

### **Connecting Cambridgeshire**

The 'Super Connected Cambridge' project has recently been awarded up to £5.2m from the Government's Urban Broadband Fund to bring faster connectivity in order to boost economic growth and support local businesses. This is in addition to the countywide investment in superfast broadband. The extra funding will help micro-, small- and medium-sized businesses in and around Cambridge with one-off payments towards the cost of connecting to high-speed broadband through a new voucher scheme, which is to be launched later this year. It will also improve high speed wireless services targeting WiFi "not spots" to increase coverage across the city and surrounding areas. Wireless providers will be invited to tender for a concession later this year.

Connecting Cambridgeshire has also been successful in its bid for £1.2 million from the European Regional Development Fund Regional Competitiveness Grant to deliver support for local businesses. This means a countywide support programme for small businesses will be delivered to assist with the adoption of broadband and broadband-enabled technologies – increasing productivity and creating jobs.

### **Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire**

Consultation is currently underway on the draft Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. This is being run alongside the consultations on Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council's draft Local Plans. The consultation period closes on the 30 September. The intention is for the Strategy to be adopted in early 2014 to support the submission of the draft Local Plans to the Planning Inspectorate.

### **Local Transport Body (LTB)**

DfT have confirmed that the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LTB will receive £14.1m in major transport schemes funding for 2015-19 – around 1/3 below the earlier indicative allocation of £21m. Further major schemes funding will form a major element of the Single Local Growth Fund. On the 17 July the Shadow Board agreed the priority schemes for submission to DfT.

The schemes and their allocations are:

- Ely Crossing (£6m)
- Kings Dyke crossing (£3m)
- Soham Rail Station (£1m)
- A1/A47 Junction 20 (£2m)
- Bourges Boulevard, Peterborough (£2.1m)

Madingley Rise bus priority and Chisholm Trail have been identified as reserve priority schemes where further work is needed to develop these, and it is intended to progress these as funding opportunities arise.

### **Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF)**

The first year of the LSTF programme has seen the delivery of a wide range of transport projects and the provision of over £1.1m of funding from the DfT. Last month the [www.smarttravelcambs.co.uk](http://www.smarttravelcambs.co.uk) journey planner was launched to support work in Ely to help people make quicker, cheaper and healthier journeys around the county.

### **Better Bus Area Fund (BBAF)**

The BBAF has allowed local partners – including bus operators – to work together to improve traffic flow, road safety and bus journey times in and around Cambridge. Two public consultations – on proposals for Histon Road and for Jesus Lane – closed in July, and the results are currently being analysed.

## Cambridgeshire Future Transport (CFT)

A programme of community engagement is underway and progress in the following areas is outlined below:

- **Area A (Linton/Balsham)** – A revised timetable has been agreed following a local public ballot. The contract is currently out to tender, with an estimated introduction date of the 28 October.
- **Area C (Villages south of the A428)** – Community support is currently strongest for a mixed scheduled and Demand-Responsive Transport (DRT) option. The next meetings are scheduled for early September.
- **Area D (Villages along the A10 Corridor)** – Two options are proposed for the corridor served by the 106 and 110 services. Further analysis of the pros and cons of each option is currently being undertaken. Following this, meetings will be held with local Members and working groups. The challenge for this area is that two very contrasting solutions have emerged and they do not overlap. Options for villages served by the 115,116,117,125 and 129 services are currently being costed, with this work to be completed in August.
- **Areas E (A14 corridor), F (A1 corridor), and G (Harston/Great Shelford/Barrington)** - Launch of the programme in these areas is now scheduled for September.

## Cambridge Science Park Station

The planning application was submitted in July and is now the subject of local consultation until the 11 August.

## Joint Strategic Planning Unit (JSPU)

The JSPU has recently published a Technical Report that clarifies the scale of new housing needed across Cambridgeshire to meet the objectively assessed need up to 2031. This also identifies the scale of growth needed in each District. The Technical Report has been instrumental in informing the preparation of each of the five local planning authorities' draft Local Plans. The JSPU has been commissioned and funded for the next six months to help develop the Local Growth Strategy for the LEP to enable funding from the Single Local Growth Fund to be drawn down from 2015/16.

