

## County Councillor Report for Parishes – December 2021 – Cllr Anna Bradnam

### Covid-19

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Enhanced Response Area status for tackling the Covid pandemic lasts until at least Monday 6 December. More information at

[Enhanced Response Area status vital to protect NHS and vital services - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Cambridge University Hospitals' Chief Executive Roland Sinker warned in early November that Addenbrooke's was 'ceasing to function as a hospital' and that 'You'd have to be asleep to not realise the profound nature of the crisis we're in'. At that time 150 of the 900-1,000 beds were closed due to infection control and pandemic-related reconfiguration. The hospital was caring for 58 people with COVID-19, 11 of them in the critical care unit. Ambulances were queuing outside the hospital, and one woman died in the back of an ambulance while waiting.

### Covid in schools

Cases in schools have risen significantly in the last week and are expected to rise further. Pressure on staffing resources is now critical and a number of schools are close to closing classes due to safety considerations.

Attendance continues to be high, however. Cambridgeshire's school attendance benchmarking tool was sent to the Secretary of State for Education by his policy advisor as a case study of best practice on highlighting challenges with pupil attendance.

Vaccination rates among Cambridgeshire's 12-15 year olds are at or above the East of England average in all Cambridgeshire districts, and all are higher than the England average. Vaccination rates among 12-15 year olds in East Cambridgeshire are the second highest in Cambridgeshire.

### Case rates in Cambridgeshire as of 27 November:

3,139 cases were recorded in Cambridgeshire in the previous seven days—477.6 cases per 100,000 population. This is above the East of England average of 455.9 cases per 100,000 population.

In South Cambs we have 905 cases (up 112 since last week) and an infection rate of 562 per 100,000 people. 79% of people have had two jabs.

In Cambridge City there are 542 cases (up 148 since last week) and an infection rate of 433 per 100,000 people.

### Vaccinations

Booster vaccinations are now being offered to those aged 40 and above who had their second dose of the vaccine more than six months ago. However the NHS is struggling with capacity to deliver the booster programme, with appointments being offered (to me) in Peterborough, Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket and even people with pre-booked vaccination appointments are having to queue round the block at their chosen location.

In response, the large scale vaccination centres are opening seven days a week for walk-ins. The nearest for us are The Grafton Centre - from 29 November daily 8:30am – 4pm and Tue and Wed 8.30am – 7.30 pm. Chesterton Indoor Bowls Club, Logans Way, Chesterton. The Guildhall opened for walk-ins (27&28<sup>th</sup> Nov).

### Holiday Activity & Food in Cambridgeshire

Enriching experiences and a nutritious lunch are being made available in the Christmas holidays for the children of families receiving benefits-related free school meals.

**The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme** offers fun with friends and free food for primary and secondary school children in Cambridgeshire. Sessions will include a healthy meal, a variety of

exciting activities or sports and the opportunity to socialise with other children. Any child receiving benefits-related free school meals is eligible for the programme.

Funded by the Department for Education (DfE) for the next three years, the HAF scheme enables councils like Cambridgeshire to coordinate free holiday childcare and activities locally. The programme will be delivered by approved providers, and co-ordinated locally by Cambridgeshire County Council.

Each eligible child will be able to access up to 16 hours of free holiday childcare or activities experiences through the school Christmas holiday period. Bookings have already opened and information about how to book with participating providers can be found at

[Holiday Activities and Food Programme - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

As part of the HAF programme, eligible children will be able to access:

- Fun and play opportunities that provide children with new skills and knowledge.
- At least one meal a day.
- Guidance on healthy eating and getting children involved in food preparation and cooking.
- Support for parents, carers or other family members with guidance on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food.
- Information and signposting to other services and support which might be helpful.

The Council is working with local schools, voluntary and community organisations, and childcare providers to deliver the HAF programme.

### **Household Support Fund**

Cambridgeshire's Household Support Fund, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions, has been created to help people experiencing immediate financial hardship to pay for food, household energy or other essential items. The scheme will run until 31 March 2022.

Support is offered in two ways:

- Support with food, household energy and other essentials for individuals and families: residents are eligible to access this support if they earn less than £17,940 per year, or are in receipt of certain state benefits
- Direct food voucher scheme: as in previous school holidays, supermarket vouchers will be issued to families meeting the low income criteria for free school meals, funded childcare for two-year-olds, early years pupil premium, or sixth form students eligible for free school meals.

[Household Support Fund - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

**Rail** The Ely Area Capacity Study Phase 2 proposed upgrading the barriers at Bannold Road. I have asked for widening to allow safer pedestrian access across the railway. It also proposes closing, either partially or fully, the crossing at Burgess Drove. I have met and discussed with residents and County officers and took the County Highways Asset Manager for a walk along Burgess Drove to show him why I am concerned that even if it is built to adoptable standards, the ongoing maintenance of costs which will fall to the County, will be enormous. I supported maintaining pedestrian access but also suggested upgrading the crossing at Burgess Drove. Thank you to residents who copied their responses to me. The consultation closed on 28 November. There will be a phase 3 consultation on (NR) preferred options in summer 2022

### **Gas main installation**

It seemed that the gas main installation was nearing completion through Milton and Waterbeach, with bulbs having been planted along Car Dyke Road but major problems have been experienced by residents in Cattells Lane, where sewage main connections to homes have been damaged, with unwelcome results. Anglian Water are tankering out twice a day, undertaking repairs and may need to check other connections by camera. The installation works (gas and electricity) have continued along Chittering Drove.

