

Cambridgeshire County Councillor's Report August/September 2017

I hope you have all enjoyed the summer break and as September sees a return to the normal schedule, I can report on the first two meetings of the new committee whose creation was approved by Council in May: **Communities & Partnerships Committee** met for the first time in July. The minutes of this meeting and the details of the committee's scope and remit can be found at: <http://bit.ly/2wiha4W> as part of the agenda for the committee's August meeting. This also includes details of the refreshed 'Innovate and Cultivate Fund'. Following a motion to full Council in February 2016, the County Council launched the Cambridgeshire Communities Innovation Fund in November 2016. Initially worth £1 million, the Fund is managed in partnership with Cambridgeshire Community Foundation to help community organisations that undertake transformative, preventative work. Applications were invited for funding for projects which demonstrably make an impact on County Council priority outcomes, particularly in relation to working with vulnerable people, thus diverting children and adults from needing high-cost Council services and helping people and communities to become more resilient. In the first round the Fund received 47 applications of which 5 projects were funded committing just £170,043 of the available funds. Hopefully the refresh will make the process simpler and there will be a larger number of organisations who benefit from either the small grants [£2K - £10K] or the large grant [up to £50K] opportunities.

The County Council has just begun a 6 month pilot project in partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council to offer specialist housing advice and support to older people. The HOOP [Housing Options for Older People] project aims to help older people consider housing options appropriate to their own circumstances at an early stage and put them in touch with the relevant providers. Until now HOOP has been a national tool to support older people in their wish to remain living independently in their own homes for as long as possible. The South Cambridgeshire pilot is only the second local scheme in the country. If it is successful it will be developed into a County wide scheme. HOOP is just one of the initiatives that the County Council is embarking on in its efforts to serve the needs of an increasing number of older residents. One of its biggest challenges is ensuring that those who experience hospital stays have appropriate and prompt support to return home at the earliest possible opportunity. Inability to provide this affects not just those individuals waiting to go home but others waiting to be admitted to hospital. A report on delayed transfers of care was one of the items considered by **Adults Committee** at its September meeting. Agenda pack: <http://bit.ly/2f2ceWY>

The need to provide appropriate housing for our younger residents is also a challenge in an area where property prices are extremely high. At this very early point in its existence the **Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority** has already approved grant funding for 11 new affordable housing schemes across the authority's area. £4.56million of the £100million housing grant included in the devolution deal has been allocated to facilitate the building of 253 affordable new homes in schemes which are expected to start on site between the end of this year and the end of March 2018. Work continues to identify other sites where this new money can accelerate delivery of much needed housing. The **Greater Cambridge Partnership** is also working to support housing delivery and this month its Housing Development Agency made a successful application for 25 new homes on land owned by the County Council.

The County Council has recently embarked upon informal discussion with library users and other stakeholders on the future of Cambridgeshire **Libraries** in the form of a series of workshops. However, in acknowledgement that many will have missed the first round of events which were held over the summer, some additional events have been arranged. The most convenient of these for anyone from our villages who is interested in attending will be the one at Cambridge Central Library [Monday 02 October 18.30-21.00] and at The Blue School - Hardwick Community School, Cambourne [Tuesday 03 October 13.00-15.30]. Despite earlier scares that many of the County's libraries would close, this hasn't in fact been the case. This current project seeks to ensure that library services are fit for the future and meet the needs of the community. The workshops are an opportunity for local people to offer ideas and suggestions on how best to sustain, improve and develop the library service. For those interested in contributing to the discussion but unable to attend a workshop, questions or comments can be forwarded to LibraryServices@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

The County Council is currently consulting on its plans to redesign **Children's Centres** across Cambridgeshire. Children's Centres are intended to provide valuable support services to parents but feedback that the Council has received from parents shows they are not always located most conveniently. The welfare of families across Cambridgeshire has to be a top priority. The Council is therefore reviewing current provision and wants to ensure that the right services, support and opportunities are available for families if and when they need those services. I have already met with the lead Officer for this review to discuss what the proposals are for us locally but it is important that you also express your views. Local people are the experts about what their communities need and there is still time to comment before the consultation ends on 22 September 2017. You can respond via the Council's website: [residents/children and families/children's centres](#) or you can get a hard copy version of the consultation at Children's Centres and Libraries.

Again I have to urge you to be vigilant about possible scammers. Most recently residents have raised concerns about door to door salesmen. Alarming it seems that the many of the door to door pedlars are young people, duped into buying stock and then driven around by a gang master to sell their goods. It is illegal to sell door to door without a pedlars' licence and many of those engaged in this activity are unaware of this requirement. Police advice is not to buy or sell at your door. To do so only encourages continuation of the activity. The best thing to do is to politely decline their offers. There is some very helpful advice from the police about this subject at: <https://southcambscops.org/2013/05/20/door-to-door-sales-what-you-should-know/>

I look forward to hearing your comments and questions about the items in this report or any other local matter either at September's Parish Council meetings or directly by email.

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