## Local Plans

Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils published their revised draft Local Plans on the 19 July for a final round of public consultation. The key issues for the County Council remain the outstanding need to provide a new secondary school in north east Cambridge and the need to provide a household recycling centre to the south of Cambridge. Cabinet will consider a report on the proposed response at their meeting on the 10 September. The developers of the Alconbury Weald site have submitted an outline planning application for 5,000 homes. This is due to be considered by Cabinet on the 10 September, along with the infrastructure and funding formula needed to address this scale of growth.

## Eastern England Agri-Tech Initiative

On the 11 July Government announced £3.2m of funding to support the development of the agri-tech industry in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. The Eastern England Agri- Tec Growth Initiative was successful in the national Regional Growth Fund competition following a bid submitted by the LEP, in conjunction with New Anglia LEP. The initiative was developed by Cambridgeshire County Council and Norfolk County Council, working closely with Cambridge University and UEA, the Sainsbury Laboratories, National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB), the John Innes Centre and others. The initiative will bring together leading agriculture, research, science and technology assets in the area to develop a significant, vibrant cluster to bring a truly global reach, enhance employment opportunities across the rural areas of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, and improve the translation of research into increased productivity on the land, and help to address wider issues around food security.

## Energy

Consultants have been appointed to develop a Low Carbon Investment Fund for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as part of the Mobilising Local Energy Investment (MLEI) Project. A range of County Council energy projects are being scoped for their investment potential. An SME learning programme targeting Cambridgeshire's energy efficiency and retrofit supply chain is being developed by the Smartlife Retrofit Project. A tender is now live to procure a Green Deal provider for Cambridgeshire to ensure local benefits to the supply chain and local jobs. A draft tender is being developed for securing good energy deals for residents via a Collective Energy Switching Scheme for Cambridgeshire will be developed by autumn 2013.

Earlier approved proposals that would see part of the former cement works quarry at Barrington infilled with spoil brought in by rail now appears to be about to enter a significant implementation phase with the re-building of the Barrington Light Railway to accommodate full length mainline freight trains. Once the railway has been upgraded, trains will be able to access the quarry to unload the spoil. At the end of June the County Planning Committee resolved to grant planning permission for the tipping of inert waste into the quarry at Colne Fen to stabilise a former silt disposal area and to enhance the biodiversity of the restored quarry area.

## INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS - Waste

The Local Authorities are working together through the RECAP partnership to develop a joined up approach to waste collection and disposal. This has the potential to deliver significant savings for all partners and provide more joined up services. This year's annual Recycling Open Day at Amey Cespa's Waterbeach site took place on the 13 July and was great success. Approximately 1,000 visitors took part in the 'Journey Through Waste' to find out what happens to waste and recycling from collection to processing and beyond. The event catered to all ages with games and activities, demonstrations from the Cambridge Science Centre as well as guided coach tours, walking tours of the new Materials Recycling Facility and vehicle displays.

## Highways Maintenance

Atkins, who provide a substantial proportion of the Council's highways and transport services, are progressing with the proposed sale of their Highway Operations business to Skanska UK. Following detailed discussions with officers, they have now proposed to assign the operation of the contract to Skanska whilst retaining the overall responsibility for its performance. Council legal representatives are in discussions with the legal teams from both Atkins and Skanska to obtain the necessary guarantees and indemnities. A review will commence shortly of the Council's Highway Services from 2016, when the contract with Atkins expires. This review will take a "commissioning" approach, which places emphasis on outputs and outcomes for communities and seeks to ensure that the means of delivery is adaptable to future needs.

## Primary Authority Award

Following the Council's success in receiving the Primary Authority award for Local Authority of the Year, Aldi have now chosen to partner with Cambridgeshire to provide them with support and advice on business regulatory matters across the UK. The Primary Authority scheme is self-funding and also generates positive relationships with both large and small businesses, in addition to helping fulfil the Council's function in protecting consumers.

