

County Report June 2013

From County Councillor John Reynolds

ECONOMY, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICES

Connecting Cambridgeshire

The Connecting Cambridgeshire programme team has outlined some of the first areas in the county that are expected to receive the new fibre-based infrastructure bringing faster broadband speeds. A list of parishes/areas included in planning for the first phase of the roll-out has been announced and is available on the Connecting Cambridgeshire website.

The roll-out has to be carefully planned in the most cost-effective way. In the first phase of the project this means targeting those premises that will require the least work to upgrade the infrastructure connecting them to faster broadband services. Some parishes/areas will fall within multiple roll-out phases and may not be included because only small numbers of premises are likely to be connected in the first phase. Other premises within the first phase parishes/areas will have to wait until later phases to be connected because the technology will take longer to plan and roll-out.

The Connecting Cambridgeshire website will be updated in the coming months to include a map and Parish Checker allowing residents to find out how their area fits in to the programme, and what they can do to promote the benefits of better broadband and help more people get online. Engineers and surveyors are busy carrying out detailed scheduling and surveys to re-design the network, which also involves working with highways and planning authorities to ensure the process is as swift and efficient as possible. To keep local communities informed, a Connecting Cambridgeshire postcard is being produced to highlight the broadband roll-out programme and where to find out more information. The Connecting Cambridgeshire team is also preparing an information pack to help Members answer queries about the programme in their local areas. contact@connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk

STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT

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Development of the scheme by the Highways Agency is continuing. The LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) has now agreed in principle to contribute £50m towards the scheme and good progress has been made re funding from local authority partners. Another Summit meeting is being planned for 10 June. Detailed discussions are ongoing with Government about the ultimate funding package, what special delivery arrangements might be instigated to deliver the design, part financing and delivery of the scheme.

More work is also needed on determining the optimum tolling strategy to raise revenue while minimising the diversion of traffic to other routes. The Secretary of State suggested that construction could begin in 2018 (and possibly as early as 2016 if a conventional funding route were used). An initial public consultation on the scheme is planned in the summer where the final scheme proposals will be presented.

Cambridge Science Park Station

The new interchange is expected to bring multiple benefits, including improved access to the rail network from the north side of the city, improved access to the key employment centres at the Science Park and other business parks on the northern fringe, direct interchange with the Busway, and opening up a significant area of land for economic development. The planning application for the interchange will be submitted shortly.

Energy

Actions and projects currently underway in the Energy team are:

- Work has begun to develop a Low Carbon Investment Fund for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as part of the Mobilising Local Energy Investment (MLEI) Project. A pipeline of County Council energy projects is being scoped for investment potential.
- A Small and Medium Enterprise learning programme targeting Cambridgeshire's energy efficiency and retrofit supply chain is being developed by the Smartlife Retrofit Project.
- A tender specification is being drafted to procure a relationship with a Green Deal provider for Cambridgeshire in the summer to ensure local benefits to the supply chain and local jobs.
- Securing good energy deals for residents via a Collective Energy Switching Scheme for Cambridgeshire will be developed by autumn 2013.

Foxton Level Crossing

Network Rail has commissioned an options appraisal on closing the crossing and the County Council has been working closely with Network Rail to ensure the report considers both rail and road user benefits. The conclusions of the report will determine the priority of the scheme within Network Rail's programme. The County Council will need to consider how the scheme should progress when Network Rail's priority is known.

Northstowe – A Modern Garden Town

The planning application for the first phase of 1,500 homes at Northstowe was approved by the Planning Committee on 19 March 2013. Work to finalise the S106 legal agreement is underway. The County Council and SCDC are also working with the Homes and Communities Agency to secure funding towards the phase 1 development through the Major Sites Initiative on which a decision is expected in late June.

Alconbury Weald

An outline planning application for 5,000 new homes, schools and other mixed uses has been submitted by the developers to Huntingdonshire District Council. This planning application will require a number of revisions, including relocating the secondary school to a much more central location within the overall development. The planning application has been submitted, includes an element of housing on land which is currently designated as Alconbury Enterprise Zone. Cabinet on 5 March 2013 agreed a response to Huntingdonshire District Council on the current planning application, with the aim of securing sensible changes. Huntingdonshire District Council will be looking to determine this application after the publication of their Local Plan consultation document, which is due to be published in July 2013.

