

Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

**July 2025
(For performance in April and May 2025)**

Cabinet Members



Cllr Chris Boden
Leader of the Council
& Portfolio Holder for
Finance, Governance &
Business Rates



Cllr Jan French
Deputy Leader of the
Council, Portfolio Holder for
ARP, Car Parks, Parking
Decriminalisation and Parks
& Open Spaces



Cllr Gary Christy
Portfolio Holder for Housing,
Licensing & Environmental
Health Enforcement, Port,
SHA, Transport and Yacht
Harbour



Cllr Steve Count
Portfolio Holder for
Economic Growth, Land
Charges and Fenland
Inspire! Leisure Centre
Projects



Cllr Sam Hoy
Portfolio Holder for Culture,
Housing, Licensing and
Wisbech Town Board



Cllr Sidney Imafidon
Portfolio Holder Assets,
Business Premises, Health
& Safety and Food Safety,
Environmental Services and
Heritage



Cllr Dee Laws
Portfolio Holder for
Building Control, Flooding,
IDBs and Planning



Cllr Chris Seaton
Portfolio Holder for Funfairs,
Fenland Inspire! Projects,
Markets and Wisbech High
Street Projects



Cllr Steve Tierney
Portfolio Holder for
Communications,
Decarbonisation, ICT,
Streetsweeping, Street Bins
& Dog Bins and Recycling &
Refuse Collection



Cllr Susan Wallwork
Portfolio Holder for
Cemeteries, Community,
Safety, Emergency
Planning, Freedom
Leisure, Military Covenant,
Policing, Street Pride,
Street Naming &
Numbering and Travellers
Sites

Support Vulnerable Members of Our Community

Enable residents to claim the Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit they are entitled to (Cllr French)

At the end of the fourth quarter Council Tax collection was within the target. Work on automation continues, with change of address automation in particular continuing to achieve excellent and improving results. Moving away from emails to expand the use of the new and improved Contact Us form has continued, enabling us to efficiently gather the right information first time.

We continue to promote e-billing to our residents to increase efficiency and save postage costs, utilising TelSolutions to contact customers by email and create a quick and easy e-billing sign up online form. We continue to use automated messaging services for council tax reminders and reviews, which sees favourable results, again reduces postage costs and improves customer engagement and collection.

The year-to-date processing times for Local Council Tax Support and Housing Benefits have been challenging. This is partly down to an increase in claims as Universal Credit migration continues. However, by implementing target days and revising work allocation and resources we have seen a real improvement in performance in the Quarter 4 processing times which are all within the targets.

Automation successfully continues, with 97% of Universal Credit notifications from the DWP being successfully automated. Universal Credit continues to be rolled out, with the migration of ESA claimants being brought forward from 2028 to 2025.

Work continues to expand with our Communities Teams initiative, referring customers claiming DHPs or who have cases passed to the Enforcement Agents and who may need financial/welfare advice for holistic support. We also continued to proactively contact customers who may be eligible to reclaim CTR and also liaised with our partners to support pension credit take up campaigns.

Across the Anglia Revenues Partnership, a new Customer Service Standard has been approved, and training will be rolled out in due course.

The team continue to be tasked, in accordance with the Business Case approved by Joint Committee, 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 and Non-Domestic Rates.

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 Cambridgeshire Fraud Hub continues into its second year. This work continues to consistently see savings outweighing the costs of the work in the areas of Local Council Tax Reduction and Single Person Discounts. Funding for 2 additional posts from

County has been secured for 2024/2025. The NFI premium data matching has been funded by County.

Overall, debt collection across the ARP is over 35.92% equating to £6,108,823, up from 23.72% at the end of quarter 3. Collection rates have increased by over 35% compared to 2023/2024. The collection of fees is also improving, with £1,629,856 of fees collected to the end of quarter 4. This is an increase of 25% compared to 2023/2024. In June 2024, the use of Tel Solutions was rolled out for the majority of ARP Enforcement contact. The team continue to proactively utilise digital communication channels and will be rolling these out as part of the implementation of a sundry debt service to all partners.

At the end of quarter 4 the Fraud and Compliance Team have identified fraud and error, across the ARP LA's, of over £4.6 million. Positive results have been reported in the Cambridgeshire Fraud Hub project with Fenland showing a high fraud and error identification across Cambridgeshire.

Our delivery of the Early Help Hub and WorkWell schemes within our My Fenland Team continues to be very successful, and provides much needed tailored support and signposting to some of our residents who looking to return to a working environment from a period of illness, some of which have a range of support needs, and some of which are vulnerable.

It has been a very busy time for the team in Fenland with 68 referrals received and 45 engaged participants in the last month alone. Our WorkWell website page has had 120 views in May with 18 Self Referrals being received.

We have a planned programme of communication to promote the schemes, and our WorkWell/Hub Coaches have engaged with the following events to increase awareness and encourage more referrals for help:

- Domestic Violence training for all officers
- Job Centre Plus (JCP) Health Adjustment Passport
- JCP catchup with disability coaches
- NetMatters introductions
- Health Fenland Event Doddington
- JCP Newsletter distributed to include details on WorkWell
- Everyturn Meeting to discuss cases and case loads
- North Cambs Training Cambs – updates on current courses
- Created two new promotional videos for use on social media, X, Facebook and LinkedIn featuring Cllr Susan Wallwork, FDC Portfolio holder, paid for boosted posts on Facebook.

Use our housing powers to improve the condition of private rented homes (Cllr Christy)

Housing Enforcement – end of May 2025

Town	HMOs investigated	Other Homes investigated
Wisbech	5	6
March	1	6
Chatteris	0	0
Whittlesey	0	1
Villages	0	2

Total homes investigated is 21 - This is in line with the profile of interventions that are undertaken each year to the target of 250.

VILLAGE BREAKDOWN

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

No.s of Notices Served 01/04/25 - 31/05/25	S.11 Improvement Notice *	S.12 Improvement Notice **	Notice of Intent ***	Final Civil Penalty Notice ****	EICR *****	MEES *****	EPC *****	Prohibition Orders
April	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
May	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0

* 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, with £40,460 levied and £30,980 having been paid:

- 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 (total levied £298,482):

- 41 have been paid in full,
- 10 are subject to payment arrangements
- Total collected £145,796
- 1 are subject to formal court action,
- 3 are with the High Court Bailiff,
- 5 are proposed to be written off as not recoverable
- 9 are subject to an ongoing appeal.
- 2 subject to early enforcement

Of the 18 fines issued due to EPC breaches, 17 have been paid (total £3,400).

Of the 29 Final CPN's served for breaches of Electrical Safety Regulations (totalling £141,021) 12 have been paid in full (£42,900) with the remaining debts either subject to appeals or formal enforcement action.

Of the 15 Penalty Notices served for breaches of Minimum Energy Efficiency Regulations, totalling £42,000, £30,200 has been paid with the remaining debts either subject to appeals or formal enforcement action.

Alongside the input from the Private Sector Housing Team and other FDC teams, support was given to aid the conviction of an Organised Crime Group (see community safety update below).

Another example of this multi-agency approach was when FDC officers brought a prosecution of an illegal eviction against a local landlord who forced a tenant and her family out of their home. Having been called to an address in Cherry Rd, Wisbech on a Saturday morning in February 2024, Police provided body worn camera footage of Jamie Punton and his agent,

Arsalan Anjum illegally evicting their tenant, her young children and their extended family. Council officers were able to provide evidence to court, together with the victim, that the landlord had failed in his duty to take the legal steps required to take possession of the property, but instead forced them out, without due notice, on a cold February morning. In hearing the evidence and the camera footage, the judge delivered a guilty verdict to both the agent and landlord. Taking into consideration the victim's impact statement, the judge sentenced the landlord to a custodial sentence, suspended for 18 months and an electronic tagged curfew of 4 months (7pm-7am), whilst the agent was ordered to carry out 160 hours of community service. Both were ordered to pay the council's court costs of £9,500 between them.

This case highlights the significant impact an illegal eviction has on victims. Unfortunately, most cases go underreported and are particularly difficult to prosecute criminally, due to the reliance on witness statements and the delay in court proceedings. Recent research by Safer Suffolk Renters identified that out of 8,748 illegal evictions cases reported nationally in 2022-23, only 42 were pursued as prosecutions. It is hoped that any landlords in Fenland who are considering such an approach will think again knowing that the council does take action.

Use our housing powers to prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping (Cllr Hoy)

End of May 2025:

So far in 2025/26, the Housing Options team has successfully addressed the housing issues for 40 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 14 at the prevention stage and 26 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.

The number of households seeking advice (homeless presentations) for this period were 295. The figure last year was 328. This represents a decrease of 10%.

Housing advice has been given to 210 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.

We have accepted 85 prevention duties and relief duties with 17 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).

The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing Options work for the year = 47% (40 preventions divided by 85 households where duties were owed).

Rough Sleeping:

From the start of this financial year to end of May 2025, the Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSPARG) formally known as Rough Sleeper Initiative, has supported a total of 33 rough sleepers. Of those 10 were rough sleeping, 9 had successfully moved on, 7 had lost contact with services, 5 were between rough sleeping and sofa surfing and 2 had an alternative outcome. For those that were successfully supported with move on, this includes into accommodation such as private rent with support from our private sector housing team to check the properties condition, into supported living routes, such as Ferry Project or Amicus, or they were supported with re-connection to their country of origin.

For those who continue to rough sleep and who are facing multiple-disadvantage, we continue to work collaboratively with Changing Futures, Housing First, MHCLG and closely with services such as mental health teams, the police, CGL and the Ferry Project to be creative in our approach to engage with these individuals and ensure the correct and most appropriate support is offered. This cohort are identified as our Target Priority Group by MHCLG.

