

County Councillor report January 2020

Divisional Highways meeting.

This was held on the 17th January with the Clerks and Chairs of all parishes within the division. All our highway issues were discussed and reported including the issues raised at the last parish meeting.

CCC response to Extinction Rebellion

Last month, Extinction Rebellion charged Cambridgeshire County Council – among other organisations - to take notice and action on Climate Change.

The Council has responded directly to Extinction Rebellion and has met with parts of the group to discuss its work, and is willing to continue discussions with this or other community groups.

Cambridgeshire County Council takes the issue of climate and environment very seriously. It's draft Climate Change and Environment Strategy went out for consultation and residents had until the end of January 2020 to give their views on it.

The County Council is prioritising action on Climate Change by;

- Becoming the first county council signatory to UK 100 – which commits local authorities to secure the future for their communities by shifting to 100% clean energy by 2050
- Making a declaration of a Climate Emergency in May 2019
- Working with the Cambridge University Social Policy Exchange (CUSPE) to produce an authoritative evidence base for reducing carbon across the county as a whole
- Developing its first Climate and Environment Strategy
- Adding specific 4th strategic priority into the council's Business Plan (which matches funding with priority objectives) concentrating on helping Cambridgeshire reach a net zero carbon target by 2050 – with associated action plans.

In areas where the County Council can take direct action itself it already is doing so by;

- Providing project and financial support for projects like Swaffham Prior heating scheme which aims to reduce village residents' reliance on fossil fuels for heating – with plans to widen this to other areas if it proves successful. 60% of the village is already signed up to take part
- Getting planning permission for the the St.Ives Park and Ride site to deliver solar PV car ports, battery storage, EV infrastructure and then selling energy to local businesses as an integrated project – the County Council has committed £1.8 million to this project and used this to draw down the same amount from Government
- Making a business plan commitment to take all 69 buildings owned and occupied by the Council off fossil fuels by 2023, and to replace all its fleet cars and vans with electric vehicles by 2025 – matched with appropriate funding
- Investing £11m into 55 schools to improve energy efficiency and generate renewal energy to reduce both their carbon emissions and energy bills - and working on a major pilot project with a large secondary school to develop a new business model to allow academy

schools to enter longer term heat agreements with the Council, to unlock investment and further decarbonisation.

- Delivering a 12mw solar farm on our rural farms estate in Soham which delivers enough renewable electricity to power 3,000 homes, and bringing forward plans for a further 30mw solar farm – enough to power a further 8,000 homes
- Earmarking 300k in the budget to install electric vehicle chargers on our sites to support pool cars and staff vehicles

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is the [transport authority](#) for the area, responsible for, among other things, [the local transport plan](#) and passenger transport. Cambridgeshire County Council is the Highway Authority with responsibilities which include maintaining the highway network, both CPCA and CCC work closely with the [Greater Cambridge Partnership \(GCP\)](#), which is a joint committee with delegated powers to deliver transport and other projects through the city deal with the Government for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (follow links for further information).

All of these organisations are committed to delivering improvements to public transport and making it more sustainable, with measures to help ensure those who are least responsible for climate change aren't disproportionately affected. There are currently plans in place to;

- Electrify the transport system e.g putting smart energy grids on P&R – to deliver solar PV and battery storage
- Trial electric buses – a GCP project with Stagecoach is about to begin shortly
- Trial autonomous vehicles - Smart Cambridge – a GCP workstream - has plans in place for trials of autonomous vehicles using part of the guided busway later this year
- Ongoing investments in cycle path network – together we have spent more than £43m on cycling projects across Cambridgeshire over the past four years, which has resulted in Cambridge becoming the cycling capital of the UK
- Develop 'last mile' delivery plans – for both freight and people – with a business case to develop a delivery hub due to be discussed by the council's C&I committee shortly
- Engaging communities to build social capital - helping them to understand their own carbon footprint and take action to reduce their impact on the environment and climate
- The GCP is developing high-quality public transport routes to the north, west, east and south east that will eventually form the first phase of the Mayor's planned Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro (CAM)
- The GCP has also held the Greater Cambridge Citizens' Assembly, where more than 50 people from across the travel-to-work area looked at the transport challenges facing the region. The GCP Board is to consider their recommendations later this year.

The County Council would welcome further face to face discussions with members of Extinction Rebellion's youth group to talk about these activities in more detail.

Budget

Many long discussions have been had over the past month to prepare the counties budget. This will go before the full council on February 11th.

Wuhan novel coronavirus.

This is very much in the news, and there has been a fair amount of emails between Public Health England, and the County Council public health Directorate.

The counties Director of Public health is keeping the Council's Joint Management Team up to date, and is also updating Local Resilience Forum partners (district councils, police, fire etc) through a web-based 'Resilience Direct' page. The main role as Council public health is to make sure that the national Public Health England information is shared in a timely way.

Peter Hudson
County Councillor

Oakington, Westwick, Longstanton, Northstowe, and Over