

County Councillors Report – March 2019 - Anna Bradnam

County Budget Immediately after your last PC meetings, the County Council had its budget setting meeting. All political groups proposed a 2% increase in Council Tax for Adult Social Care plus a 2.99% increase in General Council Tax. My group proposed an amendment abandoning the current plan to build a new HQ at Alconbury Weald and instead would have invested the money into road maintenance, street lighting and school buildings. It would have restored the multi-systemic therapy service, reintroduced council support for universal youth services, and reduced the numbers of council committees and councillor 'special responsibility allowances'. Our amendment was defeated.

County Highways Schemes - The government has allocated £6.6M to Cambridgeshire for road repairs to be completed by the end of March 2019. The pavement on the High Street, Landbeach from opposite Abrahams Close to Cockfen Lane will be resurfaced from this funding. I have asked that the work be extended to include the narrow, steep section just to the south, which is dangerous for children on tricycles and the elderly on mobility scooters.

Connecting Cambridgeshire

In February I became aware that Connecting Cambridgeshire had undertaken a survey of service delivery. I raised the matter of poor mobile telephone signal in Waterbeach with Connecting Cambridgeshire through our MP Lucy Frazer. I received a reply from CC that they had already commissioned mobile coverage testing to see how the service compared to the modelled Ofcom data. Unfortunately Waterbeach was not included in that initial survey. They have limited funding to extend the testing but if any opportunity arises, they will try to include Waterbeach village in the testing programme.

County Planning

On 7 February County Council's Environment and Economy Committee considered the Council's response to the application from RLW for the eastern part of Waterbeach New Town, particularly relating to their holding objections and to approve the draft Heads of Terms that would be used in the planning agreement.

The key issues were Transport, Education, Flood Risk and some other issues. I **attended and sought reassurance about Transport and phasing, Residual Flood Risk and Foul water treatment.** Transport – No element of the site could come forward without the relocated railway station and associated connection to the A10 being put in place first – the site would be brought forward, on a 'monitor and manage' basis, with an initial 800 units alongside the relocated railway station. Trips to be monitored, with a view to capping the development in accordance with the phase one trip budget. "The mitigation allowing this phase is dependent upon the railway station and is complementary to the proposed U&C mitigation package for junction improvements on the A10 corridor, a cycle way along the Mere Way between Waterbeach and Cambridge and an enhanced bus service to central Cambridge." Education and Flood Risk were also considered in detail as well as a number of other issues.

You can see the full Minutes on the County website here:

https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccc_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/871/Committee/5/Default.aspx

The **Joint Development Control Committee** includes members of the City, South Cambs and County Councils and I am appointed as a County Councillor. The JDCC considers applications on the boundary between South Cambs and the City. We recently considered the Darwin Green development on the old NIAB site and reluctantly approved a Variation of Conditions requested by the developer Barrett for revised delivery of a temporary Community Room. If we had not approved their request to delay delivery of the facility from the 1st to the 300th occupation, it seemed highly likely they would not deliver any community provision until the 500th occupation.

The Council's **Audit & Accounts Committee** has been asked to review the process by which members granted a senior member of the council the tenancy of a county owned farm and recommended a considerable investment in an extension to the property (which the tenant will repay over time), without the members initially knowing that the tenant was a councillor. This seems at least ill-advised and at odds with the normal principles of transparency. We await the Committee's legal advice.

Waterbeach Action for Youth Agreement – I have been following up concerns expressed by WAY, that they should not be in breach of the Agreement with the County (through which funding was provided for the Tillage Hall) if they had insufficient take-up for Youth Activities, to deliver activities as described in the Agreement. The County officer Alan Fitz has confirmed they would not be in breach. As a member of the **Corporate Parenting Committee**, I attended the Annual Awards Ceremony for children who are looked after by the County and am proud of the skills and abilities our children have demonstrated. This complemented my attendance in January at the County's Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award Ceremony.

Adult Safeguarding - We are fortunate to have a dedicated and experienced staff at the County's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. The staff decide immediately what help is needed, from whom and by when. (If you are worried about an adult who is in immediate danger or needs medical treatment, contact the Police and/or call an ambulance on 999.) If you are worried that a vulnerable adult may be being abused or neglected you can call the Contact Centre on 0345 045 5202 8 am to 6pm on weekdays and 9-1 pm on Saturdays. Or you can email on referral.centre-adults@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Civic Hub at Alconbury Weald - I visited the exhibition at Alconbury Weald to view the design for the new County Council 'Hub' and the Council Chamber. Shire Hall currently has desk space for about 3,500 staff and members but the new centre will only have about 350 desks, with satellite offices proposed in other locations. Whilst I acknowledge the need to seek alternative, more cost effective accommodation for the Council, and that Cambridge is not centrally located in the County, I have serious reservations about the public council chamber and public meetings moving to a location which has none of the public transport links enjoyed by Cambridge. About 20% of the population of Cambridgeshire live within Cambridge City.

Choices for Better Journeys - The Greater Cambridge Partnership is seeking our views about transport in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. Take part in the survey here before the consultation closes on Sunday 31 March 2019.

<https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/choices-for-better-journeys/>

County Council review of funding support I will be joining Milton Good Companions 8 March to gather their views on their weekly lunch which is managed by volunteers, but subsidised by the County Council, in order to inform my response to this review.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) Bus Review

The Mayor's long-awaited Strategic Bus Review has finally been published (23 Jan 2019). Carried out by Systra, it considered different types of arrangement between bus companies and councils. The report recommends that the CA should develop a business case comparison of possible models, including enhanced partnership and franchising. Enhanced partnerships would involve agreements between bus companies and transport authorities on a vision for the future of public transport. A franchising scheme would see local authorities determine how services will be provided but some of the bus service providers do not welcome franchising. Consultation on this may not be finished until 2021, which is a long time while services continue to deteriorate. There is a summary here:

<http://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/news/review-highlights-opportunity-for-radical-reform-to-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-bus-network/>

Bedford-Cambridge Rail Link Consultation

East-West Rail is an arm of the Department for Transport and was set up in 1995 to consider possible routes for a rail link between Bedford and Cambridge. They have proposed five different options for the proposed Bedford to Cambridge rail route, which they have been published for public consultation. Three routes start from a new station at Bedford South and two at Bedford Midland. Two routes include a station at Cambourne. You can comment here

<https://eastwestrail.co.uk/haveyoursay> by Monday 11 March.

An alternative proposal from a group called CBRR (CamBedRailRoad) follows a more northerly route through new stations at St Neots, Cambourne and Northstowe, then on to Cambridge North. <http://www.cambedrailroad.org/> Their plans have not been espoused by the DfT consultation. Although I have some sympathy for the connectivity offered to Cambourne and Northstowe by the northern route I do not welcome a rail line through Landbeach or Milton. Fortunately for us this option would require any trains to go into Cambridge and reverse out again to make the connection with the Ipswich line, so I think it is unlikely to gain much 'traction'. It is obvious that EastWestRail want to connect to the new Cambridge South Station

Brexit planning - The Council's Audit & Accounts Committee has considered a report on the impact of Brexit. It listed sixteen potential risks, ten of which have been scored as having a potentially high or very high impact should they come to fruition. The highest risks are identified as • Workforce issues associated with recruitment and retention of staff • Ensuring EU citizen residents are fully informed, but especially those who are vulnerable and/or to whom we have a statutory responsibility • Increased community tensions • Impact on council finances should there be a negative national financial reaction • Interruption to supplies and services, including medicines and fuel, and • Impact on travel and road infrastructure caused by disruption to and from ports.