Local Plans - Planning the "blue print" for Cambridgeshire

All five District Councils will publish their revised Local Plans for a further round of public consultation shortly. South Cambridgeshire District Council completed their consultation on the detail of the sites to be included in their draft Local Plan on 18 February 2013. The next step will be for the District Council to consult on their finalised Local Plan in July with consideration of the response by Cabinet in September/October. Cambridge City Council completed their consultation on the detail of the sites to be included in their draft Local Plan on 18 February 2013. The next step will be for the City Council to consult on their finalised Local Plan in July with consideration of the response by Cabinet in September/October.

Floods and Water Management

Following a period of public consultation, the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy was considered and endorsed by Cabinet on 5 March 2013. Full Council on

26 March 2013 adopted the Strategy for Cambridgeshire, which looks forward to 2015. This will be one of the first Local Flood Risk Management Strategies published in England to meet our new responsibilities as a Lead Local Flood Authority under the new Flood and Water Management Act 2010. On 5 March Cabinet also approved the Flood and Water Enforcement Policy to enable the Council to fairly and transparently apply policies and procedures when unconsented work on watercourses (streams and brooks) result in increased flood risk. This new document is available on the Council's website.

S106 Funding in Cambridge & South Cambridgeshire

Some 20 new schemes were approved by Cabinet in December for funding in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. Most of these have been put forward to the County Council by local communities to help improve safety and accessibility on the network. Over £2m has been secured from developers to pay for the improvements to the road network that are necessitated by growth. This funding has been secured by the County Council in order to make improvements to infrastructure in line with the objectives of the Corridor Area Transport Plans. Initial work has now commenced on a number of major projects including; lighting along The Busway maintenance track at Trumpington, Histon and Impington; traffic calming for Tenison Road; a cycle route from Milton to Landbeach; and a shared use path named Ring Fort Path, from Orchard Park to the A14 intersection at Histon, providing a shorter route for cyclists.

INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

Waste PFI

The MBT facility remains suspended following the structural failure in September 2012. AmeyCespa have undertaken assessments to determine the cause of the failure and have put a rectification programme in place. Work continues in accordance with this programme. All other parts of the facility remain fully operational as before and stakeholders and communities are being kept informed. AmeyCespa have indicated that the plant should be online by the end of 2013.

AmeyCespa has made no claim against the Council and we are aware of no negative financial affects upon the Council as the terms of the PFI mean that the Council is protected financially in these circumstances. Witchford HRC site has been shortlisted for an Award for Excellence (Civic Amenity Site of the Year) for the sustainable design and enhanced recycling facilities offered. Re-use activities are due to begin at Witchford HRC on 5 June. Re-imagine will operate a scheme based on the national scrap store concept, promoting re-use of materials. It is expected that these materials will be used by local schools and community groups..

Recognition of the support we provide to businesses

Supporting Businesses and Communities has received recognition from Government for its work to advise and support businesses, having been voted 'Local Authority of the Year' in the inaugural 'Primary Authority Awards. As well as helping to drive down the cost of legal compliance for businesses, the adoption of the Scheme in Cambridgeshire has also seen a fundamental change in the relationship we have with businesses, with businesses now talking frankly about compliance challenges, knowing that they will receive clear and practical advice from us that will be respected by all local regulators. The scheme has proved very popular, with a rapid take up by businesses based or operating within the county.

Local Highway Improvement Initiative

The Local Highway Improvement Initiative allows groups or individuals to improve their local roads and streets through submitting a bid to this initiative. Over fifty projects were delivered last year in partnership with local communities, delivering projects of

local importance, e.g. speed limits, traffic calming, footway and safety improvements. Applicants can seek up to £10,000 as a contribution to their projects, which could include highway improvements for as little as £500. The expectation is that the applicant will provide 10% or more of the overall cost of their project. Invitations for the 2013/14 round of Local Highway Improvement bids were issued at the end of October and over 90 bids were received at the end of the year.

The bids have been through an initial sifting process and the panels met throughout March and April to assess the bids. The information from the panels is currently being collated with a view to reaching final sign off with the Portfolio Holder by mid-June.

