

Children and Families Bill 2013

The Children and Families Bill was published on 5 February. This underpins wider reforms for vulnerable children and families. The Bill includes provisions on the following reforms:

Adoption reform: aimed at decreasing the time it takes for children to be adopted and setting targets for local authorities and signalling the potential for responsibilities to be transferred to other sectors where they are not met

Family justice: remove delays and ensure that the children's best interests are at the heart of decision making.

SEN replacing old statements with a new birth- to-25 education, health and care plans, offering families personal budgets; and improving cooperation between all the services that support children and their families, particularly requiring local authorities and health authorities to work together.

Childcare reform: High profile changes to the child/adult ratios for childcare in the early years and the general relaxing of statutory framework around childcare. It introduces childminder agencies to allow more flexible childminding

Children's Commissioners: make the Children's Commissioner more effective by clarifying his/her independence from Government with a remit to 'protect and promote children's rights'.

Shared Parental Leave: proposes reforms to provide parents greater flexibility in the care of their child in the first year after birth; parents can share leave as long as no more than 52 weeks are taken combined.

Children in care: requires Councils to have a 'virtual school head' to ensure appropriate education for all children in care

Flexible working: to extend flexible working entitlements to all individuals, not just parents and carers.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a00221178/candfbill>

Children's Trust Board

The Trust Board met on 30 January 2013 and discussed a number of the key priorities.

The Together for Families programme is currently consulting on the draft commissioning plan throughout February and March. A total of 219 families have been identified that meet their criteria. An identification scoring matrix has been distributed across services and partners to help aid professionals identify additional families.

The Eastern European Families work has now completed a needs analysis and gathered the views of children, young people and parents from Central and Eastern European backgrounds. A full report will be available soon and will help identify next steps.

Welfare Reforms is emerging as a key area for the trust to take forward in terms of identifying and understanding the impact on families and planning action to help mitigate the impact. Further work is in development on how the trust is best placed to support and will be presented at its next meeting.

An issue around sharing information between Districts and County on those families eligible for Free School Meals, but not yet claiming, was discussed. In Unitary Authorities this is not an issue. The Board agreed and have sent a letter to the Department of Education (DfE) to raise at an appropriate level.

The website has published the [Summary](#) of discussions and the [minutes](#) from the meeting.

South Cambridgeshire and City Area Partnership:

Needs assessment – a look at vulnerable groups following the welfare reforms post April 2013 to see if this will change the priorities of the commissioning plan.

Focus on children's mental health - the Area Partnership wish to work collaboratively with the CCG to enhance and add value to current VCS contracts.

Local focus on Fen Road traveller's site project with the Ormiston Trust and the current counselling contract with Centre 33. The Fen Road project has had a mix of successes and challenges. However, the project has made a difference and the Partnership is considering the extension of this contract. Centre 33's feedback to the group was positive but shows a growing need in the area.

Moving forward - looking ahead to 2014 and the renewal of the commissioning plan.

Emerging priorities are now being considered and some scoping work is now underway.

The County School – Ofsted

The County School was graded as 'Good' by Ofsted in the recent two day inspection. This is a strong result for the multi-site service given the rapid changes over the last couple of years and the need to drive improvements in teaching and learning across the establishment.

NEET Figures for North Cambridge

All Locality teams have demanding targets aimed at keeping young people in education, employment or training. In North Cambridge, we have achieved our targets of reducing NEET in Years 12 and 13 for this year, as well as achieving targets of keeping young people in learning. The numbers of young people we were unable to contact did unfortunately rise this year.

CONNECTING CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Cambridgeshire County Council's Cabinet has chosen BT to roll-out better broadband infrastructure for homes and businesses across the county over the next three years. This means that more than 90% of homes and businesses in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will be able to receive superfast broadband (of at least 24 Mbps) with basic broadband (at least 2 Mbps) available to close to 100% of premises by 2015.

The contract is due to be signed in early March 2013, following which detailed surveys and mapping will be undertaken and roll-out schedules will be drawn up and agreed with the supplier. The roll-out will be delivered in phases based on the most cost effective approach. Project phases will be publicised to inform people when their homes and businesses are likely to be reached.

