

County councillor's monthly report for October 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

The Council met during the month. [Click here](#) for my account of the proceedings as they happened. The sad feature of the meeting was its rejection of a motion to support the People's Vote. It's becoming desperately sad that our politics is now so deeply polarised that it seems that the (political) party is more important than the country. I asked a question about the number of 'transformation officers' which the Council is now employing. It's a staggering 38 costing almost £2million/year. [Click here](#) for my take on that. [Click here](#) for my view on the not entirely unrelated issue of requiring staff to take unpaid leave between Xmas and the New Year.

Committee meetings and other council matters

Adults: there were three key decisions. The first related to another contractual alignment, this time the Extra Care contract, with Peterborough. The second was about securing short term care home beds because of a shortage. Number three concerned the need to abandon a tender because of a challenge. The current contract, for the Mental Health Recovery and Community Inclusion Service, will now be extended by 12 months.

Children & Young People: there was one key decision relating to the commissioning of 'Looked After Children Residential Children's Homes Placements, Independent Fostering Agency Placements, Independent Non-Maintained Special School Placements and Out of School Tuition Services'. The intention is to commission these services together and in partnership with Peterborough (again) and other partners including the Clinical Commissioning Group. Permission was also granted for some spot purchasing in the short term. The committee also requested £3 million plus from the 'smoothing reserve' to support its transformation and other structural overspends. [Click here](#) for my view of what's going on.

Commercial & Investment: there were two meetings. The first was an extraordinary meeting to pick up where the abortive meeting of September left off. Bizarrely it was held in secret again and the decision summary is similarly opaque. However I think I can advise that Steven Norris was appointed chair of This Land and a number of other resolutions were passed which strengthen the role of the shareholder (the County Council) in its governance. At the second meeting there were no key decisions.

During the month the Council completed the purchase of a student accommodation block on East Road for £38 million. [Click here](#) for my view of its reporting.

Communities & Partnerships: there were no key decisions.

General Purposes: there were no key decisions.

Health: there was one key decision relating to the 'Re-Commissioning of Children & Young People's Substance Misuse Services'. It agreed to implement a Section 75 agreement with the current provider and not to go to a competitive tender and to integrate the Youth Offending Service provision into the community young people's specialist drug and alcohol treatment service. Seems like good sense to me.

Highways & Community Infrastructure: there were no key decisions.

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Environment & Economy: there was one key decision relating to the Transport Investment Plan. It was presented as simply a project wish list with no attempt at prioritisation. I abstained from the vote. There was also a proposal in the budget planning item to remove discretionary concessions and taxi vouchers. This would particularly hit blind and partly sighted concessionary bus pass holders. It was quickly withdrawn! There was also a confidential item relating to the King's Dyke crossing project which needs funding. The ever-generous Mayor has since come forward and agreed to fund it from the Combined Authority. [Click here](#) for that news.

During the month a councillor report was issued based on an FOI request to show how officers were bullied to go ahead with the Ely Crossing scheme prematurely. [Click here](#) for my view.

Planning: the Committee met. There were no applications of interest to H&I. The same can be said for its November meeting which has already taken place.

Health & Well Being Board: the Board did not meet. The minutes of the September meeting have now been posted. It doesn't seem to have been a very exiting meeting.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership Assembly did not meet. The Executive Board met. It postponed the one substantive decision on the agenda viz A428 Cambourne to Cambridge Public Transport Scheme until its next meeting so that it could hear what the Combined Authority has to say.

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority met. It's minutes have not yet been posted but it's communicating instead by press release and it claims to have sorted the A428 problem by 'agreeing' that it will be the first stretch of the Cam Metro. It refers to a consultants' report which runs to all of 4 pages. [Click here](#) for the press release and a picture of the mayor. [Click here](#) for the consultant's report.

During the month there's been some chatter about the way that the Chief Exec of the Combined Authority left and the size of his pay off. The Mayor wants it to go away but it doesn't seem that it will.

The Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Panel and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority did not meet. Note that the Fire Authority has meet 1 Nov 18.

Consultations relevant to this division (and elsewhere)

Consultation	Purpose	Due date and link
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	The Council is required to review its SCI every five years; a new draft SCI has been published.	12 Nov 18 https://bit.ly/2AMNvS7

More local matters

I met district and local community councillors in Orchard Park to review community building initiatives.

I attended the Histon Road Local Liaison Form meeting. This is considering a Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) proposal to improve cycling provision along Histon Road.

I attended a GCP briefing on its approach to reducing congestion in Cambridge.

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I continued to attend A14 action group and engagement meeting. One of the latter involved a presentation from a noise expert who made it clear that simple decibels are not enough when considering unacceptable noise levels. In another related meeting I met county officers to consider the southbound access paths to the B1049 crossing.

I met county officers and Histon Library Friends to discuss the (exciting) future of Histon Library.

And finally ... I've been a library user this month but not as a borrower of books but as a participant in a 'writing about your life' course with local author Judy Wilson. I'm one of five but the only male and we cover the range from young to old. I'm not naturally emotional so my writing tends to be rather dry and fact based. The others put me to shame with their writing evoking the experiences of days gone by and their impact on the author. Two or three of us read each week and then we all comment on each other's work. It's all very civilised of course and the other four have been very gentle with me. I read about my early life a couple of weeks ago and I'm due to read another text next week. I've posted the last one at <https://wp.me/phtcF-MB>.

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

*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.