CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT – OCTOBER 2024 LONGSTANTON, NORTHSTOWE, OVER, OAKINGTON & WESTWICK

CLLR FIROUZ THOMPSON

BE WINTER WISE

Be Winter Wise returns for the winter season, helping Cambridgeshire residents keep warm, safe and healthy throughout the colder months.

The focus of the campaign is on preventing winter illnesses, coping with the cost of living, and staying safe during the winter weather. It will provide practical help and guidance with the issues that face so many people at this time of year.

The Cambridgeshire County Council led campaign will have advice on:

- Help with the cost of living such as warm hubs and Pension Credit
- Ways to protect your health, including vaccinations
- Tips on how to heat your home efficiently
- Where to find free physical activities for all the family
- Advice on preparing for extreme weather, such as freezing and flooding
- Winter gritting schedules and staying safe on our roads

Supermarket vouchers will once again be available for children eligible for free school meals during the school holidays, and the council will be signposting to partner organisations who provide essential winter support. Social media posts will feature campaign motif Olly the Owl.

FULL COUNCIL - 22 October

The council debated four motions proposed by councillors, and agreed them all unanimously.

- A call for fairer police funding and awareness of domestic abuse. Cambridgeshire is the fourth lowest funded police force in the country, and local taxpayers fund around half of Cambridgeshire's policing budget.
- 2. A proposal seeking changes to planning processes in cases where schemes are delivered over many years yet planning designs and decisions are not able to be changed to accommodate new situations.
- A proposal about safety risks from lithium-ion batteries in items such as e-bikes and e-scooters, for householders and for waste collection and disposal crews. It endorses the work being done by Lord Foster and the charity Electrical Safety First to seek to ensure third party independent approval testing for these items entering the UK market, regulations for safe disposal of used lithium-ion batteries, and controls to address specific fire concerns such as charging points.
- 4. A proposal for a review of the aftermath of National Highways' project on the A14 so that issues are clear and documented, and calling for National Highways to be more responsive and to resolve outstanding matters.

The council also agreed:

- To apply to Government for a Transport & Works Act Order to progress the Cambridge South East Transport project for a busway between a new travel hub near the A1307 / A11 and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, connecting with Granta Park, and the villages in between. The law requires the support of a majority of the whole council to proceed, regardless of how many are present, so a minimum of 31 votes; the proposal passed with 33 votes in favour and fifteen against.
- To establish a new Shareholder Sub-Committee of the council's Assets & Procurement Committee, to improve governance and accountability where the council is a shareholder with a significant holding.

STRATEGY, POLICY & RESOURCES Quality of Life Survey 2024

Most Cambridgeshire residents continue to feel happy and safe in the county, well connected to their local communities, and believe it's a great place to raise children, according to the County Council's second annual Quality of Life survey.

However, cost of living remains the issue of most concern, with almost half of residents using less heating, and a quarter cutting back on nutritious food in the past twelve months.

The survey was commissioned from national independent market research agency Think Insights. This year the council carried out this work in partnership with Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, South Cambridgeshire District Council, and Cambridge Ahead. 5,500 residents took part in the survey—1,100 in each of Cambridgeshire's five districts to give a representative view across the county.

In addition to the survey, this year the council engaged with some specific groups including those with lived experience of homelessness, the criminal justice system and drug or alcohol dependency as well as those under the age of 18. A general online public survey allowed any resident to take part.

The council will use the survey to increase its understanding of what is important to local residents and to inform council decisions.

In numbers

- 72 per cent of residents have high or very high levels of happiness. The average happiness score was 7.21, higher than the national average 7.0.
- Residents continue to feel positively about their local community; 85 per cent feel safe and 75 per cent feel they belong.
- Fewer residents report struggling with mental health this year (37 per cent down to 29 per cent) and a lower proportion report issues with physical health (40 per cent down to 31 per cent).
- Significant numbers of young people (43 per cent of 25–34-year-olds and 40 per cent of 18–24-year-olds) continue to be more likely to report mental health struggles.
- The proportion of residents reporting that they often feel lonely remains higher than national data, at 31 per cent of residents.
- Younger residents are again more likely to report loneliness (53 per cent of 18-24 year olds).
- Cost of living remains residents' highest concern, with 87 per cent of residents concerned this year.

