

April Report from County Councillor John Reynolds
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CAMBRIDGESHIRE WINS £4.5 MILLION EXTRA CASH BOOST

Campaigning Cambridgeshire councils have secured an extra £4.5 million in Government funding after persuading Ministers the County had been given a raw deal.,Last year the Government told Councils that they would not be getting Local Public Sector Agreement reward money that they had earned for meeting tough targets.

This meant Cambridgeshire was left £4.5 million short and had to stop many vital community based projects. However, Cambridgeshire County Council lobbied Government on behalf of the Cambridgeshire Together partnership that this treatment was unfair as authorities had met what was asked of them and had already allocated the money.

Ministers have listened to the Council's arguments and have confirmed the County will be getting an extra £4,503,334. The money had been previously shared out under the Cambridgeshire Together partnership and helped initiatives across the county, improving people's opportunities and quality of life. Partners will now have to meet to discuss how this extra funding will be used.

Local Cambridgeshire County Councillor John Reynolds, said: "This is very good news. One of our duties as councillors is to stand up for our communities and fight for what is fair and what was promised us. We understand in this economic climate why the Government has made savings. But councils and partners worked hard to meet the tough targets set for them and this money was providing real community benefits. That is why we argued hard for the Government to look at this again and we are very pleased that the Minister had heeded what we have said. We will now look very carefully at where this money can be spent with our partners.

PUBLIC HEALTH CHANGES

Cambridgeshire County Council and NHS Cambridgeshire are jointly to establish a shared vision for the purpose, function and ways of working for the early implementer Health and Wellbeing Board in the county. Pre-meetings are being held with a range of stakeholders, including all District Councils, the Children's Trust, the county-wide GP commissioning Senate, LINKs, and voluntary sector representatives, to make sure that relevant background information is shared, and to enable the themes and issues raised by different stakeholders to be identified and brought together. The output from the stakeholder event will be used to shape the development of the Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Board. We are supported in this work by 'Local Partnerships' (part of the LGG), and will be actively sharing learning with other areas.

Public sector organisations in Cambridgeshire will be making a joint response to the Public Health White Paper 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People' and its associated consultations on public health outcomes and on funding and commissioning routes for public health. Preparation of the draft response has enabled the viewpoints of different organisations to be brought together and common themes identified. The increased public health role for upper tier local authorities is welcomed, but a common theme of the responses was concern about how to ensure the role and engagement of second tier local authorities. The County Council has raised concerns as to whether a sufficient proportion of the public health ring-fenced budget will be devolved from Public Health England to local authorities, to enable the local authority public health role to be fully developed.

COUNTY TAKES UP BUS PASS RESPONSIBILITY

From 1 April, Cambridgeshire County Council become responsible for managing and administering the national concessionary bus pass scheme in the county. Those who already have a bus pass don't need to apply for a new one as their current pass will remain valid under the new arrangements. Those who are eligible for a bus pass but don't currently have one should call 0345 045 1367 to apply for their pass.

The concessionary bus pass entitles holders to travel free of charge on off-peak local bus services anywhere in England. The statutory requirements under the bus pass scheme mean free travel is allowed during the following times:

- Monday to Friday after 9:30am
- Saturday and Sunday at anytime
- Bank holidays at anytime

In Cambridgeshire, free travel where the only bus serving a village departs prior to 9:30am will be allowed and people who are blind or partially sighted will still be able to use their bus passes before 9.30am. Bus passes may also be used on certain Dial-A-Ride services to give a 50 per cent reduction of the fare. These will be funded by the County Council. Cambridge City Council will provide some funding to increase the concession for specific groups in Cambridge.

Local Cambridgeshire County Councillor John Reynolds, said: "As the County Council takes over responsibility from the Districts, it is important we maintain a high standard and provide a good service to those who are entitled to free travel. Despite budgets being tight with the Government giving us more than £1 million less money to run the scheme, we have been working hard with operators to keep the extra discretionary concessions that are not included in the national scheme. This means for people who live in the more rural communities or use community transport they can use their passes either before 9.30am in some cases or to reduce the fare price on dial a rides."

