

## County Councillor report February 2020

### County Council Budget

The County Council has set its budget with an increase of 1.59% on Basic Council Tax. The 2% ring fenced Adult Social Care is the same as every year, until the government comes up with a new funding solution...

The budget includes:

- £16 million into a new capital environmental pot to invest in climate action related projects.
- £8.5 million extra per year to children's services as part of the best start in life strategy.
- £800,000 per year extra into social care
- £200,000 per year extra into the LHI scheme, bringing the total spend up to £882,000 this year
- £6.336 million extra towards highways this year, plus extra £4million in 21/22, extra £5million in 22/34 and extra £6million in 23/24
- £5 million fund to support delivery of community capital projects

Over £10 million has been generated per year from commercial activity that can go straight into providing services.

Relocation of HQ and putting County Council officers into the communities they work for, will generate over £40 million over the next few years.

Over 7,000 tons of carbon reduction measures have already been delivered and further work on schemes will increase this to 16,000 tons within 2-3 years.

Smoking rates in the county are down, teenage pregnancies are down and our childhood obesity rates are among the best nationally. Still more to do tho.....

### High tech investment boosts Council's bid to protect frontline services

Cambridgeshire County Council continues to protect the future of its frontline services through an ambitious move into the high tech office accommodation market - with the announcement today that it has bought the Evolution Business Park in South Cambridgeshire. Members have agreed to invest £28m in the freehold of the site off Milton Road, Impington which is currently home to a number of successful hi tech firms including Intelligent Fingerprinting.

And with an annual return on a £28m investment of 5.7% the deal generates would generate an income equivalent to that the council currently spends to support 22 adults with a learning disability year or fund 38 nursing home placement for older people a year or fill 34,000 potholes.

The high-spec office accommodation on the edge of Cambridge was developed to meet the growing demand for space in the ever expanding City, it is also home to national energy provider SSE. The opportunity to buy the Evolution Business Park allows the County Council to diversify its portfolio into a sector and geographical area which is quite different to its other recent purchases. The County Council supports and welcomes the development of high tech businesses such as those represented on its new Business Park, which bring prosperity to our county and high

value jobs for our residents. Evolution Business Park, joins a number of previous purchases in the council's property portfolio made over the past eighteen months which include Brunswick House - purpose built student accommodation for local University students, Cromwell Leisure Park in Wisbech comprising a cinema and three retail units, the Cheddar's Lane Tesco site, off Newmarket Road in Cambridge, and the ten acre Kingsbridge Centre industrial estate in Peterborough.

### **Top 15 for adult social care**

Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council are in the top 15 strongest performing councils in adult social care, highlighted in IMPOWER's latest productivity INDEX, it involves greater levels of independence and control, so that people can live more fulfilled lives and remain in their homes and communities for longer. The highest performing councils have all been able to achieve greater than average outcomes from a less than average spend per head. This means that users of social care in their local areas are getting better outcomes at the same time as the council is making best use of public funds

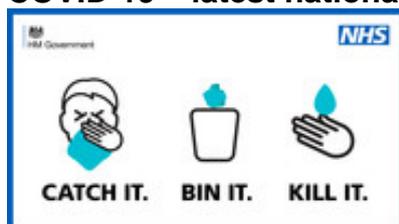


### **Applications for secondary school places are up again**

This year the County Council received nearly 6,700 applications for secondary school places, an increase of 148 compared to the last academic year. A total of 6,698 applications were received by the deadline of 31 October 2019. Of these, 6,060 (90.5%) resulted in children being offered a place at their first preference school compared to 5,859 last year. A further 440 (6.5%) children have received the offer of a place at their second or third preference school. The County Council is planning for this growing demand for places by working with existing schools to increase their capacity and to plan for new secondary schools in the areas where demand is greatest. Applicants are advised to use all three of their preferences when applying for a secondary school place and to ensure that they include their catchment school as one of their preferences to give themselves the best chance of securing a place.

Parents/carers are legally entitled to appeal against the admission authority's decision to refuse a place at their preferred school(s). Accepting a place at an alternative school does not affect their child's place on the reserve list for their preferred school(s), or right of appeal.

### **COVID-19 – latest national advice and guidance**



Developments regarding COVID-19 are continuing to be carefully monitored by Public Health England (PHE) with the Director for Public Health across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is involved in local planning.

The [public advice](#) from PHE provides more information on the situation, including travel advice. The following guidance provides information relevant to different areas of Local Authority work.

- Transport Sector [guidance for educational settings available](#)
- Further guidance for education sector can be found [here](#).
- Social care, community care and residential setting [guidance](#)
- Further guidance for employers and businesses can be found [here](#)

To help prevent the potential spread of any infections, including Covid-19, the NHS has launched the Catch it, Bin it, Kill It campaign. Using a tissue to catch a sneeze, binning the tissue and washing your hands is the best way to stop the spread of any germs or viruses.

### **Local heritage centre moves a step closer**

A planning application for a facility which will showcase heritage and archaeology at Longstanton and Northstowe, has been submitted. The project is a partnership between Highways England, Homes England and Cambridgeshire County Council, with support from the Longstanton & District Heritage Society. This new building could be an opportunity for people to celebrate their heritage in a way that also brings a unique facility to Longstanton and the new community at Northstowe and an educational resource for Cambridgeshire. The plan is to not only showcase the amazing exhibits discovered, but tell the story of archaeology and the crucial role played by RAF Oakington as an operational military base. The plan is for the County Council to run the building which sits on Homes England land with initial funding coming from the A14 Legacy Fund. I attended a meeting of the County Councils Commercial and Investment Committee and spoke to ensure that the name of Longstanton would be included within the name of the facility.

Planning permission was submitted in December and, subject to committee and planning approval, construction could begin in May and with the building opening in the Autumn.

An artist's impression of the Northstowe Heritage Facility.



Credit: Proctor & Matthews Architects.

**Peter Hudson**

**County Councillor**

**Longstanton, Northstowe, Oakington, Westwick, and Over**