District break-down of the survey, is currently being worked on and when available will be shared. More information can be found here: Quality of life survey 2024 | Cambridgeshire County Council

BUDGET

The council's current position forecasts an overspend of £9.6M for the current financial year—that's 2 per cent of its budget. The county council's estimated budget gap for next year (2025/26) has increased from £23.5M to more than £39M, largely due to a combination of increasing demand for services, inflationary pressures, and uncertainty over future funding from Government.

Over the last ten years, the council's core government funding has reduced by 70 per cent in real terms. Combined with more steep rises in inflation and a surge in demand for services supporting some of our most vulnerable residents, this has added further cost pressures to the council.

ADULTS & HEALTH

Health scrutiny

The county council's Adults & Health Committee commissions public health services from drug and alcohol treatment and wellness checks to vaccinations— but it also scrutinises NHS health care.

The Rosie

At their recent meeting, the committee received a report on maternity services at the Rosie in Cambridge. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspected two 'domains' (Safe and Well Led) at the Rosie in May 2023. Safe care was rated as 'Requires Improvement', with Well Led receiving 'Good'. The CQC issued one 'must do' and '13' should do actions.

The report covered developments in training, staffing, wait times, and the CQC's finding that 'Maternity staff felt respected, but did not always feel supported and valued'. It also considered how service user feedback was encouraged and used to influence improvement, and how the Rosie benefits from and shares learning.

Hinchingbrooke redevelopment

The committee also heard an update on plans to provide a new hospital on the existing Hinchingbrooke Hospital site by 2030. Work has begun to develop an outline business case and the programme currently remains on track to open the new hospital in late autumn 2030.

ASSETS & PROCUREMENT

The council's Assets and Procurement Committee has voted to close five county council offices and invest in other council office accommodation. including the closure or lease termination as applicable of: Hereward Hall March, Buttsgrove Huntingdon, Noble House Ely, Speke House St Ives, and Stanton House Huntingdon.

The plans will generate capital savings of nearly £11M over the next two years, with much of that reinvested in council buildings including community facilities. This decision will help continue to shrink the council's carbon footprint, and deliver around £2M in annual savings.

These closures are the first phase in the council's Accommodation Improvement Programme. This project has reviewed under-used council offices throughout the county where the average occupancy is less than 25 per cent across the working week—part of the Joint Administration's drive for value for money.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

I am pleased to announce that on 22 October 2024, I was approved by Full Council to become Vice Chair of the Children & Young People Committee. I would like to thank Cllr Michael Atkins who held this role for the past 18 months.

Martin Bacon Academy, Northstowe Ofsted

Martin Bacon Academy, Special Needs and Disability School, was inspected on 22 and 23 October 2024.

Special Celebration for Cambridgeshire care leavers

Cambridgeshire Council Councillors are corporate parents to some 670 young people, some of which leave care every year when they have reached the age of adulthood, to go onto further education, training and employment.

A special celebration event was held on October 30 for young people from across Cambridgeshire leaving care, which I attended at The Junction in Cambridge. It is one of several events planned for National Care Leavers' Week this week, young people themselves have been involved in planning this celebrations.

It was great to see local based organisation coming together at this event to help young people: Anglia Ruskin University and Cambridge University were there to showcase their courses, Become, National Youth Advocacy Service, Grafham Water Centre, Inspire 2 Ignite CIC and Health colleagues.

Support workers develop and deliver targeted programmes and experiences that engage and empower these young people, providing them with meaningful opportunities and support.

Representatives from the National Youth Advocacy Service will also be on hand with advice and guidance for care leavers.

