

REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR JOHN REYNOLDS 2ND OCTOBER

YOU CHOOSE HOW TO SPEND COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET

Residents are being put in the budget setting driving seat by Cambridgeshire County Council.

'You Choose' is a county-wide survey, launched to ask residents to put themselves in the seat of councillors in making decisions where to invest and save money.

Cambridgeshire County Council is expected to make further savings over the next year of around £39 million. This is following savings of £42 million last year, and a further £32 million this current financial year. These savings have to be made whilst supporting and investing in services such as adult social care, protecting children, boosting the economy and looking after roads and transport.

Cambridgeshire Residents are being asked to give us their views on where we should be saving money, through an online consultation and face-to-face surveys. The consultation is set up to appear as a budget simulator, allowing residents to show the County Council what decisions they would make regarding Council Tax levels and individual service levels and budgets.

It means residents will deal with similar choices and pressures to those councillors face when trying to balance the budget. This year the budget has to be balanced with 7.1 per cent less money from Government and increased pressures on services from inflation and rising demography. It has been designed to be easy to use so that people can see what effects their decisions have. No decisions have been made by the Council and the choices and options are indicative of some of the issues being faced.

If people are unable to complete the web survey at <http://www.youchoose.yougov.com/Cambridgeshire> <<http://www.youchoose.yougov.com/Cambridgeshire%20>> comments about the Council's priorities or ideas for delivering services better or more efficiently can be sent to:

Research & Performance Team: Budget Consultation, SH1306 Shire Hall,
Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP

Local Councillor John Reynolds said: "Councils across the land have some hard decisions to make and we want Cambridgeshire residents to have a big say in ours. You Choose puts residents at the heart of the decision making, having to face the challenges we do to balance the budget. No decisions have been made at this point, but like last year, the suggestions and priorities indicated by residents will help shape the budget.

"The County Council services are very wide-ranging and touch everyone's lives. From looking after young people and adults during vulnerable periods in their lives to maintaining the County's roads and recycling rubbish. But with less money from Government and increasing demographic and inflation pressures we have to find millions of pounds in savings while delivering front line services.

"The County Council has worked hard to be efficient and we saved £42 million last year, and a further £32 million this current financial year. But next year we have to find further savings of £39 million. You Choose is an easy to use survey which will put residents right at the heart of making those decisions and we can use this to help shape our budget and priorities for the future."

INSPIRATIONAL FILM TO BE SHOWN IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE LIBRARIES TO HELP OLDER PEOPLE GET ACTIVE

Cambridgeshire Libraries have joined up to the Ping Pong Care Campaign 2013 to help older people to get active in a fun way.

Ely, Huntingdon and St Ives libraries will be holding screenings of the inspirational film "Ping Pong" about a group of octogenarians who take part in the over 80's World Table Tennis Championships in Inner Mongolia. There will also be a table set up so that people can have a little try of table tennis after the screening.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds said "The film really is an inspiration for how more active lifestyles can be possible in later life. Ping Pong could become an activity that enables older people to stay active and healthy whilst having fun at the same time. We hope these short taster sessions will prove popular and we could look to run volunteer ping pong sessions in the future."

On the day, information will also be available in the library on local clubs and leisure centres.

The screenings and taster sessions will run on the following:

Huntingdon - Wednesday 16 October, 10am-12pm

St Ives - Thursday 7 November, 2-4pm

Ely - Tuesday 12 November, 2-4pm

CASH BOOST FOR VILLAGES IN SOUTH CAMBS TO IMPROVE BUS SERVICES

Residents in South Cambridgeshire are being given the chance to improve bus stops and other facilities in their village. Cambridgeshire County Council was successful in bidding for a £1.7m pot of funding from Government for a range of projects for better bus services. It is now asking for ideas from the 90 parish councils in South Cambridgeshire on how they would like to see £40,000 of it spent. But they will need to move quickly, as suggestions will need to be submitted by Monday, 4 November.

Successful bidders will be given the opportunity to develop their plans and establish project costs so that work can be implemented by the Government's deadline of 31 March 2014. Ideas could include new bus shelters, bicycle parking and real-time displays.

Funding has been provided by the Department for Transport under its Better Bus Area Fund and is being administered by the County Council. The criteria for use of this funding means that it can only be used in South Cambridgeshire.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds said: "This is a great opportunity for villages in South Cambridgeshire to see real improvements to their bus facilities. This could include new weatherproof shelters, more places to lock up bikes and keep them secure, and real time journey displays which have proved to be very popular in other parts of the county.

"It's a tight deadline so I would urge people in South Cambridgeshire to get in touch with their parish councillors with any good ideas as soon as possible. Don't miss out!"