### **Gulley cleaning**

The Council has instigated a major programme of gulley cleaning for the entire county through a system called Kaarbontech, which takes very high resolution imagery to then inform prioritisation of repairs. We have had some gulley cleaning done in Milton but I'm not sure if that was part of the programme. I will advise you when the programme is due to come to this area.

### **Land Use Framework for Cambridgeshire**

The motion on land use submitted for debate at the County Council's full council meeting on Tuesday 9 November, was passed by a majority, with members of the Liberal Democrat, Labour and Independent joint administration voting in favour of it, and the Conservatives opposing it. The motion will now be circulated locally by the Food Farming & Countryside Commission to be used as a model for partner organisations to use if they wish to indicate their support for this important piece of work.

### **Full Council - 9 November other items:**

- The appointment of Stephen Moir as the Council's new Chief Executive— Stephen used to work for the County Council some years ago and was a strong choice as the new Chief Executive.
- Various changes to the Council's constitution, which were agreed.
- The parental leave policy for councillors which was approved.
- The Pension Fund Committee annual report, which was also agreed,
- Motions on surface water flooding, resettlement of Afghan citizens, the Government's social care plan, and cuts to Universal Credit, were all agreed. A motion on Universal Credit resolved that the County Council would work with partners to set up a funding scheme to support children and young people whose families are on UC or free school meals to have reduced cost access to out of school activities, in order to support them to reach their educational and personal potential.

The County Council's Environment & Green Investment Committee on which I sit approved a draft revised **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy**, which will go out to public consultation shortly. The overall objectives of the strategy are:

1. Understanding flood risk in Cambridgeshire
2. Managing the likelihood of flooding
3. Helping Cambridgeshire's citizens to manage their own risk
4. Ensuring appropriate development in Cambridgeshire
5. Improving flood prediction, warning and post flood recovery

The new strategy will cover the period 2021-2027. It has been updated to reflect the effects of climate change, changes in policy and legislation, the importance of working in partnership and the floods in winter 2020. The strategy identifies that there needs to be much greater clarity on the roles of each flood risk management authority, and greater reference to riparian ownership and community involvement.

### **Climate Change & Environment Strategy**

A draft of the County Council's revised Climate Change & Environment Strategy will be considered by the Council's Environment & Green Investment Committee on 16 December. This follows a series of engagement meetings with parish councils, local businesses, and Council staff across the organisation. The final version of the Strategy will be considered by the Full Council at the budget meeting in February. The Council's annual report on its carbon footprint will go to the Committee for consideration in January.

### **Climate-related research**

Meanwhile, work is ongoing by postgraduate students from the University of Cambridge on two pieces of climate-related work.

- The first looks at the potential for a Cambridgeshire Decarbonisation Fund and how it might work.
- The second considers how Local Area Energy Planning could work in Cambridgeshire. Local area energy usually refers to energy projects that are led by local organisations, whether public, private or third sector, and run for local benefit. Local area energy plans can cover lots of different activities taking place within a local area such as:

→ Improving the energy efficiency of homes within a local area

→ Installing micro-generation, like solar panels on the roofs of houses and community buildings

→ Creating local generation, e.g. a local wind farm to produce energy for consumers in that area

→ Managing local distribution, potentially via a 'smart' local grid (a network that moves energy around a small geographic area)

→ Making public or on street electric vehicle charging points more widely available

→ Taking action on climate change including requiring low carbon heat in new buildings, creating heat from waste, or public and private transport/clean air priorities such as low emission zones.

We look forward to receiving the reports from the students in the new year.

**More schools moving to renewable heating** - In early November a new air source heat pump was installed at a school in King's Hedges in Cambridge. The Council has a growing programme to replace school gas and oil boilers with greener options.

### **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority**

The Combined Authority has introduced a new 'Sustainable Growth Ambition Statement' to accompany its budget. This Statement restates the commitment in the Devolution Deal signed between the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough councils and Government, 'to double the size of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough economy in the 25 years from the date of the Deal'. It also lists the six themes which will inform the Combined Authority's investment programme:

- Health and skills
- Climate and nature
- Infrastructure
- Innovation
- Reducing inequalities
- Financial and systems

The Combined Authority Board also considered the final report of the Independent Commission on Climate, and agreed to address the proposed actions for which the Combined Authority is responsible, and consider the additional recommendations for other 'stakeholders' such as local councils, businesses, Government, and others.

The Combined Authority has recognised the need to develop a new Further Education campus in Ely to address gaps in provision. 'This is to meet sufficiency requirements for the projected growth in the 16-19 cohort, tackle 'cold-spots' in FE provision for adults and create new facilities for specialist curricula. The proposed provision will also expand access to Technical Education through expanding T-Levels and green skills courses. It will reduce travel times for students by providing local provision.' This will not happen quickly, but it is great to see this in the budget papers at last.

The Board also agreed to spend nearly £350,000 in Ely—on CCTV, the general appearance of some city centre business frontages, and signage and street furniture. This is part of the £1M awarded to each of the 'market towns' in Cambridgeshire, to fulfil the recommendations of a series of 'market town masterplans' produced by consultants

The Combined Authority has portioned out to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough the Capability Fund money received from Government for active travel. Cambridgeshire's share is £258,939, to be spent on workplace travel planning, school travel planning, active travel communications, updating of cycle maps, active travel scheme planning and design, data and evidence collecting.

And finally - Season's Greetings to everyone in Milton, Chesterton Fen, Landbeach, Waterbeach, Chittering, Horningsea and Fen Ditton and very good wishes for the year to come.

Anna Bradnam

County Councillor for Waterbeach Division, [anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) 07950 241845