

October Report from Councillor John Reynolds

Council publishes all spending over £500

The County Council has shown its commitment to being open about its finances by publishing details of all spending over £500. Spending of £500 and over for July and August this year was published last month. Monthly updates of spending will follow. The Council is committed to being as transparent and accountable as possible. The information can be found by following the links on the Council's homepage at <http://tiny.cc/0pm56>.

Independent Busway public review

An independent public review into the Busway project will be carried out following a catalogue of delays and broken promises by contractors BAM Nuttall – the latest potentially putting safety at risk. The Council's Cabinet has said enough is enough ordering the independent review into the operation of the standard civil engineering contract used for the project. BAM Nuttall has been penalised almost £14,000 a day for late delivery of the project since February 2009 – a total in excess of £8 million so far.

Government Funding For Low Carbon Building On The Busway

Cambridgeshire has banked £430,000 of Government funding for a new exhibition space and passenger building at the Busway Park & Ride site in Longstanton.

The low carbon building will have a ground source heat pump for environmentally friendly heating and hot water, top specification insulation made of natural materials on the roof and walls, and there are plans for solar panels to generate electricity.

The new building will have a learning and exhibition centre to showcase low carbon living and environmentally friendly initiatives to encourage local residents to go green in their own homes. It will also include toilets for bus users and office space for park and ride staff.

Work on site will begin next year and contractors SEH French - the building arm of Jackson - believe construction will take around 6 months to complete.

Once complete the centre will help set a benchmark for low carbon properties on the proposed new town of Northstowe.

Funding for the building has been awarded to Cambridgeshire County Council following a bid to Government in partnership with Cambridgeshire Horizons and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Local Cabinet Member, John Reynolds, said: "The building will be an asset for passengers on The Busway, local communities who can learn more about low carbon construction and renewable energy and will set a benchmark for what can be achieved in Northstowe.

The County Council and partners have always fought hard for the funding Cambridgeshire deserves and this will help the development of one of Cambridgeshire's newest communities.

This new exhibition space will provide us with a unique opportunity to showcase low carbon living to the future residents of Northstowe, before the town is built. We are keen to encourage a more environmentally friendly way of living within the new town, to compliment a range of low carbon technologies and sustainable transport options that will be available to local residents."

Cambridgeshire Libraries

Cambridgeshire libraries are among the first in the country to work with other authorities to protect services and make savings. Plans are progressing to join with four other councils in the East to save up to £500,000 by sharing services. This is part of the Library Service Review. In-

depth investigations into a range of options from forming a trust to using more volunteers are also to be carried out.

The results will be reported back in January with final proposals about the future shape of library services. The County Council needs to make a £2.2 million reduction (almost 30%) in its Library Service budget over the next three years. Public engagement activity launched this summer has put communities at the heart of transforming library services. Some 4,000 people have responded, and a full report of the public consultation will be published in November with the findings used and incorporated into options to be considered in January.

Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS

The White Paper presents opportunities and big challenges to the Council together with added responsibilities in delivery services to the public. The paper proposes to:-

- Give groups of GPs responsibility for commissioning NHS services through the creation of 500 GP consortia across England.
- Allow patients to register with whichever GP practice they choose, regardless of where they live.
- Enable patients to choose which hospital and consultant-led team they want to be treated by.
- Force all NHS trusts to become self-governing foundation trusts with “the aim to create the largest social enterprise sector in the world”.
- Establish a new independent NHS Commissioning Board to oversee GP commissioning.
- Phase out 150 primary care trusts and 10 strategic health authorities.
- Reduce NHS management costs by more than 45% over the next 4 years.
- Cut numbers of NHS quangos and streamline the Department of Health.
- Give councils responsibility to support integration across health and social care.
- Ringfence the public health budget.
- Oblige doctors to keep data on their own performance and publish detailed evidence of hospital mortality rates.
- Establish a new consumer champion, HealthWatch England, to strengthen the voice of patients and the public under the aegis of the Care Quality Commission, but led by local authorities.
- The White Paper also states that the Government will set out a “vision for adult social care” by the end of this year, well in advance of the report from the commission on social care funding.

We do not want to be guilty of merely shifting deckchairs on the Titanic. The delivery of health care often appears to be in a state of flux. It is important that GPs are made aware of the part that Social Care plays in providing services to the vulnerable and those in need across the county, and the different needs and delivery methods across the county. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) will be an even more important plank in the delivery of both Health and Social care.

With the transfer of the responsibility of Public Health to the County Council, this will present significant challenges. The Government advise that funding will be ringfenced. There will be the need to work closely with core partners, particularly the District. We currently have a joint NHS/CC director of Public Health; this will help give us a constructive start. Stronger monitoring of consumer champion involvement is called for. LINK already does some of this work but closer working with Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the local authority will be expected.

MULTI-MILLION POUND ACCESS ROAD TO HOSPITAL OPENS SOON

A new £25 million road which will link major new developments and the internationally recognised Addenbrooke's Hospital directly to Trumpington / M11, is due to open on Wednesday, October 27.

The road will provide a vital link to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) which is home to

Addenbrooke's and the Rosie hospitals as well as research and teaching partners including the MRC, CRUK and the University of Cambridge.

It will also help with the expansion of CBC into an international centre for patient care, biomedical research and healthcare education and will unlock land for major housing developments in the area around Clay Farm and Glebe Farm.

