

BUDGET REPORT

The Council has published its Integrated Plan proposals. The proposals outline how we are going to deal with the most difficult and challenging service and financial planning position in the Council's history. The council will have a gross spending next year of £460 million plus the schools grant of £362 million. We will be spending around £195 million on adult care, and £122 million on children's services. We will also be investing some £108.9 million on capital projects such as new or expanding school. Even with this expenditure we will still need to make substantial saving. **This involves radical change.**

The Council's priorities - which are the priorities of residents - will change. How we work to deliver them will change, and in many cases, the services themselves will change. Our Integrated Plan 2011/12 contains a set of new priorities, as well as a statement of how we will provide them. These priorities will help us deliver our ultimate vision for the county - Making Cambridgeshire a great place to call home.

The new priorities are:

Supporting and protecting people when they need it most

The Council will provide a safety net for vulnerable people until they can take back control of their own lives. We will work to keep children and families safe at home, whilst providing the right care at the right time for those children and young people for whom Local Authority care is the right decision. We'll help older people and those suffering ill health or disability to get the care they want and need - helping people look after themselves in their own homes for longer, without the need for long-term care. Our support will be targeted to those most in need and where we do provide support, it will be to help people towards independence.

Helping people to live independent and healthy lives in their communities.

We want people to be in control of their own lives, as individuals and as part of their community. We'll promote choice through our services to help people choose the right options for them. We want people to step up and be more active in their local community so we'll work to remove the barriers that stop people getting involved. We also want to tackle the barriers which prevent everyone from enjoying the best that Cambridgeshire has to offer. We have a strong belief in fairness and reducing inequality. Therefore, we'll target our services at those people who need extra help to make the most of living in our communities.

Developing our local economy for the benefit of all.

We will help people to access the support they need to get the jobs being created in Cambridgeshire - supporting children and young people to stay in learning and providing a range of options for adults. Across the county, we'll ensure that people can travel safely and are able to access economic opportunities. We'll continue to provide the services that people use every day - like street lighting, dealing with waste and safely maintaining our roads - as much as we can within financial constraints. We'll provide these in the best possible way to improve the quality of life of the people who live here now and in the future.

How we work will also change. We've set out four principles which will guide and govern what we do.

- Be a genuinely local council
- Making sure the right services are provided, in the right way
- Investing in prevention
- Working together

Savings proposals

The budget decisions have and are being made in conjunction with Community Impact Assessments, which consider the impact of our services on communities, with particular reference to ensuring equality and cohesion. These will continue as changes are made to services. Pressures of demand for services, along with inflation and the steep reduction in our grant settlement, means the Council

has to make savings of £55 million in the coming financial year. We cannot achieve this without cuts to services, which of course carry an inevitable impact in terms of the numbers of employees which the Council needs to provide them. Some of the headline reductions are below.

Children's Services

In Children's services over the next four years, we will remove universal and discretionary services, saving £1 million from youth services, £761,000 from home to school transport and £600,000 from children's centres. We will end direct support to some children and young people, saving £1 million from disability services, £527,000 from specialist teaching, £315,000 from budgets for educating looked after children and £301,000 from the Cambridgeshire Racial Equality and Diversity service. Other services where we will make savings include the teenage pregnancy service, Cambridgeshire Music and support for newly-qualified teachers. By doing things differently we will save £950,000 from children's social care, £240,000 from the early years service, and £3 million from mainstream and special educational needs school transport.

Communities and Adults

In Libraries, Learning and Culture next year, we will save £282,000 through operational efficiencies, income generation and new ways of working next year alone, £108,000 from redesigning the mobile library service, and £100,000 from introducing more self service and using volunteers in libraries.

Working in partnership with other councils to provide support services and creating a Trust to run libraries will save a further £294,000. In social care, promoting prevention and localism will save £2.9 million, adopting reablement approach a further £4.75 million, and decreasing the cost of high cost and complex placements will save £1.3 million.

Environment Services

In Environment Services, we will make savings totalling £6.5 million over year one. Re-designing services will save money and focus on the new corporate priorities. £641k will be saved by a proposed re-design of Trading Standards and there will be savings from a proposed restructuring of Waste Management and Highways and Access. Senior Management costs will be reduced.