The Leaving Care Service works with many local and national organisations including <u>Goal 17</u>, who has been providing 40 young care leavers with mentors from the public. If you are interested in becoming a mentor for these fabulous young people who are looking forward, the work could be anything such as helping with a university application or help with finding a suitable service for their needs, then do contact Goal <u>17</u>.

Cambridgeshire County Council has recently updated and improved its <u>local offer page</u> for care leavers, which explains what services and support are available for those leaving care.

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

East West Rail consultation

East West Rail (EWR) have announced that their Non-Statutory Consultation will begin on 14 November 2024, closing on 24 January 2025. More information, including details of consultation events, can be found at https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024

COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY & INCLUSION

Poverty Strategy Commission

A new commission involving organisations from across Cambridgeshire has been launched to tackle poverty in the county.

The Cambridgeshire Poverty Strategy Commission will work independently to make recommendations to partners across the county who are supporting people currently in, or at risk of, poverty.

A group of eleven independent commissioners with extensive professional experience supporting residents will:

- look at data and evidence relating to poverty in Cambridgeshire and how the system currently responds to this
- hear from residents who have personally experienced poverty
- produce a series of recommendations for local organisations to consider as an approach to recognising and tackling poverty.

The commission will meet regularly and determine what it will focus on within the timescales. It will deliver a report in early 2025 which will include a review of the evidence submitted and a set of recommendations.

Pension Credit

A campaign has been launched to make sure everyone who is eligible for Pension Credit in Cambridgeshire is claiming it. Pension Credit is extra money to help with living costs for those over State Pension age and on a low income. It could mean an extra £186 per month for the average household.

In Cambridgeshire as many as one in three people who are eligible for Pension Credit may not be claiming it. Cambridgeshire County Council is appealing to everyone who may be eligible to check.

Claiming Pension Credit can also unlock other benefits, such as the Winter Fuel Payment, a free TV licence for those aged over 75, help with NHS dental treatment, glasses and hospital transport costs and other benefits depending on circumstances.

Pensioners can get a Winter Fuel Payment this year if they are entitled to Pension Credit at any point between 16 and 22 September 2024.

To be eligible for Pension Credit, you must:

- live in the UK
- be over State Pension age
- have a weekly income below £218.15 if you're single, or £332.95 if you're part of a couple.

The county council has set up a dedicated webpage with advice, guidance, and links to Government websites where people can check if they are eligible and apply for Pension Credit

https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/pension-credit

Household Support Fund

Every year the County Council manages a fund called the Household Support Fund which is aimed to support individuals who are in receipt of benefits. The fund has different tranches of application and is currently asking for applications from 'Trusted Partners'. Direct applications will be opening soon so please do keep an eye on this, as it is a very popular and helpful pot of money that we can tap into.

 $\underline{https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living/household-support-fund}\\$

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Local Highways Improvement schemes (LHI)s

The Highways & Transport Committee meeting on Tuesday 1 October is asked to agree which Local Highways Improvement (LHI) bids will be approved for the coming year. These are divided into complex and non-complex schemes.

The papers for the Committee Meeting can be found here <u>Council and committee meetings - Cambridgeshire</u> <u>County Council > Meetings Calendar (cmis.uk.com)</u>

Next's year's application round

The application window for the next LHI application round will be as follows.

- Application window opens: Friday 1 November 2024
- Application window closes: Friday 10 January 2025
- Feasibility studies undertaken: February—May 2025
- Panel meetings: June—July 2025
- Report to committee including prioritised list for approval: October 2025

Maintenance work continues on old A14 - between Swavesey and Huntingdon

A 40mph speed limit is in place between Swavesey and Huntingdon, this speed limit had been in place for some time and extensive maintenance works were required before it could be lifted.