Consultation on Local Sustainable Community Strategy:

Everyone is being encouraged to express their views on the draft three year Sustainable Community Strategy that is now available on line at;
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NR6JLY8>

In addition, there is a wiki for the draft vision, where people can comment upon and make changes to the draft <http://sustainable-community-strategy.wikispaces.com/>

The survey and the wiki are publicised at www.scambs.gov.uk/lsp and will also shortly be available at www.cambridge.gov.uk/cambridgelsp

Both the survey and the wiki will remain open until 31 December 2010.

Update on Strategic Transport Issues - Cambridge Advisory Freight Map

Traffic density on Cambridgeshire's rural trunk 'A' roads is 90% higher than the national average, and 38% above average on other rural 'A' roads. Additionally, over the last ten years there has been significant growth in the number of heavy commercial vehicles with five or more axles.

There was a need to identify main Heavy Commercial Routes (HCV) routes and abnormal loads routes through the County and preferred access routes movements. The Cambridgeshire Advisory Freight Map (CAFM) was highlighted as necessary in the Local Transport Plan. Following widespread consultation to seek the views of District Authorities, adjoining Highway Authorities, the haulage industry, Parish Councils and the wider public, the CAFM received Cabinet approval in April 2010.

Detailed design work is currently being undertaken on the CAFM with a view to formally launch the map early in the New Year. The CAFM will be distributed to Parishes, significant local hauliers and through industry bodies such as the Road Haulage Association (RHA) and Freight Transport Association (FTA). The CAFM will also contain information on a Code of Conduct for considerate hauliers throughout the County.

Update on Sat Nav Issues

Trading Standards have developed an application for Sat Nav devices to alert Hauliers to the presence of existing weight limits in the County. It is planned to launch this initiative to coincide with the publication of the CAFM to maximise positive publicity.

Update on Environmental Weight Limit Policy Review

The review is focusing on an escalation process with the emphasis on community involvement and understanding of the issues. Where possible, solutions will be sought on a voluntary basis, applying mitigation measures to affected routes, and seeking routing agreements with hauliers. This could be reinforced by advisory signage where applicable.

Work has been commissioned to formulate an assessment framework compare the environmental benefits of any weight limit with the economic disbenefits to hauliers. Work is progressing well on a draft assessment framework which seeks to apply objective criteria covering the physical environment such as the width of highways and footways, speed and volume of HCV traffic and the economic cost of re-routing arrangements proposed to mitigate the effects on local communities. Where it is felt necessary to impose a formal weight restriction communities must understand the resource and financial implications of both its implementation and the issues associated with enforcement.

Update on Minerals and Waste Planning

The Minerals and Waste plan has been submitted to the government in July. A pre-hearing meeting with the Inspector was held on 5 October 2010 with the full hearing scheduled to take place between 30 November and 17 December. The Minerals and Waste team have been working closely with local hauliers as part of the planning process to secure routing agreements with significant local hauliers to mitigate the effect of their operations on local communities.

The Team has also been successful in securing some financial contributions from minerals and waste developers as part of planning negotiations to be used to erect new additional advisory HCV signage on key routes and progress has been made on designing a suitable scheme, to be implemented this financial year.

Bam Nuttall's Delays Close Door On St Ives Section Opening First

Both sections of the Busway are now certain to open at the same time as BAM Nuttall have backtracked on their previous promises to residents to fix the six defects holding up the opening of the northern section.

In a Cabinet report published today updating residents and councillors, Council officers have said the contractor has still made "no meaningful progress" on fixing the defects contrary to commitments given by BAM Nuttall's Chief Executive in April.

If the six defects on the St Ives to Cambridge section had been fixed as pledged, an agreement could have been reached so the St Ives to Cambridge section could have opened without having to wait for the southern section to be completed.

As BAM Nuttall schedule the southern section for completion at the turn of the year, there is now insufficient time for the contractor to rectify the six defects in advance of the southern link being complete.

The Council has deducted over £8 million from BAM Nuttall for late delivery so far which Busway bosses have estimated is more than double what it could have cost BAM Nuttall to fix the defects months ago.

This is very disappointing for our residents but we are not surprised. BAM Nuttall made a commitment to us in April to deal with these issues but it has becoming increasingly clear that they have no intention of dealing with the problems and time has now run out. If they had made good on their commitment to fix the six defects, people could have been enjoying the route between St Ives and Cambridge some time ago. This would have been beneficial for BAM Nuttall as the damages they are being deducted would have reduced dramatically. What's even more frustrating is we know most of the track runs extremely well.

But the Council promised residents an asset and not a liability and that's exactly what we will deliver. If this means fixing the problems once BAM Nuttall complete the contract, so be it. We will get the job done right so the route is a long term asset and claim the cost back from BAM Nuttall for correcting the defects as it states in the contract.

BAM Nuttall's latest programme shows the contractor now expects to complete construction of the route on 17 December, rather than mid-January as they stated less than one month ago.

Council engineers have reviewed BAM Nuttall's construction programme and Council bosses have said they would be "very surprised" if the contractors manage to complete the job to the Council's satisfaction this year.

BAM Nuttall was due to complete both sections of the Busway in February 2009 and the Council has deducted damages almost £14,000 each day.

John Reynolds

October 2010