We will be making savings on service provision, including £2.7 million (over four years) on public transport services, although we will make a small additional investment in our community transport budget. Some highway services, such as grass cutting and gully emptying, will be reduced. Although there will be a revenue reduction of £1.4 million in highways maintenance, we are now investing additional capital of £3.8 million in this area. This was a key issue coming through the public consultation results. It is proposed that Environment and Climate Change spending will be reduced by £472,000.

Corporate Directorates

In Corporate Directorates, over a four-year period, reducing properties and maximizing office space in retained buildings will save over £1 million. Reducing the contact centre opening hours and moving to more services being accessed and delivered online - £426,000, reducing IT functions and delivering services in different ways will save £989,000 and reducing communications and marketing activity will save £550,000.

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<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/finance/spending/ip2011/>

CONSESSIONARY FARES

As you know responsibility for this transfers to the County Council on the 1st April and this is another pressure on us. We're told that last year the District/City Councils jointly spent some £5.7m in delivering the scheme across the county. The Coalition Government have given us £3.995m by way of grant. The Department for Transport guidance is that the reimbursement rate for bus operators in the order of 50% as opposed to the current 66%. We are still in negotiations with the bus operators on the reimbursement rates.

ZERO COUNCIL TAX INCREASE AND A RADICAL NEW APPROACH TO SERVICES IN COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET

There will be no increase in the County Council's element of Council Tax in the next financial year, and probably no increase for a further four years, proposals released today reveal.

The County Council has unveiled its Integrated Plan covering the next five years, which aims to save £50.4 million in 2011/12 and £160.6 million over the life of the plan.

The proposals, answer to the most difficult financial situation in its history, as the Council deals with the increasing pressures of demand, an increasing and ageing population and inflation coupled with a 14 per cent reduction in the core funding received from Government. They are defined by a new set of Council priorities, and informed by the results of a consultation process which put residents in the place of County Councillors and replicated the tough decisions in this year's budget.

BUSWAY CONTRACTOR CHASED FOR COMPLETION PAPERWORK

With only minor work left to be finished on the Busway, the County Council is demanding the contractor hands over the paperwork to confirm their work is finished and guaranteed. Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive at the Council, has today written to BAM Nuttall to ask when the Council will receive the outstanding documents and information it needs. These are the final pieces of information that are needed for the Busway to be certified as complete. Late last year BAM Nuttall set yet another deadline for when the relevant documents and work would be completed by December 17. Yet again the deadline was missed and the date has been slipping ever since. The information could and should have been provided by now.

The outstanding information includes:

1. Proof that Shelford Road Bridge has a long working life as required by the contract.
2. A final report to confirm the stability of earthworks where the Busway goes along old railway cuttings.
3. Evidence that work on the Trumpington Retaining Wall meets the required standards and the National Grid have approved this too.
4. Acceptance from Network Rail of how the Hills Road Bridge will be maintained
5. A final guarantee through completed documents that the work has been carried out to the standards required in the contract.

This information is vital to allow the Council to assume responsibility for the track in the same way as a prospective homeowner needs to get the NHBC guarantees or someone buying a car needs the registration documents before they can complete the sale

In the letter, Mark Lloyd says: "I am advised that you still have some minor work to do to complete Addenbrooke's bridge, which has now slipped to next week, and other minor snags and safety audit issues to finish, but other than these you have no further major site work planned. I am therefore concerned to hear that the Project Manager is still not in a position to certify completion as there are key areas of documentation which the Project Manager requires that have still not been provided by BNL or are not in the correct format. I understand that the Project Manager has been requesting these documents for some time.

"Whilst I understand that there are other matters outstanding, those listed above are the ones which are most critical and therefore the key to securing completion of the Busway. These issues are entirely in BNL's hands and consequently so too is the point at which the Busway can open for use. All of these issues could have been dealt with before now and should not have been left to this late stage. We all want to achieve completion at the earliest opportunity so I must ask that by return, you set a clear programme for when BNL will address these issues."

Once the contract is certified 'Complete' BAM Nuttall have 28 days to fix all notified defects on the route. If, as expected, the contractor does not complete the work within the time permitted the Council will bring in a new contractor to fix the defects charging the cost to BAM Nuttall.

For the latest information on the Busway, log on to:
<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/transport/thebusway/Latest+information.htm>.

