

# Fenland District Council Business Plan 2025/26



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# INTRODUCTION



## Welcome to Fenland District Council's Business Plan for 2025/26

As Chief Executive and Leader of Fenland District Council, we are pleased to present our Business Plan for 2025/26. This plan outlines our vision and priorities for the year ahead, focusing on delivering high-quality services to our communities while preparing for the significant changes that lie ahead.

The next 12 months presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly as we navigate the anticipated Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) reforms outlined in the Government's English Devolution White Paper, published in December 2024. The proposed reforms are expected to reshape the structure and responsibilities of local councils, requiring us to adapt swiftly and strategically to ensure a seamless transition.

We recognise that these changes bring an element of uncertainty. However, we are committed to maintaining stability and continuity in service delivery while positioning Fenland to benefit from the opportunities that LGR presents. Our planning and decision-making processes will be underpinned by flexibility and resilience, ensuring that we can respond effectively to evolving governance frameworks.

Against this backdrop of reform, our elected Members have

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

These investments reflect our commitment to improving quality of life for our residents and ensuring that Fenland remains an attractive and vibrant place to live, work, and visit. From revitalising local leisure centres to restoring historic landmarks, we are determined to create lasting benefits for our communities while strengthening our local economy.

Another reflection of Members' commitment to supporting residents – particularly those who need it most – is keeping council tax as low as possible.

With ongoing financial pressures on public services, it's not an easy task. But thanks to financial prudence and good governance, our Draft Budget for 2025/26 proposes no increase in Fenland's portion of the council tax bill for the seventh year running (in 2023/24, we even cut our element by 2%). We're proud that no other principal council in the country has a better record for keeping council

tax down for its residents than Fenland.

Other key projects for year ahead include the implementation of our new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, and the continued development of our Early Help Hub, which has already demonstrated success in providing timely and effective support to vulnerable residents. These initiatives highlight our dedication to proactive, preventative approaches that make a real difference in people's lives.

Of course, none of our priorities would be possible without our valued partners and dedicated staff, and as we move into 2025/26, we thank them for their ongoing contributions and support.

Together with residents and businesses, we will embrace the changes ahead, deliver on our commitments, and inspire a bright future for Fenland.



Paul Medd  
Chief Executive



Chris Boden  
Leader of the Council

# ABOUT FENLAND



Fenland is renowned for its vibrant community spirit, rich heritage and picturesque land and skylines. Located in North Cambridgeshire, the Fenland District spans 211 square miles and is home to 102,462 residents (ONS: 2021). Over 70% of the population resides in the four market towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey, and Wisbech, while the picturesque rural areas encompass 29 villages.

- Population of 102,462 (ONS: 2021).
- Average house price of £225,000 (UK HPI June 2024), 22% less than the national average.
- Close proximity to large urban centres like Cambridge and Peterborough.
- Population growth projected to reach 118,826 by 2043, a 16% increase (ONS: 2021).

- 23% of residents (23,400 people) are aged over 64, higher than both the county and national averages (ONS: 2021).
- 135 hectares of open green spaces.
- 80th most deprived area out of 317 in the country (IMD: 2019).



# OUR PRIORITIES

Our core priorities focus on three areas:

Communities, Environment and Economy.

A fourth priority, Quality Organisation, sits alongside everything we do. It aims to ensure that the Council runs effectively, transparently and sustainably.



Communities



Environment



Economy



Quality Organisation



# FENLAND INSPIRE!



## Fenland Inspire!

In addition to our four core priorities, our Cabinet Members have selected a number of capital investment projects they are aiming to deliver across Fenland in the next three years.

The Fenland Inspire! projects focus on enhancing our much-loved sport, leisure, and open space facilities, as well as preserving and celebrating the district's rich heritage and built environment.

These initiatives will improve access to high-quality recreational opportunities, encouraging active and healthy lifestyles within our communities. At the same time, investment in heritage assets and the local built environment will help protect Fenland's unique character, ensuring that its historical significance is maintained for future generations.

### Members' chosen capital projects are:

- New Wisbech Park bowls green
- Wisbech Park Splash Pad improvements
- Wisbech 11/12 High Street development
- Wisbech Chapel building improvements

- Wisbech floodlighting for Clarkson Memorial & War Memorial
- Wisbech Park pathway improvements
- Leisure centre refurbishments
- New Chatteris swimming pool
- District-wide assessment of new play equipment
- New March Rugby Club HQ & pitches
- New March country park
- Whittlesey Monastery acquisition
- Whittlesey Manor field sustainable surface path

- New Village Green for Wimblington

- Civil Parking Enforcement

These projects are subject to scoping work and the development of outline business cases to determine their feasibility and affordability, ensuring that investment is targeted effectively and delivers the greatest benefit to local communities.



