

CLLR FIROUZ THOMPSON

STRATEGY & RESOURCES

Financial update

Cambridgeshire County Council ended the past financial year (2022/23) with a overspend of just 0.2 per cent of its annual budget.

Despite growing inflation on all the goods and services the council buys, the council kept it's overspend to just £728,000, a figure it had been predicting with some accuracy for the second half of the year.

The council set its 2022/3 budget in February 2022 at a time of great uncertainty, and during the year which followed inflation reached record highs, meaning that in-year the council had to manage more than £43M of additional pressures.

The final position shows that increases in some areas such as high levels of inflation in home to school transport, lower than expected income in some areas due to a slow recovery from COVID, and the impact of a national shortage (and consequent spiralling costs) of placements for children with very specialist mental health needs had largely been mitigated by underspends elsewhere.

The central issue remains however that Cambridgeshire County Council is woefully underfunded by central government, leaving residents of this county severely disadvantaged.

Cambridgeshire is a growing county, but despite this our funding formula remains fixed to population figures from more than ten years ago. In effect, while more Cambridgeshire residents are contributing to national taxes, our settlement has not been updated to supporting the area's direct local needs, leaving the council with problems to fix that will need many years of detailed work, not just short-term patching. The leaders of all four political groups on the county council wrote again to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up earlier this year, putting the case for change and a funding settlement which truly meets Cambridgeshire's local needs, but received no acknowledgement.

CONSTITUTION & ETHICS

Changes to the council's constitution

The council requested, and has now received, an independent review of its governance arrangements, carried out by the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny.

The report made a number of recommendations which were considered by the council's Constitution & Ethics Committee last month. The committee agreed to recommend these changes to the Full Council for consideration at its meeting this month. They include the addition of performance and strategic partnerships to the responsibilities of the Strategy & Resources Committee, and the creation of a new Assets & Procurement Committee.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Holiday Activities and Food Programme

The County Council's summer HAF programme, funded by the Department for Education, is open for bookings. Children in receipt of income-related free school meals can book a holiday scheme place for 64 hours, subject to availability. Each scheme offers enriching experiences, a meal and snacks.

The HAF Team can arrange transport for families unable to access the programme otherwise. Ukrainian and other refugee families are also eligible for places as well as families 'just about managing' financially. There is a video on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSOEpJIXY5c> showing what's involved. And look out for the HAF Programme on Facebook and Twitter too.

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities-localism/support-with-the-cost-of-living/holiday-activities-and-food-programme/haf-provider-directory

Special educational needs support

Support for parents and carers of the approximately 15,000 children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) in Cambridgeshire is now available at the click of a button through a new information hub. The website was developed with local experts including parents, health professionals, and community organisations such as Speak Out Council and PinPoint. The tool was produced to help families and young people to navigate the special needs journey and access information and advice.

<https://send.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/kb5/cambridgeshire/directory/home.page>

COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY & INCLUSION (COSMIC)

Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund

The Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund is now open for applications. Expressions of interest must be made by 24 September, and applicants who are successful at this stage will be invited to submit a Stage 2 application. The upper limit for bids is £40,000, and these must be for community capital projects to improve or upgrade community buildings and assets, while supporting the council to achieve at least three of its strategic ambitions.

- Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2045, and our communities and natural environment are supported to adapt and thrive as the climate changes.
- Travel across the county is safer and more environmentally sustainable.
- Health inequalities are reduced.
- People enjoy healthy, safe, and independent lives through timely support that is most suited to their needs.
- People are helped out of poverty and income inequality.
- Places and communities prosper because they have a resilient and inclusive economy, access to good quality public services and social justice is prioritised.
- Children and young people have opportunities to thrive.

Stage 1: Expression of Interest - applicants must submit basic information about their organisation, local community and the project. This is so we can determine eligibility. We must receive all Expressions of Interest by 24 September 2023. More information can be found here:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/cambridgeshire-priorities-capital-fund>

Quality of life survey

The County Council has launched a countywide survey, speaking to a random sample of 5,500 residents to understand their views on the quality of their lives.

The council aims to make this an annual survey so it can track the responses over time to see how council decisions and policies—and the work of other public sector bodies in the county—affect residents' views.

The telephone survey, run by an independent market research company Thinks Insight, aims to speak to 1,100 people aged 18+ living in each of the five Cambridgeshire district areas. The company will also be talking to people from specific groups who are less often heard from including people who may have been homeless or are from migrant or Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities. If you are approached the market research team will identify themselves as working on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council and will give the council's main contact number to allow people to check. No one will be asked for identifying personal details, or any financial information.

The council is also planning a specific piece of work with younger people via our youth engagement teams. However, anyone in Cambridgeshire who wants to do so can take part by responding online until Friday 4 August.

