners which included Cambs Fire & Rescue, Police, and the County Council Community Team. Support/advice/guidance was provided on a range of issues, including ASB streetlighting, cost of living, scams and fire safety.
- The latest CSP Newsletter has been published, [Community Safety Partnership Newsletter - Edition 18](#)
- Front line professionals and volunteers who operate in Fenland attended online training organised by Community Safety and delivered by Cambridgeshire Constabulary's Modern Slavery and Trafficking Sergeant. This training covered:
 - Improving awareness of exploitation in Fenland.
 - Identifying types of exploitation.
 - Reporting and referral pathways.

Fenland Diverse Communities Forum updates on delivering the Community Cohesion Action Plan (Cllr Wallwork)

On Thursday 6 March, the Queen Mary Centre in Wisbech was transformed into a prestigious fashion show venue complete with catwalk! Ticket holders and invited guests enjoyed complimentary drinks and canapes when they arrived. This was followed by a speech by CEO Keith Smith about Ferry Project and its work with those experiencing homelessness in our community, as Ferry Project marked the end of their year of celebrating to mark the charity's 25th Anniversary. Then the Linda Ekins Academy of Dramatic Arts (LEADA) drama group, performed a short drama that told the story of a homeless person finding the help and support they needed from Ferry Project, which enabled them to move from homelessness to independent living.

After this, the fashion show began. With 20 models from the local community taking part, each model had selected items of donated clothing from Wisbech Donations Hub to include as part of their outfits. Each model took to the catwalk wearing three different outfits and wowed the 160 strong audience with their glamour, style and confidence.

The Wisbech Donations Hub is based at the Queen Mary Centre and operates in a similar way to the Foodbank, where individuals can be referred to the service. The Donations Hub provides household items for people in need who are unable to afford the essentials required to set up a home such as pots and pans, pillows, blankets, beds, cookers, lamps, towels, toiletries, clothing and even food. Donations of items in a good condition can be brought to the Queen Mary Centre on weekdays during working hours.

A total of £2,500 was raised from the event with money raised going towards helping the homeless in the Fenland area through the work of the Ferry Project by being split between the Donations Hub and the Hardship Fund that can be directly accessed by homeless clients for things such as training, transport or medical prescriptions.

Keith Smith said “What a wonderful evening Thursday was. It was a pleasure to work with all the volunteers and models to raise funds to help homeless people and to highlight the Donations Hub. I am grateful to everyone who gave their time and money to make the evening such a success.

The Donations Hub helps homeless people as they set up their new home, supplying them with household goods, furniture and clothes for free. The Hub is entering a new era with a new partnership with the Kings Church who will be taking over the management of the Hub and looking to expand its work.”

Community Safety Grant Agreement updates (Cllr Wallwork)

- Supported reports of Quad Bikes impacting a rural location. Driven at speed through hedgerows, damaging crops and disturbing wildlife and along footpaths. Community Safety met with the March police team to discuss these issues, and this is now included in their patrol activity along with them sharing information with Rural Crime Action Team and Traffic Departments. The customer was also made aware of the benefit of reporting incidents to police when happening and other evidential opportunities that could help FDC/Police to identify those responsible.
- The Speedwatch coordinator for the County is engaging in community safety engagement events to promote Speedwatch in Fenland.
- To find out more about Speedwatch and register interest in setting up a Speedwatch group, email: Speedwatch (Cambs) speedwatch@cambs.police.uk
- Wisbech Town Centre ASB – following the concerns raised at last full council in February, the Council has been working with the police who confirmed the following for the month of March:
 1. Ongoing investigation
 - a. Male charged and remanded with ABH and recalled to prison (pending Crown Court sentencing)
 - b. Two others arrested and bailed.
 - c. Several children identified have been interviewed at the police station with parents.
 - d. Referrals to the Youth Justice Service.
 - e. Ongoing liaison with social care / education / housing in relation to relevant children – part of the Youth Escalation Scheme (‘YES’) which we introduced following similar issues last year.
 - f. Visited each of the affected businesses, provided reassurance and details of plans going forward.
 - g. Work progressing towards partial/closure orders for anti-social behaviour linked to residential properties.
 - h. Community Protection Notices / Warnings progressing for those children where age permits. (16 years and over)
 - i. Increased targeted patrols.
 - j. Review of initial response to the disorder.

2. Communications

- a. Some significant improvements have been made on this issue following similar events last year. It was clear that local politicians were not fully sighted on all the improvements and process changes we have made since last year – this led to a review of how we communicate (both ways).
- b. Look to create a regular comms piece to show details around crime performance and positive police stories (as well as, where possible, something akin to testimonials from victims who are willing to allow this) which will enable politicians to understand and accurately represent the work that the police do in communities when asked. We have seen a reduction across all crime types in the city centre in Wisbech because of the work that we have put in place since last year.
- c. Early identification of issues which may cause problems with community confidence (which may attract national attention or ‘political’) are not consistently identified at an early stage.

3. Regular meetings

- a. The Police and councillors will have more regular meetings to share updates and concerns.

4. Support for causes more widely

- a. Recognition that policing is not the answer to complex social problems and deprivation. The politicians asked to be told where there are issues with partners and other agencies not helping or adequately dealing with issues in their remits which cause failure or other demand on policing so they can lobby independently of policing for system-wide or process change and allow us to remain neutral (and not critical of partners).

Deliver the CCTV shared service with Peterborough City Council (Cllr Wallwork)

Reporting period: 1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025

The CCTV Shared Service continues to play a critical role in enhancing community safety, supporting local priorities, and providing vital operational support across Fenland’s four market towns.