# TRANSFORMATION



## Transformation programme and outcomes

In 2025/26 we will be continuing our ongoing transformation work to improve efficiency, customer experience, and drive positive change.

Spanning across all services within the council, the Transformation programme ties together all major 'change' initiatives that are looking to improve how the council works and delivers services.

- An improved customer experience where customers will be able to interact with the council via a channel and time that is convenient to them.
- The ability for customers to self-serve via a suite of online processes or gain the personal support they need on more complex issues.

- Be flexible and forward thinking reflecting the diversity of our workforce and services we provide and enabling us to continue to be resilient and adapt to changing circumstances.

- Interdependencies between services will be maximised to improve outcomes for local people.

- Our building layout, usage and ways of working will encourage closer working with partners to further enhance service delivery for local residents.

- We will continue to attract, recruit and retain skilled staff enabling us to continue to deliver excellent services to our local residents

- We will have a motivated, committed, productive workforce ensuring colleagues have the necessary tools, equipment,

training, and ongoing support to fulfil their role.

- Services will be aligned, bringing together teams with similar processes and outcomes therefore building capacity whilst maximising efficient working practices.

- We will continue to have a commercial focus to service delivery, considering future opportunities and sustainable income streams

## Transformation Programme

**Cllr Chris Boden**  
Finance  
Audit & Risk  
Accommodation Project

**Cllr Ian Benney**  
Property & Estates  
Marine Services  
Economic Growth

**Cllr Jan French**  
Benefits & Council Tax (ARP)  
Car Parking

**Cllr Sam Hoy**  
Housing Options  
Private Sector Housing  
Licensing

**Cllr Dee Laws**  
Planning  
Local Plan

**Cllr Alex Miscandlon**  
Leisure  
Internal Drainage Board  
(IDB)

**Cllr Peter Murphy**  
Environmental Services  
Park & Open Spaces

**Cllr Chris Seaton**  
Transport  
Heritage

**Cllr Steve Tierney**  
ICT  
My Fenland  
Policy & Communications

**Cllr Susan Wallwork**  
Environmental Health  
Communities

# COMMUNITIES



## Support vulnerable members of our community

- Enable residents to claim the Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit they are entitled to.
- Use our housing powers to improve the condition of private rented homes.
- Use our housing powers to prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping.
- Reduce emergency accommodation use to provide better quality and more cost-effective short-term accommodation and supported homes for homeless clients.
- Use our housing powers to meet housing needs, including bringing empty homes back into use.
- Support residents to manage the effects of the cost of living.
- Encourage partners to support the delivery of the Golden Age programme and support older people.

## Promote health and wellbeing for all

- Create healthier communities through activities developed and delivered by Active Fenland and Freedom Leisure.
- 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.



- Work with the Integrated Care System to tackle local health and wellbeing priorities and provide information to help people make healthier choices.

## 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.
- Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland-wide Community Cohesion Action Plan.
- Deliver the Community Safety Grant Agreement with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

## Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture and Heritage

- Work with local stakeholders to support the aims of the Fenland Culture Partnership.
- Provide proportionate support and advice for community groups to hold safe and successful public events.



# ENVIRONMENT



## Deliver a high performing refuse, recycling and street cleansing service

- Work with partners, businesses, the community and volunteers to maximise the quality and quantity of recycling collected.
- Deliver an effective, self-funding Garden Waste collection service.
- Deliver clean streets and public spaces as set out in the national code of practice.
- Work with key stakeholders to deliver an effective waste partnership and update the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Strategy
- In cooperation with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership, to plan and deliver the Environment Act 2021 changes to domestic and commercial waste collection through an updated Waste Strategy.

## 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.



- Ensure well maintained parks and open spaces by working with our grounds maintenance contractor.
- Supporting volunteer Street Pride groups and other environmental volunteers, organisations and partners.
- Work with Town Councils and the community to provide local markets and thriving market town community events.
- Deliver the council's carbon reduction and climate adaptation plan including meeting all climate change targets which are legally required by the UK Government.