The Connecting Cambridgeshire programme team will work closely with the supplier, neighbouring authorities, local authority planning teams and local communities to ensure the roll-out is as speedy and efficient as possible. Regular updates and FAQs can be found on the Connecting Cambridgeshire [website](#).

A14 corridor transport improvements.

We have been working closely with Department for Transport (DfT), the Highways Agency and local partners on the A14 study which has now been completed and the final stage has been published. Much work is still required to finally define the scheme, decide how it will be procured, by whom and what role the Local Authorities will play in its delivery.

Nevertheless there are steps which can and should be taken to expedite delivery. We have initiated early discussions between Local Authorities and LEPs in the region to explore how far they can support the financing of the scheme from future locally-controlled revenue streams. Local Partnerships, (the 50-50 joint venture between LGA and HM Treasury), has conducted a series of meetings with the Local Authorities, LEPs and business interests to ascertain levels of interest/ funding. A summit was held in February to discuss the proposition with local authorities along and around the A14, which DfT and HM Treasury both attended and which was broadly positive.

Detailed discussions are ongoing with Government about the ultimate funding package, what special delivery arrangements might be instigated to deliver the design, part financing and delivery of the scheme. More work is also needed on determining the optimum tolling strategy to raise revenue while minimising the diversion of traffic to other routes. The Secretary of State suggested that construction could begin in 2018 (and possibly as early as 2016 if a conventional funding route were used). If that is to be the case, then detailed scheme design will need to commence soon. The DfT has allocated £5m to the Highways Agency within this current spending period to progress the scheme through the options and development phases review, although the design process is likely to need more funding, even if the scheme draws heavily on the preparatory work of the previous scheme. The separate announcement, also on 18 July 2012, of the Government's intention to underwrite £50bn of infrastructure investment, may offer an opportunity to help with the delivery of the A14 corridor transport improvements.

Northstowe – A Modern Garden Town

The planning application for the first phase of 1,500 homes at Northstowe was supported by the Joint Development Control Committee (Planning Committee) in October. A further meeting of the Committee was held on 30th January 2013 and the next Committee meeting arranged for 19 March 2013. Since the autumn the Local Authorities have worked with partner organisations to look very closely at the infrastructure requirements and the planning conditions required to ensure the planning permission delivers a very good standard of development. This work has also been mindful of the frontloaded costs associated with this project and considerable care has been taken to ensuring the project remains viable.

In parallel with this ongoing viability work the local authorities have approached the Department of Communities & Local Government to secure a government loan in order to deliver some of the infrastructure components early, and bring the delivery of phase one forward. On 15th January 2013 Cabinet considered a report on the necessary infrastructure costs and seeking to prioritise these in formulating the S106 and planning conditions. We are awaiting the Governments response to the formal bid.

Alconbury Weald

An outline planning application for 5,000 new homes, schools and other mixed uses has been submitted to Huntingdonshire District Council. This planning application will require a number of revisions. The good news is that these revisions will include relocating the secondary school to a much more central location within the overall development. The planning application as submitted includes a substantial element of housing on land which is currently designated as Alconbury Enterprise Zone. The Cabinet on 5 March considered a report which provides a response to Huntingdonshire on the current planning application, and this will be worded carefully to bring about sensible changes to the outline planning application. The District Council is looking to determine this application after the publication of their Local Plan consultation document which is due to be published in May/June 2013.

Local Plans - Planning the “blue print” for Cambridgeshire

All five District Councils will publish their revised Local Plans for a further round of public consultation shortly. Officers will arrange for workshops to be held for all services with a direct involvement with Local Plan preparation. This approach should provide for a much more rounded response being submitted.

South Cambridgeshire DC completed their consultation on the detail of the sites to be included in their draft Local Plan on 18 February 2013. An officer submission was made to meet this deadline and Cabinet considered the Council formal response on 5 March 2013.

Cambridge City Council completed their consultation on the detail of the sites to be included in their draft Local Plan on 18 February 2013. An officer submission was made to meet this deadline and Cabinet considered the Council formal response on 5 March 2013.

Huntingdonshire District Council – Local Plan consultation is expected to start in May/June 2013.