Community Safety and Incident Response

Between April 2024 and March 2025, the CCTV service responded to 1,225 incidents, marking an increase of 115 incidents from the previous year. These responses supported frontline services across a wide range of community safety concerns, including:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Criminal damage
- Violent crime
- Illegal drug use
- Possession of weapons
- Theft and acquisitive crime

Direct outcomes included 200 arrests made by Cambridgeshire Police as a result of real-time CCTV detection, evidence gathering, and live support from the control room—an increase of

48 arrests from the previous year.

This reflects the growing importance of CCTV as both a reactive enforcement support tool and a proactive deterrent, strengthening the Council's response to crime and disorder.

Proactive Monitoring and Prevention

In addition to its responsive duties, the service has expanded its proactive surveillance programme, with operators completing 5,406 proactive patrols across town centres and known hotspots. This represents a 25% increase on the 4,308 patrols conducted in the previous year. The increased visibility and vigilance have enabled early identification and intervention, helping to:

- Deter potential offending
- Reassure the public
- Support business crime reduction partnerships
- Identify environmental crime and safeguarding concerns

Out-of-Hours Emergency Support

The CCTV service also acts as the Council's out-of-hours contact centre, providing 24/7 telephone support across a range of key council services. Between April 2024 and March 2025, the team handled 437 emergency calls, covering:

- Homelessness triage and emergency accommodation
- Stray and lost dogs
- Dangerous structures and buildings
- Urgent cleansing or environmental incidents

This underlines the multi-functional value of the service in supporting frontline response, not only for crime, but also for public protection and service continuity outside normal working hours.

System Resilience

To support long-term system resilience, a new maintenance contract commenced on 3rd January 2025, secured through a joint procurement process. This ensures a robust programme of planned preventative maintenance and rapid response to CCTV faults—maximising system uptime, image quality, and public reassurance.

Key Performance Summary

Area	Total	Year-on-Year Change
Total incidents responded to	1,225	+115
Police arrests supported by CCTV	200	+48
Proactive patrols completed	5,406	+1,098

Street Drinking Update (Cllr Wallwork)

Community Safety continue to have close links with the Neighbourhood Police Team at Wisbech and conduct joint patrols with them. The overall picture does appear to be improved.

Where street drinking has been identified, there hasn't been witnessed any associated nuisance behaviour and community reports are low.

Monthly monitoring of police calls for service, CCTV monitoring data and community reports to FDC continues. This information is collated and shared with partners.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 22/23	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP7	Rapid or Village Response requests actioned the same or next day	93%	90%	87%	
CELP8	% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards	97%	93%	99%	
CELP9	% of collected household waste – Blue Bin recycling (1 month in arrears)	26.6%	28%	25%	
CELP10	Customer satisfaction with refuse and recycling services	93.6%	90%	97%	
CELP11	Customer satisfaction with our garden waste service	89.8%	85%	97%	
CELP12	Number of Street Pride and Friends Of community environmental events supported	255	204	214	
CELP13	% of businesses who said they were supported and treated fairly	100%	95%	100%	
CELP14	% of those asked who are satisfied with events	97%	90%	97%	

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

Comments

Economy

Projects from Business Plan:

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

Attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities (Cllr Benney)

Several inward investment enquiries are live including the consolidation of a business currently operating outside of Fenland to move its operation into Fenland.

Officers attended Driving Growth for the UK: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Pivotal Role in March at the Novotel Hotel in Cambridge. Over 150 businesses attended the event and several contacts were made that have resulted in/will result in visits to Fenland to look at business growth opportunities.

Preparations are well under way to promote Fenlands investment and business opportunities at UKREiiF being held in Leeds in May. Several pre-booked appointments held at the event have been made with potential inward investors, developers and funders. The representative attending on the Council's behalf and has also been invited onto the panel at the event discussing "Fens Reservoir: Leveraging investment in vital infrastructure into a community asset".

Promote business premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and Light Industrial Units (Cllr Benney)

The Estates team remain actively engaged with tenants of all sites. Overall occupancy across the investment estate remains high at 94.1%

All industrial units are fully occupied.

Boathouse occupancy has dropped to 87.3%. This is a short-term situation as we are currently seeing a number of tenants relocate between units to adjust to their capacity needs. Underlying occupancy is 98.1% reflecting one vacant unit.

South Fens Business Centre (SFBC) has increased to 67.9% as a result of a significant letting to Age UK on a long-term agreement. This letting was only possible as a result of the agreed relaxation in rents.

A small number of the industrial tenants continue to report difficult trading conditions putting a strain on their ability to continue in business. Officers remain in active dialogue with these companies to ascertain if we can assist with the short-term financial strain whilst also conscious of the need to protect the financial position of the council

Skills Update (Cllr Benney)

A representative from the Council was invited to sit on the panel at the Attracting and Retaining Fenland's Talent through the Power of Partnerships event held at March Golf.

The Economic Growth Team attend meetings and engage with a number of groups related to skills including the Fenland Early Help Hub, Connect to Work and Work Well which can help employers support members of their workforce who may be facing issues that are a barrier to work.

The team also represent Fenland on skills provider group meeting, ensuring the needs of employers are understood by the providers.

Environmental Health inspection and business support programme (Cllr Wallwork)

The Food Safety service follow the requirement of the Food Law Code of Practice – the categories A to E in the below table indicate frequency of interventions. These categories are determined by risk to food safety (it is possible for a business to move up or down the scale as they improve food hygiene practices, or present different risks in the food produced):

Category	Minimum intervention frequency
A	At least every 6 months
B	At least every 12 months
C	At least every 18 months
D	At least every 24 months
E	A programme of Alternative Enforcement Strategies or intervention every 3 years

Throughout January, February and March, 79 businesses received an inspection and were awarded a score using the food hygiene rating scheme, where applicable.

8 businesses were subject to Alternative Enforcement strategy (this is used for low risk – category E - businesses to enable the council to focus attention to those premises which present the greatest risk to consumer safety or who are failing to meet their statutory obligations).

