

REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR JOHN REYNOLDS 29th JULY

Cambridgeshire County Councillor John Reynolds Reports.

A14 MAJOR IMPROVEMENT GETS GREEN LIGHT FROM MINISTERS

Campaigners who have long called for vital improvements to the congestion hit A14 are celebrating, following the Secretary of State for Transport, recent announcement, of plans to improve the A14 between Milton and Huntingdon as part of a major drive on infrastructure investment.

This follows an effective campaign led by Cambridgeshire County Council which has succeeded in putting the A14 back into the Government's committed programme of road improvements. This is a major step forward, and a real boost for business confidence across the area. The package of proposals announced also includes further enhancements to the Felixstowe to Nuneaton rail freight line, which will help to reduce the amount of HGVs on the A14, and public transport enhancements to augment the success of the Busway and provide further alternatives to the car for local journeys.

The A14 is of national, regional and local importance and provides vital links from the east coast ports to the rest of the country. Improvement of the road is vital to support the world class Cambridgeshire economy that has the potential to create the growth that the country needs and help bring the UK out of recession. The A14 is one of the most frequent issues raised by businesses as needing improvement to facilitate economic growth and attract investment. It is a key corridor for housing and jobs growth, with Alconbury and Northstowe along its length - developments which are vital for the economic future of our area and will contribute significantly to the wider national economy.

Local County Councillor and long term campaigner for the A14 upgrading, John Reynolds said: "This announcement is excellent news for local residents and everyone who uses this major strategic route. The Government has listened to local campaigning by Cambridgeshire councils. I have always been very clear that any option must give local residents an alternative to using a toll road, and it is welcome news that the proposals put forward include plans for local routes for our residents. The upgrade of the A14 is vital to making sure we continue to have a strong local economy and this announcement will now make it feasible for us to seriously consider plans for the new homes, such as the proposed new town of Northstowe, to support jobs being created in the area."

Detailed lists of proposals are available, by email from j.e.reynolds@ntlworld.com

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The A14 road improvement package includes:

- * Widening of the Cambridge Northern Bypass between Milton and Girton and enhancement of the Girton Interchange;
- * Provision of high standard roads for local traffic use running in parallel to an enhanced A14 carriageway between Girton and the area near the current Trinity Foot A14 junction;
- * Construction of a bypass to the south of Huntingdon between the area near Trinity Foot and the A1, at both ends tying in with the existing A14.

Also announced today is Government support for a package of local public

transport improvements which could include:

- * Commercial express bus services between Peterborough and Cambridge;
- * A new park & ride site at Alconbury;
- * Park & ride bus services to Cambridge via the Busway;
- * A new 'Number 5' local bus service from Bar Hill to Cambridge via Science Park and Cambridge Science Park station.

The Government has also identified a package of desirable rail investment that will include major improvements at Ely, Peterborough and Leicester, to enable more freight to be carried by rail between Felixstowe and Nuneaton. The Secretary of State has allocated £200m to the Strategic Freight Network to fund network enhancements of this kind at the request of the rail freight industry.

Detailed lists of proposals are available, by email from j.e.reynolds@ntlworld.com

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**10,000 REGISTER IN JUST 10 WEEKS FOR CONNECTING CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

Join the ten thousand people who have already registered for our major campaign to bring superfast broadband to Cambridgeshire. The speed at which the Connecting Cambridgeshire campaign has reached the milestone total shows how strongly householders and business people feel about getting better broadband.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds, said: "This is a fantastic response to our campaign to get Cambridgeshire connected and clearly shows there is huge demand for better broadband, which is vital for our businesses and communities to thrive".

"We need many more people to register their support for the campaign if they are to secure vital investment from broadband suppliers to bring superfast broadband to the Cambridgeshire. The more people that register the fact they want superfast broadband the more chance of it being delivered, so I would urge everyone to 'click' for Cambridgeshire and help us to make it happen."

The detailed lists of proposals are available from [j.e.reynolds@ntlworld.com](mailto:j.e.reynolds@ntlworld.com)

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## **BOOK YOUR PLACE AS ADVICE SERVICE HITS THE ROAD TO LIBRARIES**

An information service which helps people stay safe, well and independent, is taking to the road to spread the word across Cambridgeshire with a series of events in Libraries.

The Your Life, Your Choice service provides online information for people who need information or support to enable them to live an independent life. It also provides details of assistance for such things as social and health care and aids and home adaptations which make life easier for people in their own home.

