

County Council Report for Parish Council

July 2018

Cllrs Roger Hickford and Kevin Cuffley

Harston Bypass meeting

There was a very successful meeting to which the public were invited in Harston to discuss options on how to reduce traffic on the A10 through Harston and other traffic using the surrounding villages. The meeting was attended by Mayor James Palmer.

The outcome was that the mayor will commission a feasibility study for the whole area, from Foxton to Trumpington. We should have this within six months, when there will be another meeting.

County Council to move to Alconbury

A contentious item on the most recent agenda for full Council was the proposal to relocate its headquarters to Alconbury but at the end of a very long debate the recommendation from Commercial & Investment Committee was approved. Arguments against the recommendation included

- Will the County Council even exist by the time the building is built?
- The desire not to move and maintain the status quo (although this had been ruled out at the previous Council meeting in March)
- Discomfort with the basis upon which the decision had been taken (the fact that a report by an outside consultant had confused Newmarket, Suffolk with Newmarket, Canada had raised questions about the competence of the authors).

What became apparent was the fact that not all members who opposed the move were actually aware of the Council's desire to move to a "hub and spokes" model which will mean only about 300 staff will move to the new HQ, with everyone else working within the community either directly or from other buildings.

The other obvious issue was those objecting to the move were ignoring the £40m of savings that can be achieved which can then be used for delivering essential front line services to our residents.

Commercialisation

Commercial & Investment Committee has approved the outline business cases for two smart energy grids at the park and ride sites at Trumpington and Babraham. This proposal builds on development work for a smart energy grid at the St Ives Park & Ride site, the objective being to generate income over the medium to long term. The St Ives smart energy grid is scheduled for construction to start this year 2018 once grant from Government is secured. It will act as a demonstrator/pilot project identifying a new business model for

local energy projects in areas where access to the local distribution network (grid) is heavily constrained. In agreeing the outline business cases members also approved a budget of £150,000 for each site to fund the development costs to the first stage of an investment grade proposal.

In the May meeting of the Commercial & Investment Committee a report was received summarising progress of sales of County Council owned land to the Council's development company, This Land. All land identified in the business plan has now been transferred.

Highways

The backlog of pot hole repairs has reduced significantly and as previously reported the County is investigating ways in which we can better address the situation should we get another severe prolonged winter. The two new dragon patcher machines will both be in use by the end of July.

Health

The scrutiny items on the Health Committee's May agenda included a briefing for members on the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group's [CCG] 2017/18 financial position and its planning for 2018/19. The Acting Interim Accountable Officer and the Chief Clinical Officer attended the meeting and the recommendation to committee was to note the update on financial performance and the challenging yet achievable plan for this year. In agreeing to note the recommendation members also requested that the CCG supply written clarification of the apparent discrepancy of £21m in figures quoted in the 2018/19 Financial Plan and attend the committee's meeting in six months to provide a further update particularly on the budget and improvement plan.

Children & Young People

At a time when the number of children being taken into care is increasing a report was made to Children & Young People Committee reviewing progress on the Children's Change programme which in 2016/17 introduced a number of changes to the way in which children's services are organised in Cambridgeshire. Some of the changes have been positive but there are also learning points from three external reviews. One carried out by Oxford Brookes included feedback from staff. The second was a focused visit made in March by Ofsted and the third was a peer review.

Whilst the report set out proposals to make some quite significant changes to the way in which services are delivered, there were many strengths identified in the outcomes of all of the external reviews. These particularly related to the skills, competency and knowledge of staff and managers. The changes proposed seek to build on the strengths identified and members were asked to endorse the eight recommendations and agree that a progress report on implementation be made to committee at its September meeting.

The number of children being taken into care remains a concern. This is a “demand led” service and therefore the County can only try and best estimate the budget required for the coming year. Many factors are involved, including the ever growing population, but we are above our comparable neighbours in terms of numbers, and officers have been tasked with investigating this.

Other information

Schools and pre-schools are just two of the beneficiaries of a social enterprise scheme in which the County Council partnered with Cambridgeshire Community Reuse and Recycling Network [CCORRN] on a scheme called **Cambridgeshire Community Repaint**. The scheme facilitates the reuse of waste paint. Cambridgeshire residents can take unused, unwanted paint to one of six household recycling centres in the county from which it is then collected by CCORRN. Following appropriate sorting and treatment the paint is distributed either on a nominal charge basis or through a monthly award programme. To date 159 charities, community groups, support workers, schools and pre-schools as well as low income households have benefitted from accessing this resource to provide improvements to the environments and facilities of around 21,000 people.

Additionally the scheme has provided work experience, volunteering opportunities and community payback placements for over 70 individuals. This creative way of disposing of waste paint has also seen the cost of the service to the Council reduce by some 42% over the six years of its existence and the decision has now been taken to extend the arrangement for another two years. For anyone wanting to use the service to dispose of unwanted paint, Milton is the nearest Household Recycling Centre and details of the types of paint that are accepted can be found at: <http://www.ccorr.org.uk/community-repaint>

The Council’s **Community Protection** Team has been acknowledged by the National Trading Standards Scams Team for its work in delivering Friends Against Scams training. Sixteen sessions have been delivered across the county since January providing knowledge for over 150 ‘friends’ to use in helping to protect their communities against this ever increasing and evolving crime. June was the national Scams Awareness Month. Following the success of last year’s campaign, the aim this year was to reduce the stigma around reporting scams.

A word of warning to anyone driving to Cambridge station to drop someone off: bus lane cameras went live at Cambridge railway station on 01 June. Similar enforcement equipment has already been installed to replace the out of date rising bollards at Emmanuel Road, Bridge Street and Regent Street/St Andrews Street. Described as ‘bus gates’ they restrict unauthorised traffic through the use of automatic number plate recognition cameras.
