

County councillor's monthly report for December 2018

For the Histon and Impington (H&I) county council division of Cambridgeshire which also includes King's Meadow and Orchard Park.

Full Council meeting

There was a meeting of Full Council but I was unable to attend (I was on holiday; see below). It was a fractious meeting with little formal business but two motions relating to the matter of Officers being required to take unpaid leave between Xmas and New Year and the (Tory) proposal that Councillors do likewise. Because I could not attend I wrote to the Leader of the Council with my opinion. Go to <https://wp.me/p7tuu7-1PX> for a copy of my letter.

Committee meetings and other council matters

Adults: there was one key decision relating to £2.4 million extra funding received to 'alleviate winter pressures in the NHS'. There's an unfortunate cause and effect in the NHS whereby people get stuck in beds because there's nowhere for them to go and this means that people are held up in A&E because there's no beds for them to go into. Many of the people with nowhere to go are simply waiting to go home and there's insufficient capacity in the social care system to accommodate them. Hence this extra funding.

Children & Young People: there was one key decision relating to the need to procure a Construction Consultants' Framework to support the delivery of the Council's Education Capital programme. The current arrangement ends later this year and it is recommended that the Council procure its own framework. Note that this was done by LGSS and then later in partnership with Northamptonshire and so represents an unravelling of a degree of cross county collaboration.

There is a developing issue relating to the escalating cost of Special Education Needs. This is funded out of the Dedicated Schools Grant but because there's a shortfall the Schools Forum (a CCC committee) has chosen to move monies from the payments to schools for basic needs. This will take about £7500 away from the funding for a small 2 forms of entry primary school.

Commercial & Investment: there were no key decisions however under the agenda item relating to finance and performance reporting it was agreed to 'recommend to GPC to approve £183K of prudential borrowing for the Manor Farm, Girton – house extension project, together with revised tenancy terms'. Later it has emerged that the tenant is a county councillor and was chair of the working group looking at the future of County Farms. Does it look fishy?

Communities & Partnerships: there were no key decisions (again).

General Purposes: there was one key decision relating to integrated financial and performance reporting and within that the loan to the tenant of Manor Farm, Girton was approved. The tenant was identified as Roger Hickford, deputy leader of the council who did declare an interest and left the room whilst this matter was debated.

The committee was also advised that for the 2019/20 budget basic council tax may be increased by up to 3% (in addition to the 2% adult social care precept) and that there will be no 'negative revenue support grant' as had previously been suggested but that a possible and favourable 'business rates partnership' would not happen.

Health: there was one key decision whereby it was agreed to adopt a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for the contractual arrangements that Cambridgeshire County Council Public Health has with

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its primary care providers. This decision was carried over from the November meeting when the committee decided that it had insufficient information to make it.

Highways & Community Infrastructure and Environment & Economy: there was the same key decision at both committees. As I said last month I don't know why E&E and H&CI committees can't be combined, often they get identical papers. It would save a couple of councillor special allowances and a lot of officer time. This key decision relates to funding which CCC gets from the Combined Authority and specifically to the £3.2 million 'integrated transport block' part of it.

Planning: There were no applications of interest to H&I.

Health & Well Being Board: the Board did not meet. Note that the new chair is Roger Hickford.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership Assembly did not meet. The Executive Board did meet and 'supported' the latest designs for the Histon Road improvements which will now proceed to final design.

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, the Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Panel and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority did not meet.

Consultations relevant to this division (and elsewhere)

Consultation	Purpose/object	Due date and link
Setting school term dates	The proposed term date timetable for schools for the academic year 2020/2021.	13 Jan 18 https://bit.ly/2zJE5pk

More local matters

I attended a meeting of the A14 action group and, subsequently, a liaison meeting of the A14 contractors, local councillors and activists, district council officers.

I attended the Finance Committee meeting at H&I Parish Council and secured support for the no parking controls at King's Meadow.

I met parish councillors and county and parish officers to review plans for Buxhall Farm school

I visited a resident who'd unfortunately been a victim of a burglary. It's the invasion of one's home that's the most disturbing and it behoves us all, when we are leaving our houses vacant, to do what we can to make them unattractive to the potential burglar. Reduced police budgets and patchy street lighting don't help and there are mixed opinions re burglar alarms but I reckon that good external lighting is not a bad deterrent.

And finally ... I took a week out early in the month for a holiday in Oman. It's an interesting place and quite different from its neighbours: Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. It's been run by the Sultan for 50 years and he appears to have done rather a good job. There's free universal healthcare and education, an excellent road system (no potholes!) and, apparently no crime. Visitors tend only to see the good side however and I was uncomfortable with a system which is tolerant of men taking multiple wives and one which so severely constrains the lives of women. However alongside its conservatism is a pragmatism that allows alcohol in hotels and some restaurants and bacon on the breakfast buffet. There's more about my trip at <https://wp.me/phtcF-NE> and a photo gallery at <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmsGKzvl>.

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10 Jan	1000	Economy & Environment Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
10 Jan	1400	Adults Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
15 Jan	1400	Children and Young People Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
15 Jan	1000	*Highways & Community Infrastructure	Shire Hall, Cambridge
17 Jan	1400	*Health Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
17 Jan	1000	Communities & Partnership	Shire Hall, Cambridge
18 Jan	1000	*Commercial & Investments Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
22 Jan	1000	*General Purposes Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
24 Jan	1000	Planning Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
30 Jan	1400	Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Panel	FDC office, March
30 Jan	1000	Health & Wellbeing Board	Shire Hall, Cambridge
30 Jan	1000	C&P Combined Authority	City Hall, Peterborough
5 Feb	1030	Full Council	Shire Hall, Cambridge
7 Feb	1400	Cambridgeshire Fire Authority	Hinchingbrooke Park
8 Feb	1030	Full Council	Shire Hall Cambridge
27 Feb	1400	Greater Cambridge Partnership Assembly	Shire Hall, Cambridge
20 Mar	1600	Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board	SCDC offices, Cambourne

*committees of which I am currently a member; these may change. Note that the Council's diary is now online https://cmis.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ccc_live/Meetings.aspx. Shaded dates are reserve.