FDC also welcomed under funding from RSPARG for our Rough Sleeper Officer, who leads on outreach and support along with the Ferry Project Hub team to our most vulnerable clients. We continue to respond quickly to rough sleeper reports with a focus on homelessness prevention. With this focus, we continue working with our broader partners to try and create opportunities to re-engage with those who have lost contact with homeless services.

Reduce emergency accommodation use to provide better quality and more cost-effective short-term accommodation and supported homes for homeless clients (Cllr Hoy)

Activity continues to increase the number of our emergency interim and temporary accommodation homes which also reduces the revenue costs to the council by reducing reliance on B&B. Highlights include:

- Planning application submitted to convert a home into flats in a village
- Planning submission being developed to build accommodation on Council land in March
- Properties being purchased utilising Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF3) grant

As a result of the increase in family accommodation sourced through Clarion and also Local Authority Housing Grant (LAHF 1 & 2) the impact is significant.

During April and May 2024, homeless families (excluding single and couples) spent 694 days in B&B. For the same period in 2025 this has reduced to 283 days.

Use our housing powers to meet housing needs, including bringing empty homes back into use (Cllr Christy)

Empty Homes 31 May 2025

The tables below represent properties brought back into use up to and including 31 May 2025.

Table 1

Represents the total number of properties brought back into use through officer involvement. From 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

LTE = Long Term Empty, **LTEP** = Long Term Empty with a premium charge

	LTE 6-11MTHS	LTEP 12MTHS +
Total Officer involvement	1	7
Total for the period	1.4.24 – 31.3.25	8

At the Annual Empty Homes conference the officer gave a brief presentation regarding their F exempt, probate case submissions to a genealogist company. In March 2024, the company provided the officer with updates on 155 cases where no council tax was being paid because the account showed probate had not been granted. By sharing the updated information with the council tax team, they were able to charge 64 accounts and, in some instances, backdate this charge. A future charge could be diarised for those accounts where probate had been granted but the 6 month exemption period was still in place.

To illustrate the savings, the officer used the Wisbech property bands for 80 cases and estimated that **£103,819.75** could be charged in response to this exercise. In addition, the data cleanse is extremely helpful, and the service from the genealogist company is free of charge for the council.

Table 2

Represents the number of properties brought back into use for the New Homes Bonus From 7 October 2024 to 6 October 2025 (CTB1 submission date)

	LTE 6-11MTHS	LTEP 12MTHS+
Total Officer Involvement	4	22
Total for the period	7.10.24 - 6.10.25	26

Support residents to manage the effects of the cost of living (Cllr Boden)

Alongside the delivery of the Early Help Hub and WorkWell schemes, our My Fenland Team provide support for our residents to make applications to Universal Credit, benefit schemes, and signposting customer to avenues of further support. Our Early Help Hub team sit within the My Fenland service, so can seamlessly pick up customer queries to enable them to support and help the customer in the quickest and most effective way; for example, referring on to our housing teams, our benefits team or the CAB.

The team have developed a wide range of stakeholders, providers and contacts from across a number of sectors that we can access to deliver a bespoke intervention to support the customer in the best way possible.

We also work closely with the Anglia Revenues Partnership Communities Teams initiative, helping to referring customers who are struggling, and claiming DHPs or who have cases passed to the Enforcement Agents and who may need financial/welfare advice for holistic support. We also continued to proactively contact customers who may be eligible to reclaim CTR and also liaised with our partners to support pension credit take up campaigns.

Encourage partners to support the delivery of the Golden Age programme and support older people (Cllr Wallwork)

No events took place in April and May due to the pre-election period. Our next event is due to be held on Friday 20 June 2025 at the Manor Leisure Centre in Whittlesey as part of the Big Bash weeklong celebrations.

Upcoming dates and events

- Annual partnership networking event – Thursday 12 June 10am until 1pm - Council Chamber, Fenland Hall
- Friday, June 20, 10am to 1pm, at Manor Leisure Centre, Station Road, Whittlesey, PE7 1UA.
- Friday, September 26, 10am to 1pm, at Wisbech St. Mary Sports & Community Centre, Beechings Close, Wisbech St Mary, PE13 4SS.

For more information about our Golden Age events visit www.fenland.gov.uk/goldenage

Promote Health & Wellbeing for all

Create healthier communities through activities developed and delivered by Active Fenland and Freedom Leisure (Cllr Wallwork)

Freedom Leisure continues to deliver a professional and valuable leisure service at its 4 Fenland sites. Visitor numbers were possibly affected by the unseasonal May heat and are slightly down on the previous year (3%) but George Campbell LC, following the extensive successful pool repairs over Christmas has rallied strongly and is 18% up on last year. Swimming lessons continue to thrive with Fenland's Learn to Swim programme (LTS) now sitting at 2,945 up 2% on last year's best total.

Customer communications continue to grow with active Facebook and Instagram platforms, and over 40,000 webpage views across 10,000 users. The mobile app now has 44,000 subscribers (people who have downloaded the app).

Net Promotor Score – a nationally recognised means to assess customer satisfaction – is measured twice per annum. The first of 2025, in May, showed mixed results however, with continued positive feedback for the quality of staff, welcoming atmosphere, and programme

variety but negative feedback continues to affect the score notably in regards to broken equipment, membership cost, size of gyms, programme changes and age of facilities. The centres are in the midst of an ongoing programme of electrical and mechanical improvements across all sites and progress continues to be made to improve the quality of service. Freedom's national average score for all their 52 operations (at the end of May) was 21, Fenlands average score is currently 13 although Chatteris and George Campbell both recorded scores in the 30's. A score at least equal to Freedom's national average is the target for 2025/26

Active Fenland

Active Fenland continues to deliver inclusive and engaging community programmes across the district, with a focus on prevention, wellbeing, and physical activity for all ages. During May and June, our funded programmes - **Healthy You**, **ICS Pathways**, and the **Wellbeing Project** - have maintained momentum, combining regular sessions with seasonal events and new development.

Healthy You

We continue to run 11 weekly sessions and 7 active wellbeing walks across Wisbech, Wimblington, and Whittlesey. Sessions include Mixed Badminton, Walking Football, Forever Fit, and Yoga (Beginners to Intermediate), as well as a relaunched Couch to 5K at Wisbech Park.

A new Family Evening Running Session launched in Wisbech, with modest early engagement. Flyers and school-based promotion are underway to encourage wider participation.

Events & Outreach

- **Healthy Eating Drop-In**, Wisbech Leisure Centre: 25 attendees received advice, recipes, app guides, and donated fruit, thanks to Tesco's Community Team.
- **Forest Fun Day**, Peckover House: 52 children and parents took part in partnership with the Child & Family Centre, promoting summer offers and local activities.

Looking forward, planning is underway to introduce a Cancer Rehabilitation offer, with insight visits to existing models in Huntingdonshire to inform local delivery.

Wellbeing Project

In May, we partnered again with Peckover House (National Trust) for a Family Fun Garden Event, drawing over 200 participants to an active-learning treasure hunt. The event helped keep families engaged with physical activity and informal learning during half term.

Our popular Tea Dance series returned in June, starting in Chatteris. These intergenerational social-dance sessions support physical activity and reduce social isolation. The next event is scheduled for July in Gorefield.

As part of National Walking Month, we saw 232 attendances across 19 Ramblers Wellbeing Walks in May, welcoming 19 new walkers. Our seven regular walk groups continue to thrive, and our volunteer leaders were nominated for Fenland Pride Awards, recognising their contribution to local wellbeing.

Upcoming events include a Get Active Summer Series and Active Story Trails in partnership with Cambridgeshire Libraries and Peckover House.

ICS Pathways

Pre-Fit and Strength & Balance continue across Whittlesey, March, Wisbech, and Doddington. New blocks launched in May with good retention and fresh interest. A second Doddington class remains under review due to low attendance.

Cardiac Rehab continues to grow, with 15 new referrals to date. We maintain strong links with CPFT's Phase 3 programme in Wisbech, ensuring smooth handovers and patient continuity.

Target Groups

We are actively supporting:

- **Older Adults:** through Forever Fit and Strength & Balance
- **Children & Families:** via active events, drop-ins, and family runs
- **Mixed Age Groups:** through walking groups and community sports sessions

Work with partners to deliver the Early Help Hub, providing a 'one stop shop' of support and advice to individuals and families in their times of need (Cllr Wallwork)

WorkWell is part of a wider Government funded scheme which is available to anyone living in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, supported by NHS Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care Board (ICB).

Our WorkWell coaches provide a free Fenland support service for people who are struggling to work due to their mental or physical health. Each individual is assigned a coach who spends time with them to understand the challenges that they are facing and identify support that they need.

More than 350 people have accessed the service to date and are benefitting from the support that is on offer.

Work with the Integrated Care System to tackle local health and wellbeing priorities and provide information to help people make healthier choices (Cllr Wallwork)

The local North and South Fenland Integrated Neighbourhood Boards continue to meet and provide a wide range of information about services available to residents.