The verges have now been cleared, the vegetation has been stripped back and some of the drains have been cleared. However, these works have not been completed as quickly as originally expected as our highways officers have uncovered the need for further drainage work. Some of the drains are not clearing properly and more drains have been discovered which weren't listed on the original plans.

Further ecology survey work is expected to start on Monday (28 October). During this time, traffic management will be in place. Following the survey, some trees, which are posing a risk to the carriageway, will need to be removed. New seeds and mature trees will be planted elsewhere at a more suitable location.

Another priority is the barrier work required between Godmanchester to Huntingdon section. The preparation for this work will start shortly, and will involve clearing the vegetation to allow the barriers to be installed. The barrier replacement work, which will require lane closures, is expected to start in November and continue until at least February 2025.

Residents Parking Scheme Consultation

There is a consultation opening on 31 October and running until 12 December on proposed changes to the County Council's policy on Residents Parking Schemes. This is to attempt to make the policy marry up with the new Civil Parking Enforcement officers (traffic wardens) that have been operational in South Cambridgeshire since February this year. Some people approach us about implementing residents parking schemes in specific areas. If you, or anyone you know, feel strongly about this policy, please do comment - https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/residents-parking-scheme-policy-review

REMINDER: Bus Franchising Consultation

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) launched a consultation on the concept of bus franchising in the county and how the authority can help reform bus travel. It's a very big step forward, as the idea of introducing a road charge in Cambridge to pay for more busses in Cambridgeshire has been binned, this is a more realistic alternative to improving public transport, but will involve more public funding to get it off the ground and possibly an increase in the Mayor's precept to help fund it, so please do contribute to the consultation if possible. The consultation runs until **20 November**.

https://cpca-yourvoice.co.uk/bus-franchising-consultation/

A141 Improvements Consultation

The consultation for the A141 improvements is now open! You might have already had a flyer through your door, if you live within a 5-mile radius of the study area (including postcodes CB24 4, CB24 5, CB23 3, and CB23 4).

These proposed changes are important for our community, so make sure your voice is heard! You can view the full plans and share your thoughts at: <u>A141 and St Ives Improvement Scheme | Consult Cambridgeshire</u>

Upcoming Sessions:

• In-person event: 5 November in St Ives

Online session: 7 November

Winter Gritting Scheme

The County Council is always looking for people to volunteer to help with community gritting in the winter months. If you're interested in this, please do register via the website or your local Parish Council - https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/gritting-roads-cycleways-and-paths/help-with-gritting-and-clearing-snow

Road closures for Remembrance events

The council has agreed to produce a toolkit to raise awareness of the support available from the Council for those organising Remembrance events. This consists of waiving the fee for any Temporary Traffic Regulation Order, and providing access to free training for traffic management volunteers.

Highway events | Cambridgeshire County Council

MEETINGS ATTENDED and COMMUNITY WORK 2 October to 2 November 2024

Local meetings:

Northstowe Quarterly Homes England (3 Oct), Over PC meeting (8 Oct), Meridian Trust (10 Oct), Bar Hill Parish Councillor (10 Oct), Capital & Centric community engagement (10 Oct), MBA (11 Oct), Oakington & Westwick PC meeting (14 Oct), Northstowe Delivery Group (17 Oct), Principal of Northstowe Learning Community (18 Oct), Northstowe Town Council (22 Oct), Stagecoach Busway new timetable release (25 Oct),

County Council meetings:

Travel to Work survey (3 Oct), Children & Young People Committee (8 Oct), Engaging New & Emerging Communities Conference (5 Oct), Combined Authority Bus Franchising (10 Oct), LHO manager (11 Oct), CCC Senior Responsible Officer for Northstowe (15 Oct), Cambridgeshire Music (17 Oct), Northstowe Heritage (21 Oct), Children & Young People (22 Oct), Full Council meeting (22 Oct), Members Transport update (23 Oct), Northstowe Avenue picture for press release (23 Oct), Cambridgeshire Music Board meeting (24 Oct), Children Young People Spokes (24 Oct), Northstowe Social Value Strategy (28 Oct), Cambridgeshire Care experienced young people – Goal 17 celebrations and county council event (30 Oct),

Community work:

Parish/Town Council monthly report, Column write ups within Northstowe News, Oakington & Westwick Journal and Over News online magazine. Northstowe Foodies

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 Transport, ASB, Highways, Youth.