# ECONOMY



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

- Provide responsive business support to encourage business growth, job diversity, skills development and increased access to grants.
- 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.
- Work with external stakeholders, local businesses and the Combined Authority to attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities.

## Promote and enable housing growth, economic growth and regeneration

- Enable appropriate growth, development and infrastructure through delivering a proactive and effective Planning service.
- 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.
- Drive forward the development and delivery of new homes and commercial space by using our surplus property and land assets to



deliver sustainable economic and residential growth.

- Work with our partners to enable new affordable housing to meet housing needs.
- Identify and bid for external funding that aligns with and supports our housing, economic and growth objectives.

## Promote and lobby for infrastructure improvements

- Promote sustainable road, rail and concessionary transport initiatives to improve access to employment and local services.
- Engage with the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council on the feasibility and delivery of road and rail infrastructure projects.
- 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.



# QUALITY ORGANISATION



## Performance Management (Performance Indicators)

- Set relevant and robust performance targets to ensure the effective delivery of Business Plan priorities.
- Report regularly on service performance to the Corporate Management Team, Councillors and the public.

## Excellent Customer Service

- Maintain our Customer Service Excellence accreditation to ensure we continue to deliver the most effective service to our communities.
- Help residents to self-serve and access our services digitally to allow us to provide greater support for vulnerable customers and complex queries.

## Governance, Financial Control and Risk Management

- Maintain robust and effective financial standards, internal controls and organisational management.
- Comply with data protection and General Data Protection Regulation requirements.

## Consultation and Engagement

- Appropriately consult with residents about our service and proposals as outlined in our Consultation Strategy.



## Asset Management and Commercialisation

- Ensure our asset base is sustainable, suitable and fully utilised to maximise income opportunities and financial efficiencies.
- Deliver our adopted Capital Programme to maintain the integrity and safety of our assets.
- Work jointly with public, private and third sector partners to improve access to our services, including from co-located facilities.
- Continue with our Commercial Investment Strategy to make informed decisions about the purchase and management of property assets through Fenland Future Limited.

## Equalities

- Meet our Public Sector Equality duty by complying with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998 through our core service delivery and publication of a statutory Annual Equality Report.



## Workforce Development

- Equip our workforce with the right skills to effectively deliver our priorities.
- Support and empower our staff to make effective decisions.

## Enforcement and Compliance

- Use a fair and proportionate approach to improve living, working and environmental standards as set out in our Enforcement Policies.
- Support businesses to ensure compliance with a wide range of regulatory requirements.

## Health and Safety

- Maintain effective Health and Safety systems to comply with relevant legislation and local requirements.
- Deliver all aspects of the Council's Health and Safety action plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our workforce, partners and wider community.

# Performance

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



## Communities

Enable residents to claim the Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit they are entitled to.

Use our housing powers to improve the condition of private rented homes.

Use our housing powers to prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping.

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

Use our housing powers to meet housing needs, including bringing empty homes back into use.

Support residents to manage the effects of the cost of living.

Encourage a range of partners to support the delivery of the Golden Age programme and support older people.

Create healthier communities through activities developed and delivered by Active Fenland and Freedom Leisure.

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.

Work with the Integrated Care System to tackle local health and well-being priorities and provide information to help people make healthier choices.

Work with local stakeholders to deliver an action plan to support the aims of the Creativity and Culture Strategy.

Provide proportionate support and advice for community groups to hold safe and successful public events.

Manage the Fenland Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland-wide Community Cohesion Action Plan.

Deliver the Community Safety Grant Agreement with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

## Environment

Work with partners, businesses, the community and volunteers to maximise the quality and quantity of recycling collected.

Deliver an effective, self-funding Garden Waste collection service.

Deliver clean streets and public spaces as set out in the national code of practice.

Work with key stakeholders to deliver an effective waste partnership and update the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Strategy.

## Performance Measures

Days taken to process new claims and changes for Council Tax Support.  
Days taken to process new claims and changes for Housing Benefit.

Total number of private rented homes where positive action has been taken to address safety issues.

The proportion of households presenting to the Council as homeless whose housing circumstances were resolved through housing options work.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports

Number of empty properties brought back into use.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Number of Active Fenland sessions delivered (per year).  
Customer satisfaction: Net promoter score for Freedom Leisure Centres

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Value of Arts Council Grants achieved in Fenland.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

## Performance Measures

% of household waste recycled through the blue bin service.