COUNTY COUNCIL'S ADOPTION SERVICE 'GOOD WITH OUTSTANDING FEATURES'

Cambridgeshire County Council's Adoption Service is well managed at all levels with particular strengths in supporting adopters and the provision of excellent access to psychological services, according to inspectors. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education - said the overall quality of the agency was good and children are placed in safe families who meet their needs. They said the service had a 'committed and thorough' medical advisor.

Staff within the organisation were viewed as being 'knowledgeable, skilled and committed and appropriately supported to enable them to provide a good service to children and their families'. They found a thorough and well-established matching process for children in which comprehensive sharing of information was used to assist in the matching of children with adoptive families. Birth families actively contribute to the matching and planning process, inspectors added.

Support to adoptive families was noted as being a particularly strong feature of the agency and adopters were well prepared for the task of parenting an adopted child during the preparation and assessment process. Adoptive families found the adoption and adoption support teams a valuable source of support, inspectors found.

Areas for development included the need for improvements in some procedural elements of the adoption process and a more consistent approach to ensure Life Story Books are provided in a timely manner for children.

Local Cllr John Reynolds, said: "This is an excellent report and a tribute to the hard work and dedication of everyone who works in the adoption team. It is clearly going from strength to strength and we now have the endorsement of OfSTED to prove this. Well done to everyone concerned."

Anyone interested in learning more about adoption should contact the adoption team on 0800 052 0078 or at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/childrenyoungpeople/socialcare/adoption The team is particularly interested in hearing from people from black, minority and ethnic groups as well as those who could consider adopting sibling groups or children with complex needs.

WINTER MAINTANCE

Clearly the winter isn't over yet but may return. Recent deliveries of salt have helped increase our stockpile - we currently have around 4250 tonnes in stock and we've already started refilling Parish Council bins.

POST SIXTEEN SCHOOL TRANSPORT SAVED FROM THE CUTS

Good news that the County can now continue to support Post 16 transport following the review of expenditure. This funding will help support those in the rural areas and support our priority of reducing those children Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEETs).

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The services in Cambridgeshire are mainly provided on a commercial basis. However the Council does have a discretionary role in subsidising services that operators will not provide on a commercial basis. We also provide some funding for community transport schemes. We will increase this support by £220k over the next two years. The proposed phasing out of subsidised bus services is likely to have a significant impact on rural communities and potentially affect people travelling on Sundays and evenings. It will be important for us to closely monitor the impacts of phased reductions in tendered services to minimise impacts on our communities. Consultation will be carried out prior to any removal of services and community impact assessments undertaken.

We are in discussions with bus operators to find out to what extent operators might run currently subsidised services without a subsidy. In addition to the extra funding we are putting into community transport there is potential for other local councils to support public or community transport services and for us to work closely with districts and other partners to address transport needs of local communities. Initially the service reduction will focus primarily on services that are highly subsidised and/or underused, or where alternatives are available. Services are likely to be reduced rather than stopped altogether where appropriate.

NEW VISION REVEALED FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE LIBRARIES

Communities will be at the heart of running and managing libraries according to draft proposals drawn up to help protect Cambridgeshire services in the face of tough financial savings. Government has given Cambridgeshire 14 per cent less main funding than last year leaving Libraries having to find £3.2 million in savings over the next five years.

Rather than simply closing facilities Cambridgeshire County plans could see the savings being made while protecting library services as much as possible. The proposals are based on the feedback given by thousands of Cambridgeshire residents. They emphasise that library closures will only be considered as a last resort but these can be avoided if communities come forward and help support their local services. The plans include the setting up of a Cambridgeshire Trust to look after the running of the libraries, but still the responsibility of the County Council. This would unlock funding and savings the Council currently does not have access to.

Libraries will also be reorganised into groups with a main library supporting the others in its area and sharing a reduced level of staff. This will also see the roll-out of more self-service technology and more community engagement and volunteers in libraries, with Community Management Boards like the one established for Wisbech Library. This idea is also backed by the public in the recent consultation. Some 69 per cent of respondents in the public consultation said they support Alternative Service Delivery model as an alternative to closing libraries. This would maximise the use of self-service facilities in libraries, while reducing staff and increasing volunteers.

