

## County Councillor Report for Parishes – April 2024 – Cllr Anna Bradnam

### County Full Council

On 19 March we received reports on Council pay, pay policy and pay gaps.

Three motions were passed:

1. To ensure our Armed Forces Covenant Officer is properly resourced; and to seek government support for veterans, Afghan refugees, and dependents of Commonwealth veterans.
2. To ask the government to introduce a proportional voting system for Police & Crime Commissioners and Mayors, and to improve public understanding of tiers of local government and increase participation of young people in local elections.
5. To ask government to commit to making the benefits of growth in Greater Cambridge accessible to all residents of Cambridgeshire, to commit to essential infrastructure and services, to establish ambitious targets for affordable housing, and invest in training and education.

**Council composition:** following the by-election in Yaxley & Farcet, the Liberal Democrat group is now the largest on the council. The composition of the council is as follows. Liberal Democrats 23, Conservatives 22, Labour 9, Independents 4, Non-aligned 3.

### Development Corporation to shape Cambridge

The government has published details of its plans for a huge expansion of Cambridge and the areas around it. 'The Case for Cambridge' contains plans for 150,000 more houses in and around Cambridge. [The Case for Cambridge - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-case-for-cambridge)

The Government's spring budget included £10.2M for the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and transport to it, namely the Cambridge South East Transport or CSET project.

Water scarcity has been recognised by the Environment Agency as a major obstacle to growth in this area; the Government's proposal is to pilot a system of 'water credits' where 'developers can offset their development through the purchase and sale of water credits to ensure they have a neutral impact on water scarcity within Cambridge'. Personally I do not find this a convincing solution.

In 2023 the government appointed the head of Homes England, Peter Freeman to lead a **new Development Corporation** called the **Cambridge Delivery Group** to deliver the government's vision for Cambridge. This will add yet another layer to our already multiple layers of governance and will see a new and unaccountable body deciding the future of the City. Some locally elected representatives will be on an advisory board, but it seems decisions will be taken elsewhere.

### STRATEGY RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE Household Support Fund and supermarket vouchers

The government's budget included an extension of the Household Support Fund for six months. This helps the council pay for supermarket vouchers during the school holidays, as well as other payments to households in need. This was not announced in time for local councils to include it in their budgets, so the council has agreed to modify its spending plans. The supermarket vouchers will therefore continue to be issued at the current rate for the next six months.

**ADULTS & HEALTH** Last year the NHS in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough spent an estimated total of £28M on emergency care for 4,500 people who attended A&E 5-10 times a year. The Council will host the 'High Intensity Users' team, working with patients with complex needs, as identifying and supporting them early can save the NHS at least 40% of these costs.

**ASSETS & PROCUREMENT** committee has approved a new Land & Property Strategy to guide the management of its diverse portfolio of land and property. The Council commissioned a CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) Health Check and this Strategy will undertake actions for change and improvement recommended in that report.

The committee has also approved a Commercial, Commissioning & Procurement Framework and made arrangements to re-procure water and waste water services when its current contract comes to an end in October.

### **COMMUNITIES SOCIAL MOBILITY & INCLUSION (COSMIC)**

The Committee has approved an additional £150,000 to Cambridge Housing Society to deliver the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme, which supports Cambridgeshire residents facing unexpected financial difficulties.

#### Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme - Cambridgeshire County Council

The council has also allocated £400,000 to Citizens Advice to deliver income maximisation across Cambridgeshire.

The council is proceeding with a series of pilot projects to bring decision-making closer to local communities.

The committee has also refreshed its Safe Accommodation Strategy for victims of domestic abuse for the next three years.

### **ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT**

The council has refreshed its policy and protocol for enforcement under the Land Drainage Act 1991.

**Fens 2100+** is a new programme of work launched in 2023 to enable the Fens to adapt to the challenges of climate change both now and into the future. It is a partnership project between the Environment Agency, the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA), Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), National Farmers Union (NFU) and Anglian Northern and Great Ouse Regional Flood & Coastal Committees (RFCCs). The programme will develop a Fens-wide flood resilience investment strategy so that Flood Risk Management Authorities can plan for the next twenty-five years.

Over the next 100 years, an additional £4.5B will be needed to manage flood risk in the Fens. Under current flood risk management funding rules half of that investment would be funded, the rest is not. The **Fens 2100+** programme has been developed to address that funding gap. Our villages (Milton, Landbeach, Waterbeach, Chittering and Horningsea are in the Great Ouse Catchment. Fen Ditton is just on the boundary.