The following are current and recent campaigns and local projects:

- Health check station will be on site at The Queen Mary Centre, Wisbech from 17th-24th June 2025. This station enables self-service health information to be made available privately including weight, blood pressure, heart age and body mass index.
- Young people mental health services survey launched-young people aged 17 to 25 who have experience of mental health services. Link below: [Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – Mental Health Survey 2025](#)
- Community Health Information Service (HPAC Cambridgeshire) supply health professionals, community groups, schools, etc with health information leaflets and other health promotion resources. It's free to register and to request leaflets, posters and resources. <http://hpac.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/HPAC/>

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

Manage the Fenland Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (Cllr Wallwork)

Community Safety Partnership updates

- Successful completion of project delivery in support of Serious Violence Duty (SVD). The projects delivered by a range of partners included:
 - After school young people diversion activities
 - Access to mentoring, coaching and personal development opportunities
 - Delivery of Joint Enterprise Sessions (knife Crime NWA – delivered in partnership with County Council Youth & Communities and Cambridgeshire Constabulary. This session is focused on those young people considered at at-risk of involvement in knife crime and exploitation)
 - Access to sport
 - Youth engagement through social media (FenlandYouthTribe <https://www.tiktok.com/@fenlandyouthtribe>)
- Development and submission of additional funding for 2025/26 to continue and further develop the successful Serious Violence Duty activities for young people.
- Community Engagement event organised and held in March town centre on 14th May. This event was held in the vacant Barclays Bank building
 - Partner agencies supporting the session were Cambs Fire, Vision Zero (Road Safety), Speedwatch, Neighbourhood Watch (NHW), Cambs County Council Volunteers, FDC Community Support, March Neighbourhood Police Team, Police Cyber Crime/Scams Officer
 - This session was well attended and above average compared to similar events held across Fenland
 - Advice and signposting were provided on a range of subjects including, neighbourhood disputes, parking, speeding, planning, harassment, Youth ASB, scams, and how to report drug activity.
- Delivered a Loan Shark project on behalf of and funded by the Illegal Money Lending Team (England), which culminated in a community day at the Adventure Playground in Wisbech.
 - Partners involved were Illegal Money Lending Team, County Council Communities Youth Team, Wisbech Neighbourhood Police Team, Street Arts Hire and Wisbech Adventure Playground team.
 - Objective of the event was to raise awareness of Loan Sharks through graffiti arts and craft activities with children, parents and local young people.
 - Activities included, Graffiti Arts, Loans Shark paper crafts and beach activities,
 - Over 60 children, young people and adults attended, 30 Loan Shark flyers were handed out and artwork produced. The artwork will be used in the design of a mural to be completed and displayed later in the year.
- Training Events: Front line professionals and volunteers who work within the community of Fenland have had access to two workforce development sessions. The sessions are intended to raise awareness of subjects that the community could be vulnerable to. This

new knowledge improves the opportunity to recognise when someone is affected, who to report to, where to signpost and provide advice. All with the intention to prevent there being a victim. In this reporting period the sessions held included:

- Carers and Domestic Abuse' 44 attendees from a range of partners including primary care, social care, and housing providers. This session was delivered in partnership with Cambs Domestic Abuse Sexual Violence Partnership
- Exploitation awareness training was delivered by Cambs police tactical lead. 43 attendees from across Fenland included District and County Council staff, Local Police teams, Social Care, Primary Care and housing providers

Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland-wide Community Cohesion Action Plan (Cllr Tierney)

The Ferry Project and the Queen Mary's Centre continue to support the homeless and the general Wisbech community. Here are a couple of the examples of the partnership work going on at the Queen Mary Centre.

Healthy You

Healthy You is a free service for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough residents who are looking to make changes to their lifestyle. Their health stations are for people age 47 – 74 and are designed to spot early signs of stroke, kidney disease, type 2 diabetes, dementia and help find ways to lower this risk

They have arranged for one of their health stations to be at the Queen Mary Centre, Wisbech from 17th-24th June 2025.

They will provide general health checks, which take between 20-30 minutes; they will then give.

- Immediate results which are shared with your GP.
- Advice on how to improve your health
- Help to get specialist advice if needed.
- Support to help make simple changes and create achievable goals that will improve health and wellbeing
- Provide the tools, encouragement and motivational support every step of the way.

The Ferry Project Cookery School

The cookery school is based at Octavia View in Wisbech and is for anyone who wants to learn how to cook, or those wanting to develop their cooking skills.

For all they teach people the basics of cookery e.g. One Pot Wonders Cookery a 5-week course. Designed for people to learn some new skills, or learn how to cook healthy, affordable meals all in one pot.

As part of the Ferry Project, the Cookery School provides vocational skills and work experience in hospitality for our homeless clients, alongside training in useful cooking skills which equip them to live independently. This forms a vital part of the holistic homelessness support they provide to their clients.

The Cookery School is also a social enterprise, which means that by running classes, courses and events for the general public in the local community, it helps to generate an income for the charity which in turn helps them to continue their work to assist homeless single adults on their journey towards independent living.

There is always a full schedule of events and courses on offer and include things such as community classes, talks and demonstrations, special food events, classes for the elderly and school groups, courses about specific cuisines, food history, opportunities to enhance your culinary skills, cooking workshops, corporate hospitality events, pop-up cafes, group cooking classes, one-on-one sessions and much more.

Deliver the Community Safety Grant Agreement with the Police and Crime Commissioner (Cllr Wallwork)

- Activity this period includes:
 - Working in partnership with police to respond to numerous reports of drug and general nuisance behaviours in residential areas.
 - This has led to sharing of intelligence, joint visits, intelligence gathering for pro-active policing response, and the execution of a search warrant.
 - Intelligence sharing and partnership working has led to vehicle and drugs seizures by police and the arrest of offenders.
 - Working with Registered Providers (RP – Housing providers) and other partners to prevent nuisance and support vulnerable perpetrators.
- Regular activity over a longer term includes supporting partner agencies in their response to Organised Crime.
 - The police are recognised as the lead agency who tackle those involved in Serious Organised Crime (SOC). However, it's also known that many other agencies can also have a positive impact in tackling SOC and supporting police prevention, disruption and enforcement.

In Cambridgeshire, Fenland District Council (FDC) actively participate in this work through regular attendance at multi-agency partnership meetings organised by police. Through this forum FDC are able to consider intelligence sharing and intervention activity that could support the police in their overall objective of dismantling organised crime groups.

One such group where FDC has actively supported the police was recently sentenced at court. Use this link to read a local media article

<https://www.cambstimes.co.uk/news/25201840.wisbech-march-peterborough-cannabis-crime-gang-made-8m/>

Following the outcome of their investigation officer contacted Fenland District Council to thank all officers in several FDC teams for supporting the investigation which was pivotal in securing the convictions.

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

Reporting Period: 1 April 2025 – 31 May 2025

Between April and 31st May 2025, the CCTV service supported 244 incidents, representing a 15-incident report increase compared to the same period last year. These incidents involved a broad spectrum of community safety issues, including:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Criminal damage
- Violent offences
- Drug-related activity
- Weapon possession
- Theft and acquisitive crimes

From these, 31 arrests were made by Cambridgeshire Police during this period, directly linked to real-time detection, evidence provision, and live operator support - an increase of 4 from the previous year reporting period. This reinforces the increasingly proactive role that CCTV plays in both supporting enforcement and preventing crime through early intervention.

Proactive Monitoring

Beyond reactive responses, the service has maintained a strong focus on prevention through enhanced proactive patrols. A total of 794 proactive monitoring sessions were undertaken, targeting key hotspots and retail, town centre, and parks and open spaces zones across the district. These patrols contributed to:

- The early identification of potential criminal activity
- Improved public reassurance
- Better support to business crime reduction partnerships
- The detection of environmental and safeguarding concerns

The visible presence and vigilance of operators continue to make a significant contribution to local resilience and community confidence.

The CCTV team also provides the Council's 24/7 out of hours contact service, acting as a first point of call for urgent public safety matters and key service requests. Between April and 31 May 2025, 101 emergency calls were managed across a variety of service areas, including:

- Homelessness response and emergency accommodation
- Lost or stray dogs
- Dangerous structures
- Environmental hazards and urgent cleansing needs

This underlines the breadth and adaptability of the CCTV team, demonstrating their continued value not only in crime prevention, but also in enabling effective emergency response and service continuity outside of core working hours.

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 whilst the staffing levels allowed. The overall picture does appear to be improved, albeit it is recognised its likely to be influenced by the usual seasonal dip. Where street drinking has been identified within the areas of the Public Spaces Protection Order referral into the police led, multi-agency Op Luscombe is made. This provides opportunity for support and diversion, before a tiered enforcement intervention if the individuals were repeat referrals.

An example of this was a community report of public defecation. The perpetrator was known to services and subsequently formally interviewed. The perpetrator was determined to have significant vulnerabilities which were mitigating. The partnership agreed response was a Community Resolution with requirement to attend support services provided by partners. This person hasn't come to attention since.

Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture & Heritage

Work with local stakeholders to support the aims of the Fenland Culture Partnership (Cllr Hoy)

Fenland Culture Fund

Grants totalling over £55,000 were 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 £2,000 each for a range of projects happening 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. An elected Member from FDC sat on the decision-making Board for the grant process.