Where it is already used in Cambridgeshire, self-service accounts for more than 85 per cent of normal library transactions. Already libraries have hundreds of volunteers as well as friends groups. The new model would extend this and see communities helping to manage the library as well as support initiatives such as IT buddying or children and older people's activities. Nearly half (48 per cent) of the 5,600 survey respondents said they would volunteer to help libraries, and 1800 people have already registered their interest in volunteering. Cambridgeshire will also join up with four other local authorities to provide backroom library services to drive down costs.

In order to meet the additional savings required, communities with least need will be approached to see if they could run the service themselves, with the support of the Council and the new Trust. This would be similar to the library access points which are already run by volunteers in the county. Libraries could also look to merge or share facilities with other services to reduce costs or move to other, more cost effective, buildings in the same area.

Some 77 per cent of survey respondents said they wanted to see libraries used as community hubs where various agencies and community groups could use the buildings. The proposals ask for communities to take the lead in helping to come forward and support their library to meet the savings targets.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds, said: "We are facing some of the toughest financial choices ever. But Cambridgeshire County Council is clear that libraries are vital community hubs that we need to support as much as we can and work together to keep them open. That is why we have come up with proposals that are based on what residents have said to us, that keep services but still make the savings needed.

"There is much we all can do together to reduce costs and transform the library service but communities must be encouraged to continue to play their part if they want services to remain. Due to the tremendous challenge we are facing we could have made the decision to close libraries but that would not be the right thing to do. We have put forward a plan that will change the delivery of services and put communities at the heart of that transformation. As part of the localism agenda I urge residents to take this opportunity with both hands and help us achieve the savings needed."

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A14 UPDATE

You will be aware that the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton scheme was withdrawn in late 2010. Instead the Department of Transport is planning to undertake a study to identify cost effective, and practical, proposals which bring benefits and relieve congestion on the sections of the A14 covered by the former scheme. The study is to report in mid-2012, allowing the findings to play into the next Spending Review and other relevant decision-making processes.

The plan is to build on the body of existing evidence and analysis and to use this as a basis for the development of a Business Case for any preferred option which would support a definitive investment decision within the context of the next Spending Review. Priority problems would be identified and solutions for these proposed.

Roads-based solutions would be examined in the Huntingdon/Cambridge area, and this approach would also look at the potential for rail, other public transport and demand management approaches to help alleviate problems on the A14, particularly in the vicinity of the previous scheme. The study will involve local stakeholders.

REDUCING TOP MANAGEMENT COSTS.

The County Council is continuing to reduce the number of senior managers. Over the past 6 years the numbers have been reduced to 7 and this number is likely to reduce to 5 in the coming year.

OPPORTUNITY FOR THOUSANDS OF LOCAL PEOPLE TO SHAPE THEIR COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust (CCS) provides a wide range of community-based health and social care services across Cambridgeshire including adult social care services on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council. From 5 January to 30 March 2011, the Trust is undertaking a public consultation on becoming an NHS Foundation Trust, which will give thousands of staff and local people the opportunity to become Members of the Trust and really influence how local services are developed. The Trust genuinely wants to hear what people think about the proposals outlined in its consultation document, click on the link below to read a summary:

<http://bit.ly/eESf1o>.

To become a Member on line, click on the following link:

<http://bit.ly/g9tZJu>

For further information, contact Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust's communications team on 0800 013 2511 or 01480 308216 or email FT@ccs.nhs.uk

SURVEY GIVES FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A new survey of parents has shown why the uptake of school dinners in Cambridgeshire has rise from 31.5 per cent to 40 per cent in the last three years. This equates to an extra 600,000 meals a year. Parents of primary pupils who choose a school lunch told researchers:

- * They valued the importance of a hot, nutritionally balanced meal at lunchtime
- * Children enjoyed the meals and are given the opportunity to try new and different food
- * School meals offer convenience for families with busy lifestyles
- * Eating a school lunch teaches children important social skills
- * A school lunch offers good value for money.

The survey was carried out by Cambridgeshire Catering Services (CCS) - which is part of Cambridgeshire County Council. Uptake of school meals in Cambridgeshire has risen. The price of a school meal has remained at £2.00 for the last two years. CCS has also introduced a pre-ordering system in some schools to ensure the most popular meals do not run out - and is looking to extend this in 2011.