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND ADULTS SERVICES

Welfare Reforms

Further significant changes to welfare benefits began in April 2013. These include:

- Changes to Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans – the Social Fund from DWP will no longer provide emergency grants and interest-free loans. Instead each upper tier local authority has developed its own local scheme. In Cambridgeshire this is the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme (CLAS). For more information see <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/social/welfare-changes/>
- Changes in Housing Benefit – housing benefit for social housing tenants will be reduced if they are deemed to have more bedrooms than required. Those in privately rented properties will not be affected – changes to the local housing allowance in the private sector were introduced a year or so ago.
- Changes to Council Tax Benefit – all districts have introduced their own local schemes. This means that some people who have not had to pay council tax in the past, may now have to pay a contribution. Other welfare benefit changes which will be implemented over the next few months include:
 - Disability Living Allowance starts to be replaced by Personal Independence Payment (PIP) (June 2013)
 - Benefit Cap (phased in during July – *October 2013*)
 - Universal Credit (phased in from *October 2013 - 2017*)

A factsheet for practitioners can be found at the link below:

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies/providingchildrenservices/supportforpractitioners/practitionerspolicies/practwelfare reforms.htm>.

A booklet for families is available on our website:

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies/moneyandbenefits/welfare reforms.htm>.

Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act

The introduction of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 In April means that there are new disposals available to the Police which can be used to divert young offenders from court. These include community resolutions and conditional cautions which replace final warnings and reprimands. We are confident that the new arrangements will work well between the Youth Offending Service and the Police.

New 18-25 year old Service

We launched the 18-25 year service on 1 April. This replaced the 16+ Service and provides services for looked after young people and those in transition to adulthood. In line with a request from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the Department for Education for all Local Authorities to review the Care Leaver grant allowance a decision has been taken to increase the monies paid to £2,000. This has been communicated to Voices Matter (The Children in Care Council), who welcomed the increase.

Achievement for All and Early Support

50 Cambridgeshire schools are currently implementing 'Achievement for All' (AFA), national programme to improve the educational outcomes for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability. The Local Authority AFA coaches will be providing additional resources to these schools by introducing Early Support, which is a way of working that improves the delivery of joined up services for children and young people with additional needs, including those with disability, and their families.

Cambourne Village College

This will be a new five form of entry Secondary School with associated external works, including sports pitches and a new access road. This is intended to meet the growing demand for secondary school places within Cambourne as the neighbouring Comberton Village College is now approaching operational capacity. Construction commenced on site in September 2012, with the works expected to be completed in July 2013. This is the first new secondary school to be built in Cambridgeshire for around 30 years.

Northstowe – primary school

The Diocese of Ely – sponsor for the first primary school at Northstowe – is moving forward with the design of the school, assisted by the Education Capital Team and in close consultation with South Cambridgeshire District Council regarding the early core community facilities that will be delivered from the school before the first community centre is built. These will include the Health Visitor team that is currently working out of Longstanton surgery, and children's centre services.

Funded Two-Year-Old Childcare

Government is introducing a national entitlement for all two-year-olds whose families are in receipt of certain income related benefits (as used for free school meals), or who are looked after, a child in need or the subject of a child protection plan. The benefits involved are:

- Income support;
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance;
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Support under part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999; and
- Child Tax Credit (provided not in receipt of Working Tax Credit and annual income does not exceed £16,190).

The entitlement is equivalent to a funded three- or four-year-old nursery place (15 hours per week, term time), and comes into force in September. We estimate that around 1 in 10 children are likely to be entitled. Places can be taken up with a range of quality approved nurseries and childminders around the county. Currently around 450 places of 12.5 hours per week are offered.

Consultation on changes to the Local Authority role in early education and Childcare

On 25 March, the Department for Education launched a further consultation on the role of Local Authorities in early education and childcare. The consultation builds on some of the themes in the recent policy document '*More Great Childcare*'. Key proposals being considered are:

- automatic rights to claim local funding for childcare providers who meet Ofsted quality criteria;
- limiting conditions local authorities can place on providers, especially in relation to quality;
- replacing the existing local authority duty to offer information, advice and training to local authority providers with a power to do so; and
- encouraging further simplification of the early years funding formula by determining the scope of certain elements, including the removal of all supplements except deprivation.