In April and May:

- Artists Peggy and Sadie ran three days of 'Simple Pleasures' workshops at Lyncroft Care Home in Wisbech. The residents, staff and families created their own colour palettes, learned Gelli-Block printing, collage, and leaf printing. **"Thank you to the Fenland Culture Fund project for their funding. The experience shared today by our residents and staff have truly been mind blowing, the conversations and memories shared, the experiments with colour, the enjoyment of being together."**
- Illustrator Moira facilitated a series of six after school art workshops for primary age children between 5 and 11 years old. They took place in the March Library EverySpace and each week gave the group a chance to explore different artistic mediums. **"The funding enabled me to offer these after school art workshops to the children for free. It is great that lots of individual artists have benefitted from the funding in this round and this is something I feel is important as artists are struggling in the current financial climate. I think it is an amazing scheme, thank you for funding my project"**, and feedback from parents, **"She loved the after-school sessions. She was so excited going every time and wanted to spend more time there each session. I definitely think she benefited from these sessions"**, and **"I think it's a great idea as there are very few after school clubs for arts and crafts."**

Fenland Culture Partnership –

- Earlier in the year the Fenland Culture Partnership held 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 third session facilitated by Baker Richards focusing on Practical Strategies for Data and Ticketing, has been made available online as a free educational resource, [Fenland Culture Strategy and Resources - Fenland District Council](#)

- Arts Council England (ACE) Place Partnership Funding secured for Fenland. Clarion Futures are the lead partner of the project which has achieved a £420,000 grant investment from ACE which will form part of a larger project, called Made in Fenland, being delivered by a group of partners until March 2028. The project mainly focuses are on new partnership models, cultural leadership development and multi-art festival production. Throughout the duration it will focus on enhanced cultural leadership development and improved infrastructure. It will see skills, jobs, training and volunteering opportunities made available, creation of an emerging artists' network and culminate in a new type of multi-arts festival programming that will happen in the summer of 2027, which will be brought about by specific art form leads and co-commissioning. The success of the funding bid to the Arts Council is due to the partnership approach, the innovative approach to the joint bid with a housing operator being a lead partner. None of this would be possible without the work undertaken over the past 5 years to develop a Culture Strategy, appoint a jointly funded Culture and Creativity Officer, with her work to then develop the Fenland Culture Partnership and partnership works, led by FDC's officer then facilitating this successful bid.
- The Express Yourself Art in a Box project launched in Whittlesey. It is a new creative wellbeing initiative designed to support people in Whittlesey and the local area who may be experiencing isolation, poor mental health or anxiety. We have worked with six local artists to produce free art boxes and a series of free community workshops to help people reconnect, express themselves and improve their wellbeing through creativity. 180 boxes have been prepared and made available to people through places such as the Jenner Health Centre, New Queen Street Surgery, the Phoenix Youth Club, Food Banks and Coates Community Living Room.

Provide proportionate support and advice for community groups to hold safe and successful public events (Cllr Seaton)

Pride In Fenland Awards (Cllr Wallwork)

The Pride in Fenland nominations opened on Tuesday 6 May following elections which has seen 78 different nominations being received for volunteers and groups across Fenland. The awards ceremony will see categories including Fundraiser, Youth, Group, Community Champion, Community Volunteer and Sports and Recreation will have taken place on Wednesday 25 June at Wisbech St Mary Sports and Community Centre with an update at the next Council meeting.

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

Details required to implement the permission for the internal demolition of the building and protection of the façade, have been agreed by the Council earlier this year. 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 2025/26	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
ARP1	Days taken to process new claims and changes for Council Tax Support	9.4 days	7.0 days	7.18	
ARP2	Days taken to process new claims and changes for Housing Benefit	8.36 days	8.00 days	8.69	
CELP1	Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues	286	250	21	
CELP2	The proportion (%) of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through Housing options work	46%	52%	47%	
CELP3	Number of empty properties brought back into use	64	50	8	
CELP4	Total number of Active Fenland sessions offered per year (to October 2025 in current year – 50% of previous performance)	1463	750	TBC	
CELP5	Customer satisfaction with our leisure centres (using a representative Net Promoter Score)	33	30	N/A (March 2026)	N/A
CELP6	Value of Arts Council Grants achieved in Fenland	£199,000	£201,000	N/A (March 2026)	N/A

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

Comments
CELP 1 - profile of interventions increase over winter period

Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

Diverting waste from landfill (Cllr Teirney)

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 encouraging 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, and 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. 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.

Customer satisfaction with the refuse and recycling, with the customers who responded recording a satisfaction rate of 97%.

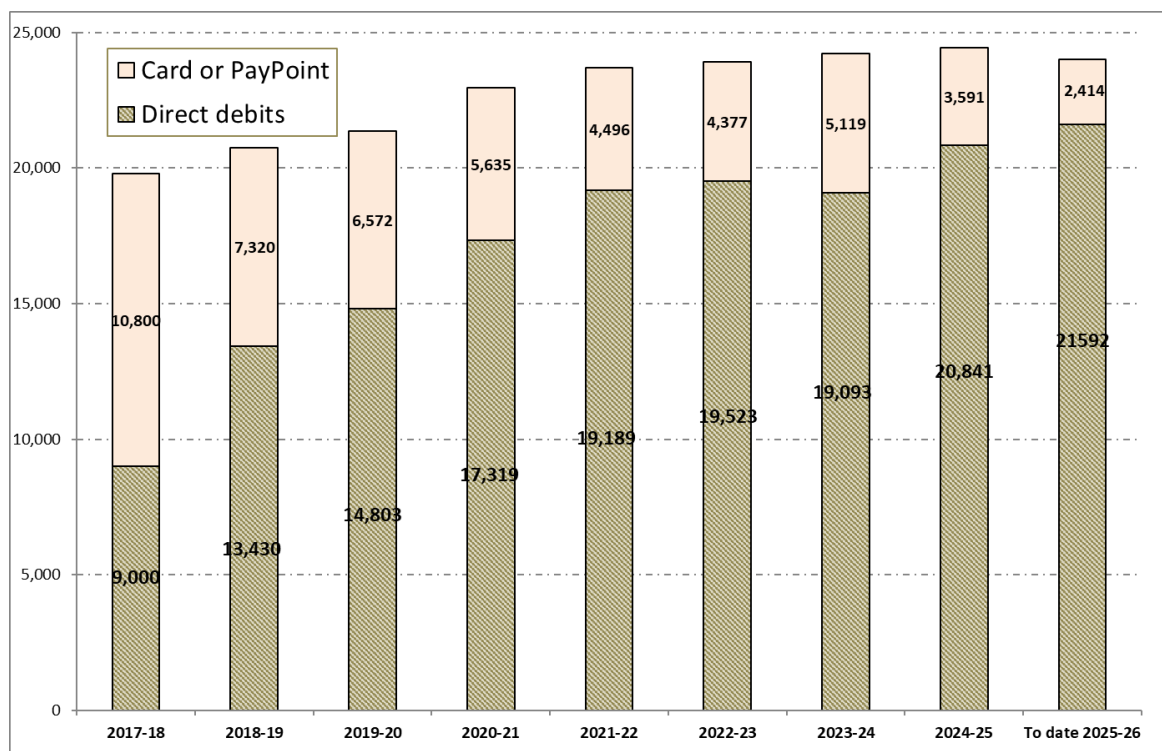
Defra Provisional 2023/24 Recycling Figures

Provisional [information](#) on recycling rates for England shows that most authorities have seen a dip in recycling performance, with the national Local Authority Collected Waste average recycling rate being 41.7% and recycling being 25% (when organics are excluded).

Garden Waste Collection (Cllr Teirney)

To date this year we have 24,006 subscriptions, with 90% direct debits and a total of £1,152,750 of income to cover the costs of providing the garden waste service. Last year there were a total of 24,432 subscriptions, with 85% direct debits, which generated an income of £1,114,509.

Garden Waste Subscriptions by Year and Payment Type 2017-2025



The fees charged for the garden waste service increase as costs for providing the service increase, however with the lower priced direct debit fee, Fenland remains one of the lowest priced garden waste services in the Eastern Region.

Since the garden waste service commenced in 2017, it has generated more than £8.5 million and allowed the customers who choose to use the garden waste service to continue to do so.

Customer satisfaction for garden waste remains high, with those responding to the survey recording a 97% satisfaction rate.

Delivering clean streets and public spaces (Cllr Tierney)

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 and the final draft will form a Council report in the early Autumn.

Deliver a competitive trade waste service (Cllr Tierney)

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.

Monitor and respond to the DEFRA Waste & Resources Strategy consultation with RECAP partners (Cllr Tierney)

The Council has received more than £1 million of capital funding and £320,000 of revenue funding from Defra to commence the work developing the food waste services as set out in The Environment Act for 2026. A cross departmental team has been created to design and manage this project with support from relevant portfolio holders and regular updates to members.

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

Use education, guidance and Council powers to fairly enforce environmental standards and tackle issues such as fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles, dog fouling, littering and antisocial behaviour (Cllr Imafidon)

Total number of fly tips during April and May is show below. Wisbech rural villages have been the most affected across the district.

Month	Total	Chatteris	March	Whittlesey	Wisbech	Villages
April	69	3	14	6	26	20
May	101	6	13	11	50	51

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

4 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. 2 of these have now been paid.

1 business owner has been issued with a fixed penalty notice for failing to have any trade waste disposal after waste found dumped was linked back to them.

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

3 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.

4 Formal S34 Notices have been issued to businesses in relation to trade waste offences requesting paperwork.

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 **1 parking fine** to cars who were found to be parking illegally.

The team have received **a total of 41 reported abandoned vehicles. All were investigated with 3 being removed by our contractor** due to being a danger to the highway.

Ensure well maintained parks and open spaces by working with our grounds maintenance contractor (Cllr French)

Progress with the maintenance of Fenland's open spaces and park has been excellent this year, with our contractor, Tivoli, supported by the weather reducing grass growth rates. Complaints received are limited, with action taken promptly due to the excellent contract management skills of the FDC officers involved.

Supporting volunteer Street Pride groups and other environmental volunteers, organisations and partners (Cllr Wallwork)

Fenland's volunteer groups continue to deliver on average 20 scheduled events per month, including group litter picking, planting and fundraising.

Steps have been put in place to ensure groups can access equipment and materials efficiently and are able to share progress and raise issues at a monthly virtual meeting.

