

OCTOBER REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR JOHN REYNOLDS

Education Funding Reforms

The Secretary of State for Education published a consultation paper: "School Funding Reform: Next Steps towards a fairer system". The consultation response was published at the end of June and there have been a few minor changes to the original proposals. The proposals all spell out major change for the way that schools and particularly funding for children with SEN is calculated and administered. We are currently consulting with schools and parents/carers of children and young people with statements about the changes and a paper will go to Cabinet in November 2012.

Provisional GCSE Performance

Early headlines indicate that overall performance in Cambridgeshire on the key 5+A*-C including English and mathematics measure is 58.3%, which is 1.0 pt below last year's figure of 59.3%. Given that national pass rates have fallen and the changes to GCSE English grade boundaries this year have had a significant impact on many schools nationally and locally, a drop of 1.0 pt is less than might have been expected.

When remarks and appeals are completed, the figure is likely to be in line with last year's. It is not yet possible to compare Cambridgeshire's performance with national or statistical neighbour results. Four Cambridgeshire schools are below the new government floor standard of 40% 5+A*-C including English and mathematics. While some schools experienced sharp declines in performance this year, others sustained or significantly improved performance. Particular note should be taken of Thomas Clarkson's in Fenland a dramatic improvement of nearly 15 pts.

Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2) Outcomes

Early Indications are that overall KS1 and KS2 results have improved significantly this year, with the greatest gains in KS2. National data will not be available until later this month so it is not yet possible to compare our results with statistical neighbours and national averages although the general expectation is that results will have improved nationally as well. The headlines are:

KS2

L4 in English and Maths combined has risen from 74% to 79%

Attainment in English at Level 4 has risen from 82% to 84%

Attainment at Level 4 in Maths has risen from 80% to 83%

KS1

KS1 English data improved across all indicators except girls writing at L3 which has dropped 1% KS1 Mathematics all measures equal to last year, or improved

For more information, please contact Sue Wilson, 01223 706304

Dyslexia Guidance

Cambridgeshire County Council has produced Dyslexia Guidance for Cambridgeshire in order to provide a common language and approach to the identification and assessment of dyslexia and to the inclusion of dyslexic pupils. It is underpinned by the recommendations of the Rose Report (2009) *Identifying and Teaching Children and Young People with Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties* and recent national guidance on Special Educational Needs and Disability. This guidance is intended for schools, settings, parent/carers and professionals working in the Cambridgeshire Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) and outlines the guidance which all those working with children and young people across Cambridgeshire will receive one.

Inspection at Russell Street

A residential and respite care home for adults with learning disabilities has been given top marks after a visit by Government inspectors. The home at Russell Street, Cambridge, recently underwent a routine inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and was found to be performing well in all aspects of the inspection. The house provides residential care and respite support for up to eight people who were interviewed as part of the inspection process.

Inspectors also spoke to staff working at Russell Street. CQC looked at all aspects of the work of the home, including measures to ensure service users were kept safe and supported in a way which reflected their individual needs and they were protected from abuse with respect to their human rights. The quality and accessibility of the building, staff training, supervision and management practice and processes were also checked. The inspectors noted that people were treated equally whilst being suitably supported for their differing needs.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) Consultation

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) (the independent regulator for health and social care services) has recently published a consultation on its proposed strategy for 2013 to 2016, which will influence how social care services are subject to inspection and regulation. The relevant documents can be viewed at:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/thenextphase>. In summary, CQC's suggested strategic priorities are:

- *a move to a model of 'differentiated regulation' with different approaches for different sectors, making greater use of information and evidence to prioritise resources;
- *greater partnership working with organisations such as Monitor, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, and Healthwatch England;
- *use Healthwatch to ensure people's views, comments and concerns are heard, and improve provision of information direct to the public;
- *'build respect and care' with care providers and build confidence in its inspectors, by reducing burdens and supporting innovation and sharing good practice;
- *improving delivery on their responsibilities for mental health and mental capacity;
- *becoming a high performing organisation that is 'flexible and adaptable'.

Officers will be developing a draft response to the consultation in advance of the closing date of 6 December.

High numbers of visitors for equipment self-help guide

The AskSARA website provides help and advice about equipment to help with daily living – including falls prevention, managing medication and eating healthily. Since a Cambridgeshire version of the award-winning online self-help guide was launched in February 2012 over 250 people a month have used the site to find equipment to make life easier and to help them stay independent in their own homes.

Compared with visits to AskSARA sites nationally for the 12 months since August 2011, Cambridgeshire has the second highest number of visits to a local authority version of the website. Based on the number of visits since the site launched it is estimated that around 2,000 visits will be made to the Cambridgeshire version of AskSARA annually, double the average seen by most local authorities.