The purpose of the food hygiene rating is to allow consumers to make informed choices about the places where they eat or shop for food and, through these choices, encourage businesses to improve their hygiene standards. All food ratings are periodically uploaded to the FSA website which publishes the ratings at <https://ratings.food.gov.uk/>. All premises that receive a score will also receive a window sticker to display the rating. It is not a legal requirement in England to display a hygiene rating.

Some premises may be excluded from the scheme or their rating may not be published for sensitivity purposes, however they are still rated in accordance with the standard. We support businesses who receive Food Hygiene Rating 5 by monthly publishing their trading names on our social media pages.

In January, February and March, Food Hygiene Ratings were awarded as follows:

- 66 businesses received a 5
- 9 businesses received a 4
- 3 businesses received a 3
- 1 business received a 2

- 0 businesses received a 1
- 0 business received a 0

The lower scoring businesses have received follow up support and revisits. Businesses that were subject to Alternative Enforcement Strategy do not receive a new food hygiene rating.

In January, February and March we received 4 applications for a food hygiene rating rescore visit. An opportunity to request a re-visit when improvements have been made in order to be re-assessed for a 'new' rating is one of the 3 safeguards to ensure that the Food Hygiene Rating scheme is fair to businesses, alongside a right to appeal and a right to reply. The re-score visit is unannounced and must take place within 3 months of the application being made by paying a fee via our website.

We also received 41 support requests, ranging from new business enquiries to foreign body and food poisoning complaints or issuing a food export certificate.

Support requests often include additional, unforeseen work, for example the Food Standards Agency asked local authorities to contact all care homes and hospitals in our District as a precaution due to certain desserts containing small levels of Listeria. We contacted 28 of these health care settings and 7 of them confirmed they had these desserts at their site and withdrew the products from their offer.

As the Port Health Authority, the Council also has responsibility for monitoring the classification of shellfish beds around the mouth of the River Nene. Eastern Inshore Fishery Conservation Authority (IFCA) collect the samples, and the Centre for Environment Fishery and Aquaculture Sciences (CEFAS) examine the samples and report on the results. In light of the recent vessel collision in the North Sea, IFCA carried out beach surveys and found plastic contamination that was varying in composition and numbers. IFCA also carried out additional shellfish sampling to ascertain background levels. Fishermen were advised to take extra care to undertake visual inspections to minimise the risk of plastic pellets presence.

Recently we also participated in a national sampling study focusing on raw shell eggs and both unpasteurised and pasteurised milk cheese at retail sale in order to ascertain their microbiological safety and quality. We collected 6 samples from shops located in March and all the results came back from the laboratory as satisfactory. Next we will be involved in a study designed determine the microbiological safety and quality of ready to eat dried fruit, nuts and seeds from retail and distributor/supplier premises and to identify any association between microbiological quality and packaging, country of origin and other relevant information gathered. Dried fruit, nuts and seeds are popular snacks which are generally seen as healthy options but have all been associated with outbreaks of illness in recent years.

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration

Planning updates (including progress on the Local Plan) (Cllr Laws)

The final vacancy within the Development Management Team has been recruited to, and the candidate is currently working their notices. The vacant role of Team Leader within the

Enforcement Team has been successfully recruited to. Alongside this a two year role to deal with some of the large planning applications has been successfully recruited to. This role is temporary in nature and will be funded through income from Planning Performance Agreements and also the Planning Fees for these large planning applications. The service is still staffed by 4.no agency staff to cover these various vacancies and large workloads. The Service has made significant strides in to reducing the backlog generated over the extended period of vacancies and has also undertaken an internal review to improve process and procedures.

Whilst the scheme of delegation, which decides which planning applications are determined by committee as opposed to officers, has been amended the number of items needing to go to Planning Committee is still significant and the level of delegation is still significantly below the Government guidance of 90%. Fenland District Council had the 5th lowest level of delegation across the Country in 2024. This continues to put pressure on the ability for Officer's to meet the statutory deadlines for planning applications. This is particularly relevant for the smaller and less controversial planning applications. The resulting impact is also of lengthy meeting agendas, or additional meetings, and the associated significant impact on those engaged in delivery.

The Planning Policy team are continuing to work on the development of a new Local Plan alongside other statutory duties. The Council submitted an Expression of Interest earlier in the year to Government regarding additional funding to help progress our Regulation 18 Local Plan. Fenland District Council has subsequently been allocated £227,962.50. This funding can assist in the delivery of the technical evidence updates that are required.

Planning Policy are also currently leading on a number of NSIPs which are requiring an increasing level of engagement and interaction from the team. The Planning Policy team are keen to undertake further engagement with Elected Members to better understand current place priorities and help ensure that emerging policies deliver good growth for Fenland.

Delivery of new homes (including affordable homes) (Cllr Laws & Cllr Hoy)

The totals of affordable housing for the last financial year ended slightly higher than the last report, ending at 240 homes, though final verification still being undertaken. This is very similar to the previous year total.

Section 106 units totalling over 200 units are anticipated to be completed in the next 12 months, with others also highly likely, therefore the forecast is that we will result in similar number of new affordable home completions to the last 2 years.

Whilst viability has often presented a problem in the district, we have seen a recent lift in developments in Fenland coming forwards as 100% affordable, with 6 of these aiming to start construction in the coming financial year and totalling over 400 affordable units.

Whilst these homes will not be completed in the next financial year, we are likely to see completions in the following couple of years and should the S106 units continue the recent trend, then we anticipate looking forward to a significant lift in the total affordable units completed in 2026/7 and 2027/8 and beyond.

With pressure being felt on the housing register for 1 bed units and feedback from the Leader

and the Portfolio Holder for Housing, a focus has been placed on securing as many 1 bed units within new application as viability allows. This has resulted in pipeline developments now providing over 200 x 1 bed units, with circa 50 of these to be under construction in the coming 12 months.