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/quality-of-life-survey

Equality, diversity and Inclusion

The council has developed a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy. This focuses on the council's workforce, communities and services, with three guiding principles—taking evidence-based action, listening to the voices of everyone, and having a transparent and robust approach that delivers meaningful change.

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Defra has now published guidance on how it wishes to see Local Nature Recovery Strategies being prepared. The Combined Authority is responsible for the preparation of Cambridgeshire's strategy, and has contracted this responsibility to the county council together with Natural Cambridgeshire.

Meanwhile work on the county council's Biodiversity Strategy is progressing well, with survey work ongoing this month to provide a baseline of the biodiversity status of the council's important sites and help identify plans for enhancement.

Energy Projects

Babraham Park & Ride: all the panels on the solar carports in the main car park have now been installed, and work is to follow on the remainder of the car park. 35 EV chargers will be installed later this year, fifteen of these on behalf of the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

St Ives Park & Ride: all solar carports have been constructed, and the next step is to build the microgrid energy centre and substation which will allow the project to connect to the grid and switch on.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Local Highways Improvements

The Highways & Transport Committee has delegated to the relevant Executive Director authority for the approval of recommendations for this year's Local Highways Improvement schemes.

Application numbers submitted this year were: East Cambridgeshire (12), Fenland (15), Huntingdonshire (38), South Cambridgeshire (42) and Cambridge (55) where a large number of bids will be unsuccessful due to the intense competition.

It was great to see that Girton and Oakington & Westwick Parish Councils were prioritised for Road Raised Features & Speed Limit Changes – Speed limit change, and installation of speed cushions at 100m spacing locations on Oakington Road between the two villages. Now awaiting next stage, timeline below:

- Programming, design, and consultation with applicants - July 2023 to March 2024
- Pricing and construction – March 2024 to August 2024.

The proposed application window for the next round of bids is as follows.

- Application window opens: Friday 27 October 2023
- Application window closes: Friday 12 January 2024 midday
- Feasibility studies undertaken: February to May 2024
- Panel meetings: June and July 2024
- Report to committee including prioritised list for approval: September 2024

Sustainable Travel Zone / Congestion Charge

The Greater Cambridge Partnership held an Extraordinary Joint Assembly/Executive Board meeting and a separate Executive Board meeting to discuss a revised package of measures to upgrade public transport, improve air quality and cut congestion on the roads.

On Thursday 29 June, following a lengthy debate, the Executive Board outlined the need for the region's transport network to be upgraded to support its growing needs and decided that - while no options should be taken off the table at this stage - the original Making Connections scheme should be modified.

The five members of the Board requested officers to develop a revised package of measures to transform the way people travel around Greater Cambridge, reflecting the public's feedback to the Making Connections consultation and following discussions with the Joint Assembly.

In the autumn a detailed proposal will be brought back to the GCP's Joint Assembly for scrutiny before the Executive Board decides whether and how to proceed with any scheme.

The updated proposal could include changes to the operating hours of a Sustainable Travel Zone and a more extensive package of exemptions – including possible free days for account holders or no charge for hospital patients and visitors.

Any potential scheme would be phased in over time with the GCP committing £50m of upfront investment in the region's transport infrastructure to improve public transport and active travel.

You can watch the meetings again at: www.youtube.com/greatercambridgepartnership

For more information about the GCP's projects visit: www.greatercambridge.org.uk.

Transport - Future ideas to improve public transport to be discussed

[Future ideas to improve public transport to be discussed by Members - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Cambridgeshire Matters Newsletter

Cambridgeshire Matters is Cambridgeshire County Council's monthly newsletter which aims to share good news, highlights and updates from across Cambridgeshire to help our network of district, city and community members stay informed.

Find out about the great work that is taking place to support everyone in the county.

[Cambridgeshire Matters - June 2023 \(govdelivery.com\)](http://govdelivery.com)

MEANWHILE ON THE COMBINED AUTHORITY

Combined Authority's new Environment & Sustainable Communities Committee met last month for the first time, Cllr Lorna Dupre, Chair of Environment & Green Investment Committee at CCC attended and asked that notes should in future be published of the meetings of the Combined Authority's Climate Partnership.

Cllr Dupre also attended an induction day at the Combined Authority, which brought together for the first time officers, Board and committee members, and Overview & Scrutiny and Audit & Governance members.

The Skills & Employment Committee has received Labour Market & Skills Profiles for each of the Cambridgeshire districts. South Cambridgeshire has 18 per cent of Cambridgeshire's population, +9 per cent higher than 2011. It has an employment rate of 79.4 per cent, and an unemployment rate of 1.8 per cent—both higher than England. It has a higher population of retired people and a lower proportion of students.