WARD NEWS

HIGHWAYS

New Local Team

Local Highways Officer: Sarah Bligh and Local Highways Officer: Aaron Boddington

Quarterly Highways meetings 2024 dates: Friday 8 November 12noon – 1.30pm

TRANSPORT

Busway Crisis

Stagecoach announced their new modelling for the Busway, County Councillor Ros Hathorn (Histon & Impington) met with David Boden from Stagecoach to take us through the 13 report on the busway and the data that they have gathered to come up.

The press release is as follows:

Busway to gain extra buses in bid to meet unprecedented growth in demand

- Two additional services registered
- Busway has seen an up-to 58% passenger growth
- Increase is in addition to 3 extra buses that were added in September

Cambridgeshire's biggest bus operator is adding even more buses onto its Busway services to allow an unprecedented increase in passengers to travel when they want.

Last year, between August and September, Stagecoach East's services on the Busway saw a 7% increase in passengers – this year that figure has ballooned to a 20% increase overall. At certain times in the morning, the increase has been even sharper: up to 58%. This rise has meant that some customers have not been able to travel at their preferred times.

This September has seen a large number of students travelling on the Busway, with Long Road and Cambridge Regional College both reporting higher student numbers than last year from St Ives, Huntingdon, Swavesey and Longstanton. The effect of this is compounded by the fact that the colleges themselves only know final student numbers in August, well after timetable changes can be legally registered.

To cope with this unprecedented increase in demand, the local bus operator has already used driver-trained office staff to duplicate key journeys at peak times. Now two additional buses have been registered to run from Sunday 3rd November – these will be two extra B services from St Ives Park and Ride to Drummer Street, and two extra back from Drummer Street.

Also, the number of B services going to Addenbrookes will drop from nine to five in the morning peak, and four in the evening peak. This will mean more seats from St Ives and more buses starting and finishing in Drummer Street.

The increase in capacity comes on top of the announcement, just weeks ago, that three extra buses were added into the Busway rotation, one of which was supported by the Combined Authority.

Congestion continues to be a major challenge for the operator, meaning that buses cannot complete their journeys to schedule. Hills Road has a particular impact on all bus services, especially the Busway, which can take up to 29 minutes to complete that stretch at peak times – compared with 9.2 minutes last year. Also, although Stagecoach East consistently runs 99.5% of its scheduled miles, of those it cannot run, last week, 70% was due to congestion.

Darren Roe, Managing Director of Stagecoach East, said: "The Busway is such a unique and important piece of local infrastructure, so we are pleased that it has seen such an increase in popularity, but we certainly also regret that some of our loyal customers have not been able to travel at the times they choose.

"We hope that this further injection of new buses into the routine will help even more of our new customers to get where they need to go, at the times they want travel, and, for the future, we would just encourage local

organisations to give us as much information as they can about the travel needs of their students and members of staff. We will also continue to adjust our services as our customers' travel needs evolve.

"We would always say, as well, that congestion remains a key challenge, adding new buses helps improve the punctuality of buses turning up, but does nothing to improve journey times, which is key to help rebalance bus over car journeys. We would like to encourage further communication with not only the utilities companies over roadworks but also with our local authorities over issues like parking enforcement and road priority. Once our buses leave the depot, overwhelmingly their punctuality on the road is down to factors that are out of our control."

1A and 5A bus route to be combined

I have been liaising with an Over resident and the Combined Authority, it seems that from 1 December this route will be combined, as the 1A bus operator did not wish to continue with the route, as such the Combined Authority have worked up a solution to award to Stagecoach to ensure continuity of service. Stagecoach operate the 5A currently, so for efficiency purposes we will be integrating the timetables.

