

County Councillor Report to Parish Councils for the Fulbourn Division, April 2024

Local Issues

Flood resilience and drainage: we have just experienced the wettest 18 months since records began in 1836. The ground is saturated and there has been much excess water on roads and footpaths. The county has a multi-faceted approach to flood and drainage resilience but there have been challenges over the past several months. Householders have also felt this. There is a programme of gulley clearance and this is regularly examined for changes to increase frequency or to look at blockages. In Quy, Station Road has been a special case for some time. Although matters have improved, I keep a close eye on gulley clearance there, along with keeping in contact with Anglian Water concerning the pumping station.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/flood-and-water/community-flood-action-programme>

Roadworks. There will be works to provide electrical connections along Airport Way; and further work to repair the road surface on Newmarket Road once these utility connections have been made.

Potholes: please continue to report potholes as soon as they appear. I have asked for a number to be filled in Quy in recent weeks. Additional funding has been made available to increase the repair rate. It is hoped that drier weather will enable more to be done more quickly. <https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk>

Footpaths: I have asked for an update on the repairs to Station Road and the remainder of Church Street. These works have been budgeted for.

STRATEGY RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE

Household Support Fund and supermarket vouchers The Government's budget included an announcement that it would be extending the Household Support Fund for six months. This is the funding that helps the council pay for supermarket vouchers during the school holidays for families entitled to support, as well as other payments to households in need. The Government did not announce this in time for local councils to include it in their budgets, so the council's Strategy Resources & Performance Committee has agreed to modify its spending plans. The supermarket vouchers will therefore continue to be issued at the current rate for the next six months.

ADULTS & HEALTH

'High intensity users' of A&E services: Cambridgeshire County Council will host the 'High Intensity Users' team working with patients who frequently attend hospital A&E departments. Last year the NHS in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough spent an estimated total

of £28 million on emergency care for 4,500 people who attended A&E departments between five and ten times a year. Many of these patients have complex needs, and identifying and supporting them early can save the NHS at least 40% of these costs.

COMMUNITIES SOCIAL MOBILITY & INCLUSION (COSMIC)

Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund: The council's Cambridgeshire Priorities Capital Fund was hugely over-subscribed. Twenty-six applications were awarded funding, including those in Teversham and Great Wilbraham.

Cost of living : The council's Communities Social Mobility & Inclusion Committee (COSMIC) has approved an additional £150,000 to Cambridge Housing Society to deliver the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme, which supports Cambridgeshire residents facing unexpected financial difficulties. www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/parenting-and-family-support/cambridgeshire-local-assistance-scheme

The council has also allocated £400,000 to Citizens Advice to deliver income maximisation across Cambridgeshire. By the end of the third quarter of 2023/2024, Citizens Advice had supported 2,251 people, against an annual target of 2,400. This resulted in a total additional income gain of over £1.5 million.

'Closer to Communities' : The council is proceeding with a series of pilot projects to bring decision-making closer to local communities. These include a project to help parish councils deal with *funding of street lighting*, with the county council looking at joint procurement facilities for parish councils. A trial is being carried out in Girton.

Safe accommodation : The committee has also refreshed its Safe Accommodation Strategy for victims of domestic abuse for the next three years.

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

Flooding cases: Officers from the Flood & Water team and the Drainage & Resilience team are meeting weekly to review the many cases across the county of water problems arising from Storms Babet through Henk, and the saturation arising from an exceptionally wet winter and early spring.

Flood risk enforcement : The council has refreshed its policy and protocol for enforcement under the Land Drainage Act 1991, for landowners' maintenance of ditches.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy : The council is working with partners on the production of this strategy. Natural Cambridgeshire is continuing to develop an engagement and communications plan to support this piece of work.

Clean energy at Park & Rides : Work is progressing on the installation of solar panels at St Ives and Babraham Park & Rides. These will provide power for the operation of the sites themselves, while also making energy available to commercial customers via a private wire. Several electric vehicle charging points are being installed at each site, with some of these designed specifically for the access requirements of drivers with disabilities.

Connecting Cambridgeshire : Gigabit-capable broadband coverage in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough has hit 85 per cent a year early, meaning we are above the national average and ahead of Government targets. Work is ongoing to bring future-proof connectivity to homes and businesses in harder to reach areas. Connecting Cambridgeshire will be launching its Digital Inclusion Strategy in May. District Digital Overviews for each district are available at <https://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/about/digital-connectivity-strategy-2021-2025/district-digital-overviews/>

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

EV charging cross-over pilot: A trial will take place across the county on a first-come first-served basis of EV car charging solutions that involve cables crossing the highway. I have encouraged council officers to be ambitious in this. Cambridgeshire & Peterborough will need ten thousand public plug-in stations by 2030, as more and more residents without off-street parking and charging capacity will be wanting to make the switch to electric vehicles.

PLANNING (including consents)

East West Rail: EWR are planning the first stage of their statutory consultation in the first half of this year.

Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation : The Examination of this application is due to finish on Wednesday 17 April.

Fens reservoir: Anglian Water and Cambridge Water are to consult on proposals for two new strategic reservoirs for the East of England region. One reservoir is to be located in the Fens and the other in Lincolnshire. The 'phase two' non-statutory consultation will start in May 2024, and will run for eight weeks

Cambridgeshire County Council composition changes again: The composition of the county council, following another by-election is now: Liberal Democrats 23*; Conservatives 22; Labour 9*; Independents 4*; Non-aligned 3. The ruling group of the Joint Administration is therefore 36* in number.

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