Floods and Water Management

Following a period of public consultation on the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, Cabinet at their meeting on 5 March 2013, approved the revised Strategy for Cambridgeshire, which looks forward to 2015. This will be one of the first Local Flood Risk Management Strategies published in England to meet our new responsibilities as a Lead Local Flood Authority under the new Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

On 5 March Cabinet will be considering an Enforcement Policy to enable the Council to fairly and transparently apply policies and procedures when unconsented work on watercourses (streams and brooks) result in increased flood risk to Cambridgeshire

Better Bus Area Fund (BBAF)

Good progress continues to be made with a number of BBAF projects:

- The Babraham Rd Park & Ride site extension has now been completed, increasing the number of parking spaces from 1000 to 1500. The construction included widening of the exit road, construction of an alternative drop off point and installing lighting & CCTV cameras.
- Trials using on-bus audio equipment on Whippet and Stagecoach Guided Busway buses is also due to start at the end of January.

Local Pinch Point Fund

The DfT announced in January 2013 the creation of a Local Pinch Point Fund worth £170m to remove bottlenecks on the local highway network which are impeding growth and restricting the movement of people and goods. Any English local transport authority or local highway authority outside of London can apply. Transport for London will be able to bid for up to £10m of the Fund on behalf of London. It should be noted that this funding is in addition to the Highways Agency's Pinch Point Fund which target England's motorways and major 'A' roads.

The Fund is designed to tackle the most immediate barriers to growth. Thus all bids must demonstrate that proposed schemes will be delivered as soon as possible with supporting evidence e.g. designs, modeling, business case, scheme impact data. Bridges and structural maintenance bids are also eligible. Local contribution / match funding of at least 30% is required. Schemes requesting over £5m DfT funding are classed as Large Schemes and between £1m-£5m as Small Schemes.

The DfT Fund will have to be spent by March 2015. Although local transport authorities can submit more than 1 bid, DfT may restrict the awards to two per bidding authority. Potential schemes in Cambridgeshire that meet the funding criteria have been considered within ETE and with partners for submission by the deadline of 21 February 2013.

Cycle Safety Fund

The Department for Transport announced the availability of a £15 million Cycle Safety Fund to provide capital support for safety improvements at junctions identified as having a record of cyclists being killed or seriously injured. Local highway authorities were invited to submit applications. Cambridgeshire County Council, in consultation with cycling stakeholders, submitted 5 applications seeking a total of £1.5 million from the Fund towards the total cost of £2.6 million. The 5 schemes submitted were: Catholic Church Junction (Cambridge), North Cambridge Radial Network, Perne Road (Cambridge), March South and Whittlesey to Peterborough. It has just been announced that funding has been awarded for the three Cambridge schemes, totaling £965,000, but the Fenland schemes were not successful. The schemes will be substantially complete by the end of 2013.

Cycling Programme

The Cycling Projects Team, which is fully funded by external capital grants, has a wide ranging programme of infrastructure schemes, events, initiatives and child cycle training, all aimed at getting more people cycling, more safely, more often. Initial work has commenced on The Chisholm Trail, a brand new foot and cycleway linking Cambridge Station to the new Science Park Station (and hence linking the north and south sections of The Busway cycleway). This initial work entails engagement with Network Rail and more detailed analysis of route options and opportunities to acquire sections of the route afforded by new developments.

S106 Funding in Cambridge & South Cambridgeshire

Some 20 new schemes were approved by Cabinet in December for funding in the Cambridge and South Cambridge area. Most of these have been put forward to the County Council by local communities to help improve safety and accessibility on the network. Over £2million has been secured from developers to pay for the improvements to the Cambridgeshire road network, necessitated by growth. This funding has been secured by the County Council in order to make improvements to infrastructure in line with the objectives of the Area Transport Corridor Plans. Initial work has now commenced on a number of major projects including ; lighting along The Busway maintenance track at Trumpington, Histon and Impington; traffic calming for Tenison Road; a cycle route from Milton to Landbeach; and a shared use path named Ring Fort Path, from Orchard Park to the A14 intersection at Histon, providing a shorter route for cyclists.