Recent successful initiatives include Murrow Street Pride who recently secured a grant fund from Mind* in recognition of the positive impact of their Coffee & Cake social gatherings after their group events.

Groups continue to focus on building their resilience and accessing a wide range of funding opportunities.

Work with Town Councils and the community to provide local markets and thriving market town community events (Cllr Seaton)

On 27 April another successful St George's Fayre took place in March. St George's Fayre is organised by Fenland District Council in partnership with March Events Committee and supported by partners including March Town Council, MarketPlace Arts, March Library, March Society, March Museum, St Peter's Church, The Library Presents and 20Twenty Productions.

Prior to the event the volunteer committee worked in partnership with MarketPlace Arts, who invested in the region of £15,000 of resource, to deliver a series of workshops leading up to an impressive community parade involving 15ft puppets.

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 extended as far as West End Park, March Library and St Peter's Church.

The Fayre commenced at 10am with a parade to the town centre, coordinated by MarketPlace Arts.

There were more than 100 stalls including; street food, live entertainment, street performers and amusements at the event with a special hub of arts activities, workshops and performances for all ages. There were thousands of people in attendance.

For the past two years, St Georges Fayre adopted the name of St George's Festival when it had a slightly different look and format during town centre works, but this year reverted to be known as St George's Fayre.

The next event in the four seasons calendar is Chatteris Midsummer Festival taking place on 28 and 29 June.

Deliver the council's carbon reduction and climate adaptation plan including meeting all climate change targets which are legally required by the UK Government (Cllr Tierney)

During April and May all approved Net Zero Village Funding has been allocated to successful applicants. The funding, initially provided by a bid to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Combined Authority, aims to support rural communities with capital projects that deliver reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Fenland Council receives 10% of the fund to allocate to resourcing costs.

Applications were welcomed from:

- A parish council within Fenland district,
- A voluntary, community or social enterprise sector organisation, with the applicable asset to be improved being located within the Fenland district or,
- Other public sector bodies applying on behalf of a Fenland district community.

The minimum single grant award was £4,000 and the maximum, £25,000. The application window closed in February 2025 with successful applicants awarded in April 2025.

Four successful grants have now been paid and work on their projects commenced.

Maximum amount of grant approved payable to FDC	£93,208 10% to fund administration costs / officer time.
Total expected project cost	£93,208
Project breakdown	Project 1 £25,000 Project 2 £17,000 Project 3 £10,000 Project 4 £9,198.41 Total allocated £61,198.41 Administration costs £9,320.80
Total allocated	£61,198.41 Administration costs £9,320.80
Total remaining	£20,987.85 for project 5 (award planned for summer 2025).

Successful projects:

Project 1 -Gorefield Playing Field Association secured £25,000 towards a project to install a solar energy system for the community hall and sports pavilion, in Wolf Lane.

Project 2 - Wimblington Parish Council awarded £17,000 towards a replacement of the roof on the parish hall, in Addison Road, with a 'green roof'.

Project 3 - Tydd St Giles community centre low energy lighting scheme awarded £10,000.

Project 4 - Wisbech St Mary Parish Council secured £9,198.41 for the installation of a solar energy system for Guyhirn Community Centre.

Project 5 should be confirmed in summer 2025 and this will complete 100% of the funding allocation for Fenland.

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 were last calculated in November 2023. This highlighted a significant shortfall in the available funding at the time in the region of £500,000.

This figure would certainly now have increased due to associated annual construction price increases but more importantly the scope of works would also now likely have increased due to additional sign and line corrective works being required since the estimated costs was based on a survey undertaken 3-1/2 years ago.

A further CPE update paper is anticipated to go to Cabinet in July; however it is likely that only estimated costs will be available at that time as updated target costs would likely attract a sizeable cost to produce and would require member approval.

Street Lighting (Cllr French)

A total of fifty-six streetlight faults were reported and have been attended to during the months of April and May 2025 by Fenlands streetlight maintenance contractor. Forty-seven 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 (Woodstock Streetlighting Services Ltd).

Fenland DC -	47 Fault Reports
Clarion -	1 Fault Reports
Parishes -	8 Fault Reports

The bulk of the electrical and structural testing works associated with Council owned or managed streetlights was undertaken between September and February however, some additional testing works was commissioned in March, and approximately 300 streetlights required a return visit to site associated with restricted access and vegetational overgrowth. Approximately 40 units currently remain outstanding and are being programmed in.

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. It is hoped that the testing data will be shared with the Parish Councils in July following receipt of the outstanding works data.

Capital Streetlight Replacement Works

Following receipt of the structural and electrical works test data the Engineering Team will undertake an analyse to determine the next phase of capital streetlight replacement or upgrade works. It is known that a number of streetlights have failed either the structural or electrical test and replacement or upgrade works will be prioritised in order of severity.

FDC Car Park Maintenance (Cllr French)

Car park inspections are undertaken 6 monthly and are scheduled in April and October each year. The next asset inspections for FDC's car parks are due to take place in October and any associated defects shall be quantified and actioned. Works that were identified following the April inspections are currently being undertaken or have been programmed. The inspection information is also used to inform minor improvement, and maintenance works for the Councils public car parks.

The Engineering Team are responsible for around 6500 highway related assets. The majority of these assets are either streetlights or street furniture items.

Routine inspections for the high-risk assets are undertaken each year and various maintenance, and improvement works carried out to ensure that the assets remain safe and fit for purpose. Each year a number of seats, street name plates, streetlights and bus shelters are replaced or upgraded for safety reasons and to enhance the streetscene.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 25/26	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP7	% of Rapid or Village Response requests actioned the same or next day	87%	90%	91%	
CELP8	% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards	99%	90%	97%	
CELP9	% of household waste recycled through the blue bin service (1 month in arrears)	25.0%	25.0%	23.5%	
CELP10	Customer satisfaction with refuse and recycling services	97%	90%	N/A (March 2026)	N/A
CELP11	Customer satisfaction with garden waste service	97%	90%	N/A (March 2026)	N/A
CELP12	Number of Street Pride, In Bloom, Friends Of Groups and Green Dog Walkers community environmental events supported	282	204	45	
CELP13	% of those asked who were satisfied with community events	100%	96%	N/A (Jul 2025 & Jan 2026)	

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

Comments
CELP9: Reducing weights of recycling and increasing incorrect materials as outlined in this report.

Economy

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

Promote and develop our Business Premises at South Fens, The Boathouse and Light Industrial Estates to encourage investment, business development, job creation and skills diversification (Cllr Count)

The Estates team remain actively engaged with tenants of all sites. Overall occupancy across the investment estate remains high at 94.4%

All industrial units are fully occupied.

Boathouse occupancy has dropped slightly during this period to 94.3%

South Fens Business Centre (SFBC) has shown an uplift this period to 71.3%

The significant uplift in occupancy rates at South Fens has been aided by the flexible approach to marketing and rents. The Boathouse continues to see a churn of tenants with some leaving and some merely moving offices to suit needs and this is resulting in occasional voids. However, interest in the site remains strong.

A small number of the industrial tenants are reporting difficult trading conditions putting a strain on their ability to continue in business. Officers are 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

Work with external stakeholders, local businesses and the Combined Authority to attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities (Cllr Count)

A council representative attended the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum from 20 to 22 May held in Leeds as part of "Team Cambridgeshire" led by the CPCA. Sixteen pre-arranged meetings were held with developers, funders and Government representatives promoting the benefits of investing in Fenland. The council representative was also asked to speak at a forum on how to leverage economic and social benefit from the planned Fenland Reservoir.

Skills Update (Cllr Count)

Local Skills Improvement Plan – Quarterly Report for Fenland

Increase in employment:

A recent increase in employment has seen Fenland's employment rate rising to (68.0%) but it still remained well below the national average (75.7%) in 2024 and the lowest across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Fenland's employment rate fell sharply in 2023 (-7.5 percentage points) – reflecting rising economic inactivity – but increased slightly in 2024 (+0.2 percentage points). Claimant unemployment in April 2025 was also slightly higher (+0.3 percentage points) than at the end of 2023.

Strong job growth:

While slightly more dated, new jobs data suggest that Fenland experienced strong jobs growth (+4.8%) in 2023, above England's growth rate of 1.1%.

Increase in job postings:

In the six months to April 2025, Fenland was the only area of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to see the number of online job postings increase on 10 years ago (+9%, compared to -2% across the region and -16% across England). Job postings increased for just over half of all occupations, particularly transport workers/drivers. Care Workers and Home Carers continued to account for the largest number of job postings in the district, while the biggest recruiters were the NHS, Greencore and Cambian Group.

Increased rate of Level 3 qualification attainment:

The percentage of 19-year-olds attaining Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications remained low in 2023/24, at 75.9% and 46.4% respectively (below national rates of 83.4% and 57.6%), with Fenland having the lowest Level 3 attainment rate in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Despite this, Level 3 attainment in Fenland increased to its highest since the earliest year of comparable data (2016/17).

Strong growth in digital employment, but weak growth in green employment:

According to labour market statistics, employment in digital occupations across East Cambridgeshire and Fenland has increased by over 800% over the past five years (2019-2024) (compared to 21% growth across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough), while the number of people employed in occupations affected by greening in Fenland has increased by 4% (below growth of 19% across the region).

Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration**Enable appropriate growth, development and infrastructure through delivering a proactive and effective Planning service (Cllr Laws)**

The Development Management Team is currently fully staffed, with no vacant posts within the service. One agency officer remains engaged to assist with a number of complex planning applications, a temporary arrangement that was initially put in place during a period when the team experienced several vacancies. The service continues to make notable progress in reducing the backlog that built up during that time and is actively reviewing internal processes and procedures with the aim of improving both the speed and quality of decision making, as well as enhancing the overall customer experience.

