

Cambridgeshire County Councillor's Report October/November 2018

Finance: In response to the Head of Paid Service's decision to ask all staff earning over £25,000 pa to take three days unpaid leave at Christmas there is a cross party proposal for councillors to respond. Although only a fairly small number of councillors' allowances are over £25,000 pa a motion to Council will propose that all councillors take a 1.2% cut in their allowances. Whilst the saving is small, approximately £9,000, I anticipate that this motion will have universal support to demonstrate member support for Officers. I shall support the motion but still believe that the proposal to cut staff salaries in this way was wrong. I continue to press for the Council to find ways to create new income streams rather than seek 'savings'. Whilst I believe that the creation of 'This Land', the Council's development company has not been a good example of this stream of effort, the work being done by Officers through the Corporate Energy Strategy approved by Council in March 2017 is progressing well. The Director of the Mobilising Energy Investment project is making great strides with her team to progress the stated aim of the strategy: 'to reduce energy bills, generate income for our services and lead our communities to adapt to a low carbon future'. There are several strands to the strategy including a scheme to help residents save money on their energy bills: 'Cambridgeshire Energy Switch', a new solar farm at Soham, the use of park and ride sites as smart energy grids and a programme of using County buildings including schools to install solar panels. The exorbitant cost involved in trying to make connections for generated energy has provoked the team to progress further its work on energy storage with a wide range of stakeholders. Working with those stakeholders the plan now is to investigate how to make more effective use of the grid and establish other storage facilities. This energetic team saw its efforts acknowledged earlier this year when it was the winner of the Pioneer category of the Renewable Energy Awards. Details of this stream of work: <https://bit.ly/2QUmhhQ>

Education: The County Council is currently seeking more volunteers for Cambridgeshire's School Admissions Appeals Panel. Every year a number of pupils fail to secure a place at the school of their choice because that school is oversubscribed. The parents of these pupils can appeal against the decision and those appeals are heard by an independent panel as part of a process required by law. Qualifying applicants may or may not have educational experience but must be totally independent of the County Council and the school governing bodies. They must also be able to listen to both sides of a case and weigh up evidence objectively and impartially. The Council is keen that panels reflect the diverse communities living in Cambridgeshire. As volunteers the roles are not paid but travelling expenses and training are provided. The time commitment is usually a minimum of five working days each year. To find out more or get an application form, email harriet.snape@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or rob.sanderson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or write to Harriet Snape, SH1102, Shire Hall, CB3 0AP. The closing date for applications is 18 January 2019. Successful applicants will be notified by March and asked to attend training the following month.

Health: Committee members had only one decision item on the agenda for its most recent meeting. Asked to agree a recommendation to adopt a Dynamic Purchasing System for Public Health Primary Care Commissioning, members were unanimous in their view that the report to committee didn't provide sufficient detail for them to make a decision. They deferred the decision to December's meeting and asked Officers to go back to the CCG for further information. Commissioning of Primary Care services is something that I am carefully looking into at the moment as the current contract for the Maple Surgery at Bar Hill comes to an end in March 2019 and the procurement process has caused concern amongst local residents. The longer I sit on the Health Committee, the more amazed I am at the lack of transparency that the NHS has hitherto offered and the complexity of its processes which seem designed to aid that shortcoming. Having said that the organisation is striving to improve and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group is currently consulting on the recommissioning of carers services. Details are available at: <https://bit.ly/2QVokCk>

Cambridgeshire **Police** held a Day of Action on Friday 02 November to target driving transgressions in Cambridgeshire Police's biggest road safety event. During the 24 hour multi-agency operation more than 800 motoring enforcements were handed out targeting the use of mobile phones whilst driving [25], speeding [534], failure to wear a seatbelt [25] and driving under the influence of drink or drugs [no figure published so let's hope there were none]. Additionally 7 motorists were reported for going through a red light. Speed Watch volunteers caught 150 people speeding; they will now receive warning letters. 291 vehicles had their tyres checked and one driver out of the 40 whose eyesight was checked at the roadside failed the test. 260 cyclists were handed warnings about not having lights. The operation also allowed for road safety training to be delivered to around 1,000 children and teenagers in pre-schools, schools and colleges across the county. More than 350 officers, PCSOs, staff and volunteers took part in the event. Last year 48 people were killed in Cambridgeshire, 436 were seriously injured and a further 2,307 were injured in collisions.

The police are also offering opportunities to local people to influence the service they deliver. These opportunities will be offered through a series of events that they will be holding over the coming weeks. They remind us that pressures on police forces have never been so complex; that it is difficult to manage demand and deal with the challenges of modern day policing. Their objective is to be as efficient and effective as possible bearing in mind that they have to balance the need to manage national, regional and local issues and they acknowledge the value of active public participation in deciding priorities. Local officers will attend the events to give an overview of the challenges followed by opportunities for public questions. Do look out for details of local events.

Meanwhile the **Greater Cambridge Partnership** is consulting on two options for more Park & Ride spaces south west of Cambridge to address the identified need for greater provision to cope with planned growth. Option 1 is to create a multi-storey car park on the existing Park & Ride site at Trumpington and Option 2 is to create a new Park & Ride site north west of Junction 11 of the M11. This is a separate proposal to the works to expand the current Trumpington Park & Ride site by 274 parking spaces and 5 additional bus spaces. Although not unanimous members of the Joint Development Control Committee - Cambridge Fringes [JDCC] despite some reservations, granted delegated approval to address the short term need to alleviate demand pressures at this, the busiest of the Park & Ride sites. The consultation will run until Friday 21 December 2018 and a series of exhibitions is planned. Further details of the consultation at: www.greatercambridge.org.uk/parkandride

I attended my first meeting as a member of the **Fire Authority** this month. You will recall that earlier this year the Police & Crime Commissioner made a bid to add the Fire Authority to his current responsibility for the police. My own response to the consultation was a firm 'no' as was the formal response of the County Council. The request for a Judicial Review has now been granted and, whilst we wait for the outcome, I feel completely vindicated in my original view that it is an unnecessary change. My first impression is that we have a very well run Fire Service and that, whilst both the Fire Service and Police currently collaborate and plan to continue to do so regardless of the outcome of the Judicial Review, there is no need to change the status quo nor benefit to be found by so doing.

I look forward to receiving any questions or comments that you have about the items in this report or any other matters either at your November meetings or by email.

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