In 2022 wages were 16 per cent higher than the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough average and 19 per cent higher than the England average. In 2019 the district was the 291st most relatively deprived out of 317 English local authorities when looking at children who live in income deprived households. This would place South Cambridgeshire within the 10% least relatively deprived local authorities in England when considering income deprivation affecting children.

Participants aged 19+ both in further education and skills and apprenticeships increased up by 1 per cent between 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Full details can be found on below link:

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2191/Committee/76/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

MEETINGS ATTENDED and COMMUNITY WORK 5 June to 5 July 2023

Local meetings:

Northstowe SARW opening with Northstowe Town Council, Oakington & Westwick and Longstanton Parish Councils (12 June), Oakington & Westwick Parish Council AGM (12 June), Over Parish Council (13 June), Northstowe Delivery Group (15 June), Stagecoach meeting re: 5A bus with Over and Willingham Parish Councils (15 June), SARW Comms meeting (23 June), Longstanton Coop Neighbour Centre (23 June), Northstowe Town Council (27 June), Northstowe Hub (28 June), Northstowe Permanent Community Centre (4 July), Homes England Northstowe Quarterly with Northstowe Town Council, Oakington & Westwick and Longstanton Parish Councils (5 July)

Council meetings:

Digital Strategy Members' Briefing (12 June), Planning meeting with SCDC (12 June), Cambridgeshire Music Hub board meeting (14 June), Member Training - The role and scope of Children's Commissioning within Cambridgeshire (22 June), Starship Robots (26 June), Children & Young People's Committee (27 June), Local Highways meeting (3 July), Member Briefing - Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund (3 July)

Community work:

Sustainable Northstowe Skip Day (16 June), Meridian Showcase at NSC (21 June), Oakington Village Day (24 June), Over Day Centre bike rides (25 June),

Parish/Town Council monthly reports, Column write ups within Northstowe News, Longstanton Life (currently on hold) and Oakington & Westwick Journal, Northstowe Town Council Market Working Group – arranging food trucks and volunteers, Northstowe Foodies, Arranging Food Pantry beside the Mobile Library (2nd Friday of the month) and Bar Hill hub on Sundays.

Private case work:

Most Councillors will have private case work that they are dealing with, details of which cannot be shared due to GDPR – current themes are Bar Hill Asylum Seekers, Early Years, ASB, Youth, Potholes.

WARD NEWS

South Access Road West (SARW)

Currently due to open at end of July, meetings I am due to attend currently in the diary:

- Homes England Comms – Friday 7 July
- CCC and Homes England – Wednesday 12 July

Police – Noisy motorcyclist

It seems the noisy motorcyclist going around our villages has again come up as an issue. It is important to ensure that if the offender returns that we report this as the Police will have powers to seize his motorcycle. Please encourage your residents to do this and if they are able to safely get a video of him driving on paths or going through red lights, then please send them to me.

Any further reports of this or similar issues should be reported through the force's webchat on our website:

<https://orlo.uk/g7Zoi> Anyone without internet access should call 101.

HIGHWAYS ward meetings

Dates currently in the diary:

- Friday 7 July – at Oakington Pavilion
- Friday 6 October
- Friday 5 January

STARSHIP ROBOTS – food delivery from Longstanton Co-op

We at County have been working with Starship Robots to start the food delivery from Longstanton Coop to Longstanton and Northstowe, following the success of the pilots in Cambourne and Cambridge City. We have spent the last month helping Starship with SCDC to map roads, unfortunately some roads in both Longstanton and all of Northstowe are unadopted this will mean that contracts will need to be put in place with L&Q and House Builders – a contract is in place with County Highways. Timings are currently September, and a demonstration will be held for the local Councillors and the community.

LONGSTANTON Incl. B1050 Surface Treatments

Unfortunately, to ensure there was no clash of closures at the same time in the Longstanton area; our contractors are re-applying for permits to work at these locations. They will reschedule some of the works to avoid any clashes with the planned roadworks in mid-June on the High Street by Virgin Media.