Community Learning Trust Fund

The Adult Learning & Skills Community Learning Trust Fund is currently funding 22 projects in Cambridgeshire. These projects are generally delivered by Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, who work with those people farthest away from learning. Learners include those lacking confidence or basic skills and those with issues such as mental ill-health or homelessness. The projects are essentially a first step engagement activity and are very diverse in type, ranging from training to be a volunteer through to financial literacy, cooking skills, employability skills and many more. Partnership work is the key to our projects and our district Community Learning & Skills Partnerships are responsible for identifying the priorities in districts and working with the VCS organisations to deliver.

Cambridgeshire Culture Partnership

A partnership has been established between the Arts Council, Cambridge University and Cambridgeshire local authorities to maximize the potential for investment in culture to support health and well-being and economic growth / regeneration by widening engagement and participation in community and cultural activity. The partnership increases the likelihood of funding coming into Cambridgeshire, with a particular focus currently on Fenland (linking in to Wisbech 2020) and NW Cambridge (existing and new communities) and Northstowe.

Local Highway Improvement Initiative

We have worked with local groups throughout the year to take forward the Local Highway Improvement Initiative which allows groups or individuals to improve their local roads and streets. Last year communities submitted their bids for works to address local highway issues. After a short listing process over 50 local projects were successful and our teams have been working with communities to ensure they are delivered. Many of the projects have now been delivered and include measures such as speed limits, traffic calming, footway and safety improvements. Invitations for bids for the next round of Local Highway Improvement for 2013/14 were issued at the end of October and can be viewed online: <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/transport/localism/Minor+works+funding+opportunities.htm>

Many bids had been received by the closing date of 21/12/12 and these are currently being reviewed. Decision panels will be held in March 2013.

Improved IT services for libraries

Residents have started to benefit from free Wi-Fi in libraries and updated public computers. Two pilot sites, Cambourne and Milton Road Libraries, were completed last week and there has been good feedback about the new operating systems and the new free wireless internet. The roll out of IT upgrades to all Cambridgeshire libraries will begin in March, starting with Cambridge Central Library early next week.

“Read it Again!” Cambridgeshire Children’s Picture Book Award

The Eighth “Read it Again!” Cambridgeshire Children’s Picture Book Award will be launched **on World Book Day (7 March)**. “Read it Again!” is a unique award, judged by Cambridgeshire school children, for a debut picture book where the words and pictures are the work of one individual. Thousands of school children across the county will read, discuss and then vote for their favourite book from a shortlist of eight outstanding new titles. Three of the shortlisted authors are graduates from the children's book illustration course at Anglia Ruskin University. Votes will be counted at the end of June and the winner will be announced at a special presentation in early July to which around 250 local children are invited.

Book donations

Following the success of a book and magazine donation drive as part of National Libraries Day (9 February) at Shire Hall, the stock donation scheme will continue on a permanent basis. The service has so far received over £300 worth of stock, ranging from topical magazines to non-fiction thrillers. We will continue to encourage people to donate used

books and magazines in good condition. There is a collection box in Shire Hall, room 009. Staff and members of the public can also donate books at their local library at any time.

Public County Council meetings March

5	10.00ar	Cabinet	Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP
7	10.30ar	County Advisory Group for Archives and Local Studies	Huntingdon Library, Princes Street PE29 3PA
8	10.00ar	Constitution and Ethics Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP
14	10.30ar	Planning Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP
14	2.30pm	Resources and Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP
19	10.00ar	Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP
19	2.00pm	Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee	South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne CB23 6EA
20	10.30ar	Joint Development Control Committee: Cambridge Fringes	The Guildhall, Cambridge CB2 3QJ
20	2.00pm	Community Safety Strategic Board	Police HQ, Huntingdon PE29 6NP
20	2.30pm	Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP
21	2.00pm	Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel	Pathfinder House, Huntingdon PE29 3TN
26	10.30ar	County Council	Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP
27	9.30am	Enterprise, Growth and Community Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP
27	2.30pm	Audit and Accounts Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP
28	10.00ar	Pension Fund Board	Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 0AP
28	2.00pm	Cambridgeshire Children's Trust	Cambridge Regional College, Cambridge CB4 2QT

REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR JOHN REYNOLDS 6TH MARCH