You can find AskSARA at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asksara

Connecting Cambridgeshire

The Connecting Cambridgeshire superfast broadband campaign is the fastest growing in the country and has overtaken neighbouring counties with over 16,000 demand registrations to date. Much of the support has been generated with the help of more than 70 local Broadband Champions, who were thanked for their efforts at a recent networking event hosted by Cambridgeshire County Council.

The procurement process to select a supplier to invest in rolling out superfast broadband access to at least 90% of homes and businesses across Cambridgeshire by 2015 is progressing well and is expected to conclude in December 2012. The Connecting Cambridgeshire project also embraces plans to make Cambridge a super-connected city with ultrafast broadband speeds of 80-100 mbps to boost the local economy through technology, innovation and enterprise.

Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council have submitted a bid to the Department of Culture Media and Sport's £50 million Urban Broadband Fund. The three councils are also working together to undertake a feasibility study for the city in the TSB's Future City Demonstrator competition.

Cambridge Northwest (University, NIAB & Orchard)

NIAB Developer discussions are continuing to finalise the S106 agreement. Draft documents have been exchanged. Security/Bonding provisions are currently unacceptable to the County Council. Negotiation for Heads of Terms regarding the University Planning Application continues. The remaining outstanding matter, agreeing the road adopted strategy, is now provisionally agreed and is delegated to the Lead for Growth and Planning in consultation with the Executive Director - Economy, Transport and Environment and Local Members. Work on progressing the NIAB Primary School design continues with input from the housing developer. A programme is being produced to determine when a planning application will be submitted, likely to be following approval of the Design Code for the over-all NIAB site.

Cambridge Southern Fringe

The Fringes Joint Development Control Committee (JDCC) on 6th September 2012 refused a revised planning application for access to Bell School. The revisions were made to address an inspector's findings having been to appeal once already. There is a risk the promoter will appeal this latest decision. A reserve matter application for 102 homes to the north of Addenbrooke's Access Road was approved by JDCC on 6 September 2012

Major Development Alconbury

The Alconbury Weald Outline Planning Application for up to 5000 new homes; 8000 new jobs has been submitted to Huntingdonshire District Council and is currently out to public consultation. The draft County Council response is to be considered by Cabinet on 23rd October 2012 following Scrutiny on 5 October 2012. County Officers continue to participate in the working group and Board for Ely North (Highflyer Farm & Endurance Estates) to progress the joint Masterplan for the two sites. Workshops established, so far, include baseline parameters for transport, education and SuDS. An application has been submitted for 753 dwellings and associated infrastructure (including a 1.5FE primary school) at Bearscroft Farm, Godmanchester. The County response has been returned to Hunts DC. Concern has also been raised in relation to transport matters. At the request of officers, amendments to the application are anticipated in late September 2012. This is to include a wider assessment of the impact to the highway network. The County will be invited to respond to a further round of consultation.

Cambridgeshire Future Transport

Area A (Linton-Balsham Area) – Following on from discussions with the community and Parish Councils in the Linton-Balsham area, it was agreed to circulate a questionnaire. This was developed in partnership with the parishes, who helped distribution. The closing date for submission was the 16 September and we are currently analysing them, the results will inform options to go to the Parish councils on the 11 of October and The wider community on the 19 October for a final decision.

Area B (Whittlesford Area) – Following work with the Area B working group, options have been worked up and presented to parish councils on the 12 of September. A preferred option will now be presented to the community. This will lead to a final decision. Once approved the service will be tendered and registered. A marketing campaign will begin to promote the service locally.

Area C (Villages South of the A428) & D (A10 Corridor) - Three meetings were held for County and District members to feed into the engagement process. There was poor response even after individual meetings were offered. We will now write to County, District members and Parish Councils stressing how important it is for them to engage in the process.

Cambridge Future Transport team will met with all South Cambridgeshire parishes in areas C&D on Monday the 24 October. Parishes were very positive about the process and have agreed to help.

Meetings have been set up with East Cambridgeshire parishes for early Oct. Initial meetings with community groups will follow and a working group put together to help develop options.

Work has begun looking at how we can work better both internally and with external partners. Part of this work has been looking at best practice. We have spoken to Integrated Transport Units, the currently recognized best practice, in North Yorks, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and Norfolk.

Local Strategy Development

The transport strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire consultation concluded on the 28 September. The consultation has been aligned with City Council's and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan consultations. Initial results of the City Council Local Plan consultation have now been shared with us and officers will review them shortly. Modelling work is to commence with an assessment of Growth Options

Sawston Library

A second disaster hit the service with the total destruction of Sawston Library on Thursday 6 September, from a fire at the Village College where the library is based. The fire took hold very quickly and nothing remains of the library or its contents. Fortunately the school has been able to reopen and is less affected. Again, staff reacted quickly to put in place an alternative temporary service, with a mobile service on Mondays (11-5) and Tuesday evenings (5-7) which started from the following Monday (10 September).

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