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/east-anglia-c-e/fens2100/>

The council is working with partners to develop a **Local Nature Recovery Strategy**. Natural Cambridgeshire is continuing to develop an engagement and communications plan to support it.

#### **Decarbonisation of council buildings**

The council has been awarded a government grant to decarbonise 9 more of its own buildings including libraries and youth centres. This will help the council meet its target of net zero by 2030 for its own operations. Government funding of £1,244,550 will be added to £3,793,741 from the council's own decarbonisation fund. The works to these buildings will reduce carbon emissions by 178.44 tonnes every year.

#### **Clean energy at Park & Rides**

Solar panels are being installed at St Ives and Babraham Park & Rides. These will provide power for the operation of the sites themselves, while also making energy available to commercial customers via a private wire. Electric vehicle charging points are being installed at each site, with some designed for drivers with disabilities.

#### **North Angle private wire**

Work is also finally under way on the project to connect North Angle Solar Farm to the Swaffham Prior community heat network by means of a private wire.

**Swaffham Prior community heat network** has been named as a finalist for an international award, the Ashden Awards, recognising ground-breaking climate solutions. The project won the prestigious Edie Net Zero Award for Renewable Energy Project of the Year in November 2023. The Ashden winners will be announced at a ceremony in London on Thursday 27 June.

**Connecting Cambridgeshire** - Gigabit-capable broadband coverage in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough has hit 85% a year early, meaning we are above the national average and ahead of Government targets. Work is ongoing to bring future-proof connectivity to homes and businesses in harder to reach areas. Connecting Cambridgeshire will be launching its Digital Inclusion Strategy in May 2024. Digital Overview for Cambridgeshire can be seen here <https://www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk/about/digital-connectivity-strategy-2021-2025/district-digital-overviews/>

## **HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT**

**Gully clearing** – I receive a regular update on the cyclic gully clearance programme but I've not been advised when gullies in Waterbeach Division will be cleared.

**20MPH schemes** A 20MPH speed limit in Ely went live on 29 March. Applications for new schemes in Cambridgeshire closed on 22 March. Speed reduction schemes such as these are being funded from the CPCA's Transforming Cities Fund allocation from government.

**Hemlock** has been gradually expanding across areas of Cambridgeshire. While it is invasive, and highly toxic to livestock and humans, it is a native plant species. In public spaces under the council's control the council instructs its contractor to treat it using professional equipment and glyphosate.

**Guided buses** have resumed two-way running between Cambridge Railway Station and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, following installation of a safety fence.

**East West Rail** are planning statutory consultation in the first half of this year. Land Interest Questionnaires have been issued to some landowners. As far as I can tell the southern route still appears to be their preferred route.

**Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation** - The Examination of this application is due to finish on Wednesday 17 April. The Conservators of the Cam have been heavily consulted concerning the new outflow point north of the A14.

**Fens Reservoir** Anglian Water and Cambridge Water are to consult on proposals for two new reservoirs for the East of England region. One is to be in the Fens near Chatteris and the other in Lincolnshire. The non-statutory consultation will start May 2024, and will run for eight weeks.

**The Combined Authority Board** will be tendering for a contracts to run the service 9 bus from Littleport via Ely to Cambridge, to replace the journeys proposed to be cut by Stagecoach in April. The Combined Authority is also working on plans for bus network improvements and £1 youth bus fare, and bus shelter improvements.

**Trinity Hall Farm Industrial Estate, Milton Road** – I attended a local member briefing from the developer about proposals for the estate. Public consultations are due to start soon.

### **Cambridge Biomedical Campus**

I attended a presentation by the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, which explained forthcoming developments (Cambridge Children's Hospital, affordable housing for medical staff).

**Milton Cambridge Road Industrial Estate** – Councillor Rippeth and I have been taking steps at District and County level to deter antisocial parking, which blocks business access.

**Milton Cambridge Road** - I have reported the series of awful potholes from Tesco to One-Stop.

**Milton Ely Road - overnight lorry parking.** Whilst unexpected, parking is not illegal in this location. I have not received any reports of disturbance and lorries seem to leave early in the morning. Please report overnight parking to the Police if it obstructs the road.

**Horningsea Greenway** – works will continue once county footway resurfacing has been completed.

**Landbeach High Street** – I am checking a historic stretch of unexplained dropped kerb.

**Landbeach Beche Way, Fen Ditton High Ditch Road and Fen Ditton Green End** - footway slurry sealing will be done sometime between 1 May and 1 November 2024. Hoorah. I am seeking further details of timing.