

County Report August 30th 2014
Councillor John Reynolds

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HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S BUDGET

Residents across Cambridgeshire are being asked for their input in the setting of the County Council's budget for 2015/16. People will be able to have their say face to face or online at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/budgetconsultation to help the Council meet the tough challenge of saving around £30.7 million next year.

Due to increased demand and inflation coupled with cuts in funding from Central Government, the Council's current business plan sets out the need to save £149.1 million over the next five years, with £30.7 million to save next year. This inevitably means the Council (along with all local authorities) will need to make more service cuts. This year the budget has to be balanced with 7.1% less money from Government and increased pressures on services from inflation and rising population.

The aim is to undertake efficiencies which have minimal impact on front-line services. Significant savings have been made over recent years, but further savings need to be achieved. These savings have to be made whilst supporting and investing in services such as adult social care, protecting children, boosting the economy and looking after roads and transport. Cambridgeshire residents are being asked to give the council their views on where it should be saving money. An online consultation www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/budgetconsultation has been launched this week (August 11) as well as door-to-door surveying. The survey looks at specific issues surrounding our savings whilst also seeking public opinion around Council Tax levels.

Next year the budget has to be balanced with a further reduction of 7.1 per cent less money from Government, alongside increased pressures on services from inflation and rising populations. Comments about the Council's priorities or ideas for delivering services better or more efficiently can also be sent to: Research & Performance Team: Budget Consultation, SH1306 Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP

Local County Councillor John Reynolds said: "Councils across the country have some hard decisions to make. We want Cambridgeshire residents to have a big say in ours. The survey puts residents at the heart of the decision-making, allowing them to face the challenges we do in order to balance the budget. No decisions have been made at this point, but like last year, the suggestions and priorities indicated by residents will help shape the budget.

"The County Council services are very wide-ranging and touch everyone's lives - from looking after young people and adults during vulnerable periods in their lives to maintaining the County's roads and recycling rubbish. But with less money from Government and increasing demographic and inflation pressures we have to find millions of pounds in savings while continuing to deliver front line services.

"The County Council has worked hard to be efficient, budgeting to save £32 million last year, and a further £38 million this current financial year. But next year we have to find further savings in the region of £31 million. The survey will enable residents' voices to be heard, which we can use to help shape our budget and priorities for the future."

The consultation closes on 29 September 2014.

Cambridgeshire County Council is currently reviewing its annual business plan which includes looking at the authority's priorities and setting our budget for the year 2015/16. Please be advised that the CCC Budget Planning consultation has just started.

We want your views:

Before any final decisions are taken by councillors and stakeholders we would like to gauge local opinion. Therefore, we would be grateful if you could take the time to view the proposals and complete the questionnaire – which you can access here:

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/budgetconsultation>

If you have any questions, please do get in touch. It would be greatly appreciated if you could promote this consultation out to members of your household, your friends and your colleagues to complete this survey as well.

GREATER CAMBRIDGE

Government has announced the first tranche of Growth Deal funding. This is where Government has struck a deal with our Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership for growth deal funding for 'shovel ready schemes' to support jobs growth in our area in 2015/16.

Details are available at the link here . <http://www.gcgp.co.uk/growth-deal-announcement/> .Some of the headlines include funding towards;

- * Cambridge Biomedical Innovation Centre - the creation of a new innovation centre to provide business space for small firms at the growing Cambridge Biomedical Campus next to Addenbrooke's Hospital

- * Haverhill Innovation Centre - the development of a new centre at Haverhill Research Park<<http://www.gcgp.co.uk/how-can-we-help/growing-places-funding/>> to support business growth in the ICT, Bio-Tech and Agri-Tech sectors

- * New facilities for The Welding Institute (TWI) at Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus - expanding TWI's operation onto the Enterprise Zone to bring more high-skilled jobs, support the growth of businesses in high-tech sectors and act as a catalyst for further growth on the site

- * Technical & Vocational Centre at Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus<http://www.gcgp.co.uk/business_support/alconbury-enterprise-zone/> - developing a new Centre with a focus on the built environment and engineering technical expertise to support the development of the Enterprise Campus and sites across the whole LEP area

- * Agri-Tech Growth Initiative - a further £1.55 million of investment into this popular fund to support the growth of Agri-Tech businesses<<http://www.gcgp.co.uk/agri-tech-grants/>> across the LEP area

- * Wisbech Access Study - funding to undertake a detailed study into the transport improvements required to support the growth of Wisbech

- * Growth Hub - a new approach to business support designed to make it easier for businesses across the LEP area to access the advice and funding they need to grow.