## Tour de France

Preparations are underway for next year's Tour de France Stage 3 start in Cambridge. Discussions continue with the organisers, other authorities, Yorkshire and UK Sport to identify a route for the stage. The Council has stated that no specific funding is available locally, but has committed to use staff time to help deliver a successful event and maximise opportunities for local businesses, schools and the wider community.

## **Future of Older People's Services**

The following social care services (approximately 200 staff), currently operated by CCS, will transfer to the Council on 1 October:

- Assessment and care management; and
- Discharge planning (social care elements).

The future arrangements need to be considered within the context of the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG's) current procurement exercise for older people's services. The Council will seek to agree the best way to secure long-term integrated arrangements with the future provider.

For this reason the Council plans to defer a decision on the future arrangements for Assistive Technology, Intermediate Care/Reablement and Occupational Therapy Services until the outcome of the CCG procurement is known. The Council has indicated a willingness to consider managing the integrated services in the future, but this will depend on the outcome of these discussions.

Therefore, there will be no transfer of staff from the Assistive Technology, Intermediate Care/Re-ablement and Occupational Therapy Services in October and the Council will make a decision on whether or not the social care elements of these services transfer to the Council once the CCG's procurement processes are complete. A CCS staff reference group has been established and will meet monthly to ensure that any issues identified can be raised, resolved and communicated to all staff.

## **One Assessment**

The new 'One Assessment' is being piloted within Children's Social Care from 15 July for 4 weeks. This replaces four separate forms, thereby reducing the amount of paperwork for social workers. It is expected to improve direct work with families and has an increased focus on risk from the child's perspective.

## **Social Work Units**

The phased roll out of Cambridgeshire's Social Work Unit Model began in January 2012. Once fully implemented, there will be a total of 46 Units working across four Social Work Functions including Access, Children in Need Units, Looked After Children and Children's Disability. There are currently 39 live Units in place. Inductions will be completed for the remaining seven Units by late September. The model will be fully implemented by October.

## **Working Together**

The Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 guidance requires the Council to draft a Local Protocol for Assessment, which is then to be ratified by the LSCB. Partners from across the LSCB network are collaborating with the Council in drafting this document, which will outline the expectations and roles for all agencies working with children in terms of their participation in the assessment of the child and their family. This is due to be completed in September. From 1 August all families that require assessment by Children's Social Care will have a family plan after 10 days and a family assessment complete within 45 working days of referral.

## **A new national curriculum**

Government has announced the final programmes of study for the national curriculum for 5- to 16-year-olds. The latest documents contain major revisions to February's consultation draft following strong engagement and debate within the sector, which saw 17,000 submissions during the consultation period. The new-look curriculum puts a stronger emphasis on skills such as "essay writing, problem solving, mathematical modelling and computer programming". The intention is to finalise the new national curriculum this autumn so that schools have a year to prepare to teach it from September 2014. This implementation timeline will be demanding.

## **Troubled Families funding to be extended beyond 2015**

The Government's Troubled Families programme will receive a further cash boost of £200 million, extending the life of the programme beyond the original 2015 deadline. The new funding will be available over 5 years from 2015 and Government hope it will see another 400,000 vulnerable families provided with intensive help to get to grips with their problems and change their lives for the better. The indication from Government is that the need funding will support a wider group of families with an earlier intervention focus before they reach the crisis points that would qualify them for the current Troubled Families programme.

## **Child Care Proposals & Consultations**

The Government published its 'More affordable childcare' report on 16 July, setting out its plans to help working parents access the childcare they need when they need it, in particular by:

- helping schools to offer affordable after school and holiday care, either alone or working with private and voluntary providers;
- enabling nurseries to expand by reducing red tape and removing planning restrictions;
- ensuring that childminders and nurseries that are good or outstanding can automatically receive Government funding for two, three and four year olds; and
- supporting parents to access more informal care.

Councils will no longer act as gatekeepers to early years funding for those childminders and nurseries judged by OfSTED to be good and outstanding – only retaining this responsibility for providers that have not yet met this benchmark. The Department for Education have also launched two consultations. One focuses on childcare regulation (ends 30 September) seeking views on reforming the regulatory system for childcare providers by removing burdens and simplifying processes, with a proposal to replace the general childcare register with a child safety register. The other focuses on primary assessment (ends 11 October), which asks whether there should be an earlier assessment in Key Stage 1 or in Reception.

