County Councillor Report for Parishes – January 2026 – Cllr Anna Bradnam

County Council (16 December)

The Council approved a motion calling for **increased support for care leavers** in Cambridgeshire. It was noted that previous council decisions have led to care experience being treated as a protected characteristic by the council but care leavers in our county are often still stigmatised and treated with prejudice. It was agreed to recognise a Councillor as a Care Experience Champion, to serve as a single point of contact for care-experienced residents and promote best practice in safeguarding their rights. The motion included actions to improve access to employment and services for those with care experience and resolved to ensure that all councillors are trained to better understand the ongoing role of the council as corporate parent to support care leavers beyond the age of 18.

The Council voted for **greater access to music and the arts** for Cambridgeshire's children. The undertaking was that every child, regardless of their background or where they live, should have the opportunity to engage with music and the arts. The agreed actions included asking Cambridgeshire Culture to create a new culture and arts strategy with a focus on improving access for children as well as adults and asking the Council's Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media, and Sport to make the case for greater funding for arts and culture for children in Cambridgeshire.

Another motion related to a previous motion calling for action to **remove fast-food advertising on bus shelters and related infrastructure**. It was agreed that council officers would work with district councils, parish councils, and the Mayoral Combined Authority, to conduct a review of the overall management of bus infrastructure. Part of the review would be to clarify where responsibility lies for commissioning advertising on bus infrastructure.

The Council also considered **the safety improvements that are currently underway on the Guided Busway from St Ives to Trumpington.** Noting the busway's important contribution to improving access to both public transport and active travel, the motion called for a report to be brought to the Highways and Transport Committee proposing a policy which will enable designs for new busways to be more easily updated, to take into account any new safety requirements, as early as possible in the design / construction process.

Finally, the Council advocated for the **United Kingdom to rejoin the European Single Market** at the earliest practical opportunity.

The Full Council meeting was live streamed on our YouTube channel, where you can now watch it back, and the papers discussed are available to read here Council and committee meetings - Cambridgeshire County Council > Meetings Calendar

Children and Young People (25 November) – agreed to extend funding for Independent Fostering Agencies, Residential Care, Independent Special Education Provision and Out of School Tuition, Alternative Education Provision and Post-16 provision for a further two years from March 2026 to March 2028.

Highways and Transport (2 December)

Update on **Cambridgeshire Guided Busway Safety Works** – the budget allocation was agreed, for the delivery of the required health and safety works which includes the provision of additional safe crossing points.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure – it was agreed to award and execute a fifteen-year contract for the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure starting in 2026 and extension periods.

It was agreed to review how the Council's different highway assets will be managed in the future.

The processes and scoring system to prioritise the submissions to the **Highways Capital Programme** were agreed.

New school at Waterbeach

Deneia Academy – an update in response to my questions:

- "The Council has procured Atkins Realis and Kier to deliver the scheme. The Multi-Academy Trust is a key stakeholder, however they are not responsible for delivery.
- The programme is currently targeting a start on site of 2 March 2026.
- A paper is scheduled for 20 January at Children and Young People Committee to ask for Councillor approval to enter into the construction contract with Kier. This paper will provide full details on the scheme"

The agenda will be published on the County website 13 January – a week before the committee.

Budget 2026/27 consultation open – it's serious

How would you like Cambridgeshire County Council to prioritise spending and savings in the years ahead? A consultation was launched 3 December and will close on 7 January 2026. It will gather your views on key spending, savings and investment proposals.
This follows a previous consultation Oct/Nov 2025. Read the full proposal here
Council and committee meetings - Cambridgeshire County Council > Meetings Calendar
The results will be reported to the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee on 29 January 2026. You can find out more and have your say at: https://yourvoice.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business-planning/business-planning-26-27-phase-2-engagement/ The meeting will be live streamed on the council's YouTube channel.

Every year, the council must set a budget which balances need against income. This income comes mainly from council tax (around 74 per cent of council funding) with other sources coming from business rates, government grants, and service fees. These funds support a wide range of council services, including social care, education, libraries, highways and transport, environmental services, and waste management. Therefore, the survey gives people another opportunity to have their say regarding how the Council is prioritising its approach to delivering services.

2026/27 will see a continued and significant increase in costs due to a growing population and increasing demands – particularly in children's and adults' social care. Nearly two thirds of our spending goes toward social care, while other major areas of spending include Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), home to school transport, and highways maintenance.
Since 2019, the council has experienced a 122 percent increase in the costs of providing home to school transport; a 76 percent in learning disability related care costs; a 50 per cent increase in the costs of providing care for older people; a 42 percent increase in the costs of supporting children with SEND and a 99 percent in the costs of supporting children in care. Even in the current 2025/26 budget the council faces a forecast overspend of nearly £10 million and a deficit for SEND costs of nearly £100 million.
Government has recognised it needs to respond to the SEND crisis nationally but has yet to share how it will help councils, schools, parents and carers. Along with a lack of Government funding for these vital public services means that for 2026/27 the council will face a further £22 million in financial challenges than were identified in February 2025. That means that further and even more difficult decisions about how to allocate resources and balance its budget will be required.
Consequently, the draft business plan and budget proposals set out how the council will close a projected £40.3 million budget gap through savings, additional fees and charges as well as a proposed council tax increase of 4.99 percent. So please log in and tell us your views.

Get your flu vaccination - now

One of the most important things you can do to keep yourself and others safe this winter is to have the seasonal flu vaccination - if you are eligible. It is strongly recommended that anyone who is eligible should get their flu jab as soon as possible.

Flu is a serious and highly infectious illness that can cause sudden fever, sever fatigue, and complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia – particularly dangerous for those who are more vulnerable.
Even if you had the flu vaccine last year, you'll still need another one this year. Flu strains change annually and protection from the vaccine decreases over time. Getting vaccinated early ensures the best protection during peak flu season (December to February), helping reduce winter pressure and absence from work, which keeps care services running for our communities.
You can get an NHS flu vaccine from your GP or local pharmacy if you are or have one of the following:

- Aged 65 years or over
- Pregnant
- Have long-term health conditions
- Live with someone who has a weakened immune system
- You are the main carer for an older or disabled person or receive a carer's allowance.

For more information on the flu vaccine, please visit the NHS website. You will also be able to find details on your nearest pharmacy offering flu vaccinations.
Vaccination walk-in sessions may also be available in your area – please visit The Vaccinators webpage to find a clinic near you.
More information on flu, including symptoms and how to treat yourself, can be found on the NHS website.

Forthcoming highway works

Waterbeach – Cambridge Road. Closure to facilitate new water connection and associated works between 93 and 111 Cambridge Road. Estimated closure: 19-23 January 2026
Access will be maintained to properties affected by this order.

Waterbeach – Clayhithe Road. Closure between points 20m either side of the railway level crossing situated there as measured from its gates or barriers. Access will be maintained to properties affected by this order. Purpose: to facilitate essential maintenance and associated works which are being carried out on or near this highway. It is anticipated that these works will be carried out between 00:01hrs and 05:00hrs on 3rd February 2026

Cllr Anna Bradnam anna.bradnam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk 21/12/2025