Much work has gone into making case for investment in this area, and in particular in transport as a key enabler of growth. On top of the £4m already secured for major transport schemes through the Local Transport Body for 15/16, an additional £3m has been secured for Cambridgeshire for 15/16 for key schemes such as Kings Dyke Level Crossing (£2.5m in 15/16 and another 2.5m in 16/17), along with 0.5m funding for studies in 2015/16. Beyond this, up to £11m has been allocated to access improvements for Wisbech to 2020 subject to the outcome of the study work and business case proving positive.

MAINTENANCE SCHEME WILL LEAVE CYCLE BRIDGE SPICK AND SPAN

Works are due to start on Monday, August 18, to repair, maintain and clean up Riverside Cycle Bridge in Cambridge. The £15,000 scheme will take around two weeks and will include repairs to the deck, maintaining the aluminium planks to the pedestrian walkway, general repairs and removing graffiti and algae from the paintwork.

The bridge which links St Andrews Road, Chesterton and Riverside, in Abbey will remain open and work will be carried out off peak between 9am to 4pm. Works have been set for school summer holidays when the bridge is the least busy to reduce disruption to people using it.

On average around there are around 2700 cycle and 1,000 pedestrian trips across the bridge a day. While work is carried out cyclists and pedestrians should be prepared to share narrow lanes and may have to wait while contractor carries out some operations. The river will also be restricted with a work pontoon to carry out the deck repairs.

FUNDING HELPS STUDENTS BECOME WW1 DETECTIVES

Funding for a project will see local school children become World War One history detectives. With the Great War centenary fast approaching, funding worth £8,300 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) will encourage young people to explore the lives of local soldiers.

The project, 'Not Just a Name on a Wall', is being delivered by Cambridgeshire County Council's Archives and Local Studies team. It forms part of the Council's plans to commemorate the Great War, which includes 'the Last Day of Peace' event on 3rd August at Hinchingsbrooke House starting at 1 pm. This is a free event with activities for all the family and involves exhibitions, re-enactments, displays and World War One hospital.

'Not Just a Name on a Wall' will develop resource packs for local schools so that students can explore their communities' Great War history. They will also be encouraged to research their own families' personal collections of Great War memorabilia and to contribute material themselves.

The results and learning from this project will also be made available to local groups and to the wider community and will be used to create exhibitions in local libraries. The funding has been awarded through HLF's 'First World War: then and now' programme.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds, said: "We are thrilled to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund. We hope our project will inspire young people to successfully carry out local and family research and more fully understand the impact on the Great War on local communities and families."

Government has also outlined that a further £9m funding could be available from 2016 onwards towards bus priority improvements on the A428 corridor between St Neots and Cambridge subject to the business case work proving positive. We will update you if any further news. Do get in touch if any queries.

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CROMWELL MUSEUM EXHIBITION

A new exhibition, Cromwell Heraldry, opened at the Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon. On show for the first time is a rare coat of arms carried at the Lord Protector's funeral in 1658. It is painted onto silk and formed part of the very elaborate displays of heraldry at Westminster Abbey. One half shows Cromwell's own coat of arms on black silk, the other side on white silk depicts his widow Elizabeth's coat of arms.

Heraldry was of real significance in the seventeenth century. To have a coat of arms, and to be able to show that you came from an ancient family was a real mark of social status. Oliver Cromwell was very aware of the importance of the symbolism of heraldry. As Lord Protector he had his own family crest drawn onto the centre of the equivalent of the Royal coat of arms.

The exhibition will run until the end of the year – admission to the exhibition and museum is free.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S SAFEGUARDING 'GOOD' – OFSTED

Government inspectors have rated Cambridgeshire County Council as 'overall good' for its arrangements for children in need of help and protection, looked after children and care leavers. The 'good' judgement by OfSTED – the Office for Standards in Education – comes less than two years after a similar inspection rated the authority's safeguarding procedures. This is the first time a local authority in the country has gone from 'inadequate' to 'good' for child protection – a leap of two categories to the second highest.

Inspectors said Council leaders and senior managers responded 'purposefully and systematically' to the improvement agenda following the previous inspection. "Lead members and senior officers demonstrate a good knowledge of the needs of all children in Cambridgeshire," said the inspectors' report. The new model of social work practice in the county was particularly praised. Inspectors said social workers told them they felt safe, secure and valued in an environment where good social work practice could flourish.