Despite this progress, the number of applications requiring determination by the Planning Committee remains high. The Council's level of delegated decisions continues to fall significantly short of the Government's recommended 90% threshold. In 2024, Fenland District Council had the fifth lowest rate of delegation in the country. This situation places continued pressure on the service's ability to meet statutory decision deadlines, particularly in relation to smaller, less contentious applications. It also results in lengthy committee agendas and, in

some cases, the need for additional committee meetings, creating a considerable burden on both planning officers and elected members.

In terms of policy work, the Planning Policy Team is actively progressing the preparation of a new Local Plan, alongside the delivery of other statutory responsibilities. The Council is now advancing the required evidence base to support the Regulation 18 stage of the Local Plan, aided by £227,962.50 of additional Government funding secured for this purpose.

The Planning Policy Team is also leading the Council's involvement in a number of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), which are placing growing demands on officer time and expertise. However, significant progress has been made in formalising Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) with developers, ensuring that the costs associated with the Council's role in NSIP work are appropriately met by the promoters of these schemes.

Work with the Combined Authority on the development of its new ten-year Local Growth Plan, to link the potential for growth in Fenland to Government priorities and the development of a national industrial strategy and unlock the potential of its key industrial sectors to power the local economy (Cllr Count, Cllr Laws & Cllr Hoy)

Work has continued to develop a Local Growth Plan (LGP) across the CPCA area and at the time of writing a draft plan was scheduled to be sent out to constituent authorities. The aspiration is that the LGP can act as a catalyst to secure additional investment into the CPCA area to the benefit of all constituent authorities.

Work with our partners to enable new affordable housing to meet housing needs (Cllr Laws & Cllr Hoy)

The affordable housing pipeline in Fenland continues to flow with over 250 units currently planned to be completed in 2025/26 and at least a further 350 units that have received planning permission that are looking to break ground this year, with others likely to be added feeding into the future completion pipeline.

We are in the final year of the current Homes England funding cycle which means that the registered providers budgets are already all but allocated. Therefore, we are unlikely to see any major uplift in the current years' numbers as they look forward to the next round of funding. With the announcement in the recent spending review nearly doubling the available grants for affordable housing over the next 10 years, we will be working hard to ensure that we see an uplift in the investment made in Fenland.

Plan for Neighbourhoods, Wisbech (Cllr Hoy)

Fenland District Council, in partnership with the Wisbech Town Board, remain in a positive position in relation to the Plan for Neighbourhoods programme.

The Board have successfully drafted the Regeneration Plan and have completed prioritisation of projects for the 4-year investment plan with the next meeting scheduled for 10 July.

The approved projects which will form the basis of our bid are:

- Public Realm Improvement Fund – a targeted package of funding to improve public realm of poor quality across the town
- Riverside improvements
- Introduction of Street Wardens hosted by Wisbech Town Council
- Deliver funding for an increase in CCTV coverage
- A scheme of new small industrial units, supported by apprenticeship funding for training
- Hudson Leisure Centre Upgrades funding package (value TBC)
- Upgrade the castle cafe to become a Castle Visitor Centre
- Launch of a Disabled access improvement Grant

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 (previously Long-Term Plan for Towns) but in principle, the scheme remains largely unaffected.

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

Immediate next steps being taken by the Board are the setup of the grant funding agreement between Wisbech Town Council and FDC to fund the introduction of street wardens alongside an ongoing piece of work to create a brand and website for the Town Board.

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

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) is a transitional fund for one-year 2025-26 to maintain support for businesses and communities prior to the introduction of the Government's Industrial Strategy to be launched in 2026.

Fenland has negotiated with CPCA an SPF allocation of £279k. This is the largest single allocation to any of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local authorities.

The two SPF projects are, in summary:

A continuation of the Investment in Business project with a budget of £220k. This project will provide access to the appropriate expertise and pump-priming grant funding for Fenland businesses to drive local economic growth, productivity, R&D, energy saving and business innovation to secure access to market opportunities. The project will proactively prioritise sectors that are important drivers for economic growth in Fenland including agri-food, precision engineering and advanced manufacturing sectors, however, there will be no sectoral restrictions for the project. The project will maintain the involvement of the Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce in assessing grant bids and making recommendations to the Council's Grant Team for final decisions on grant applications.

Firebreak and Anti-Social Behaviour - Delivered in partnership with the Fire Service, County Council Youth Engagement team, law enforcement agencies, and local youth organisation CICs, the project provides structured youth engagement opportunities, focusing on personal development and crime prevention. As well opportunities to engage and reassure the wider

community through visible policing across all areas of Fenland. A key component of this initiative addresses youth-related anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime through targeted outreach, increased police visibility, and proactive intervention strategies. Under Operation Luscombe, law enforcement will enhance patrols in ASB-prone areas across Fenland, improving public perception of safety and reducing nuisance incidents

The SPF transition year schemes launched in May 2025.

The Rural England Shared Prosperity Fund (REPF) builds on and is a top-up to the Governments Shared Prosperity Fund and is available only to eligible rural local authorities in England. The funding available to Fenland District is for £130k over a transitional one-year period 2025-26 and will support the continuation of the 2022-25 REPF rural business grant scheme. During the June Cabinet meeting the Executive agreed to accept the funding to facilitate the REPF Grant scheme for the transition year 25/26.

The key elements of the REPF Business Grant project are:

- A maximum grant of up to £10k per business.
- Businesses will need to contribute a minimum of 50% towards the total cost of the project.
- Only businesses with between 2 and 40 employees will be eligible.
- Only businesses located within the defined Fenland REPF area will be eligible
- Capital grants will be available for businesses to promote business growth and diversification and for the purchase of for example capital equipment, expansion of business premises and so on.

The criteria used in assessing applications for REPF will include:

- Projects that create and sustain rural jobs.
- The diversification of income streams.
- Certain types of rural businesses will receive priority including farming, suppliers to farming businesses, manufacturing and tourism businesses.

The Transition year REPF Grant Scheme will launch late June 2025.

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

The March Future High Streets Fund Project is now in the final phases of 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.

The scheme was awarded “highly commended” (2nd place) at the national **CIHT Creating Better Places Awards** on 4 June 2025.

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.

Shopfront Grants and Local Business Support

The shopfront grants scheme is ongoing. At present there are:

- 3 businesses undertaking or with completed works
- 7 businesses with Grant agreements in place to begin delivering improvements
- 6 businesses with ongoing applications

March Toilet Block – Construction Phase

The toilet block in March is now under construction with our contractor Probus and works began on 26 May. Work is progressing well and the anticipated completion date is October 2025

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 almost complete with close out of this element of the project projected for the end of June.

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.

Barclays Building

Planning for the demolition of the premises to make way for a development site is almost concluded with a submission to the planning committee expected over the summer of 2025.

Due to the start on site of works to construct the new Toilet Block and the attached Construction Design Management (CDM) regulations coupled with the remembrance services and Christmas markets it may not be possible to demolish the building until January 2026. However, officers are reviewing this issue to see if a suitably safe and CDM compliant solution may be found.

Once consent of the demolition is granted soft marketing of the site will commence to reduce the period of vacancy. It is intended that any sale contract will impose time deadlines for the submission of a full planning consent and work start dates to ensure March is not left with a major site vacant. Officers have already had informal confidential discussions with at least one interested operator for parts of the site so are hopeful the marketing will result in a good level of interest.

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

This project is in the final stages. The building is completed with internal works almost finished. Carpets are down and the building is a few weeks from handover to the Council. A road closure is required in Wisbech High Street for connection to the sewer system which has delayed the handover until August.

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

Reserved matters planning application in for consideration.

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

Plot 5 has a planning application submitted for an extra care scheme.

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 Boden, Cllr Count, Cllr Tierney & Cllr Imafidon)

Work continues in respect of the final sites identified in the first tranche of disposals with two further sales completing in the period. This results in overall sales in Tranche 1 of £486,000 with additional receipts from overage clawbacks of £37,590 thus a total return of £534,590 to date.

Work has also 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 and this strategy will soon be discussed with Cllr Imafidon prior to implementation

Fenland Inspire! (Cllr Seaton and Cllr Count)

Wisbech Splash Pad Improvements:

At time of writing, the splash pad improvements are progressing well. Following close working with local members, the design for the improvements has been agreed. The purchase of the

new water features was undertaken at the beginning of June with the items arriving for installation in late July.

The new shaded areas have been agreed, the products selected ready for purchase and a planning agent appointed for the planning process.

The intention is to twin track purchase and install with FDC's planning process in order to install the new shaded areas this summer.

At present the budget remains healthy and will allow for further addition of seating, planters and possibly soft landscaping to further improve the space.

11-12 High Street, Wisbech

Following Cabinet's approval of the scheme officers are finalising the quotes and prices for the required specialist services to allow the final design, planning and tendering to undertaken prior to returning to cabinet with a full report once a preferred bidder is established.

Wisbech Floodlighting for Clarkson Memorial

Scoping work in relation to this project has been undertaken and officers are presently awaiting costed quotes back from contractors. Discussions will also be held with the FDC Conservation officer and planning colleagues to confirm the requirements of undertaking this work in the proximity of a listed structure.

Manor Leisure Centre, Whittlesey

The Alliance Leisure project team is ready to begin RIBA stage works to develop the project to the end of RIBA 4 (design / planning / contractor procured / cost confidence). This work will cost approximately £1m and will take 30 weeks.