External funding bid and major projects updates (Cllr Boden)

(Long-Term Plan for Towns) Wisbech Plan for Neighbourhoods, Wisbech (Cllr Hoy, Cllr Tierney, Cllr Wallwork)

Fenland District Council, in partnership with the Wisbech Town Board, are in a positive position in relation to the Long-Term Plans for Towns programme.

The Board have successfully drafted the Regeneration Plan, and have begun prioritisation of projects for the 4-year investment plan with the next meeting scheduled for the 12 May. The Town Board will be able to submit this work as soon as FDC have approved the plans at Cabinet and Government announce the submission window.

Following the most recent budget, it was confirmed that the £20m funding is secured. There have been some minor changes to the programme, namely the change to being branded the Plan for Neighbourhoods but in principle, the scheme remains largely unaffected.

Since the last report, FDC have received a further £200,000 in revenue capacity funding to support any bid/application process.

FDC officers have also confirmed all governance information to CLG as required.

Further updates will follow in subsequent Portfolio holder reports.

Accommodation Review (Cllr Boden)

At the FDC Cabinet meeting held on 24 March 2025, Cabinet members decided to pause the council's Accommodation Review, pending the ongoing Local Government Reorganisation.

Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund (Cllr Benney)

The three-year SPF and REPF grants programmes have now completed and evaluation reports are being completed. Initial assessments show that the programmes have delivered significant benefits for the Fenland economy including:

- £1m+ of grant support provided
- £1.95m+ of additional private sector investment
- 79 businesses receiving grant support
- 125 new Fenland jobs created
- 11 new businesses started
- 16 farm businesses supported including 9 diversification projects

From the CPCA SPF and REPF Team, "a big congratulations to FDC for fully completing their UKSPF programme – an excellent achievement!"

A full evaluation report will be provided over the summer.

Transitional funding has now been secured for 2025-26 of SPF £297k and REPF £130k.

March Future High Street Fund (Cllr Seaton & Cllr French)

The March Future Highstreets Fund Project continues to make significant strides in its objective to regenerate and revitalise the town centre of March. This initiative, supported by the UK Government's Future High Streets Fund, aims to create a vibrant, sustainable, and attractive town centre for the benefit of local residents, businesses, and visitors.

Key Achievements and Progress

The project has made significant progress in a number of key areas, and the following highlights demonstrate the positive impact being achieved:

Broad Street Capital Regeneration Scheme

The completion of the Broad Street regeneration scheme represents a major milestone in the programme. Delivered in partnership with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), this project has transformed the appearance and functionality of the area. The scheme included improvements to the streetscape, better pedestrian facilities, enhanced green spaces, and upgraded lighting. Feedback from the public and key partners has been overwhelmingly positive, with many noting the improved aesthetic appeal and increased footfall in the area.

To note, the scheme has now been nominated for a national **CIHT Creating Better Places Award**. FDC will find out the outcome of the award on the on 4 June 2025.

There is minor work close to the bridge still outstanding that is anticipated to be completed in the first week in May.

Completion of the Marketplace Regeneration

The regeneration of the Marketplace, which forms a central focal point of March's high street, has also been successfully completed. The improvements to this space have enhanced its appeal as a community hub, with better seating areas, more greenery, and improved pedestrian walkways. The current seating has not weathered well, and will be replaced during May.

Barclays Building – Demolition Planning

Planning for the demolition of the premises to make way for a development site is ongoing and it is hoped that the demolition of the property will be able to begin in late spring/early summer.

Shopfront Grants and Local Business Support

The shopfront grants scheme is ongoing, with 30 expressions of interest (EOIs) received from local businesses keen to upgrade their premises. FDC officers are currently considering 6 formal full applications.

March Toilet Block – Tendering Process

The successful tender process has been concluded for the construction of the new toilet block in March. The successful bidder Probus will aim to start on work as soon as possible subject to final agreement of design elements with the Middle Level Commission. Due to technical

issues, this consent process has taken longer than hoped. However, work between both parties continues to ensure the project is delivered as planned

Next Steps and Future Developments

The project team, in collaboration with the Member Steering Group, is actively exploring opportunities to maximize the remaining underspend, with a focus on enhancing the infrastructure and accessibility of the town centre. Key planned initiatives include:

Gray's Lane Resurfacing and Crossing Improvements

A full resurfacing of Gray's Lane has been completed.

City Road Car Park Expansion

The creation of additional car parking has now been completed.

March Gateway Physical Regeneration

March gateway (outside Iceland) works are now underway with programmed completion for the end of May 2025.

New Fountain Centrepiece

Plans are currently being drawn up for the installation of a new ornamental centrepiece for the Fountain in Broad Street. Officers will work internally with Planning and Conservation to progress this work. This will be the final element of the works and is programmed for completion at the end of 2025.

This will then bring to a close all remaining capital works within the FHSF scheme.

11-12 High Street, Wisbech (Cllr Boden, Cllr Hoy & Cllr Tierney)

The revised design for the project has been received together with a proposal from local architects / construction specialists with knowledge of the site to deliver the project through to RIBA Stage 6.

24 High Street, Wisbech (Cllr Seaton, Cllr Hoy & Cllr Tierney)

24 High Street construction continues with the building almost completed. The expected construction completion date is now 21 May 2025. However, handover to the Council will take place around 21 June, as connections to the water supply and sewerage require a closure of the High Street.

Once handed over there will be a formal event where elected Members will have the opportunity to see the building. Whilst it is compact, the change to the streetscape on Wisbech High Street is significant, with the "missing tooth" of 24 High Street finally filled with a building that will provide housing opportunities for local people, as well as a small commercial unit.