For more information and/or to find out how to submit an expression of interest, please contact Cambridgeshire County Council Transport Delivery Team via email transport.delivery@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or telephone 01223 699906.

Funding has been provided by the Department for Transport under its Better Bus Area Fund and is being administered by the County Council. The criteria for use of this funding means that it can only be used in South Cambridgeshire and that priority may be given to areas along the busiest transport routes to Cambridge.

Improvements can include:

Bus Shelters

Providing a bus shelters can make bus travel considerably more comfortable and can encourage new users.

Real time information displays

Allow passengers to know precisely when the next bus will arrive.

Cambridgeshire County Council is investing significantly in the technology that provides this real time information, so that the most accurate and reliable information is displayed at bus stops.

Cycle parking

Good cycle parking facilities can encourage people from further afield to use local bus services. Cycle racks and hard surfacing if not in an existing footway are minimum requirements, but covered cycle parking may be an option.

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GET READY FOR “STOPTOBER”

National campaign calls for all smokers in Cambridgeshire to join a 28-day quitting challenge. During October, smokers in Cambridgeshire are being encouraged to take part in the first ever mass quit attempt launched by the Department of Health – Stoptober. We know that if you can stop smoking for 28 days you are five times more likely to stay smokefree, and Stoptober leads smokers through a detailed step-by-step programme to help them achieve this goal.

CAMQUIT, your local stop smoking service, wants you to start your planning now and make an appointment early. CAMQUIT were inundated with extra people asking for support last year, so don't miss out and contact CAMQUIT early to make a booking. Claire Mead, CAMQUIT co-ordinator, said: “You're up to five times more likely to succeed in quitting if you get help. We are a team of professional support advisors who understand that quitting smoking is different for everyone. Last year more people than ever stopped smoking with NHS support in Cambridgeshire, with nearly 4000 people giving up.

We are very happy to support this campaign and have increased our clinics over the course of the campaign. Willpower alone isn't always enough so ring CAMQUIT your local NHS stop smoking service for support. CAMQUIT can provide support in a variety of settings, including your GP surgery, your local Pharmacy, your workplace or even over the phone. Ring 0800 018 4304 or visit www.camquit.nhs.uk to find out how.”

The campaign includes a preparation pack, 28-day Quit Calendar and Health & Wealth wheel. Smokers will also receive support and encouragement through a daily messaging service, inspiration from celebrity mentors, and expert advice via:

- Stoptober app (available via Smartphone)
- Motivational text messages
- Facebook page

Local County Councillor John Reynolds said: "A major priority for the County Council is improving the health and wellbeing of our community - regardless of their age. I would absolutely support this new campaign which will help cut the number of people who smoke and reduce the possible health problems it can cause."

Longer-term, those who stop smoking reduce their risk of heart disease and lung cancer as well as protecting others from their second hand smoke. Smoking is one of the biggest cause of premature death in Cambridgeshire and each year it accounts for over 100,000 deaths in the UK and one in two long-term smokers will die prematurely from a smoking disease.

Stoptober 2013 kicks off on Monday 1 October and runs for 28 days. For more information and to join the biggest stop smoking challenge of its kind, visit smokefree.nhs.uk/Stoptober or contact CAMQUIT on 0800 018 4304.

BLUE PLAQUE AND NEW BIOGRAPHY OF HENRY MORRIS

A blue plaque has been unveiled in Cambridge in recognition of one of the country's greatest educational reformists. The plaque, in memory of Henry Morris, was unveiled at Darwin College at on Monday 30 September. Henry Morris lived at the Old Granary in Silver Street - now part of Darwin.

This coincides with the publication of a new biography of Henry Morris, the Chief Education Officer who set up the Cambridgeshire Village Colleges, and pioneered the concept of Community Education. His vivid phrase 'Education from the cradle to the grave' will appear on the blue plaque at Darwin College.

When he became Chief Education Officer in 1922, Cambridgeshire was the second poorest county in England and had no secondary schools. The network of Village Colleges around Cambridge reflects the magnitude of Henry Morris's achievement.

The new biography has been written by David Rooney, a former warden of Swavesey Village College. Mr Rooney, who retired in 1985, now lives in Willingham. Published by the Henry Morris Memorial Trust, all proceeds from the book will go to the Trust, which awards travel grants to young people in Cambridgeshire aged between 13 and 19.

Copies of the book will be available to buy from Village Colleges and secondary schools across the county, as well as the main Reception at Shire Hall in Castle Hill, Cambridge.

Local County Councillor said: "Henry Morris was probably the most important educational thinker and reformist of the 20th century and the legacy of his vision can be seen thriving today across the village colleges of Cambridgeshire and beyond.

David Rooney has done a first-class job of capturing the flaws and brilliance of this unique individual who did so much to shape the influences of the many young people who have passed through Cambridgeshire's education system over the past 80 years.

