

County councillor's monthly report for January 2019

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

Full Council meeting

This report is being written a little late to enable me to include an update on the Council's budget meeting early in February. Normally such meetings are a big debate about the level of council tax to be levied. This year it's been different because the Council has such major 'savings' to be made it was a no brainer to go for the max of 2.99% plus 2% for adult social care. The Council is also raiding its piggy bank to use £9 million from its 'smoothing reserve' and a further £1.3 million by another rephrasing of its 'minimum revenue provision' (the means by which councils put money aside to fund debt service). It was a fractious meeting. My account it at <https://wp.me/p7tuu7-1Qk>.

Committee meetings and other council matters

It was another lean month with several committee meetings which included no key decisions.

Adults: there were two key decisions. The first relates to the second work stream of a three-stream approach to securing extra care home bed capacity through stimulating market activity. The second relates to the extension of existing practice for the procurement of 'Discharge & Transition Cars' which are used to bridge the transition of people into mainstream homecare.

Children & Young People: there was one key decision relating to the Residential Short Breaks for Disabled Children Contract which expires Oct 19. It will be extended for just one year to allow alternative approaches to be considered.

Commercial & Investment: there were one key decision relating to a solar farm project on County Farm land at Mere Farm. It is a good project and will go ahead with no external funding.

At the same meeting I raised a question about This Land. I have seen its 2019 business plan and it raises questions regarding its alignment with its shareholder's (that's CCC) objectives. We are to have an opportunity to ask about it before February's committee meeting.

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

General Purposes: the committee failed to deliver on the one key decision which it could have made. For reasons best known to themselves the Tories, who have a majority on the committee, chose not to recommend a balanced budget but to leave that to amendments at full council (see above).

Health: there were no key decisions.

Highways & Community Infrastructure: there were no key decisions. However during the month £6.1 million funding was announced by central government to be spent before the end of the financial year. Over £100K of this will be used to finish off the resurfacing of the B1049 south of the Busway.

Environment & Economy: there was one key decision relating to funding which CCC gets from the Combined Authority and specifically to the £3.2 million 'integrated transport block' part of it. This is the same decision as the one which went to H&I in December.

Options have been announced for the proposed Cambridge to Oxford railway.

Planning: the committee did not meet. There is also no meeting scheduled for February but the March one can be expected to include the application for Buxhall Farm primary school.

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Health & Well Being Board: the Board met but the minutes of the meeting have not yet been posted. I note that it was remarkably well attended with some officers attending who'd not attended before.

Neither the Greater Cambridge Partnership Assembly nor the Executive Board met.

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority met. Inter alia it considered the report on its 'strategic bus review'. Which now recommends that the '...strategy to follow would be to start engaging with operators to investigate an Enhanced Partnership in the short term, while developing a Business Case for the assessment of a long term delivery models including Enhanced partnerships and franchising considerations that achieve the Combined Authorities need for investment back into its networks and offers flexibility to support economic growth over the short medium and long term'. You wonder why that didn't emerge from the strategic review but then consultants have always been good at recommending that more work be done. And by themselves of course.

The Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Panel met and endorsed the Police Commissioner's proposal to raise its precept by £2/month, an increase of about 12%. It is said that this increase will fund an extra 50 police officers.

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority did not meet.

Consultations relevant to this division (and elsewhere)

Consultation	Purpose/object	Due date and link
	There is only one current consultation which related to Soham library opening hours.	

More local matters

I joined county officers and parish councillors to review pollution issues regarding the Buxhall Farm school plans. Later in the month I joined a CCC planning committee site visit.

I met county officers and A14 engineers to press for improvements to plans for the B1049/A14 junction cycle and pedestrian approaches

I met the owners/developers of the School Hill site to review plans for the library in the new development. I subsequently met county officers to make sure that they were moving ahead with 'deliberate speed'.

I attended the launch of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Business & IP Centre in Cambridge Central Library. I was able to meet a lead Director from CIVIC and reinforce the case for Histon library to be included in the CIVIC program.

And finally ... There's a lot of it about. I seem to pick up a virus most years and although it never lays me low it hangs around. This year's been no different but I seem to be OK now so I'm not grumbling. But I do note how many people seem to have been laid low and a lot more seriously than me. Is it getting worse? I can't help but think that prevailing levels of air pollutions have an impact and as these get worse we're all going to get sick more often, absenteeism at our schools and work places will increase and NHS costs will rise. As they say 'something must be done'.

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7 Feb	1000	Economy & Environment Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
7 Feb	1400	*Health Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
7 Feb	1400	Cambridgeshire Fire Authority	Hinchingbrooke Park
12 Feb	1400	Children and Young People Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
12 Feb	1000	*Highways & Community Infrastructure	Shire Hall, Cambridge
14 Feb	1400	Adults Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
14 Feb	1000	Communities & Partnership	Shire Hall, Cambridge
22 Feb	1000	*Commercial & Investments Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
26 Feb	1000	*General Purposes Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
27 Feb	1000	C&P Combined Authority	City Hall, Peterborough
27 Feb	1400	Greater Cambridge Partnership Assembly	Shire Hall, Cambridge
13 Mar	1400	Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Panel	FDC office, March
19 Mar	1030	Full Council	Shire Hall, Cambridge
20 Mar	1600	Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board	SCDC offices, Cambourne
21 Mar	1000	Planning Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
28 Mar	1000	Health & Wellbeing Board	Shire Hall, Cambridge

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