The Elms, Chatteris (Cllr Boden, Cllr Benney, Cllr Tierney)

Planning application has been submitted and is being assessed.

Nene Waterfront Development (Cllr Boden, Cllr Benney, Cllr Tierney)

Planning application being submitted in May for an Extra Care scheme at Plot 5.

Continue to review council land and property assets to ensure they are fit for purpose and optimised to deliver better public services, improve efficiency and release surplus land for residential and commercial development as outlined in our Commercial Investment Strategy (Cllr Benney)

Whilst work continues in respect of the final sites identified in the first tranche of disposals, work has now begun in relation to the second tranche of sales as approved by members in December. The first stage is to prioritise the sites to identify which can be progressed and also which have the potential to generate the most significant capital receipts for the Council

To date Phase 1 sales and overage payments have resulted in an income of £468,950.

Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements**Promotion of sustainable road, rail and concessionary travel initiatives (Cllr Seaton)**Whittlesea Station

The Outline Business Case (OBC) is continuing to progress. The procurement phase will complete shortly, and contractors will then commence all the design and feasibility work along with surveys to provide data that will support the business case. This project will consider the station access, platform lengthening and a pedestrian bridge along with additional car parking.

By way of background, CPCA approved up to £3 million pounds for Whittlesea Station from April 2024 to end of March 2027. Further details about the Whittlesea Station funding are available here [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com/Document.ashx)

Engagement with CPCA and CCC on delivery of major road and rail infrastructure projects (Cllr Seaton) – WOLocal Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP)**There is no specific update on this project.**

The LTCP sets out the forward transport strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is an essential document to help secure funding for local transport improvements. It can be viewed from the link below.

[CMIS > Meetings](#)

Wisbech Access Strategy**There is no specific update on this project.**

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. It contains

a range of transport projects in Wisbech that aim to address transport issues within the town and to help support the delivery of the scale of growth in the Fenland Local Plan. The latest information can be found on the County Council website from the following link:
<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/transport-funding-bids-and-studies/wisbech-access-strategy>

A Wisbech Access Strategy report was presented to CPCA Business Board in July 2021 and CPCA Board in September 2021. The report required a strategic decision on the way forward linked to timescales and budgets. It was agreed that funding would be made available to complete the detailed design and the land acquisition for the 3 schemes – A47 Broad End Road, A47 Elm High Road and A1101 Ramnoth Road/Weasenham Lane. A copy of the main accompanying paper for the meetings mentioned above can be found from the following link:
<https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1529/Committee/62/Default.aspx>

There has been delays relating to land acquisition and ongoing discussions around related issues such as probate. This work is now expected to complete in the summer of 2025. The next step for these 3 projects is to secure funding for their construction.

March Area Transport Study – Main schemes

There is no specific update for this project. Work is ongoing to progress the individual projects as set out below.

This is a CPCA funded project being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council. It includes a range of transport projects across March to address transport issues and to facilitate new housing and employment growth.

The following are currently being progressed following approval by the CPCA to draw down an additional £7million pounds for spend between 2024 and 2026 in July 2024. These schemes are continuing to progress on time and on budget.

- A141 / Twenty Foot Road Signals scheme delivery
- High Street / St Peter's Road Traffic Signal Improvements scheme delivery
- Development of a full business case and detailed design work for Northern Industrial Link Road (NILR)

The link below provides further details of the July 2024 meeting.

[Agenda for Transport and Infrastructure Committee on Monday, 22nd July, 2024, 1.00 pm](#)

Additional delivery funding is required for the A141 / Peas Hill Roundabout Upgrade (52m ICD), including the creation of an all-movement signalised junction at the A141 / Hostmoor Avenue Junction.

March to Wisbech Railway Line

There is no specific update for this project. An update is expected at the CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee in November 2024.

This is a CPCA funded project with study work being taken forward by CPCA.

In November 2024, CPCA Transport and Infrastructure Committee reviewed the latest Options Assessment Report. Despite the consideration of several scheme options (e.g. heavy rail and light rail) the case for the improvements was challenging with low benefit cost ratios on the

schemes. There was collective disappointment amongst the CPCA Committee members but also an agreement to explore other connections such as links to the proposed Anglian Water Fens Reservoir project near Chatteris. Wider connectivity benefits should also be part of ongoing discussion. There was also support for interim measures such as additional bus services. The Committee agreed that an additional paper will be presented to them with possible next steps in Spring/Summer 2025.

A link to the papers and information from the November 2024 CPCA meeting with the relevant reports and papers can be found from the link below:

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

A47

In May 2023 National Highways released a series of documents and a consultation to support the Roads Investment Strategy 3 process covering the period 2025 – 2030. There are several references to A47 within the East of England regional report. The outcome of the consultation will feed into the RIS3 decision making by Government. The documents can be viewed from the following link: <https://routestrategies.nationalhighways.co.uk/>

As part of RIS2 National Highways are working on a series of Pipeline scheme undertaking feasibility and other technical work to support decisions for RIS3. One of these projects is A47 Elm High Road roundabout. They are also considering this roundabout alongside Weasenham Lane/Ramnoth Road. The outcome of the work will go forward to Government as part of their decision making for RIS3. In late 2024, Government announced that RIS3 decisions would be postponed by 12 months for early 2026.

Whittlesey Relief Road Project SOBC

The Whittlesey Relief Road Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) project is being managed by Fenland District Council with funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) market towns programme. The project commenced in March 2023 with a paper approved by FDC Cabinet for the Governance arrangements and procurement of a contractor to deliver the project. Please see the link to the Cabinet paper for further details.

[Cabinet Paper March 2023 - Whittlesey Relief Rd V2 6.2.2023 updated 02.03.23.pdf \(fenland.gov.uk\)](#)

The project is now being finalised and is just to complete shortly. It is expected that the final report will be discussed at FDC Cabinet in May 2025 to consider its contents and next steps.

