

## Cambridgeshire County Councillor's Report

**Council** met in March with very little formal business to discuss. There were though four motions. One, on the subject of sustainable high streets and another on education funding were supported. Meeting agenda pack: <http://bit.ly/2oDb1cl>

**General Purposes Committee** [GPC] approved investment from the Transformation Fund in line with recommendations from **Adults Committee** meeting earlier in the month. Investments in prevention and early intervention have had some success in holding back demand in the face of a growing and ageing population and rising levels of need. The Council has over-delivered on planned savings from the Older People's budget and is forecasting an underspend in the Older People and Mental Health Directorate [OPMH] for this financial year, mitigating the Council's overall financial position in 2017-18. This positive aspect is though explained as much by the challenge of securing the requisite supply of care as it is by a genuine reduction in the level of demand. It seems that the approach taken so far by the Council is becoming unsustainable and will not meet the future challenge of providing for all adult client groups. The requested investment of £600,000 from the Transformation Fund will allow the Council to tender for an external organisation or combination of organisations to work with it on a detailed business case for a change management programme to accelerate the required service transformation. Meeting agenda pack: [GPC] <http://bit.ly/2oA6cAH> Adults Committee: <http://bit.ly/2p7p4KA>

**Highways & Community Infrastructure Committee** approved the prioritised list of schemes for the Local Highways Improvements Scheme. There was only one application from the Bar Hill Division for this last round - from Lolworth whose request for protective kerbing at the junction of Robin's Lane and The Green was regrettably unsuccessful. There were though other applications that were discussed by parish councils prior to the application deadline and, although those applications were not made this year, I hope that they may be submitted for the next round [start date for applications is usually around November]. 29 South Cambridgeshire parish councils were successful this time sharing a budget of just over £117,000. Meeting agenda pack: <http://bit.ly/2oA6g3p>

**Children & Young People Committee** considered a report on delivering the extended entitlement to free child care. From September 2017 local authorities will have an increased obligation to provide free entitlement to early years education and childcare for 3 and 4 year olds. The entitlement for working parents who meet the qualifying criteria will be increased from 15 ['universal entitlement'] to 30 hours ['extended entitlement']. Members were told that the early experience gained from the pilot scheme run in 8 authorities confirmed that access to 30 hours weekly free childcare is radically changing the lives of lower income families for the better. Based on predicted funding rates eligible Cambridgeshire families could, on average, save £2565 per annum on childcare costs. Although the proposed hourly rate to be paid to all Cambridgeshire providers [£4.04 ] for the 'extended entitlement' is higher on average than the basic hourly rate currently paid to Cambridgeshire providers for the delivery of the 'universal entitlement', it does represent a significant reduction for some providers from the hourly rate they charge working parents who are currently purchasing additional hours between 15 and 30. There is concern that the result will be a loss of income for some providers thus making delivery of the extended entitlement financially unviable for them. Officers are continuing work to identify capital funding requirements to support development of projects in areas of high demand and will continue to monitor the situation with regard to the possible further funding that DfE has suggested may be made available later this year. Agenda pack: <http://bit.ly/2pFawhj>

The **Health Committee** approved the transfer of responsibility for Stop Smoking Services to an external provider, Everyone Health. This organisation is already contracted by the County Council to provide other lifestyle services. In its scrutiny role the committee received a report on the consultation exercise undertaken on the relocation to Addenbrookes of the out of hours service currently located at Chesterton. Although members supported the move in principle, there was continuing concern about the way in which the NHS consults. The on line questionnaire that formed a major part of the consultation was described [by me and supported by other members] as 'extremely simplistic'. Meeting agenda pack: <http://bit.ly/2ppcvHc>

Communication seems to be something that Highways England [HE] also struggles with. Although a regular communication on progress of the **A14 Upgrade** is emailed to a wide range of stakeholders, HE seems not to grasp the reality nettle. At a recent meeting with the chairman of Boxworth Parish Meeting, some Boxworth residents and both District and County Councillors, I made the point that honesty and acknowledgement of 'worst case scenario' at the outset is a much better approach than having to explain changes after the event. The excuse that 'things change' is not acceptable. The point was made that HE has carried out projects of this nature previously and should be sufficiently experienced to know where there is a possibility of change. People are usually accepting of changes that have to be made in truly unanticipated circumstances but should be treated with greater respect when it comes to communication of more general matters. Our MP, Heidi Allen also met with HE subsequent to the meeting at Boxworth and I asked her to include this feedback in her discussions.

Both the **Greater Cambridge City Deal** [GCCD] **Assembly** and **Board** met this month. The Assembly made recommendations to the Board in relation to the allocation of funding/resource. Two proposals may have direct benefits for our villages. The first is to allocate £480K for a 2 year programme of work [2017-2019] to develop up to 12 cycling 'greenways' in South Cambridgeshire. The second is the allocation of £100K to carry out initial feasibility work on South Cambridgeshire Travel Hubs. Both were subsequently agreed at the GCCD Board meeting.

The GCCD Board also agreed to consider later in the year an indicative request to develop a detailed business case to enable Board decisions to be taken on scaling up original pilot skills work. This will help stimulate business demand for apprenticeships and improve careers advice in schools through a second phase of activity and allow investment in a wider reach. [An indicative maximum of £2.1m over 3 years.]

Full details: Assembly - [bit.ly/2nVK8lQ](http://bit.ly/2nVK8lQ) Board: <http://bit.ly/2nKxPIC>

As we approach elections for the County Council and for the new Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Mayor, I should like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support over the 2 years and 3 months that I have been your County Councillor. I very much hope for the opportunity to continue to represent Bar Hill Division after 04 May but meanwhile offer my best wishes to all those standing for that privilege.

*Lynda*

[lyndaharford@icloud.com](mailto:lyndaharford@icloud.com);  
01954 251775/07889 131022;  
Follow me on Twitter: @2whit2whoo