

Cambridgeshire County Councillor's Report to Parish Councils November 2016

Despite the withdrawal of one motion [on devolution] from the agenda for October's **Council** meeting other questions and motions still contrived to make it lengthy.

Full details: bit.ly/2flFoBB

The next meeting of Council will be on 15 November when councillors will vote on the devolution deal for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The meeting on 25 October of **General Purposes Committee** was adjourned till 27 to allow for further information to be provided to members on item 9, Service Committee Review of Draft Revenue Business Planning Proposals for 2017/18 to 2021/22. At the reconvened meeting there was robust debate on the late provision of detail from government on the offer of a 4 year funding settlement for Revenue Support Grant [RSG]. Councils had been given this option to allow a degree of certainty in preparing future budgets.

RSG has been an important and sizeable element of local authority funding for many years but is being phased out and replaced by the new Business Rates Retention (BRR) scheme which the Government plans to introduce nationwide in 2019/20. BRR is designed to encourage local authorities to stimulate business growth in their area, allowing them to retain newly generated business rates income. Cambridgeshire negotiated with the Government to be an early adopter of the BRR scheme and is already benefiting from growth in business rates throughout the county. However, details of the national BRR scheme have not yet been finalised and it is possible that areas like Cambridgeshire that are generating large levels of economic growth may be expected to supplement less well-off areas by handing some of the income over to a central pot for redistribution. Those arguing in favour took the view that the right thing to do for the people of Cambridgeshire was to accept the 4 year deal with the caveat that the Council would be no worse off than if it had not accepted the deal. This would give assurance of the grant sums offered for 2017/18 and 2018/19. Advice from the Chief Finance Officer acting in his professional capacity as Section 151 Officer supported this. His view was that the Council would be in a better position to secure future funding and, although a negative RSG was unpalatable, the Council would be able to draw from BRR pooling. The argument against accepting the 4 year deal [which ultimately prevailed] was unacceptability of negative RSG for 2019/20. Full details: Meeting 25 October: bit.ly/2fKxlv0 and meeting 27 October: bit.ly/2f2hsjA

The newly appointed Interim Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults, Wendi Ogle-Wellbourne attended her first meeting of **Adults Committee** in November. Members were given the opportunity to consider the detail of a Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] related to the Council's role in supporting the Sustainability and Transformation Plan [STP] that government requires of all NHS organisations in the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Health System. This 5 year plan acknowledges the interdependency of local authority provided services for adult social care and public health. Cambridgeshire County and Peterborough City councils have, therefore, been asked to contribute to its formation so that services can be appropriately aligned. Suggested amendments to the MOU included greater emphasis on the limitations imposed on the County Council by its statutory responsibilities. The most important suggestion though was the addition of a further point under governance about the role of councillors to represent the views of their constituents.

Agenda pack: bit.ly/2f2uBct

At its November meeting **Health Committee** further strengthened the amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding made by Adults Committee regarding the unique role of elected members.

Agenda pack: bit.ly/2fKHeZZ

The Council is carrying out a **Survey of Adult Carers** in England. This survey has been developed to learn more about whether services received by carers are helping them in their caring role.

Details: bit.ly/2eU1VVA End date: 17 February 2017

The agenda for **Economy & Environment Committee** included 4 items relating to new/improved cycling schemes including Phase 2 of the Huntingdon Road cycleway. This would see completion of the last part from just beyond Oxford Road to the junction of Histon Road/Victoria Road. There were a large number of public speakers on all these items and some of the common concerns expressed related to the floating bus stops. It was agreed that further work initially said to be needed to be undertaken with the Bus Quality Partnership will be extended to include disability and cycling groups.

Agenda pack: bit.ly/2eNgTcy

Both the **Greater Cambridge City Deal Joint Assembly and Executive Board** considered a report on progress of the Chisholm Trail project. The Board endorsed the Assembly's recommendations and approved construction of Phase 1, subject to it gaining planning permission, delegated powers for selection of contractors and supported the continuation of land negotiations. Both the Assembly and Board also received a progress report on building a locally responsive skills system and the Board approved continuation of the work that is being done on this.

Agenda pack and decisions/minutes:

Executive Board - bit.ly/2eRRIJi Assembly - bit.ly/2eRT5HP

The Council has published its plan for road gritting this winter: bit.ly/2g7br9C Routes have been reduced by about one third. Those routes excluded from this winter's schedule include those used by buses from Oakington/Girton to Impington Village College. Full details: bit.ly/2fJ2ikw

Consultation of District and Parish Councils, adjoining County Councils and local Waste & Minerals Operators is being undertaken **on Cambridgeshire County Council's Enforcement Plan**. Details: bit.ly/2fOOoOu Closing date: 05 December 2016

I look forward to seeing those of you who have meetings in November and welcome your comments and questions.

Lynda

lyndaharford@icloud.com

01954 251775/07889 131022

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