Work with CPCA to influence housing and infrastructure funding to stimulate housing development and economic growth (Cllr Boden) – DH/AG

The Council continues to work collaboratively with the CPCA and constituent Councils of the CPCA to submit a Local Growth Plan by the summer of 2025. This will link to the Comprehensive Spending Review and the emerging National Industrial Strategy. The plan will be for 10 years up to 2035.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 21/22	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP15	% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks	92.5%	70%	91%	
CELP16	% of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks	68%	70%	85%	
CELP17	% of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks	85.75%	80%	91%	
EGA1	% occupancy of our business estates	94.2%	95%	94.1%	
MS1	% occupancy of Wisbech Yacht Harbour	95%	97%	85%	

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

Comments

Quality Organisation

Projects from Business Plan:

Excellent Customer Service

Customer Service Excellence accreditation (Cllr Tierney)

Our last annual assessment took place on 13th June 2025.

Supporting vulnerable customers with complex queries (Cllr Wallwork)

Please see updates on [Homelessness](#), [Rough Sleepers](#) and [Community Safety](#)

Elections Update (Cllr Boden)

By-Elections 27 February 2025

On Thursday 27 February 2025, the Council successfully delivered two By-Elections as follows:

Slade Lode South Ward of Chatteris Town Council following the resignation of Ken Perrin. There was one polling station located at Quaker Way Residents Community Room. The overall turnout was 16% and Joanne Fuller-Gray was duly elected.

East Ward of March Town Council following the resignation of Stuart Harris. There were two polling stations located at St Peters Church and Morton Avenue Residents Community Room. The overall turnout was 17% and Rob Skoulding was duly elected.

3C's Update (Cllr Tierney)

January – March 2024	Total received	On time	% On time
Correspondence			
	42	38	90%
Stage 1			
CELP	46	34	78%
GI	1	1	100%
PRCS	13	13	100%
Stage 2			

CELP	11	6	54%
GI	0	0	N/A
PRCS	1	1	100%
Stage 3			
CELP	4	2	50%
GI	0	0	N/A
PRCS	0	0	N/A

Governance, Financial Control & Risk Management

Finance and internal audit updates (Cllr Boden)

The detailed budget report and associated papers were approved by Full Council in February 2025.

Internal Audit

The last audit reviews within the 2024/25 Audit Plan are being completed for the year. These are Creditors, Procurement, ARP Enforcement, Declarations of Interest, and Payroll. Draft Reports have been issued for Procurement and Creditors and Final Reports issued for Contract Monitoring (Leisure Contract) (9 agreed actions), Performance Management (11 agreed actions) and Taxi Licensing (7 agreed actions). In addition, audits are being finalised for the fundamental areas of Housing Benefits, Council Tax and NNDR by the ARP.

The Audit Plan for 2025/26 is being prepared for formal approval by ARMC at its May meeting. Overdue audit actions continue to be reported to Management Team for overview and action, before onward reporting to ARMC. The status in February 2025 was 27 overdue audit actions (from 2021/22 through to 2024/25).

Data protection updates (Cllr Boden)

There have been no reportable breaches of the UK GDPR during the period to which this briefing relates. However there have been 9 recorded breaches by ARP (5), My Fenland (2) and Environmental Health (2) requiring no further action. These breaches were all human error that resulted in information being sent to the wrong person.

In the same period, there has been 1 data subject access request.

Transformation and Efficiency

Transformation Project updates (Cllr Boden & Cllr Tierney)

In Summary the Transformation Team have achieved the following key achievements

- Devised and delivered the TA2 programme including a service prioritisation matrix to enable the objective prioritisation of service reviews, ensuring the services with the potential highest efficiency gains are prioritised
- Devised and implemented a transparent Transformation Tracker ensuring the outputs and outcomes of the team are realised and shared organisationally therefore promoting a culture of continuous improvement and holding Managers to account for delivery.
- Contributed £241k of cashable savings in addition to the £1m savings achieved as a result of the TA1 agenda, in addition to saving more than 5,700 officer hours across the Planning Team, Markets and events, Cemeteries, Licensing, My Fenland, Workshop and Fleet in addition to Environmental Services and identifying and reducing in excess of 20 based service risks
- Identified a further potential £295k of savings which have not been agreed for implementation at this time, albeit can be revisited at any time.
- All Team Members have successfully achieved a project management qualification therefore providing the organisation with expert project management capacity and capability.

Public Service Reform updates (Cllr Boden)

On 16 December 2024, the Government published the [English Devolution White Paper](#), setting out its plans to reform local government across England.

The government expects all two-tier areas, and existing smaller or failing unitaries, to develop proposals for reorganisation. The new unitary authorities will focus on delivering services, with the intention to serve populations of more than or equal to 500,000 residents, although lower for exceptional circumstances, to achieve efficiencies.

The white paper suggests legislation will be introduced where necessary to ensure effective reorganisation can take place.

On the 5 February 2025, we received [a letter](#) from the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon, to formally invite us, and all Cambridgeshire councils, to work together to develop a proposal or set of proposals for LGR. The letter asked the leaders of all seven councils to submit their initial plans by 21 March 2025, with a view to full proposals being submitted by 28 November 2025.

On 14 March 2025, an [extraordinary FDC Full Council meeting](#) was held to discuss LGR and the Council's initial response. Following the meeting, the Leader of Fenland District Council, Cllr Chris Boden, wrote a letter to Government outlining Fenland District Council's position. This was submitted on 21 March 2025.

A separate letter, from the leaders of the other six councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council) was also submitted to Government on 21 March 2025.

FDC decided to submit its own letter to Government at this early stage of the LGR process to provide a little more specific information. FDC remains fully committed to working in close collaboration with the other six Cambridgeshire and Peterborough councils as LGR progresses.