CCS already provides meals to over 200 schools across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Essex and Rutland, and has recently started providing meals to about 70 schools in Northamptonshire. A total of 17,000 children in Cambridgeshire now have a school meal every day.

PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

My report this month is about progress with the Annual Public Health Report which is one of the roles of the Director of Public Health (DPH). This is an independent report, which describes key statistics relating to the health of the local population and makes recommendations for action to improve/maintain population health. The Annual Public Health Report is distributed widely and made publically available on the NHS Cambridgeshire website.

The draft Health and Social Care Bill proposes an ongoing duty for the DPH in the local authority to produce an annual report on the health of the local population. The report includes information from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) as there is considerable cross over between the two documents.

The Annual Public Health Report 2010 presents a brief summary of some key health statistics for Cambridgeshire, key points and recommendations from the JSNA work carried out in 2010. The report reviews progress against the recommendations of the APHR 2009, and make a small number of new recommendations.

The full report is due to be published in March; previous reports are available from the Director of Public Health.

CHILDCARE AND EARLY YEARS NEEDS BEING MET IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

A survey of over 1500 parents and carers in Cambridgeshire has revealed that 94 per cent of their childcare and early years needs are being met. However, the survey also revealed that a quarter of parents find childcare difficult to afford, and that there were significant pressures on childcare. The final Childcare Sufficiency report will be published on 1 April 2011, along with detailed action plans and locality profiles giving more detail on the local childcare picture in residents' neighbourhoods.

Local Cllr John Reynolds, said: "The survey's aim is to identify where and why parents are struggling to find the right sort of childcare or early years education for their children. Once identified, we can put plans in place to meet these needs. It's good to see that we are meeting the needs of such a high proportion of our residents."

"Where families simply need more information about options, the Council's Childcare Information Service (CIS) is a vital resource. The CIS, currently provided by Opportunity Links, is the first port of call for parents seeking childcare or early year's places. The service includes enhanced support for parents who have particular needs or difficulties in finding suitable childcare".

Log onto <http://www.opportunity-links.org.uk/> or call 0845 04 54 014 (localcall rate).

To view the results of the research and to provide feedback, as well as find out more on the sufficiency process, see:

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/education/parents/childcare/sufficiency.htm>

GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE A DIFFERENT SORT OF CARD

Why not give a different kind of card to the one you love. The C-card isn't like any other kind of card. It's much more exclusive - available only to young people aged 19 and under. Once you have a C-card you have access to a confidential service, providing information and advice around relationships, sexual health and access to free condoms.

The C-card scheme is run by Cambridgeshire County Council and is offered from a wide range of places that are accessible for young people, including Young People March to Alconbury Doctor's Surgery and Manor Leisure Centre to the Connections Bus Project, which stops at 11 places across the county. Many of the C-card registration points also offer other services to young people, such as screening, pregnancy testing, emergency contraception and testing for sexually transmitted diseases.

To find out more about the C-card and a searchable database of registration points, visit: www.youthoria.org/c-card. Youthoria is the website for young people in Cambridgeshire providing information and advice on a wide range of teenage topics.

NEW POLICE WEBSITE

The new Police website **www.police.uk** has provided you with maps that show crime and anti-social behaviour at a street by street level right in your neighbourhood. This means you can see, even from your mobile, exactly what crime is happening and where - right down to the level of your street corner. If you have concerns about the crime you see or how issues are dealt with, you can raise them with the police. The interactive maps open the door on crime and police information. You can view crimes including burglary, violence and anti-social behaviour in a particular area by using a simple postcode search. There will also be details about your neighbourhood policing team and information about regular beat meetings.

The government is introducing a series of measures as part of a plan to fight crime:

Slashing bureaucracy - steps already taken to save up to 800,000 hours of police time by scrapping the stop form and limiting stop and search reporting.

Removing all targets and setting the police just one goal: to cut crime.

Introducing directly-elected Police and Crime Commissioners to ensure that police forces respond to the needs of local communities.

Providing transparent information so local communities really know about crime in their area.

These crime maps which will reconnect the police and communities through the power of information are just the start. **It's clear that this sort of transparent information is very popular as www.police.uk has already received millions of hits.**

We want to build on this by working with the police and with you to explore how we can go further and faster and drive forward even greater transparency across crime, policing and justice.

John Reynolds Feb 2011