Customer satisfaction with our Garden Waste service.

% of inspected streets meeting our cleansing standards.

Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

# Performance



In cooperation with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership, to plan and deliver the Environment Act 2021 changes to domestic and commercial waste collection through an updated Waste Strategy.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports. Customer satisfaction with refuse and recycling services.
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.	% of Rapid or Village response requests (to action issues such as fly-tipping, dog fouling and littering) actioned the same day.
Ensure well maintained parks and open spaces by working with our ground maintenance contractor.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Supporting volunteer Street Pride groups and other environmental volunteers, organisations and partners.	Number of Street Pride, In Bloom, Friends of Groups and Green Dog Walkers community environmental events supported.
Work with Town Councils and the community to provide local markets and thriving market town community events.	% of those asked satisfied with community events.
Deliver the council's carbon reduction and climate adaptation plan including meeting all climate change targets which are legally required by the UK Government.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Economy	Performance Measures
Provide responsive business support to encourage business growth, job diversity, skills development and increased access to grants.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
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.	% occupancy of Business Premises estates. % occupancy of our Wisbech Yacht Harbour.
Work with external stakeholders, local businesses and the Combined Authority to attract inward investment and establish new business opportunities.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Enable appropriate growth, development and infrastructure through delivering a proactive and effective Planning service.	Annual Monitoring Report.
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.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Drive forward the development and delivery of new homes and commercial space by using our surplus property and land assets to deliver sustainable economic and residential growth.	% of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks. % of minor applications determined in 8 weeks. % of other applications determined in 8 weeks.
Work with our partners to enable new affordable housing to meet housing needs.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Identify and bid for external funding that aligns with and supports our housing, economic and growth objectives.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Promote sustainable road, rail and concessionary transport initiatives to improve access to employment and local services.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Engage with the Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council on the feasibility and delivery of major road and rail infrastructure projects.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Work with the Combined Authority to influence how housing and infrastructure funding is used to stimulate housing development and economic growth in the district.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.

# Performance



## Quality Organisation

Set relevant and robust performance targets to ensure the effective delivery of Business Plan priorities.	Corporate performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Report regularly on service performance to the Corporate Management Team, Councillors and the public.	% of Council Tax collected. Council Tax net collection fund receipts. % national non-domestic rates (NNDR) (Business Rates) collected. National non-domestic rates (NNDR) (Business Rates) net collection fund receipts.
Maintain our Customer Service Excellence accreditation to ensure we continue to deliver the most effective service to our communities.	Customer Service Excellence Report.
Help residents to self-serve and access our services digitally to allow us to provide greater support for vulnerable customers and complex queries.	% of customer queries responded at first point of contact. % of customers satisfied by our service. Contact Centre calls handled.
Maintain robust and effective financial standards, internal controls and organisational management.	Annual External Audit Report.
Comply with data protection and General Data Protection Regulation requirements.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Appropriately consult with residents about our service and proposals as outlined in our Consultation Strategy.	Consultation Strategy and Consultations reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Ensure our asset base is sustainable, suitable and fully utilised to maximise income opportunities and financial efficiencies.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Deliver our adopted Capital Programme in line with our Corporate Asset Management Plan to maintain the integrity and safety of our assets.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Work jointly with public, private and third sector partners to improve access to our services, including from co-located facilities.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Continue with our Commercial Investment Strategy to make informed decisions about the purchase and management of property assets through Fenland Future Limited.	Commercial Investment Strategy updates via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Meet our Public Sector Equality duty by delivering the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act and 1998 Human Rights Act through our core service delivery and publication of a statutory Annual Equality Report.	Annual Equality Report.
Equip our workforce with the right skills to effectively deliver our priorities.	Customer Service Excellence Accreditation.
Support and empower our staff to make effective decisions.	Bi-annual Staff survey.
Use a fair and proportionate approach to improve living, working and environmental standards as set out in our Enforcement Policies.	% of local businesses who said they were supported and treated fairly. Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Support businesses to ensure compliance with a wide range of regulatory requirements.	Performance reported via Portfolio Holder Reports.
Maintain effective Health and Safety systems to comply with relevant legislation and local requirements.	Annual Health and Safety Report. Annual Audit and Risk Report.
Deliver all aspects of the Council's Health and Safety action plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our workforce, partners and wider community.	Annual Health and Safety Report. Annual Audit and Risk Report.

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