

## County Councillor Monthly Report - Sawston & Shelford Division

(includes Sawston, Little and Great Shelfords, Stapleford, Babraham, South Trimpington, Hauxton, Harston, Newton and Haslingfield)

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### BE WINTER WISE

Be Winter Wise returns for the winter season, helping Cambridgeshire residents keep warm, safe and healthy throughout the colder months.

The focus of the campaign is on preventing winter illnesses, coping with the cost of living, and staying safe during the winter weather. It will provide practical help and guidance with the issues that face so many people at this time of year.

The Cambridgeshire County Council campaign will have advice on:

- Help with the cost of living such as warm hubs and Pension Credit
- Ways to protect your health, including vaccinations
- Tips on how to heat your home efficiently
- Where to find free physical activities for all the family
- Advice on preparing for extreme weather, such as freezing and flooding
- Winter gritting schedules and staying safe on our roads

Supermarket vouchers will once again be available for children eligible for free school meals during the school holidays, and the council will be signposting to partner organisations who provide essential winter support.

Social media posts will feature campaign motif Olly the Owl.

### FULL COUNCIL

The council debated four motions proposed by councillors, and agreed them all unanimously.

1. A call for fairer police funding and awareness of domestic abuse. Cambridgeshire is the fourth lowest funded police force in the country, and local taxpayers fund around half of Cambridgeshire's policing budget.
2. A proposal seeking changes to planning processes in cases where schemes are delivered over many years yet planning designs and decisions are not able to be changed to accommodate new situations.
3. A proposal about safety risks from lithium-ion batteries in items such as e-bikes and e-scooters, for householders and for waste collection and disposal crews. It endorses the work being done by Lord Foster and the charity Electrical Safety First to seek to ensure third party independent approval testing for these items entering the UK market, regulations for safe disposal of used lithium-ion batteries, and controls to address specific fire concerns such as charging points.
4. A proposal for a review of the aftermath of National Highways' project on the A14 so that issues are clear and documented, and calling for National Highways to be more responsive and to resolve outstanding matters.

The council also agreed:

- To apply to Government for a Transport & Works Act Order to progress the Cambridge South East Transport project for a busway between a new travel hub near the A1307 / A11 and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.



- To establish a new Shareholder Sub-Committee of the council's Assets & Procurement Committee, to improve governance and accountability where the council is a shareholder with a significant holding.

## **QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY**

Most Cambridgeshire residents continue to feel happy and safe in the county, well connected to their local communities, and believe it's a great place to raise children, according to the County Council's second annual Quality of Life survey.

However, cost of living remains the issue of most concern, with almost half of residents using less heating, and a quarter cutting back on nutritious food in the past twelve months.

The survey was commissioned from national independent market research agency Think Insights. This year the council carried out this work in partnership with Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, South Cambridgeshire District Council, and Cambridge Ahead.

5,500 residents took part in the survey—1,100 in each of Cambridgeshire's five districts to give a representative view across the county.

In addition to the survey, this year the council engaged with some specific groups including those with lived experience of homelessness, the criminal justice system and drug or alcohol dependency as well as those under the age of 18. A general online public survey allowed any resident to take part.

The council will use the survey to increase its understanding of what is important to local residents and to inform council decisions.

### **In numbers**

- 72% of residents have high or very high levels of happiness. The average happiness score was 7.21, higher than the national average 7.0.
- Residents continue to feel positively about their local community; 85% feel safe and 75% feel they belong.
- Fewer residents report struggling with mental health this year (29% down from 37%) and a lower proportion report issues with physical health (31% down from 40%).
- Significant numbers of young people (43% of 25–34-year-olds and 40% of 18–24-year-olds) continue to be more likely to report mental health struggles.
- The proportion of residents reporting that they often feel lonely remains higher than national data, at 31% of residents.
- Younger residents are again more likely to report loneliness (53% of 18-24 year olds).
- Cost of living remains residents' highest concern, with 87% of residents concerned this year.

## **BUDGET**

The council's current position forecasts an overspend of £9.6M for the current financial year (2% of the total budget). The county council's estimated budget gap for next year (2025/26) has increased from £23.5M to more than £39M, largely due to a combination of increasing demand for services, inflationary pressures, and uncertainty over future funding from Government.