The expectation is that this work will be complete in January 2026, with a project Gateway report to Cabinet asking for a recommendation to Full Council to move to construction at that point.

There is considerable work to take place in the coming months, commencing with local club and community consultation, alongside and local elected Member consultation. The project scope determines the cost of the facility, so any feedback will be considered carefully, but must be balanced with the cost of any suggested scope creep.

Chatteris Leisure Centre Condition Survey Work

This work has been ordered and a local contractor is expected on site in the coming weeks.

Work includes:

- Exercise class studio floor replacement
- Replacement of changing room floors / shower units / tiling
- Water tank replacement
- Ceiling painting works and cleaning of solar PV panels and external skylights to maintain performance

District Wide Assessment of New Play Equipment

Cabinet will receive a scoping report regarding this project at July Cabinet. The project will commence in September.

Wisbech Orchard Park

A project plan is being developed to take this work forwards, with partners in the area who would like to take on removed trees being identified. The expectation is that this project will take about 2 weeks and due to the seasonal nature of tree's growth cycles will commence in mid-January, weather dependent.

New March Country Park

Discussions with lead members resulted in an initial public consultation exercise being undertaken prior to the local elections in May seeking comments on the facilities that would be desired. These results have now been reviewed and discussed with the lead members and will be fed to the design team at the appropriate time

The next phase for which current authority is provided is to discuss with the current landowners the terms upon which the land can be transferred to FDC and the price being sought (if any). This work will continue with the assistance of the Deputy Leader and a further report will be brought forward in due course.

New Village Green for Wimblington

Valuers have been engaged to assess the current market value of the site bearing in mind the potential future uses and the current placement of an Asset of Community Value notice on the site. This information being required to ensure that FDC achieve best value as required by law. Once received discussions will take place with the Parish Council over the method of transfer be it freehold sale or long lease and the terms connected to the agreed method

3G Pitches

Fenland has successfully bid to the Football Foundation for considerable financial support to install 2 [PlayZones](#) located in Barton Road, Wisbech and Manor File, Whittlesey. The delivery of these projects is underway, requires a planning application and if approved, the facilities are likely to be in place in late November – weather dependent.

The Football Foundation (FF) will consider future funding for further PlayZones in England in late September. Should that funding be approved by the FF Board, then FDC will consider funding applications for a Wisbech Park PlayZone and a PlayZone in March

St John's Chapel, Station Road, March

Discussions will be held with representatives of March Town Council and members of the FDC Estates Team regarding the preferred method of transfer and the terms attached and also any pre-conditions / requirements that they may have.

Civil Parking Enforcement

An updated report relating to the current financial projections and timings for the implementation of CPE has been prepared and circulated to Cabinet for further review and discussion. Following feedback from this draft report officers will then prepare the details to allow a formal decision to be taken

Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements

Promote sustainable road, rail and concessionary transport initiatives to improve access to employment and local services (Cllr Christy)

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. Survey work has been commissioned at the station and for Station Road relating to the level crossing closures and the volumes of traffic using the station and the Station Road. This work will take place in July 2025.

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)

Engage with the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council on the feasibility and delivery of road and rail infrastructure projects (Cllr Christy)

Local 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

There is no specific update for this project. Further updates from Government are needed on projects to be funded for RIS3

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 now complete. The final report and appendices were approved at FDC Cabinet in May 2025. Please see the link to the report and the Cabinet meeting minutes below.

[Agenda for Cabinet on Monday, 19th May, 2025, 2.00 pm - Fenland District Council](#)

Officers have been asked to consider options and sources for the additional funding that is needed to take forward the recommendations in the SOBC report forward. This includes opportunities to reduce potential costs of the scheme, further assessment on scheme benefits, a broader network wide assessment using the traffic model and an assessment of how the scheme supports economic growth and planning.

Work with the Combined Authority to influence how housing and infrastructure funding is used to stimulate housing development and economic growth and improve connectivity in the district (Cllr Christy, Cllr Hoy and Cllr Laws)

Following Homes England and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority formalising their ongoing housing and regeneration efforts with a Strategic Place Partnership, we have been proactively reaching out to our key registered providers, developers and partners to explore how we work collaboratively to bring this new potential investment into our district.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 25/26	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
CELP14	% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks	91%	85%	100%	
CELP15	% of minor planning applications determined in 8 weeks	85%	85%	93.02%	
CELP16	% of other planning applications determined in 8 weeks	91%	85%	100%	
EGA1	% occupancy of our business estates	94.2%	92%	93.4%	
MS1	% occupancy of Wisbech Yacht Harbour	85%	90%	86.5%	

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

Comments

Excellent Customer Service

Help residents to self-serve and access our services digitally to allow us to provide greater support for vulnerable customers and complex queries (Cllr Tierney)

Work is ongoing in respect of the Council's approach to process automation. This is a project which puts a greater emphasis of maximising the use of technology in order to deliver excellent services to our customers, whilst freeing up Officers capacity to support those members of our community who are the most vulnerable or those who have the most complex needs. The project team have identified all the processes involved in receiving, validating and facilitating applications for services across the Council and a prioritisation approach will be utilised to automate those processes therefore exploiting technology where possible and appropriate. Work to facilitate the automation will begin later in the summer.

Elections Update (Cllr Boden)

Election of Councillors to Cambridgeshire County Council and Election of Mayor for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

On Thursday 1 May 2025 we successfully delivered the Election of nine Councillors to Cambridgeshire County Council for the eight Fenland Divisions and the Election of Mayor for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the Fenland Local Area. There were 59 polling stations located across the Fenland area and all polling stations successfully used iPads to access and mark the register, record ballot paper numbers, record photo ID data and return the ballot paper account at the close of poll.

<u>Cambridgeshire County Council Election</u>	
Polling Station Total	13,700
Postal Vote Total	9,448
Total Votes	23,148
Electorate	76,445
Turnout	30.28%

The following candidates were duly elected to Cambridgeshire County Council Fenland Divisions:

- Chatteris Division – Daniel Devine
- March North and Waldersey Division - Stefan Fisher and Colin Galbraith
- March South and Rural Division – Christopher Thornhill
- Roman Bank and Peckover Division – Andy Osborn
- Whittlesey North Division – Chris Boden
- Whittlesey South Division – Michael Fisher
- Wisbech East Division – Samantha Hoy
- Wisbech West Division – Steve Tierney

Combined Authority Mayoral Election for the Fenland Local Area

Polling Station Total	13,694
Postal Vote Total	9,310
Total Votes	23,004
Electorate	76,445
Turnout	30.09%

The Fenland Area results were declared and submitted to the Combined Authority Returning Officer and combined with results from Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Peterborough City and South Cambridgeshire, with Paul Bristow being duly elected.

3C's Update (Cllr Tierney)

Quarterly figures to be reported on, July, October, December and March

April - May 2025	Total received	On time	% On time
Correspondence			
	17	16	94.1%
Stage 1			
CELP	17	14	82.3%
GI	0	0	N/A
PRCS	9	9	100%
Stage 2			
CELP	2	1	50%
GI	0	0	N/A
PRCS	0	0	N/A

Please note that the new two stage 3C's policy was implemented 1 April 2025.

Governance, Financial Control & Risk Management

Maintain robust and effective financial standards, internal controls and organisational management (Cllr Boden)

The detailed budget report and associated papers were approved by Full Council in February 2025 and the Statutory Statement of Accounts for the 31 March 2025 will be audited by our external Auditors EY by February 2026 providing assurance that the Council's financial standards, value for money including internal controls are appropriate.
No non-compliance to report.

Internal Audit (Governance, Risk Management & Internal Control)

We have been busy completing the Audit Plan for 2024/25; currently there are two audit reports awaiting final agreement before they are formally issued and the audit year closed.

The Head of Internal Audit met with management from across the council to discuss potential areas for the new year's Audit Plan. There has been a set back with one of the auditors leaving the organisation and various recruitment options are being considered for replacement, but there will be a shortfall in resource for a period of time. This has meant that the Audit Plan taken to committee for approval was a Draft and will be adjusted once resources are known.

The following audit reports (with their assurance opinion) have been finalised in the period:

- Licensing – Taxi (Reasonable Assurance)
- Creditors (Reasonable Assurance)
- Payroll (Reasonable Assurance)
- ARP Enforcement (Substantial Assurance)
- NNDR (Reasonable Assurance)
- Council Tax, Housing Benefit & Local CT Reduction Scheme (Reasonable Assurance)

Two high priority actions were agreed from the above audit reports one of which has been actioned.

The Chief Audit Executive will now prepare their Annual Report which will detail their overall assurance opinion to feed into the Annual Governance Statement for the Council.

Assurance Questionnaire Statements have been given to all Services to each complete an assessment of governance basics, providing a picture of our governance themes across the Council and identifying gaps where further improvement may be made. Work will now commence to prepare the AGS.

Comply with data protection and General Data Protection Regulation requirements (Cllr Boden)

There have been no reportable breaches of the UK GDPR during the period to which this briefing relates. However there has been 1 recorded breach by ARP requiring no further action. This breach was human error that resulted in information being sent to the wrong person.

In the same period, there have been 2 data subject access requests.

Consultation and Engagement

News update:

Due to the Mayoral and CCC Elections on 1 May and the pre-election period commencing on 25 March, we were unable to publicise our normal selection of press releases.

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in April = 5. We also created an additional 2 news articles we published on our website.