The roadshows will visit Chatteris Library during August, and will feature:

- \* Leaflets and information about staying independent, safe and well
- \* Information on aids and devices to help people remain independent
- \* Trading Standards information on how to Buy With Confidence and avoid rogue traders
- \* Information about Direct Payments for social care
- \* Opportunities to book a session with the libraries' Computer Buddies to help less experienced computer users access online information.

County Council Cabinet Member for Adult Services, Councillor Martin Curtis, said: "The Your Life, Your Choice website was developed with the support of service users, carers and our partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors, to encourage people to think more widely than just traditional care services when planning the support they need.

"These roadshows, in addition to promoting Your Life, Your Choice, are focused on providing preventative and self-help information to people who may need it and telling them about the support and services available in their local community. Hopefully they will show people what is available and the difference it can make to them, their careers and families, whilst help them to stay safe and independent for as long as possible," added Councillor Curtis.

Roadshow schedule:

August 6-September 1 Chatteris Library  
September 3-September 29 Wisbech Library  
October 1-October 27 March Library  
October 29-November 24 St Neots Library

Access to the Your Life, Your Choice website together with help to find the information you are looking for is already available in your local library or you can access information and advice directly at:

[www.yourlifeyourchoice.org.uk](http://www.yourlifeyourchoice.org.uk) <<http://www.yourlifeyourchoice.org.uk/>

## **NATIONAL SURVEY ON THE ROAD TO BETTER CUSTOMER FEEDBACK**

The public's views on Cambridgeshire's Highways and Transport services will soon be compared with others across England, thanks to the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction survey. Cambridgeshire County Council is one of 75 Local Authorities to sign up to a standardised survey that will ask members of the public exactly the same questions, whether they live in Cornwall, Newcastle or Cambridgeshire.

The survey, which is being run for the fifth year, is the result of months of work between the National Highways & Transport Network (NHT) and a regional Highways Service Improvement Group. It enables Local Authorities to compare results, share in best practice and identify opportunities to work together in the future.

The questionnaire will be sent to a random sample of Cambridgeshire residents in July with local and national results expected to be published later in the summer/early autumn. Since the survey is based on a sample, residents that receive a copy are being urged to take part.

The results will enable us to find out what people in this area think about these important services. This will provide one of several ways Cambridgeshire County Council can assess how it is performing and which services to prioritise, and to improve.

Local Councillor John Reynolds, said: "There are clear benefits to conducting a public survey in this way. As well as providing excellent value for money, it also enables everyone involved to identify areas of best practice and spot national, regional and local trends. This is not about producing a league table to champion one geographical area over another, it is about understanding customer views better and working together to deliver the best possible outcomes for local residents."

- \* The survey is the result of a collaboration between the National Highways and Transport (NHT) Network and the South West Highway Service Improvement Group.
- \* The survey is being carried out on behalf of the participating Local Authorities by market research specialist, Ipsos MORI.
- \* Participation in the survey is voluntary. It is believed to be the first survey of its kind to bring together a large number of separate highway authorities from all over England and parts of Wales to carry out their surveys in a comparable format
- \* The survey questionnaire is 12 pages long and covers all aspects of local highway and transport services (e.g. from the condition of roads and footways to the quality of local bus services). The questionnaire should be completed in around 20 minutes
- \* 75 Local Authorities have signed up to take part in the combined survey

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### **BUY WITH CONFIDENCE PROMOTION**

Cambridgeshire County Council's Trading Standards Service recently launched the Buy With Confidence approved trader scheme – now the scheme is being promoted throughout the county to both businesses and residents. In addition Trading Standards will be encouraging Cambridgeshire residents to use the local reliable traders who are scheme members and inviting more local traders to join.

The Buy With Confidence Scheme provides residents with an online database of local 'Trading Standards approved' businesses who can be relied upon to provide a quality service to customers. Members can be found by visiting [www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk](http://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk), by calling Trading Standards advice partner on 08454 040506 or by visiting your local library and asking library staff to look up traders on the scheme for you.

For businesses who wish to join, comprehensive information and application forms are available at [www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk](http://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk) or by calling 0345 0455206. The public are also being called on to nominate traders to join the scheme by emailing the traders details or by calling Cambridgeshire Direct on 0345 0455206. Trading Standards will then contact the traders to invite them to apply.

Buy with Confidence schemes operate in nearly 50 local authority areas, with over 4,700 businesses signed up. For more information visit [www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk](http://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk)

## **COUNTY ANNOUNCES NEW CYCLE TRAINING CONTRACTOR**

A £460,000 contract to deliver free Bikeability cycle training to primary school pupils across Cambridgeshire has been awarded to a Cambridge based company Outspoken to deliver the training over the next three years. This means thousands of school children will get free training as part of Cambridgeshire County Council's commitment to encourage more people on their bikes and improve safety. The Council were successful in securing government funding to allow child cycle training to be offered free across the county as from 1st September 2012.

