

Cambridgeshire County Councillor's Report February/March 2019 [For March Meetings]

In May 2018 at a meeting of full **Council** the decision was taken to move the council's headquarters from the six acre site at Shire Hall to a smaller, more flexible, purpose-built building at Alconbury Weald. It is planned that this will be a two storey building which is 'bright, efficient and flexible' and will incorporate a private wing for staff accommodating 350 desks and a public reception area with informal meeting space. Council and committee meetings will take place in a multi-use 90 seater space which can be sub-divided into three rooms with the potential for community use. The County Council is now inviting residents to view and comment on the plans prior to submission of a formal planning application in late spring. It is anticipated that construction will commence towards the end of 2019 with build completion by December 2020. To view plans and read the forecast financial benefits please go to: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/public-invited-to-view-council-plans-for-new-hq/> Those of you who read the information on the website will see that there was a public engagement event in February. My apologies that details of this were advised to members too late for inclusion in my last report.

Work on the **A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme** continues, as I am sure you are all aware, and despite regular contact with the A14 team, some of the issues that residents raise seem to persist. I have recently reminded the team that an undertaking was given to adjust the lights on the Swavesey and Bar Hill bridges. The problem with road sweeping has not been quite so bad due to recent good weather conditions but I have now had an increasing number of complaints about both the vehicles used for this and the muck-away lorries parking inappropriately. On a more positive note part of the new local access road will be opened this month. It is quite amazing how much of the A14 work has been done and continues to be done out of sight of all but those involved in getting it done. To see what happens on a project of this size you can book a place on "Open Doors 2019" on Saturday 23 March: <http://ow.ly/3Ft930nWkWj>.

On the subject of roads it is time to start thinking again about **Local Highways Improvement scheme** applications. The projects that are being recommended for approval for 2019/20 will be considered by members of the Highways & Community Infrastructure committee on 12 March, 2019. Details of those local projects recommended for approval can be found at item 7 and its accompanying appendix on the agenda for that meeting: <https://bit.ly/2HbGvCT>
I will talk to each parish separately to discuss how an appropriate project for 2020/21 can be identified and will then arrange for a Highways Project Officer to come out to meet and discuss.

Please can I also remind you all again about the "Choices for better journeys" consultation that the **Greater Cambridge Partnership** is currently carrying out. The deadline for responses is 31 March, 2019. <https://bit.ly/2tX9y4a>

I attended a consultation event at Cambourne for the **East West Rail Bedford to Cambridge Route Option**. Everyone I spoke to there seemed to support the Route E option which is the one that would see a station at Cambourne. The County Council's **Economy & Environment** committee will consider the council's draft response to the consultation at its meeting on 14 March 2019. The draft response is included at item 5 of the agenda: <https://bit.ly/2XGoQQB>

Whilst it is sometimes frustrating to sit through a committee meeting of which I am not a member and cannot therefore contribute to the debate, there are also benefits to doing so. Having listened to the debate at the **Communities & Partnerships** [C&P] committee, I was at least able to follow Officers as they left after two reports were presented to offer relevant information that I had been given as a member of the Health Committee. The item the committee considered on the review of domestic abuse resource and outreach provision prompted members to refer to the recent proposal by the council to cease its funding to Orwell Housing, the provider of the all women facility at Whitworth House, Cambridge. This was also covered in a briefing provided for county

councillors recently on Housing Related Support [HRS]. HRS funds a county-wide range of services providing specialist support for more than 1,500 vulnerable people including those at risk of homelessness, domestic violence, addiction and mental health issues. This funding does not cover accommodation costs but is intended to address the issues that contribute to homelessness. HRS was originally funded through a ring-fenced Government grant to county councils who administered it in partnership with district councils. The county council continued to provide the services after that grant was absorbed into its core funding in 2010; its current spending is £7.5m. It is not a statutory service, neither should the support it provides be confused with those statutory services that those who are eligible receive from adults' or children's services. However, although they may not qualify for these statutory services, those currently being supported through HRS provision are still vulnerable. The council is looking at alternative provision through models like the internationally recognised 'Housing First' and is using the 'St Basil's Pathway' as a guide to redesigning HRS services for young people. More information on Housing First can be found at: <https://hfe.homeless.org.uk/about-housing-first>. The changes proposed through the review of HRS will be implemented over a three year period to manage the impact.

This committee is also the one that approves grants through the **Innovate & Cultivate Fund**. As I have advised previously significant amounts are available through these funds and I encourage our parish councils to look at those projects that have recently secured funding to see whether they or local voluntary organisations cannot also benefit in the future.

Agenda pack for Communities & Partnerships meeting: <https://bit.ly/2TmJ4bq>

The NHS is currently developing a local plan and is asking for the help of local people in doing so. Growing pressure on the NHS - an ageing population, more people living with long term conditions and lifestyle choices affecting people's health - means that changes are needed to make sure that everybody gets the support they need. The NHS has produced a long term plan that sets out all the things it wants health services to do better nationally and local plans will be expected to be built around what local people say. Please do give your views: <https://bit.ly/2UrPbl9>
Public Health England [PHE] has released its quarterly data update on its Outcomes Framework. This shows Cambridgeshire to be generally a healthy place to live with a higher than average life expectancy. Indicators show where the county is both better and worse than the national picture. Further information can be found at: <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/health/localphi/aphr/>

I recently completed a survey by Deafblind UK. The results they have since advised show that shockingly 92% of respondents know very little about deafblindness or related legislation. There are some very common misconceptions about the term deafblindness which actually means a combination of sight and hearing impairments to the point where an individual's communication, mobility or ability to access information are impacted. Whilst many people with deaf blindness have some hearing and/or sight, this impairment covers a very wide spectrum of disability ranging from struggling to see and hear the television right through to not being able to see or hear anything at all. As someone who has good hearing and sight, the thought of either sense being impaired is frightening enough but a combination of the two must be incredibly hard to deal with. If, like me, any of you are interested in finding out more Deafblind UK has a website: <https://deafblind.org.uk>

The number of applications for **secondary school** places in Cambridgeshire has gone up again. A total of 6,691 applications were received by the deadline of 31 October 2018. More than 5,990 [89.5%] were offered a place at their first preference school with a further 449 [6.7%] being offered a place at their second or third preference school. This significant increase in applications is expected to continue and the county council is planning for this by working with existing schools to increase their capacity and through planning for new secondary schools in the areas where demand is greatest. There is planned investment for this of £200m between 2019 and 2024.

I look forward to receiving any questions or comments that you have about the items in this report or any other matters either at your March meetings or by email.

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