The new timetable will travel in both directions between St Ives and Bar Hill, via Over and Willingham. It is mostly a 90-minute frequency, adjusted in the morning and afternoon to cater for the students that currently use the bus to get to Swavesey Village College.

Combined Authority Officers will continue to work with the operator (Stagecoach) to improve the frequencies for residents with the new, integrated timetable

Update on Community Gym and Café at Northstowe Learning Community

We met with Meridian Trust, South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC), Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), and the Northstowe Learning Community Principal to discuss the progress of these much-anticipated community facilities in September.

Leisure Facilities including Gym; Earlier this year, Meridian Trust issued a tender for the leisure facilities, but it was unfortunately unsuccessful. After additional discussions with potential providers through consultants, the tender will be revised and reissued later this year. CCC has secured capital funding and Homes England is supportive and is happy to make an early payment of the planning obligation to help support the delivery of the gym for the community.

Café; it is exciting to confirm that a café will be installed by the end of 2024, with funding being secured from the Rural England Prosperity Fund. CPCA is the lead authority delivering this fund, along with South Cambridgeshire District Council. Meridian Trust is currently seeking providers interested in running the café. To confirm as of 3 November, 6 potential café providers have put forward their interest and an invitation to bid email has been sent to them.

With the recent growth of the Northstowe Learning Community (also referred to as Northstowe Education Campus) - nearly 100 staff across its all-through education phase from Primary School to Sixth Form, some 800+ pupils, various sports and community groups using the sports halls, and the 3G pitches in the evenings and weekends - the area is set to thrive. As more homes are occupied, the buzz around Northstowe will only grow, making the café and gym much anticipated and valuable additions to the community.

CALL OUT: If you're keen to explore these business opportunities — either to manage the café or the leisure facilities or you know someone who is, please contact Meridian Trust, by emailing: FDifranco@meridi-antrust.co.uk Website: https://northstowe.education/

Police Community Engagement Panel

Cambridgeshire Police hold quarterly public forums where they give updates on the service in South Cambs as well as take questions from the public. The next one is to be held online on 27 November at 7pm, this is a good opportunity to raise any concerns. To register for the event, follow this link -

 $\frac{https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/south-cambridgeshire-community-engagement-meeting-november-2024-tickets-772923213137?aff=oddtdtcreator$

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.

County Council

Responsibilities: Education, Transport, Highways, Heritage, Social care, Libraries, Trading standards, - Waste management, Maintaining their estate.

Some of these services are shared between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council but any concerns should be directed to the county council.

District Council

Responsibilities: Council tax payments and benefits, Household bin collections, Housing and housing benefits, Council leisure facilities, Environmental health, Residential planning.

Parish/ Town Council

Responsibilities: Looking after community buildings, Open spaces, Allotments, Play Areas, Bus shelters.

Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)

'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.'

Partnership between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, University of Cambridge.

The Combined Authority, Cambridge and Peterborough, our elected Mayor

'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.'

What our mayor does – Business support, skills, housing, transport, environment, international, digital connectivity, resilience, research, and strategy. New homes.

Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridge and Peterborough

To support and challenge the Chief Constable to provide effective and efficient policing services for the area.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

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.

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

Email: firouz.thompson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/ - Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe https://www.facebook.com/libdems3rdMay18 - Over & Willingham

Report a highways fault - Cambridgeshire County Council

 $\underline{Report\ a\ flood\ -\ www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/flood-and-water/report-a-flood}$

NOTE: Homes England areas in Phase 2 Northstowe including South Access Road West and new B1050 roundabout – any estates or maintenance issues should be report to 24/7 helpdesk number 0845 603 1485 (which is the same cost as a local rate). The number is manned 7 days per week 24 hours per day and all calls are placed in an auditable system to ensure matters are progressed.