

County Councillor's Report October 2018

Quarterly Highways Meeting

This meeting took place on the 9th November and included Parish Clerks/Chairs from Longstanton/Northstowe, Over, Oakington and Westwick, along with representatives from highways. Highway issues were reported and discussed by each Parish and it's good to see the footpaths around Ladywalk and Brookfield Drive being repaired and upgraded after such a long fight for funding.

Longstanton and Northstowe Child and Family Centre

It's really fantastic to see so many more of our families using our new County Council Child and Family Centre at the Pathfinder School. This is proving to be very successful with families from all over our community using this great facility.

Our new Education Campus is on the way – Who pays?

As widely reported, Cambridgeshire County Council has received the go ahead to develop Phase 1 of the Northstowe Education Campus. The first phase of the campus, which will cost around £45m, includes a secondary school, a multipurpose school hall, theatre space and drama studios, a sports hall large enough for four tennis courts, a gym, two dance studios, an all-weather floodlit football pitch and a 110-place Special Education Needs School. I have been asked by many of our residents how this will be funded, and how much will it cost the County Council. Well, so far funding is as follows: £7.5million from the government, £12.5million from the Education and Skills Funding Agency towards the Special Needs School, and £8.8million in section 106 funding, which is provided by the developer. Therefore, this leaves the County Council with a bill of just under £16 million!

Children's Change programme starts from 1 November

From this November, the way the County Council organises its services for safeguarding and supporting vulnerable children is set to change, with improvements backed by revised council funding. To recognise that these changes are focused on making radical improvements to service, and not at delivering an immediate financial saving, myself and colleagues on the General Purposes Committee, unanimously agreed to invest £3.413m from the council's smoothing fund into the children's services budget to allow the change to start with a clean sheet.

Changes in the service from this November will see:

- Social work teams based in districts led by non-case holding team managers, who can provide more support and challenge; linking in to early help teams who already work in this way and are working well with

our partners in schools and health to meet the needs of vulnerable children at the most early stage

- Easier referrals into the council's contact centre, with trained call handlers able to make faster decisions on all clear cut cases, and referring only complicated or unclear issues on to social workers
- Lower caseloads for social workers overall
- Two new dedicated teams focused on adolescents in the north and south
- More Child Practitioners focused on working with children in need and able to undertake more sustained and in-depth work

Investment programme delivers additional £1.9m for frontline services

The purchase of a purpose built student accommodation block in Cambridge will allow Cambridgeshire County Council to plough up to £1.9m a year back into vital frontline services. The Council's investment of £38m in the 251 bed Brunswick House on Newmarket Road, is the first acquisition in its strategy to build a portfolio of investments that both support its objectives and help to safeguard the future of vital services for people across the county.

The Council has a strong asset base (county farms, etc.) and is involved in the long lease of buildings for student accommodation elsewhere (at Castle Court and North Cambridge Academy) but this is its first venture into direct ownership and operation - a relatively small investment in terms of the balance sheet, but a sizeable income stream to support public services and investment in the Cambridgeshire economy. With rising demand for our services, the council is determined to consider all opportunities to invest in schemes that will help us maintain and improve our service levels and stand on our own feet financially. Our ethos of transformation, commercialisation and sound financial management means we are better able to deal with financial pressures.

LED lantern replacement - 50% milestone reached

Between May and December this year, more than 3,500 energy-saving LED streetlights will be installed as part of the LED lantern replacement project being carried out by Balfour Beatty on behalf of the County Council.

LED lights give us cost savings, higher quality of light, and overall better efficiency – as well as cutting CO2 emissions.

The milestone of 50% was achieved in October with the goal of 100% set to be achieved by mid-December 2018. Full details of the streets to be included in the upgrade programme can be viewed on the [Lighting Cambridgeshire website](#).

Gritters ready for action this winter

Our fleet of 37 gritters, quad bikes and crews completed a 'dry run' across the county in mid-October to carry out a trial run in preparation for winter.

Cambridgeshire's salt domes and barns have already been filled with 10,000 tonnes of rock salt ready for the start of the cold season.

These trial runs are important as they allow the training of new drivers and remind the existing ones of the routes they'll be keeping clear over the next six months and provide any feedback. [View details of our gritting routes](#)

Electronic referrals to the Coroner and Medical Examiners

The Coroner's Office is launching a new online portal for referral of deaths, piloted at Addenbrookes Hospital from 5 November 2018, in line with the launch of the new medical examiners pilot at the hospital. It is designed to cut down the time doctors spend on the phone with the Coroner's Office; allowing for referrals to be sent through at any time of day (rather than being limited to the office open hours) and improve the quality of the information. This should also allow the Coroner's Officers to improve the service for bereaved families. Once the trial at Addenbrookes has been concluded, the portal will be rolled out to the other hospitals at, Hinchingsbrooke and Papworth. This is planned to begin from early December 2018. Talks are also ongoing regarding how to roll the system out to GP practices across the county.

Peter Hudson

County Councillor

Longstanton, Northstowe, Over, Oakington and Westwick.