## **Framework for delivery of traineeships for 16-19 year olds**

The Government has published a framework for the delivery for a new programme of traineeships, which aims to address the needs of young people and employers by providing a link between school or college and apprenticeships or sustainable work. The programme will begin in August for 16-19 year-olds, and will extend up to the age of 24 at a later date. Each traineeship will last up to six months and will conclude with a guaranteed interview with the work placement host, either for a job or a reference from their work placement. More information is available online.

## **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)**

The next phase of the JSNA will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board at its meeting in April 2014. The Board has a statutory responsibility to publish and keep up to date a statement of the needs for pharmaceutical services, referred to as Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA). This work will be closely aligned to the JSNA. The final PNA will be presented to the Board in January 2014. The topics for the next phase of JSNA will therefore be:

- Carers (all ages including young carers)
- Long term conditions (all ages)
- Older people – primary prevention
- Older People – mental health
- Adults of working age – mental health

In the longer term, the Board agreed the need for a JSNA on how local transport networks impact on public health and wellbeing.

## **Sexual health procurement**

Responsibility for the commissioning of the majority of NHS Sexual Health Services moved from the NHS to the County Council on the 1 April. Public Health officers are currently working with LGSS on the procurement of a countywide Integrated Sexual Health and Contraceptive Service. The key aims are to address the inequity in service provision between the north and the south of the county and to establish a modern easily accessible service where users can have both their sexual health and contraceptive needs met.

## **New rotavirus vaccination**

A new oral vaccine against rotavirus infection, a common cause of diarrhoea and sickness, is now available for babies as part of the NHS childhood vaccination programme for all babies born on or after the 1 May 2013. The NHS childhood vaccination programme is commissioned by NHS England. The programme has been implemented across Cambridgeshire and leaflets and flyers are available from the Department of Health. Copies have been sent to all Cambridgeshire Children's Centres, together with MMR leaflets and flyers. Data relating to local uptake will be collected by the Cambridgeshire Child Health Department and reported to Public Health England together with all other pre-school immunisations.

## **Business Plan**

Work on the 2014/15 Business Plan is in full flow with a published timetable issued to help guide officers on when tasks are required to be completed by, in order to ensure that the key deadline dates are met. A current major piece of work in the Plan is to undertake the public consultation, which is currently being finalised ready to be launched in the form of an online survey and face-to-face/telephone contact. The field work and online survey will be undertaken in September.

## **Creepy House - Summer Reading Challenge 2013**

The annual Summer Reading Challenge helps get around 7,500 local children into libraries to keep up their reading skills and confidence during the summer holidays. This year's theme is 'Creepy House', illustrated by the award-winning Chris Riddell. Children can join the challenge at their local library. Children will need to read six books from the library and there is a certificate and gold medal for everyone that finishes the challenge.

## **Six for Summer – Adult reading challenge**

There is also a summer reading challenge for adults called 'Six for Summer'. Readers need to borrow six books to read, either along with their children as they take part in the summer reading challenge, or simply to enjoy the challenge of finding and reading six books over the summer.

## **Local Government Finance Settlement consultation**

A technical consultation was published by Government on 25 July regarding the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2014/15 and 2015/16. The consultation closes on 2 October. The key proposals are:

- Reductions to Revenue Support Grant to reflect the reductions in local government funding announced in the Spending Round in June.
- The New Homes Bonus (NHB) of the Single Local Growth Fund to be pooled at the LEP level from Local Authorities' NHB revenue – either through each Authority pooling a flat proportion of its NHB revenue (around 35%), or by the upper-tier Authorities in two-tier areas pooling 100% and the lower-tier Authorities pooling the remainder (around 19% of their NHB revenue).
- Holding back additional funding from Revenue Support Grant to meet the need for 'Safety Net' payments under the Business Rates Retention Scheme.

## **County Councillor John Reynolds**