We are now awaiting a response from Government to these letters.

Communication, Consultation and Engagement

News update:

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in January = 9. We also created an additional 1 news articles we published on our website.

Highlights include:

- Council launches public consultation on draft Budget and Business Plan amid significant financial challenges
- Free and low-cost exercise and wellbeing classes in Fenland in January 2025
- Consultation launched on Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
- Conviction for woman whose rubbish was dumped in the countryside
- Free welcoming event for older people
- New scheme supports employers to retain staff and reduce sickness
- Fenland leisure centres welcome £114,300 energy upgrade

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in February = 9. We also created an additional 1 news articles we published on our website.

Highlights include:

- New home for Wisbech funfair confirmed following consultation
- Progress in council's bid to improve Wisbech Market Place
- Grants Available to Help Cut Fuel Costs and Keep Homes Warm
- Latest Meet the Manager event coming to Manea on 6 March
- Council pushing forward with plan to redevelop another Wisbech High Street building
- Plans for multi-million-pound leisure centre improvements move forward, as the George Campbell Leisure Centre swimming pool reopens
- Council seeks public views on new HMO planning control to tackle overconcentration concerns

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in March = 12. We also created an additional 1 news articles we published on our website.

Highlights include:

- Fenland District Council leader issues letter on Local Government Reorganisation
- More than 100 Fenland people struggling to work due to their health are already getting support through new scheme
- Excitement as St George's Fayre makes a return to the heart of March town centre
- Free event in March offers tips on reducing living costs
- Community input sought on exciting March country park project
- Owner of eyesore property fined after council prosecutionFelix Dawson crowned 2025 Fenland Poet Laureate
- Work starts on Fenland's first BMX pump track in March
- Fly-tipping hotspot cleared of lorry loads of waste

All press releases are distributed to relevant press and media organisations, appear as a web article on the news pages of the [Fenland District Council website](#) and on our social media channels [Facebook](#) and [X](#).

Monthly update on FDC social media sites:

The number of social media updates added to the FDC X, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts:

January:

X = 110

Facebook = 96

LinkedIn = 40

February:

X = 121

Facebook = 106

LinkedIn = 40

March:

X = 124

Facebook = 116

LinkedIn = 44

We currently have 8,524 followers on Facebook, 8,631 followers on twitter and 2,015 on LinkedIn.

Consultation Summary:

- Draft Budget & Business Plan – 2 January to 2 February 2025
- Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report – 9 January to 25 February 2025
- Air Quality Management Areas (Wisbech) – 27 January to 2 March 2025
- HMO planning control – 26 February to 21 March 2025
- March Country Park Project – 10 March to 24 March 2025

Business Plan 2025-26

The Business Plan 2025-26 sets out the priorities we aim to deliver over the next 12 months. These priorities have been developed to address the most important needs of our communities and set a framework for how we will work towards our ambitions for the area and achieve our goal of creating a thriving place to live and visit.

Its structure outlines our key Corporate Priorities, Communities, Environment and Economy. A fourth priority, Quality Organisation, sits alongside everything we do. It aims to ensure that the Council runs effectively, transparently and sustainably.

Each corporate priority is underpinned by a series of performance indicators, which are used to track progress, measure success, and identify areas for improvement. All performance indicators are reported to all elected Members at our Council meetings.

Against this backdrop of Local Government Reform, we have a strong ambition to deliver a series of exciting capital investment projects across Fenland over the next three years. Under the banner of Fenland Inspire!, these projects will focus on enhancing our much-loved sport, leisure, and open space facilities, as well as preserving and celebrating the district's rich heritage and built environment.

These investments reflect our commitment to improving quality of life for our residents and ensuring that Fenland remains an attractive and vibrant place to live, work, and visit. The Business Plan was approved at Cabinet and Council on 24th February 2025.

Asset Management and Commercialisation

Using assets to maximise income opportunities and financial opportunities (Cllr Benney)

Please see section regarding [new businesses, jobs and opportunities](#) earlier in the report.

Commercial & Investment Strategy (Cllr Boden)

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 2025, £4m of this facility has been utilised to fund the acquisition of a commercial investment in Wisbech and a house in March. These acquisitions were approved at Investment Board meetings held on 16th March 2021 and 3 December 2021 respectively. Further utilisation of this facility was used to fund the development of the two sites now owned by Fenland Future Ltd in line with the agreed Business Plan.

The Commercial Investment in Wisbech has delivered a rental income of £230k every year since acquisition in March 2021 and continues to be on track for 2024/25. As we used our own funds to acquire this asset there is no external cost of capital and the loss of interest foregone on our funds is minimal at present. This acquisition has enhanced the Councils revenue

position and has had a positive impact on the MTFS.

The most recent updates on the work of the Investment Board were presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 24 March 2025. The annual report on Investment Board activity was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee held on 21 October 2024.

Fenland Future Limited (Cllr Boden, Cllr Benney & Cllr Tierney)

Please see updates on [The Elms](#) and [Nene Waterfront](#) section above.

Workforce Development

Workforce skills and training (Cllr Boden)

We have a strong commitment to the ongoing learning and development of our staff. We believe that if we are to continue to deliver excellent services to our customers, our staff must be well trained.

We have an extensive learning and development offer for our workforce, which involves opportunities for formal and informal training; we have a range of learning resources available to all staff, which includes a new e-learning platform with a wider range of courses and development opportunities as well as coaching, shadowing, secondments, in-house training workshops delivered by our own in-house experts; as well as more formal courses, training and apprenticeships.

Staff value the learning and development opportunities that are offered at FDC and are able to indicate the difference that training makes to them and their team.

However, it is important that we continually review our learning and development offer to ensure it is fit for purpose and as accessible as possible.

