

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

At the March meeting **County Council** members approved the Chief Officer Pay Policy Statement 2019/20 and the Gender Pay Gap Report 2019. The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 requires councils to publish various details including those of employees paid £50,000pa or more, the 'pay multiple' [the ratio between the highest paid salary and the median salary of the authority's workforce] and vacancies [via the jobs portal]. Additionally for the second year they must publish Gender Pay Gap data on the Government portal. For the mathematicians: the Council's mean gender pay gap is 13% [same as last year] against a national public sector mean of 17.5%. The median is the same as the national figure at 19% [18% last year]. Following the publication of last year's data, the Council carried out a full review which provided overall positive evidence although higher earners within the Council are less likely to work part time.

Agenda pack: <https://bit.ly/2UAdUx3>

Following on a motion considered at a previous meeting of Council, unanimous approval was given to the draft Plastics Strategy that was presented. Two motions debated at March meeting sought to offer reassurance to the many Cambridge residents who had expressed concerns relating to the proposal to sell the leasehold of Shire Hall and its 6 acre site. The concerns relate to public access rights which are afforded under the Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The motion put by the chairman of Commercial & Investment committee was passed. It confirmed that the Council recognises the importance of the mound and civil earthworks to both residents of, and visitors to the County and has as a consequence ensured that all bidders are clear that any proposal for the site's future use must provide enhancement of access to, and the public experience of these historic features. Agenda pack: <https://bit.ly/2uPlog4>

In a demonstration of the Council's commitment to improving access to its meetings for residents of all parts of the county, **Children & Young People** committee held its March meeting appropriately in March [the town]. Members received updates on the impact of the recent changes within children's social care services and the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of the Council's children's services which took place 07-18 January 2019. The unannounced inspection gave the Council an overall rating of 'requiring improvement' but this was mitigated by Inspectors' assessment that the impact of senior leaders is good. The report noted whole Council ownership of the change programme that it has embarked upon. It acknowledged that the Council had itself already identified the same areas for improvement as did the Inspectors and that Children & Young People committee had already responded with investment to implement changes and to boost staffing levels. Agenda pack: <https://bit.ly/2KeoAgT>

I was pleased to be asked to sub again for **Economy & Environment** [E&E] committee as its agenda considered the responses to consultations on the East West Rail route options and the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan - issues and options 2. I voted in support of all the Council's recommendations on East West Rail except its preference for Option A, the route via Bedford South, Sandy and Bassingbourn. My preference would be for Option B which was supported by South Cambs District Council. Considering the response to the second consultation on issues and options, members were updated on matters that had progressed since the last consultation. These include the adoption of new local plans for SCambs and the City, delivery of Cambridge North station with its guided busway link and completion of the Ely to Cambridge transport study. The area has also been expanded to include the Cambridge Science Park on the other side of Histon Road. The success of the bid to the Housing Infrastructure Fund for £227m to relocate the waste water treatment works at Milton was announced the day before the meeting and this now paves the way for the development to achieve the Area Action Plan's vision of: 'North East Cambridge - a thriving, low carbon place for innovative living and working; inherently walkable where everything is on your doorstep'. Agenda pack: <https://bit.ly/2XGoOQB>

In addition to approving the recommendations for funding of Local Highways Improvement bids, **Highways & Community Infrastructure** committee also approved the withdrawal of the Council's service which has historically managed the supply of energy for the street lights owned by District and Parish councils. This was supplied as part of the Council's own unmetered supply and therefore required a detailed inventory provided by Balfour Beatty to calculate the monthly bill for each organisation. Over the last few years a significant proportion of Parish councils have sought more cost effective energy solutions and many who still use the service are questioning whether it still provides best value for them. Both Fenland and SCamb's district councils are also changing the way in which they manage the street lights they own. Balfour Beatty no longer maintains an inventory and parishes now have to undertake this themselves. Making changes to the inventory is not quite as straightforward as it may sound; I know that one of our parish clerks struggled to provide the technical information required to get a new installation added. Overall the demand for this service is declining and the complexities of managing it are increasing. Thus it will cease from October 2019. I have asked Officers how this is being communicated to parish councils and how the transition will be managed. Agenda pack: <https://bit.ly/2HbGvCT>

Health committee members congratulated representatives from the Clinical Commissioning Group [CCG] on maintaining its target overspend of £35m. Asked whether the mild winter had assisted in achieving the target CCG Officers confirmed this to be the case but added that a significant amount of forward planning for the winter period and proactive management had allowed winter pressures to be better managed. It was confirmed that previous years' overspends would continue to be carried forward but the current £35m deficit would not be added to the cumulative deficit. Members also received an update on the General Practice Forward View. New National Operating Planning Guidance and General Practice contract changes due to come into effect in June will refocus the direction of GP services on the establishment of Primary Care Networks. [Separate briefing note to follow.] Agenda pack: <https://bit.ly/2FTTHcg>

I attended **Adults** committee to listen to an update report on use of the 'Hancock Monies' - the £2.395m of additional funding for 2018/19 which the Council allocated to fund additional domiciliary care and reablement capacity to address performance on delayed transfers of care. I also spent a day with the reablement service. There is no doubt that staff in the service are doing a good job but my observation is that they could be helped to achieve even better outcomes. My feedback to the committee chairman was well received and I will continue to pursue some of my thoughts with other colleagues. Agenda pack: <https://bit.ly/2OTSKVi>

There was a long agenda for the joint meeting of **Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Health & Wellbeing Boards** [H&WB] followed in the afternoon by a workshop to formulate a plan for how the two will work together in the future and what their raison d'être is. I am not a member of the H&WB but invariably attend its meetings and, thanks to the Cambridgeshire chairman, I was offered a place at the workshop. It was just a little dis-spiriting when, at the end of a long afternoon working on the task set, to have a presentation from the Director of Public Health outlining 'one we made earlier'. I guess it was good for our souls and the networking opportunities it offered were excellent. H&WB agenda pack: <https://bit.ly/2UjE08h>

Hot off the press as I write: the announcement by the Department for Education [DfE] that the Council has been named as a 'trailblazing authority' in the national roll out of an innovative approach to children's social care. This comes with a share of £87m of DfE funding. Cambridgeshire will take a leading national role in supporting the Government's nationwide roll out of Family Safeguarding, an approach that improves outcomes for vulnerable children and young people through the work of multi-disciplinary teams.

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 April meetings or by email.

Lynda lyndaharford@icloud.com; 01954 251775 or 07889 131022; follow me on Twitter: @2Whit2Whoo