NVQ Level 2 and 3 attainment of young people by age 19 in 2012

Performance continues to rise at a similar rate to that seen nationally at both Level 2 and Level 3 for all Cambridgeshire young people. Attainment of Level 2 qualifications equates to the achievement of five or more GCSEs at grade A*-C or equivalent qualifications. Level 3 equates to the achievement of two or more A Levels or equivalent qualifications.

The gap between the achievement of Cambridgeshire children who are (FSM) and are not (non-FSM) eligible for Free School Meals has narrowed at a faster rate than that seen nationally at each level. The Cambridgeshire FSM attainment gap is now in line with that across its statistical neighbours at Level 2 and narrower than in its statistical neighbours at Level 2, including English and Maths, and at Level 3. Since 2009, the Local Authority rankings of Cambridgeshire FSM pupils and of the FSM attainment gap have improved significantly at each level.

The proportion of 19 year olds eligible for FSM in Year 11 achieving Level 2 including English and Maths has risen year on year for four years, but the rate of improvement is slowing. Analysis of the Cambridgeshire 'Age 19 in 2012' cohort, from Key Stage 2 to Age 19, shows that the gap between FSM and non-FSM children widened over time but less so than for previous cohorts – the average FSM attainment gap for the cohort over time was 23% compared with an average gap of 20% nationally.

Together for Families Programme

In December 2011 the Government announced a new initiative to positively transform the lives of 120,000 troubled families. The cost of these families to the public purse is significant, around £9bn a year nationally, and most of this is spent on reactive services and not on services to turn around the lives of these families and improve outcomes.

The Government has committed £450m to this programme and has asked Local Authorities to lead a programme of intervention and change to meet the needs of these families. Cambridgeshire has agreed to work with 805 families up to March 2015. The funding available for this is up to approximately £3m and some of this is available only as a Payment for Results. In Cambridgeshire, the programme is known as 'Together for Families'.

Consultation with families from Central & Eastern Europe complete

A consultation with Cambridgeshire's young people and parents from Central and Eastern Europe has now been completed and a full report can be found following the link below. This is a very useful piece of work to help us understand the issues facing newly arriving migrant workers and their families, and it will help us to plan services to meet these needs.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE & CAMBRIDGE CITY AREA

Family Worker for Travellers

A one year fixed term appointment has been made in the Cottenham & Swavesey Locality for a Family Worker to work and engage specifically with travellers. They will work alongside other services, including schools, to support traveller families in the Locality. The primary aim will be to create better links between school and travellers to increase attendance. The Family Worker will also work with Youth Workers through the Connections Bus, which currently visits the Cottenham Smithy Fen Site.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Housing Related Support for Older People

The work of the project to remodel the support services for older people is gathering momentum. The Council is tendering for a new service, with a different lot being tendered in each District. A key aim will be to re-model support services for older people, so that support is still available to those tenants who need the service to enable them to remain living independently and, to ensure that flexible support is also available to older people living in the wider community, irrespective of their housing tenure. It is planned that the tender will be issued in the summer, which should enable the new services to start in January 2014. Providers and other stakeholders are being kept up to date with developments.

Delayed Transfer of Care (DTC) update

The Adults Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee conducted a review of delayed discharge and discharge planning between June and December 2012. At the 28 May meeting, Cabinet welcomed the report as a useful contribution to work to reduce the incidence of delayed discharge from hospital and considered the report's recommendations, which they broadly accepted. Cabinet also decided to refer the Overview and Scrutiny report to the Health and Wellbeing Board, to ensure that recommendations that are about non-Council managed parts of the health and social care system are discussed there.

Support for carers

The new 'Carer in the Community' Support Model – which includes Health and Wellbeing Days and is being delivered to local community settings including Libraries and other Community venues – has already received two formal written compliments which have been passed on to Customer Services, and one verbal compliment in its first 6-8 weeks operation period. Initial reports show that increasing numbers of carers are accessing a range of direct Carer Support via Health and Wellbeing events, as well as using the 'drop in' advice and information facilities combined with informal group activities in local community settings. It has been a great boost to all team members who have worked hard to get this new initiative started and to have such positive feedback at such an early stage of rolling out the community model of support for carers.

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