We believe that talent exists in all our staff and that it needs to be encouraged and nurtured. Every manager with staff responsibility manages talent through the following activities:

- Performance management
- Coaching and development
- Springboard (appraisal) discussion and regular 121's, which include a discussion about the learning needs and aspirations for each member of staff
- Recruitment

Talent management and succession planning ensures ongoing organisational capacity and capability for the future and enables transformation; and at a time when more is demanded of less, it becomes increasingly important.

Supporting and empowering staff (Cllr Boden)

We are committed to supporting and empowering our workforce, and we have a range of support that our staff can access, from an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). This provides a free and confidential service for staff, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week,

365 days a year and is accessible by phone, email and online.

The EAP is designed to help with a wide range of work, family, and personal issues. It provides practical information, fact sheets and packs, resource information on support services in the local area and even short-term face to face or telephonic counselling if required.

It is supported by a comprehensive EAP website offering extensive resources including articles, interactive tools, regular online seminars, confidential 24/7 support, self-help workbooks, Podcasts, blogs, videos, and articles on a range of topics, Debt advice, Debt Management, Domestic Abuse support, Wellbeing portal & App, Trauma programme and Exercise and Fitness advice.

Alongside this we provide additional support via our team of Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA), our Occupational Health Advisor, a range of family friendly policies and procedures, a comprehensive (cost neutral) employee benefits platform.

We also provide individual support via our HR team, service managers, our Management and Trade Union and Staff Partnership (MTSP) reps.

This year we have started surveying our staff via “pulse” surveys via our new HR/Payroll system app to obtain more immediate feedback.

Enforcement

All enforcement policies updates (Cllr French (CPE), Cllr Laws (Planning), Cllr Murphy (Streetscene) & Cllr Wallwork Environmental Health))

The Food Standards Agency is currently undertaking a review of the level of qualification required to complete food safety business support inspections and carry out any enforcement actions. Currently officers must hold a formal degree in environmental health or a higher food safety competency certificate for certain lower level inspection related activity.

Health & Safety

Maintaining Health & Safety Systems to comply with legislation and Health & Safety Action Plan updates (Cllr Boden)

A key part of the function of Corporate Health and Safety is the provision of policies, codes of practice (COPs) and guidance to provide managers and employees with the necessary support to meet their health and safety obligations.

The Council has a programme of ongoing review and implementation to support effective health and safety management.

Health and safety training needs are identified in several ways including springboards, regular

one to ones, team meetings and through the Council's Health and Safety Panel.

A corporate health and safety matrix has been developed during the reporting year which is now available on the health and safety intranet pages.

Work continues to drive forward improvements in health and safety management where required, with ongoing progress to deliver our objectives as set out in the health and safety action plan.

Other Updates:

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) update (Cllr Chris Boden)

Information relating to the CPCA can be found on their website:

[Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority \(cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk\)](https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)

Mayoral decisions can be found [here](#).

Office decisions can be found [here](#).

The papers for recent meetings can be found by clicking on the links below:

CPCA COMMITTEE	DATE OF MEETING	LINK
Combined Authority Board	19.03.25	https://democracy.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&MId=149&Ver=4
Audit & Governance Committee	21.02.24	https://democracy.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=156&Ver=4
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12.03.24	Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 12th March, 2025, 10.00 am
Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee	26.02.25	Agenda for Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee on Wednesday, 26th February, 2025, 10.00 am
Skills & Employment Committee	24.02.25	Agenda for Skills and Employment Committee on Monday, 24th February, 2025, 10.00 am
Employment & Skills Board	11.02.25	Agenda for Employment and Skills Board on Tuesday, 11th February, 2025, 10.00 am

Transport & Infrastructure Committee	05.03.25	Agenda for Transport and Infrastructure Committee on Wednesday, 5th March, 2025, 10.00 am
Investment Committee	10.03.25	Agenda for Investment Committee on Monday, 10th March, 2025, 2.00 pm
Business Board	31.03.25	https://democracy.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MIId=143&Ver=4

Forthcoming CPCA meetings include:

CPCA COMMITTEE	DATE OF MEETING	LINK
AGM - Combined Authority Board	04.06.25	Agenda for Combined Authority Board on Wednesday, 4th June, 2025, 10.00 am
Combined Authority Board	04.06.25	Agenda for Combined Authority Board on Wednesday, 4th June, 2025, 11.00 am
Audit & Governance Committee	19.06.25	Agenda for Audit and Governance Committee on Thursday, 19th June, 2025, 10.00 am
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	24.06.25	Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 24th June, 2025, 10.00 am
Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee	18.06.25	Agenda for Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee on Wednesday, 18th June, 2025, 11.00 am
Skills & Employment Committee	16.06.25	Agenda for Skills and Employment Committee on Monday, 16th June, 2025, 11.00 am
Transport & Infrastructure Committee	25.06.25	Agenda for Transport and Infrastructure Committee on Wednesday, 25th June, 2025, 11.00 am
Investment Committee	23.06.25	Agenda for Investment Committee on Monday, 23rd June, 2025, 10.00 am
Business Board	14.07.25	Agenda for Business Board on Monday, 14th July, 2025, 2.30 pm

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Target 2024/25	Cumulative Target	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries processed at the first point of contact	99%	85%	92.45%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (measured annually in February)	97.94%	-	96.66%	
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	43.96%	46.5%	57.54%	
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	83.46%	80%	87.42%	
ARP3	In year % of Council Tax collected	100%	-	99.67%	
ARP4	Council Tax net collection fund receipts	£73,595,060	-	£73,350,882	
ARP5	In year % of NNDR collected	96.57%	-	95.70%	
ARP6	NNDR net collection fund receipts	£24,409,318	-	£29,467,704	
HR2	% of staff that feel proud to work for FDC	85%	-	86%	

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

Comments