Over the last ten years, the council's core government funding has reduced by 70% in real terms. Combined with more steep rises in inflation and a surge in demand for services supporting some of our most vulnerable residents, this has added further cost pressures to the council.

## **THE ROSIE MATERNITY HOSPITAL**

At their recent meeting, the Adults & Health committee received a report on maternity services at the Rosie in Cambridge. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspected two 'domains' (Safe and Well Led) at the Rosie in May 2023. Safe care was rated as 'Requires Improvement', with Well Led receiving 'Good'. The CQC issued one 'must do' and '13' should do actions.

The report covered developments in training, staffing, wait times, and the CQC's finding that 'Maternity staff felt respected, but did not always feel supported and valued'. It also considered how service user feedback was encouraged and used to influence improvement, and how the Rosie benefits from and shares learning.

## **POVERTY STRATEGY COMMISSION**

A new commission involving organisations from across Cambridgeshire has been launched to tackle poverty in the county.

The Cambridgeshire Poverty Strategy Commission will work independently to make recommendations to partners across the county who are supporting people currently in, or at risk of, poverty.

A group of eleven independent commissioners with extensive professional experience supporting residents will:

- look at data and evidence relating to poverty in Cambridgeshire and how the system currently responds
- hear from residents who have personally experienced poverty
- produce a series of recommendations for local organisations to consider as an approach to recognising and tackling poverty

The commission will meet regularly and determine what it will focus on within the timescales. It will deliver a report in early 2025 which will include a review of the evidence submitted and a set of recommendations.

## **PENSION CREDIT**

A campaign has been launched to make sure everyone who is eligible for Pension Credit in Cambridgeshire is claiming it.

Pension Credit is extra money to help with living costs for those over State Pension age and on a low income. It could mean an extra £186 per month for the average household.

In Cambridgeshire as many as one in three people who are eligible for Pension Credit may not be claiming it. Cambridgeshire County Council is appealing to everyone who may be eligible to check.

Claiming Pension Credit can also unlock other benefits, such as the Winter Fuel Payment, a free TV licence for those aged over 75, help with NHS dental treatment, glasses and hospital transport costs and other benefits depending on circumstances.

Pensioners can get a Winter Fuel Payment this year if they are entitled to Pension Credit at any point between 16 and 22 September 2024.

To be eligible for Pension Credit, you must:

- live in the UK
- be over State Pension age
- have a weekly income below £218.15 if you're single, or £332.95 if you're part of a couple.

The county council has set up a dedicated webpage with advice, guidance, and links to Government websites where people can check if they are eligible and apply for Pension Credit

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/pension-credit>

## **ROAD CLOSURES FOR REMEMBRANCE EVENTS**

The council has produced a toolkit to raise awareness of the support available from the Council for those organising Remembrance events. This consists of waiving the fee for any Temporary Traffic Regulation Order, and providing access to free training for traffic management volunteers.

## **THE BUS FRANCHISE CONSULTATION**

The Combined Authority's bus franchising consultation closes on 20 November 2024. [Bus franchising consultation - CPCA](#)

## EAST WEST RAIL CONSULTATION

East West Rail (EWR) have announced that their Non-Statutory Consultation will begin on 14 November 2024, closing on 24 January 2025. More information, including details of consultation events, can be found at <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024>

**Flooding: emergency numbers. If there is an imminent risk to life please dial 999**

Division	Contact Number	1 <sup>st</sup> point of contact	2 <sup>nd</sup> point of contact	3 <sup>rd</sup> point of contact
West	07887 634348	West	South	Fenland
City	07721 819811	City	South	East
East	07721 819827	East	Fenland	City
Fenland	07500 816896	Fenland	East	West
South	07887 634289	South	City	West

## LHIs: Next year's application round

- Application window opens: Friday 1 November 2024
- Application window closes: Friday 10 January 2025
- Feasibility studies undertaken: February—May 2025
- Panel meetings: June—July 2025
- Report to committee including prioritised list for approval: October 2025

**Local Highway Improvement home page, measures and indicative costs – [Local Highway Improvement funding | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)**

**Application form and associated guidance – [Applying for a Local Highway Improvement \(LHI\) | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)**