Surface Treatment processes such as Surface Dressing and Gripfibre Micro Asphalt are multi site programs that are weather dependent, and are also subject to breakdown and parked vehicle delays. The programs and dates issued, are therefore best guesses/guides rather than totally accurate actual dates as they would be with a traditional plane out and inlay tarmac resurfacing. Works completed to date are:

- B1050 Old Hattons Road, Longstanton – completed 30 May
- B1050 Bypass, Longstanton – completed mid-June
- Hattons Road, Longstanton – completed end-June

Yet to be confirm dates, all will require Road closure (specific times during the day) and diversion

- Home Farm Road, Longstanton – w/c 11 July
- School Lane, Longstanton – w/c 11 July

Please note, all the below will be treated and assessed on a site-by-site basis in accordance with Cambridgeshire County Council's policy which can be found on the website:

- All junctions will be treated with the Gripfibre Dressing
- All white lining replaced within 28 days
- All studs/cats' eyes replacement – this works was started last week

[Road surface treatment schedule - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

[Types of road surface treatment - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

NORTHSTOWE

- Awaiting confirmation from Officers with regards to CCC's Education Centre Planning consent for 6th form, new primary school and extension to NSC for September 2024 opening.
- Adoption of Spine Roads – CCC officers are now working with L&Q to progress their agreements for the spine roads on Phase 1 for adoption, as well as the sewer adoptions on the main infrastructure, S38 agreement applications with L&Q to ascertain the current position as Bloor is reporting that they are awaiting this information.

OAKINGTON AND WESTWICK

- 20mph in Westwick– awaiting decisions, timeline below:

Application window opens – Monday 27 February 2023

Application window closes – at 5pm on Sunday 30 April 2023

Prioritisation undertaken – May to July 2023

Report to committee including prioritised list for approval - July 2023

Programming, design, and consultation with applicants - September 2023 to March 2024

Pricing and construction – March 2024 to July 2024.

- Mill Road flooding, have been liaising with a resident, currently CCC officer is looking into this with Homes England, update to come to Quarterly Highways meeting on Friday 7 July.
- GCP St Ives Greenway – the recommendation from the Joint Assembly at their 8th June meeting to the Executive Board was in favour of the St Ives Greenway spurs going ahead to Detailed Design, in which Oakington to Cottenham. The queries from the resident in Mill Road as above were all answered, details are with Laura Lawrence if required.
- Transport to Impington Village College for September 2024 – One of the residents has been in touch to say that her child has had their requests for transport to IVC rejected, I am liaising with County Education Officers to see if I can assist in any way.

OVER

- GCP St Ives Greenway – the recommendation from the Joint Assembly at their 8th June meeting to the Executive Board was in favour of the St Ives Greenway spurs going ahead to Detailed Design, in which Over to Fen Drayton.
- Potholes both conventional and by dragon patcher have been filled at the following roads: Station Road and Junction with the Doles, High Street and part of the junction with Fen Road, Overcoate Road, Meadow Lane, Long Furlong, Glover Street, Cromwell Park, Mill Road, Kings Street, Longstanton Road – these were the roads that I travelled to check on 25 June – day of the bike rides. The rest of this will be covered at Highways meeting on Friday 7 July

COUNCILS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND KEY GOVERNMENT FUNDED ORGANISATIONS

If you have a problem or concern do not worry too much about who can solve it just ask the question and we will endeavour to signpost to the right person. The organisational structure of Cambridgeshire is complex, but it is important to identify where responsibility lies.

<p>County Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Education, Transport, Highways, Heritage, Social care, Libraries, Trading standards, - Waste management, Maintaining their estate.</p> <p>Some of these services are shared between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council but any concerns should be directed to the county council.</p>
<p>District Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Council tax payments and benefits, Household bin collections, Housing and housing benefits, Council leisure facilities, Environmental health, Residential planning.</p>
<p>Parish/ Town Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Looking after community buildings, Open spaces, Allotments, Play Areas, Bus shelters.</p>
<p>Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)</p> <p>'The local delivery body for a City Deal with central Government worth up to £500 million over 15 years, to vital improvements in infrastructure (decarbonising transport), supporting and accelerating the creation of 44,000 new jobs, 33,500 new homes and 420 additional apprenticeships.'</p> <p>Partnership between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, University of Cambridge.</p>
<p>The Combined Authority, Cambridge and Peterborough, our elected Mayor</p> <p>'A combined authority (CA) is a legal body set up using national legislation that enables a group of two or more councils to collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries.'</p> <p>What our mayor does – Business support, skills, housing, transport, environment, international, digital connectivity, resilience, research, and strategy. New homes.</p>
<p>Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridge and Peterborough</p> <p>To support and challenge the Chief Constable to provide effective and efficient policing services for the area.</p>
<p>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority</p> <p>The Fire Authority is the governing body responsible for delivering a fire and rescue service to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is made up of Cambridgeshire County Councillors and Peterborough City Councillors.</p>

CONTACT DETAILS

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the above, or any other matters.

Firouz Thompson, County Councillor for Longstanton, Northstowe, Over and Oakington & Westwick
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For those on social media we have highly active Facebook groups:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/> - Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe

<https://www.facebook.com/libdems3rdMay18> - Over & Willingham