"Permanency planning in Cambridgeshire is rigorous and is subject to regular senior management oversight and scrutiny," they said. Inspectors noted that Cambridgeshire was in the top 25 per cent of local authorities for the number of looked after children being adopted – increasing year on year to 17 per cent in 2013. They praised the establishment of the voluntary adoption agency Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption (CCA), adding that it was likely to further develop the effectiveness, efficiency and pace of adoption activities in the county.

"Adopters receive comprehensive training in both the pre-adoptive and post-adoption phases; adopters commented favourably on the quality and range of training offered," added their report.

"The authority has demonstrated that it is open to learning from both external and internal review and challenge. The senior management team has the full support of the Chief Executive and leaders of the Council, who are strong advocates for children and young people," said inspectors. Inspectors were also impressed with multi-agency activity and how closer working relationships enabled children and young people in need of help to be protected. This included young people who were missing from education and those at risk of child sexual exploitation.

STREET LIGHTING

The street lighting PFI will provide the County Council with energy savings of 46%. The conventional lanterns that are currently being installed, whilst not as efficient as LED units, do achieve significant energy savings when compared with the old style lanterns that they replace. These savings can also be further increased by dimming the lanterns so that they consume less energy.

As part of the work to look at the savings required for the street lighting business plan for 2015/16, the installation of LED units across the entire County Council street lighting network was carefully considered. The potential annual energy savings achievable from LED lanterns was calculated to be in the region of £400k. In order to achieve these savings the council would have to fund estimated implementation costs of circa £16,000,000. This large implementation cost would require a lengthy period to pay back and so at this time an LED replacement option did not appear to be financially viable.

However, the Assets and Commissioning team are currently assessing a funding option bid from the Green Investment Bank to potentially replace the most inefficient lights on the CCC lighting network with LED lanterns. These columns which are situated on CCC owned traffic routes and on new developments (which have been adopted since the beginning of the street lighting PFI) will offer a substantial energy saving if they are replaced with LED units. Therefore, there is the potential to operate a proportion of the County Council's street lighting stock as LED units in the future.

CASE FOR INVESTMENT IN EAST WEST RAIL CENTRAL SECTION LINK SUPPORTED

A new study supports the economic case for investment in East West Rail 'Central Section' rail link which would extend the line from Oxford to Cambridge. The East West Rail Consortium, which Cambridgeshire County Council is a partner in, has published a report that shows that extending the East West Rail line has real potential. It shows that the delivery of attractive new rail services between key locations could deliver substantial economic benefits and support significant growth in the East West Rail corridor. The report concludes a study by Atkins Consultants and is the first step towards developing an outline business case for the East West Rail 'Central Section'.

Working closely with the East West Rail Consortium and Department for Transport, Network Rail will now lead the next phase of work which will consider and examine the engineering, operational and planning feasibility and cost of several potential route options. The aim is to establish a scheme with a robust and convincing business case that can be submitted to Government in 2016 to secure inclusion of the scheme, subject to funding availability, in the 2019-24 investment plans for the rail industry.

It has been a long term aim of the East West Rail Consortium to improve rail connections within the region by re-instating the former 'Varsity Line' between Cambridge and Oxford. This would provide the rail infrastructure for train services to run from East Anglia to Oxfordshire (and beyond) with connections to all national mainline services to the north, west and south of England.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds, said: "Cambridgeshire is the fastest growing County in the country and it is vital that we support this development with high quality public transport. This study is an excellent step forward in creating that link which will bring boost jobs, reduce congestion and support the local and national economy."

MERCI TOUR de FRANCE FOR A DAY LIKE NO OTHER

Massive crowds, an electric atmosphere and lifelong memories were created as Stage 3 of the Tour de France started in Cambridge last month. Officials have estimated over one million people lined the whole of the Stage 3 route from Cambridge through Essex to London to watch the world's biggest annual sporting event. The peloton began its journey by parading through Cambridge, cheered on by wall of noise as they took in the world famous colleges of St John's, Trinity and King's, before officially starting the stage as they left the city on Trumpington Road.

Travelling through South Cambridgeshire, they took in beautiful villages such Great Shelford, Hinxton and Ickleton on roads lined with spectators before leaving the county via Saffron Walden and racing through Essex towards London.