"I am also extremely grateful to Darwin College for recognising the huge significance of Henry Morris and agreeing to erect a blue plaque at the College in recognition of his achievements."

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HELP WEED OUT ROGUE TRADER GARDENERS

Cambridgeshire County Council's Trading Standards is warning residents to beware of rogue traders offering tree and gardening services on behalf of local garden centres. The rogues have been leafleting Cambridgeshire homes, using the garden centre trading names on the flyers and providing false trading addresses - when in fact they have no connection with the legitimate businesses.

Cambridgeshire's Head of Trading Standards Nikki Pasek, said: "Whilst there are a wide range of reputable, honest garden services operating in the county, unfortunately it continues to be a sector favoured by rogue traders. These rogues tend to find work by calling door to door and leafleting.

"We would advise against using a trader who calls at your door. If you want to use one of the gardening services operated by a particular garden centre, contact that garden centre direct for details. Alternatively, use a gardener or handyman on our Buy with Confidence approved trader scheme www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk<<http://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk>>, or go on recommendation from a friend or neighbour."

Householders are advised to always get more than one quote to ensure the price is reasonable, ensure quotes are given in writing outlining exactly what work is included in the price and ensure they are aware of their contract obligation and cancellation rights.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds said: "The County Council's Trading Standards Service plays an important role, not only in protecting Cambridgeshire residents from the rogues, but also protecting local businesses. "The garden centres concerned have worked hard to build a good reputation and gain the trust of their customers, and these rogues are looking to take advantage of that, potentially jeopardising their good name."

Anyone who has been approached by a rogue trader, or think they are operating in their area, should contact Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0845 404 0506, who will pass the information on to the relevant Trading Standards team.

PLANS FOR A SAFER CROSSING ON A10 AT LANDBEACH

A consultation on proposals to create a safer way for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the busy A10 north of Cambridge has been launched today by Cambridgeshire County Council. The improvements follow on from the new £240,000 dual use path built earlier this year between the villages of Milton and Landbeach.

The council is asking for feedback on two crossing designs. The first involves closing the slip lane to Milton, narrowing the Cambridge bound carriageway and creating a two stage crossing across the A10. The second option is to widen the existing triangular island in the middle of the A10 to create three crossing points. Both designs include extending the dual footpath and cycleway to the sewage station and Landbeach Road.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds said "The new path has already encouraged more people to walk or cycle, especially commuters to the Cambridge Research Park and to the Science Park and Cambridge

The proposals are likely to cost around £130,000 and will be financed from developer funding.

An online survey and more detailed information on the scheme is available at: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/a10-crossing

CONNECTING CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The 'my area' pages have gone live and a news release has been issued by Connecting Cambridgeshire to raise awareness of the new online tool which can be found at www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk

We can confirm that the programme is currently on track to deliver the first cabinets as part of the intervention programme. Some areas show broad timescales because they are covered by more than one phase. Work to connect premises will progress incrementally from the first date. We will be regularly updating the information, which will become more precise as the roll-out progresses.

We are working with the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to ensure that broadband services will be available from as wide a range of providers as possible. We realise not all ISPs will offer superfast services in all areas. However, we will be sharing Cambridgeshire's uniquely high demand registration levels with them to demonstrate the opportunities and drive market competition to offer affordable services.

We are aiming to deliver superfast broadband to as many premises as possible, however we are aware that many people are struggling with broadband speeds under 2Mbps so it is important to reassure them that they will be able to get better broadband speeds of at least 2 Mbps - and in many cases much faster.

As many of you have recognised, the launch of the 'my area' pages is just the start and we hope it will prove to be a valuable resource as the programme progresses and we are able to add more details. It's a positive sign that the fibre broadband roll-out really is underway – even if some have to wait a bit longer than others.

Please email the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme team at contact@connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk if you have any queries.

MANAGEMENT PAY REVIEW AGREED

Cambridgeshire County Council's Remuneration Committee have supported proposals to increase pay for staff earning over £28,000. But at less than the one per cent increase agreed nationally for 2013/14 for the significant majority of Council staff and other public servants like doctors, nurses, the armed forces and civil servants.

The Council reviews and sets pay locally for staff on its management band pay scales. This includes more than 1,000 staff such as senior social workers, children centre managers and engineers working in frontline services.

All staff at Cambridgeshire County Council have had pay frozen for three years. Unlike other public sector workers and lower paid Council staff, those staff employed on the Council's management band have also had any progression up their individual pay scales frozen.

The cross-party Committee of Councillors supported a proposal put forward by the Chief Executive for management band pay, up to head of service, to receive a 0.8 per cent cost of living pay rise - but below the one per cent for other staff. The freeze on progression up pay scales will continue. This will cost the Council £321,000.

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