More information can be gained from calling 0345 045 1367, charged at the normal landline rate or local rate although charges from mobiles will vary and could be more. Alternatively contact our website at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/buspass

THE LOCALISM BILL and LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

The Localism Bill which is currently being considered by the CLG Select Committee includes a **new 'duty to co-operate'** in relation to the preparation of Local Development Frameworks (clause 90 of the Bill). This new duty is intended to be wide ranging but has a particular focus on the provision of strategic infrastructure. The intention is that the principles outlined in the 'Open Source Planning' document will be incorporated into the Localism Bill and associated regulations etc.

However there is no explicit reference to the proposal for upper-tier authorities, including County Councils, which are responsible for infrastructure such as waste, roads etc to compile infrastructure plans (although this had been recommended in page 3 of Open Source Planning). Strengthening the arrangements around the duty to co-operate and ensuring a clear purpose around which LPA's should co-operate would be a helpful approach.

The County Council's suggestion is that the duty to co-operate as proposed should be amended to include a specific requirement for more co-operation around strategic infrastructure assessment and that upper tier authorities can play a key role working with local authorities and LEP's in this regard, similar to that suggested in the Planning Officers Society's written evidence to the Public Bill's Committee.

PLACEMENTS STRATEGY for LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Children and Young People's Services is addressing the increase in the number of children in care in the county of more than 25% since 2007 through the creation of a Placements Strategy for Looked After Children. The Placements Strategy aims to respond to increasing need and create a financially sustainable model which delivers a planned £8.3m of savings, as part of the overall Children's Services savings of more than £40m from 2011 to 2015.

These savings are planned over the next 4 financial years:

2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Total
£-1,630, 000	£-2,000,000	£-2,500,000	£-2,261,000	-£8,391,000

These savings will be delivered primarily by:

Reducing the number of children coming into care through a combination of successful and well-targeted preventative services; high quality, family-centred social work and other support at the edge of care; and good care planning that avoids drift and supports children and young people to return home where this is in their interests.

Altering the mix of placements so that a greater proportion of children and young people are supported by in-house carers rather than private providers and fewer receive high-cost residential or residential school placements.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCE REVIEW.

The current dependency of councils on central grant allocations makes planning difficult, weakens accountability, and stifles local innovation. In the future, Government is keen to move to a radically different system of funding and support for councils that is built on strong incentives, is driven by local decision-making and breaks this dependency. This would include looking at business rates staying local.

The review of local government resources will consider how we can recast the distribution of business rates and Formula Grant to deliver a more effective income stream for councils. The focus will be to free up as many local authorities as possible from dependency on central government funding, as well as develop better incentives for local authorities to promote economic growth in their areas and to benefit financially from that growth. The first phase of the Review will deliver proposals for reform by July 2011.

The review will include consideration of changes to the business rates system and will take account of the responses made to the questions in Local growth: Realising every place's potential. It will also conduct extensive engagement with interested parties, including businesses of all sizes, to ensure that all views and perspectives are taken into account. In developing the proposals, the Government is clear that businesses should not be subject to locally imposed increases in the burden of taxation that they do not support.

Following the announcement at the Spending Review and through introduction of the Welfare Reform Bill that Government will localise Council Tax Benefit, the Review will also consider the design of the new scheme (to be launched in 2013-14) and what flexibilities local authorities should have to help keep overall council tax levels down.

The first phase of Review will conclude by July 2011, followed by the necessary steps to implement the concluded reforms. The second phase of the Local Government Resource Review will commence in April 2011 and will focus on community budgets. It will be taken forward in parallel with the continued roll out of these Budgets.