The team of instructors are fully trained and accredited professionals who share a passion for cycling. Bikeability is cycle training to the national standards, and involves a period of playground skills before the riders are then taken out onto the road to master techniques such as positioning and turning into and out of junctions.

Local Councillor John Reynolds, said "Equipping our young people with the skills to ride their bikes safely and confidently on the road is of great importance. Cycling is a fun and practical way for children to be active. The County Council looks forward to working with Outspoken to get lots of young, safe, responsible cyclists trained up. Cycling is a great way to improve health and reduce congestion, therefore boosting the local economy. Giving our youngsters the right training at an early age gives them confidence to ride their bikes and enjoy cycling.

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## **CAMBRIDGESHIRE READY TO IMPLEMENT GOVERNMENT ADOPTION PLANS**

Cambridgeshire will be among the first authorities in the country to put new Government proposals on adoption into practice that will mean all babies taken into care will be looked after by the families who hope to adopt them. The move is part of Government plans to reduce the disruption that many children under the age of one suffer in early life. It aims to make fostering by approved adopters standard practice for the youngest infants. Cambridgeshire County Council is already set up to implement the proposals following its groundbreaking partnership with national children's charity and specialist voluntary adoption agency Coram a year ago.

The main purpose of the new partnership with the County Council is to further improve decision-making and minimise delays in the adoption process. The ultimate aim is to give more children and young people in care in the region a secure and stable future with an adoptive family, long term foster carers or legal guardians. Cambridgeshire is leading the way as the first partner, focusing on short and long term planning to give even better care to looked-after children. They are ready for carers who wish to do concurrent planning to come forward and find out about this very child-centred scheme.

Local Councillor John Reynolds, said "I am delighted with Government's announcement this morning. It embraces everything we in Cambridgeshire have been working towards ever since we joined forces with Coram last year. Staff in Cambridgeshire are suitably trained and ready to put the new proposals into practice. We would urge anyone interested to contact us as soon as possible. With their help we can radically improve the lives and opportunities for these vulnerable young children."

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## **SCRUTINISING THE OPTIONS TO IMPROVE THE ELY CROSSING**

Work to determine the best way to tackle congestion at the railway crossing in Ely suggests a new bypass could be the way forward. Members of the Enterprise, Growth and Community Infrastructure Committee have received a report how the six months of investigation, assessment and study has rated options included bypasses, underpasses and stacking systems.

The option which, on balance, meets the challenges of taking traffic out of Ely, is future proof and offers the best value for money is Route B - a new road to bypass the level crossing. The proposed link road would be just over a mile long diverting the A142 at Angel Drove to just outside Stuntney via two roundabouts, a bridge over the railway line, the River Great Ouse and its floodplains.

Councillor Ian Bates, Cabinet member for Growth and Planning at Cambridgeshire County Council, said: "Since the turn of the year, officers at the County Council have spent a huge amount of time and effort assessing the various options to once and for all resolve the problem of the Ely Crossing. They have worked very closely with a number of partners from East Cambridgeshire District Council to Network Rail and English Heritage as part of this process.

All of the documents relating to the assessment are available on the County Council's website for anyone to view. There is still a long way to go yet but I believe we are beginning to make real progress to end the misery caused by this traffic bottleneck."

Copies of the paper are available here:

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/transport/projects/east/elycrossing/optionassessment.htm](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/transport/projects/east/elycrossing/optionassessment.htm)

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## **SOAPS AND SMELLS**

Ever wondered how soap was made during the 17th century? Come along to the Cambridgeshire County Council run Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon to find out how soap was made in the past and have a go at making some. This is part of the museum's current exhibition, Perfumes for the Protector, which focuses on an elaborate box of soaps.

The box was given to Cromwell as a present by the Duke of Tuscany in 1657 and contains glass jars of soaps. Recent analysis has shown that the soaps are based on olive oil and are a very rare survival of the period. Visitors can see the 17th century way of making soap. We now take hard soap for granted but in Cromwell's day soap was rather different. The soaps given to Cromwell were extremely high quality, scented with delicate perfumes.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds said "This is a real chance to see a very different aspect of our past. You do not automatically associate Cromwell with luxury items but the Museum does contain some amazing treasures."