Highlights include:

- New free social and fitness sessions in Fenland for April 2025
- Couch to 5k running class graduates never thought they'd be able to do it – but now they can, and you could too!
- Postal voters reminded about changes to handing in their vote
- Fenland District Council identifies error with small number of postal votes for upcoming elections
- New accessibility feature introduced for 1 May elections

The number of news stories added to the FDC website and distributed as press releases to local media in May = 11. We also created an additional 2 news articles we published on our website.

Highlights include:

- New free and low-cost fun and fitness activities in Fenland
- Don't forget to nominate the people who make a difference in Fenland
- Plans for new sports areas move forward
- Community centre upgrades supported by grant funding
- Free event offers information on services and support for over 60s
- Whittlesey Relief Road feasibility study published
- Wisbech Splashpad reopens for summer fun
- New Chairman elected for Fenland District Council

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](#). We also publicise relevant press releases on LinkedIn.

Monthly update on FDC social media sites:

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

April:

Twitter = 98

Facebook = 94

LinkedIn = 39

May:

Twitter = 118
Facebook = 115
LinkedIn = 41

We currently have 8,757 followers on Facebook, 8,567 followers on X and 2,071 on LinkedIn.

Asset Management and Commercialisation

Continue with our Commercial Investment Strategy to make informed decisions about the purchase and management of property assets through Fenland Future Limited (Cllr Boden, Cllr Count, Cllr Tierney & Cllr Imafidon)

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 16 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 2025/26. 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.

Workforce Development

Equip our workforce with the right skills to effectively deliver our priorities (Cllr Boden)

We have a strong commitment to learning and development. 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 also have a range of learning resources available to all staff, e-learning, coaching, shadowing, secondments, in house training workshops delivered by our own in-house experts, as well as more formal courses and 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 is 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

In light of the forthcoming Local Government Reform process, the Council is committed to supporting every member of our workforce through this period of uncertainty and change.

To help do that, a new specific LGR Workforce Workstream has now been created, tasked with shaping and delivering a robust support programme for staff over the next three years.

The Workforce Workstream will focus on a number of areas, but one of these will be about increased opportunities for learning and development and skills development. As such we will be delivering workshops how to deal with and manage change from this September.

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.

Support and empower our staff to make effective decisions (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)

The EAP is free and confidential for staff to use, and 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.

We are now carrying out pulse surveys for our staff via our new HR/Payroll system app to obtain more immediate feedback.

Transformation and Efficiency

2024/25 subheadings:

Transformation Project updates (Cllr Boden & Cllr Tierney)

In 2019, we began our Transformation Agenda programme (TA1). This focussed on transforming the way the Council delivers all aspects of our services to our customers. TA1 has successfully delivered over £1m savings over the medium term.

In 2023/24 the Transformation Agenda 2 (TA2) was launched. The objectives of TA2 were to build in the successes of the TA1 programme and further drive forward transformation change across all services within the Council.

Following the emergence of the TA2 Programme, the Team currently supports three key strands of work including proactive Service Reviews, encompassing all services across the organisation, Ad-Hoc requests in addition to Corporate Transformation projects.

Since the relaunch of TA2 in 2023/24, £241k of cashable savings have been implemented in addition to those already achieved as a result of TA1. In addition, over 7,000 of Officer hours have been saved as a result of exploiting the use of technology as well as introducing more efficient business processes. The team have also identified and put in place effective mitigating actions in respect of 20 significant business risks, which had the potential to cause significant service disruption and/ or reputation damage to the Council in the event that they materialised.

Work is ongoing in respect of the automation of business processes which will further free up office capacity to support those with the most complex of need.

More recently however the team are increasingly being drawn into corporate projects to ensure their success. This slightly different emphasis has arisen due to the changing context in which the organisation works including the Fenland Inspire Programme and Local Government Reform.

Local Government Reorganisation (Cllr Boden)

While many details of the government's LGR plans are still emerging, the Council is committed to supporting every member of our workforce through this period of uncertainty and change.

To help do that, a new specific LGR Workforce Workstream has now been created, tasked with shaping and delivering a robust support programme for staff over the next three years.

The Workforce Workstream will focus on the following areas:

- Recruitment and retention issues.
- Review of fixed-term contracts and secondments.
- Job description and contract updates.
- Learning and Development.
- Apprenticeships.
- Communication.
- Skills development and change management.
- Workforce wellbeing.

Enforcement & Compliance

Use a fair and proportionate approach to improve living, working and environmental standards as set out in our Enforcement Policies (Cllr French (CPE), Cllr Laws (Planning), Cllr Tierney (Streetscene), Cllr Christy (Environmental Health, Housing & Licensing Enforcement) & Cllr Seaton (Dilapidated Buildings & Enforcement))
Environmental Crime updates can be found under streetscene update within the environment priority.

Support businesses to ensure compliance with a wide range of regulatory requirements (Cllr Count & Cllr Imafidon)

During April and May 76 food safety compliance visits or other interventions (for example the provision of information and guidance) have been undertaken. Compliance visits are undertaken based on business categories rated from A to E. Those categorised as A, B and C are businesses serving ready to eat food such as restaurants or cafes and serving a large customer base, in particular customers who may be more vulnerable such as hospitals, schools and care homes.

Broken down into categories these are:

Category	April	May	Total
A	1	0	1
B	4	2	6
C	6	8	14
D	9	17	26
E	9	20	29
Overall total			76

Businesses who are eligible to use the food hygiene rating scheme were awarded the following certificates:

Food Hygiene Award	5	4	3	2	1	0
April	23	1	0	0	0	1

May	27	3	1	0	0	0

Food hygiene ratings of 0 or 1 will be categorised as non-compliance and will be provided with a series of follow up visits to ensure full compliance within a satisfactory period of time dependant on the situation.

At least 25% of businesses are asked after the visit if the service was helpful and fair. 100% of respondents in April and May responded positively to this question.

Health & Safety

Maintain effective Health and Safety systems to comply with relevant legislation and local requirements (Cllr Boden)

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. Some of the actions are highlighted below:

- An enhanced suite of Health and Safety e-learning courses developed for staff training which are available to all staff via our new HR and Payroll system.
- An analysis of all accidents and their consequent actions has been undertaken. The Accident Incident Rate (based on 100 per employees) was 5.39, which is a decrease of 2.32 on the previous year.
- Health and Safety corporate training was delivered to a total of 104 staff.
- A programme of audits and inspections undertaken.

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. This details all courses available either via e-learning, internally or externally delivered and which courses are applicable to specific services/teams.

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

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

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

Officer decision notices and Mayoral decision notices 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 - AGM	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	15.07.25	Agenda for Audit and Governance Committee on Tuesday, 15th July, 2025, 10.00 am
Funding Committee	30.06.25	Agenda for Funding Committee on Monday, 30th June, 2025, 10.00 am
Growth Committee	18.06.25	Agenda for Growth Committee on Wednesday, 18th June, 2025, 11.00 am
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	24.06.25	Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 24th June, 2025, 10.00 am
Skills Committee	16.06.25	Agenda for Skills Committee on Monday, 16th June, 2025, 11.00 am
Transport Committee	08.07.25	Agenda for Transport Committee on Tuesday, 8th July, 2025, 10.00 am

Forthcoming CPCA meetings include:

CPCA COMMITTEE	DATE OF MEETING	LINK
Audit & Governance Committee	18.09.25	Agenda for Audit and Governance Committee on

		<u>Thursday, 18th September, 2025, 10.00 am</u>
Business Panel	08.09.25	<u>Agenda for Business Panel on Monday, 8th September, 2025, 2.30 pm</u>
Combined Authority Board	22.07.25	<u>Agenda for Combined Authority Board on Tuesday, 22nd July, 2025, 10.00 am</u>
Combined Authority Board	24.09.25	<u>Agenda for Combined Authority Board on Wednesday, 24th September, 2025, 10.00 am</u>
Funding Committee	04.08.25	<u>Agenda for Funding Committee on Monday, 4th August, 2025, 10.00 am</u>
Growth Committee	30.07.25 (provisional date)	<u>Agenda for Growth Committee on Wednesday, 30th July, 2025, 10.00 am</u>
Growth Committee	10.09.25	<u>Agenda for Growth Committee on Wednesday, 10th September, 2025, 10.00 am</u>
Mayor's Question Time	04.09.25	<u>Agenda for Mayor's Question Time on Thursday, 4th September, 2025, 10.00 am</u>
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	09.09.25	<u>Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 9th September, 2025, 10.00 am</u>
Skills Committee	28.07.25 (provisional date)	<u>Agenda for Skills Committee on Monday, 28th July, 2025, 10.00 am</u>
Skills Committee	08.09.25	<u>Agenda for Skills Committee on Monday, 8th September, 2025, 10.00 am</u>
Transport Committee	15.09.25	<u>Agenda for Transport Committee on Monday, 15th September, 2025, 10.00 am</u>

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Target 2025/26	Cumulative Target	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries processed at the first point of contact	92.45%	85%	85%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (measured annually in February)	96.66%	90%	N/A (Feb 2026)	
PRC3	% of contact centre calls handled	87.42%	80%	79%	
PRC4	% of businesses who said they were supported and treated fairly	100%	96%	N/A (Jul 2025 and Jan 2026)	
ARP3	In year % of Council Tax collected	96.20%	20.00%	19.82%	
ARP4	Council Tax net collection fund receipts	£78,224,486	£15,081,041	14,905,074	
ARP5	In year % of NNDR collected	95.70%	18.96%	17.38%	
ARP6	NNDR net collection fund receipts	£29,467,704	£5,729,934	5,459,147	
HR2	% of staff that feel proud to work for FDC	86%	85%	N/A (Mar 2026)	

Key:

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

Comments