While the Tour de France has now left the UK, its legacy continues through the Vélo Festival - which celebrates cycling in Cambridgeshire through culture and sport - which now features more than 120 events taking place across the county through to September.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF RECYCLING IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Work to develop the household waste recycling service in Cambridgeshire is being reviewed by the County Council's Highways and Community Infrastructure Committee. The review will look at how to provide an efficient and cost effective recycling service coupled with the need to contribute to the £149 million in savings required from the authority's budget over the next five years.

The options being considered by the Committee include looking at the location, usage and potential closure of some household recycling centres (HRCs) in the county as well as proposals such as charging for certain wastes such as hardcore and plasterboard or reducing weekday opening hours at sites.

As part of this review, the Council will work closely with the local authorities of RECAP - the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership to ensure any potential issues such as flytipping are taken into account.

Across the council we are looking to find savings to deliver the core services which Cambridgeshire and our residents need in the years ahead. No service is immune from this process as we try to manage the increasing demands on our budget. We have an excellent record for recycling in Cambridgeshire.

With the support of the City and District Councils we have worked hard to minimise the waste we send to landfill. The challenge we face is to deliver the savings we need without incurring the greater costs of burying rubbish in the ground, deterring recycling, or causing additional pressures on City and District Councils through flytipping.

This means we are looking very closely at how our household waste recycling service can either save money or generate income to offset its costs. These are not issues which we face in isolation, other authorities across the country are facing the same tough choices but we hope with the help of the public we can create a service which will meet all our needs in the future.

Please ensure that your response is received by midnight on 26 September 2014

Contact me J.E.Reynolds @ntlworld.com for a list of Frequently Asked Questions

MORE THAN 4,000 MEMBERS CAR SHARING THROUGH CAMSHARE

CamShare, the car sharing matching website is celebrating reaching its 4,000 members mark, meaning people's chances of finding a car sharing match are increasing all the time. The 4,000th member travels from March to Cambridge with a group of five others making a similar journey, and hasn't looked back since joining.

CamShare matches journeys to other people who live nearby who are making the same trips to the same destination or in the same direction. Once matched members can choose to car share as little or as often as they like and with whom they like. Research has suggested that a typical commuter who car shares everyday saves around £1,000 a year!

There are many benefits to car sharing:

- Save on fuel costs
- Enjoy the social element of getting to know someone else
- Cut congestion and pollution
- Reduce the stress of driving

Car Sharing aims to make life easier for us all by reducing the number of cars on the road carrying only one person. In this way car sharing can speed up your journey and helps the local economy by reducing congestion and reducing CO2 emissions.

CamShare began in 2002 and now has over 4000 members and is run by the Travel for Work Partnership (TfW). One of the biggest barriers to car sharing people site, is situations where they have an emergency and need to travel home early, or where they simply need to stay at work later than their sharer.

To overcome this, TfW are offering their member employers a Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) scheme until March 2015, which provides an emergency subsidised ride to commuters who car share - for example, if a car sharer must stay at work later than expected. GRH programmes may use taxis, company vehicles or rental cars. TfW will reimburse its member companies based within the Cambridge to Ely and Cambridge to Huntingdon corridors for the journey.

NEW CAMPAIGN TO ENCOURAGE TEXTILE RECYCLING IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH

Residents encouraged to give old clothes a new lease of life and help save money by recycling them as part of a new campaign.

Recycle for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (RECAP) has launched the 'Love your clothes' campaign which is an national initiative, with backing of 64 major charities and clothing retailers such as Debenhams, John Lewis and the British Heart Foundation. The campaign which runs throughout August, September and October is asking residents to recycle all their unwanted textiles – not just clothes, instead of throwing them away.

It's easy to do – residents can either take them to their local recycling centre, a textile bring bank or donate them to a local charity to help them raise funds. Your local council will have a leaflet with these details, or just click on to www.recap.co.uk for a simple guide.

Over £140 million of clothing gets dumped in landfill sites each year. But all unwanted textiles can be used again, no matter what condition they are in. Even rags, old towels, worn out clothes, stained fabrics and misshapen tops can be recycled into new outfits or can be made into things such as padding for furniture, carpet backing and even speakers.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds said: "Clothing, even if it looks a bit shabby, is still high quality material that can be recycled and made into something useful again. This campaign is designed to show that little things really do make a big difference. So instead of putting them in your rubbish bin, pop them down to your nearby bring bank, recycling centre or charity shop. You never know what it might be made into next."

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To give your points of view on any of these issues, contact me by email at; j.e.reynolds@ntlworld.com

As Your County Councillor I welcome hearing from you on these and/or any other issues that affect our community."

Yours John Reynolds

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