SCHOOL FUNDING IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

In 2010 -11, Cambridgeshire received Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) of £4,093 per pupil, resulting in the county being ranked 132nd out of 151 local authorities. For the financial year 2011-12, Cambridgeshire will receive £4,643.51 per pupil. This means Cambridgeshire will fall from 132nd to 143rd out of 151 local authorities.

What is of greater concern is the per pupil difference between ourselves and other local authorities. Every £100 difference equates to approximately £7.9m of overall funding. If Cambridgeshire was funded at the national average of £5,082.53 per pupil this would provide additional funding of nearly £35m for Cambridgeshire schools.

Cambridgeshire's funding position in relation to its geographical neighbours is shown in the table below.

<u>Geographical Neighbours</u>	<u>2011-12 GUF £ per pupil</u>	<u>2011-12 National Ranking</u>
Peterborough	£5,168.59	55
Essex	£4,816.23	108
Lincolnshire	£4,797.87	111
Hertfordshire	£4,786.53	115
Norfolk	£4,785.83	116
Northamptonshire	£4,698.68	126
Suffolk	£4,676.45	131
Central Bedfordshire	£4,658.10	138
Cambridgeshire	£4,643.51	143

CAMBRIDGESHIRE TOP PERFORMING COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL CARE CONTACT SERVICES

Cambridgeshire County Council is one of the top performing local authorities in the country for the way it handles first time contact from the public re Adult Social Care Services. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has just published the results of a survey of all local authorities across the country which are responsible for providing social care to people over the age of 18.

Of the 152 authorities surveyed, Cambridge was awarded a range of 'excellent' and 'good' scores and received a overall rating of four – making it one of the 25 best performing local authority adult social care organisations in the country for the way it responds to 'first-time' callers. The CQC inspection is an independent assessment of how well adult social care services across the country are performing when they are first contacted by the public and I am very pleased to see that Cambridgeshire County Council is rated as one of the top 25.

The CQC rating is a tribute to our staff who are the first point of contact for people that are often in distress and needing urgent help, support, services or advice. Clearly the public in Cambridgeshire are getting a high quality and professional service from the start of their involvement with Adult Social Care services in the county. The survey, carried out between December 2009 and August 2010, included an online survey of data collection by councils, a 'mystery shopping' exercise and an assessment of how councils ensured their contact arrangements are accessible and supportive.

The 'first port of call' for most people seeking Adult Social Care services in the county is the authority's Contact Centre, Cambridgeshire Direct, which operates extended hour over six days a week. For Adult Social Care enquiries or information, contact: 0345 045 5202.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S INTERGRATED PLAN 2011 - 12

The Integrated Plan 2011-12, covering the next five years, was agreed by Full Council on 15th February 2011 and aims to save £50.4 million in 2011/12 and £160.6 million over the life of the plan. The Plan can be found under the Publications section below.

The Plan is the Council's answer to the most difficult financial situation in its history, as the Council deals with the twin pressures of increasing demand (because of an increasing and ageing population) and inflation, coupled with a 14 per cent reduction in the core funding received from Government.

The Plan is defined by a new set of Council priorities, and was informed by the results of a consultation process which put residents in the place of county councillors and replicated the tough decisions made in this year's budget. The key findings were that, if at all possible, residents would like to see fewer cuts in road maintenance and library services. Both these priorities have been reflected in decisions in our Integrated Plan, with some extra investment to maintain levels of road maintenance, and an intention to avoid library closure through changing the way they work and placing libraries into community ownership.

The new priorities are supporting and protecting vulnerable people when they need it most, helping people to live independent and healthy lives in their communities, and developing the local economy for the benefit of all.

Four principles will guide the way in which the Council works:

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

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 to be updated as changes are made to services.

A summary of the Integrated Plan 2011-12 can be found under the Publications area of this page, providing an overview of our long-term vision, strategic priorities for 2011/12, and our planned activity across the organisation for the next five years.



[Integrated Plan 2011-12.htm](#)

Cllr John Reynolds, 4 Hollytrees, Bar Hill, April 2011