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## **RAIL IMPROVEMENTS PUTS CAMBRIDGESHIRE ON TRACK TO BOOST ECONOMY**

A national £9 billion package of rail improvements that will also help boost the economy in Cambridgeshire has been welcomed by councillors. The money will see a notorious rail bottleneck at the Ely North junction improved making it easier for freight and passenger trains to travel to and from Norwich and King's Lynn as well as London. This was a key priority of the regional rail prospectus put together by local and regional councils. £240M has been earmarked for the East Coast Main Line, and improvements could include the widening of the line to four tracks between Huntingdon and Peterborough, providing more capacity for local trains between Peterborough and London.

Cambridgeshire County Council will now be working with developers Urban and Civic and Network Rail to take forward plans for a new station at Alconbury to serve the Enterprise Zone and housing growth. The announcement also sees the confirmation of the western section of the east-west rail project between Oxford and Bedford. Attention will now turn to the trickier issues relating to the central section between Bedfordshire and Cambridge. Cambridgeshire County Council will now take on the role of lead authority for this and will be commissioning some feasibility work in the near future.

Local Councillor John Reynolds, said: "We are very pleased to see some of the crucial rail improvements needed for the prosperity of the County and indeed country included in this package of funding. Improvements in Ely will mean more reliable and frequent services boosting the local, regional and national economy. The County Council is committed to solving the issues that surrounds the Ely Rail Crossing as more trains are expected to be travelling through the city. The announcement over the east-west rail project means we will now take a lead on looking at joining the gap between Cambridge and Bedfordshire. There are no easy solutions for this, but we need to understand all the options and how deliverable they might be before deciding on the way forward. This package of funding is great news for our local and national economy."

## **BED COMPANY GETS RUDE AWAKENING THANKS TO TRADING STANDARDS**

A company has been fined more than £10,000 for selling unapproved beds to vulnerable people. Following a joint investigation by Cambridgeshire Trading Standards and the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, Glasgow based Relief Healthcare admitted four charges under the medical devices regulations 2002 and five charges under consumer protection laws.

Cambridge Magistrates fined the company and its Managing Director John McConville, £10,250 and ordered the firm to pay £20,000 costs. Relief Healthcare Ltd claimed the beds and massage therapy mattresses could help with a range of conditions including diabetes, broken bones, weight loss and "breaking down poison in the body," he court heard. But there was no clinical evidence to support the claims and the products, which cost thousands of pounds each, were not licensed for sale in the UK.

Cambridgeshire Trading Standards investigated complaints over a period of 18 months with victims in East Anglia and into Lincolnshire. 11 elderly and vulnerable people and their relatives gave statements to Trading Standards officers and were prepared to give evidence in court.

Local County Councillor, said: "Trading Standards worked closely with other regulatory agencies to bring this case to court. Relief Healthcare preyed on vulnerable people by cold calling them making false claims about the nature of the call to persuade the public to buy their beds and mattresses. I am delighted by the outcome of the court hearing."

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## **CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH ROAD CASUALTIES CONTINUE TO FALL**

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Road Safety Partnership are pleased to report that overall road casualties in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have continued to fall.

National data shows a 3% rise in the number of road deaths in 2011, while in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough the number of deaths fell by 7 in 2011 compared to 2010 - a 17.5% reduction. The numbers are small and therefore fluctuate annually, however Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has an underlying downward trend of about 3% per year in killed and seriously injured (KSI) casualties per kilometre travelled.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds, said: "Whilst nationally there was a slight increase in people killed or seriously injured on the roads, Cambridgeshire continued to see a downward trend. This is positive news, however every person injured on the roads brings personal tragedy and Cambridgeshire County Council continues to work hard with our partners to target Road Safety Education, Engineering and Enforcement in the areas that need it most."

"Every fatality has a far wider effect and it's not just the victim but friends, relatives and everyone involved in dealing with such incidents that are affected. We must not take our eye off the ball where road safety is concerned, but strive to maintain the improvements that have been made."

"We hope that with initiatives such as Drive 2 Arrive, which aims to educate young people in an interactive way, and our work with partners to reduce reoffending regarding dangerous driving, will help maintain this trend"

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## **SACKVILLE HOUSE CAMBOURNE GETS SOLA PV PANELS**

Works has been completed on installing 20 kW of solar photovoltaic tiles on Sackville House Cambourne. The works funded by Cambourne Parish Council will see the County Council get free electricity and a reduction in its carbonfootprint. The community will benefit from income over the next 25 years, under the government feed in tariff scheme. The work is being under taken by Kier and is programmed to take two weeks.

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