

County Council Report for Parish Councils

August 2017

Cllr Roger Hickford & Cllr Kevin Cuffley

Representing the villages:

*Babraham, Great Shelford, Harston, Haslingfield, Hauxton, Little Shelford,
Newton, Sawston, Stapleford*

Financial Impact

It is common knowledge that the County Council has less money than it did, but just how much less? Ans: The County Council had to cut its spending by £300m over eight years.

To put it into perspective, the overall budget is around £1 billion, but nearly half of this is ring fenced for schools etc. So in broad terms, our target was to save £300m from the £550m we spent on Adult Social Care, Vulnerable children and the maintenance of our roads, to name a few. The £300m was money we would no longer receive from central government, and is being phased out over the eight years, ending in 2020.

To date, we have cut our spending by £210m, and we are on target to reduce this by the other £90m by 2020. We have achieved this through restructuring, income generation and transformation, while still providing the front line services that are so needed, and we are committed to continue to do so.

Major Development

A “North Uttlesford Garden Community” of up to 5,000 dwellings is being proposed at Great Chesterford in the Uttlesford draft submission local plan. This was a very late addition by Uttlesford DC, but it has got through the initial phase for submission and is now a very real potential development. The proposed site is right on the border of South Cambs and Uttlesford, and with other proposals already being looked at in South Cambs, it could mean development all the way from Sawston to Uttlesford.

Other developments affecting the County...

A proposed “strategic expansion” of St. Neots by 3,820 dwellings on land east of Love’s Farm and at Wintringham Park is included in the Huntingdonshire draft local plan (though Wyton is off the agenda for the time being). A new town of about 7,000 dwellings at Tempsford, and around 3,000 dwellings in four new “linked villages” between Biggleswade, Sutton and Dunton feature in the Central Bedfordshire draft local plan. There is also a proposal for another cluster of villages (about 5,000 dwellings) proposed in Marston Vale,

which although further away will put more pressure on the A421/A428, Oxford Cambridge railway/expressway corridor.

A1307 LLF.... Workshops

The final workshops will take place 6th September 6-8pm at Linton Village college. All PC's will have been contacted and are urged to send representation.

City Dealnow Greater Cambridge Partnership

The City Deal has rebranded itself as the Greater Cambridge Partnership. Cllr Francis Burkitt took over the chair of the Executive Board from Lewis Herbert.

Children's Centres

A consultation on Children's Centres opened on 19 July and closes on 22 September. You can take part here: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/children-s-centres/children-s-centres-consultation/> The proposed changes will help the service with maintenance and running costs of under-used or over-used buildings, thereby saving a million pounds a year, and focus on improving the actual service to young people and their families. The proposal is for future provision by outreach to surrounding villages. Many good community spaces are available to host such sessions. Those interested in meeting and talking to officers leading these changes can attend events in August, including one in South Cambridgeshire...

15th August 2017

13.00pm to 15.00pm

Waterbeach Children's Centre

Waterbeach Community Primary School Site

High Street, Waterbeach, Cambridge, CB25 9JU

In Sawston the proposal is moving to a different building in the community to create Child and Family Zones. In this case the existing Children's Centre building would be available for re-purposing

Local Highway Improvement Scheme

Local Highway Improvement Scheme applicants will now be contacted by highways officers following the initial application deadline, to carry out further work in developing the feasibility and cost of solutions that meet their objectives. An updated application incorporating the outcome of this work will then be included in the information presented to the LHIS assessment panels.

This initial deadline is scheduled for 30th September 2017, followed by further development with officers and local communities throughout October, November and December.

The budget for projects will now be required to include the cost of officer resources necessary to deliver them. This will be estimated by officers during the feasibility assessment stage outlined above.

Multiple applications will now be accepted from Town Councils, limited to the number of County Council divisions in their authority area.

Combined Authority

The Combined Authority is jointly commissioning with Greater Cambridge Partnership a strategic options appraisal of rapid mass transit in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (and wider afield). Having knitted together the existing Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport Plans, the next step is launching the process leading to a new Local Transport Plan to 2031/36, aligned with constituent local plans. The Combined Authority successfully secured £100million from the Government to deliver 2,000 “affordable homes” across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as part of the devolution deal. £4.56million is to be drawn down to provide the first 253 “affordable homes”, of which 95 are in Peterborough, 48 each in Huntingdonshire and South, 36 in Fenland and 26 in East Cambridgeshire. (Cambridge City has its own five-year £70million housing grant to administer.) The Combined Authority will be writing its own Housing Strategy, envisaging 100,000 dwellings by 2037.

New Community and Partnership Committee

Communities and Partnerships is one of two new committees to be given full service committee status this year (the other is the Commercial & Investment Committee). Terms of Reference were agreed at its first meeting. A report featuring results of town and parish council surveys acknowledged the importance of meaningful and successful working with town and parish councils as they have some of the closest relationships with local communities. The county council realises that these relationships are key to supporting efforts particularly to helping people stay independent and healthy for longer. The Localism Act 2011 and the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 give town and parish councils new opportunities. The first countywide Parish Council Conference, led by Cambridgeshire Acre, had been held in November 2016 to explore how all tiers of government and the voluntary sector could work better together in a stakeholder partnership for the good of Cambridgeshire residents.

A suggested Improvement Plan includes: improving training for parish councillors in respect of their powers and duties; reviewing job descriptions of parish clerks to ensure their relevance with current requirements/expectations of the role and improving training provided for them in this respect; considering how support can be provided to younger parish councillors to retain their enthusiasm and commitment; encouraging parishes to become involved with volunteer and service provider locality networks.

Withdrawal of Bus Services

After three generations of family ownership, Whippet became part of the Tower Transit Group in November 2014. Whippet has given notice of withdrawing services 1, 1A, 2, 5, 7A, 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, 18, 21, 45/45A, 114 and 117 from 2 September 2017. The Council is looking to see if there is a possibility to keep any of these services running.

Police & Crime Commissioner bids to take over the Fire Service

The Police and Crime Commissioner is keen to take over governance of the Fire & Rescue Service. The bid is being strongly resisted by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority, whose stance has been supported at Full Council of the County Council. We also suggested that instead of the PCC taking over the Fire service, rather the Fire service and the Ambulance Service would make a better fit.

Other news...

- Cambridgeshire County Council received £453,000 from the first year of the pilot business rates retention scheme to which all seven councils signed up a couple of years ago. The General Purposes Committee has directed this additional income towards care for vulnerable children and adults.
- The 12MegaWatt Soham Solar Farm will generate £1million revenue a year from an initial investment of £9million. St Ives Park & Ride is set to become a solar carport, supplying a smart energy grid.
- Cambridgeshire County Council's Community and Cultural Services have been awarded funding from Arts Council England for a four-year programme of arts events and activities in libraries, beginning in 2018, called 'The Library Presents'. Libraries are a trusted "brand", and generally regarded as safe, welcoming and helpful places.
- A new £34million a year highway services contract, initially for ten years with the option to extend for a further five, has been awarded to Skanska, including management and maintenance of 2,800 miles of carriageway, 1,400 miles of footways and cycleways and 1,276 structures.
