

County councillor's monthly report for November 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

Full Council did not meet. However we already have sight of the agenda and it includes a bizarre motion asking all councillors to support the unpaid leave decision (go to <https://wp.me/p7tuu7-1Po> for my view on that) and suggesting that those who do not would be publicly shamed (more opinion at <https://wp.me/p7tuu7-1PX>).

Committee meetings and other council matters

We're very much into the budget season and with the council forecasting a year-end deficit of £4.5 million (that's after last month's £3 million plus virement from the 'smoothing reserve') it's looking pretty bleak which is why it becomes so important to earn money from other activities.

Adults: there were no key decisions. In fact it seems to have been a meeting with no decisions.

Children & Young People: there was one key decision relating to the 'need' to extend the contract for the delivery of Child and Family Centre services at March, Chatteris and Whittlesey. The current contract expires 31 Mar 19 and is to be extended by one year to bring it into line with other contracts which are being/will be jointly procured with Peterborough. Note that in the same paper the wider Children's Centre program was reviewed and the 'closure' of the one in Histon was noted thus: 'This site is no longer used as a designated Children's Centre. Histon Early Years Centre will continue to deliver childcare for 0- 5s from the site. The Child and Family Centre team will continue to deliver a range of outreach activities in the area including a stay and play in Cottenham'. The continuity of care is important. Go to <https://wp.me/p7tuu7-1Kp> for a previous update.

Commercial & Investment: there was one key decision viz to support a low carbon heat generation demonstrator in Swaffham Prior. The committee went into closed session (as it loves to do) to discuss the future of County Farms but thankfully decided to continue to run them as they do now.

Communities & Partnerships: there were no key decisions (again). There was an oral update from three of the four community champions. I've no idea what happened to the fourth. There is no fifth of course because South Cambs Lib Dems believe that this is every councillors' role.

General Purposes: there was one key decision relating to more prudential borrowing to fund a clutch of projects including 'revised phasing' of the Shire Hall Relocation Scheme. It also reviewed the 2019/20 draft capital program and has at last acknowledged that the current approach of funding road maintenance from capital is wrong. Check out <https://wp.me/p7tuu7-1Mb> for my early concern

Health: the one key decision viz the adoption of a dynamic purchasing system (DPS) for public health primary care commissioning'. The decision was deferred because insufficient information about DPS and its alternatives had been provided. Well done!

Highways & Community Infrastructure: did not meet.

Environment & Economy: there were no key decisions and little else of substance on the agenda. 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.

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Planning: There were no applications of interest to H&I. However note the outline planning permission given under delegated powers for the new secondary school at Northstowe.

Health & Well Being Board: the Board agreed to reconstitute as a joint Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Board. This makes sense because its key stakeholder is the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group and the Board's main task is to allocate funding money from the Better Care Fund to it.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership Assembly met (mid-month but its decision summary has not yet been posted) and discussed inter alia the 'final' design of the Histon Road scheme. Problem is that wasn't what had been endorsed by the Local Liaison Forum (LLF) and it caused a small uproar. Cue another 'final' design and another meeting of the LLF. The Executive Board did not meet.

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority met. It discussed its draft budget for 2019/20 and it's a long cry from the minimal spend on overheads promised by the Mayor during his election campaign. And in breaking news during the month The Combined Authority's Finance Director's been shown the door. With all this coming and going you've got to worry that there's something rotten in the state of Denmark.

The Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Panel met 14 Nov and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority met 1 Nov 18 but neither have published minutes or decision summaries yet.

Consultations relevant to this division (and elsewhere)

Consultation	Purpose/object	Due date and link
Business Plan 2019/20	Residents' views about their communities, council services and changes to council tax.	24 Dec 18 https://bit.ly/2BSBWsx
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 met county officers seconded to the A14 scheme to get support for better cyclist and pedestrian routes southbound to the A14/B1049 roundabout.

I attended a meeting of A14 people and South Cambs officers to review landscaping options.

I met county officers to review changes to the design of the Greater Cambridge Partnership's Histon Road scheme. I subsequently attended the hastily arranged LLF meeting (see above).

I met the new highways engineer for a 'walkabout' in King's Meadow. Subsequently Histon & Impington Parish Council has agreed to fund the double yellow lines outside the community centre.

I joined a meeting with county officers and parish councillors to review latest plans for Buxhall Farm School. There are concerns about cycle path conflicts and the pollution impact because it's so close to the B1049. Subsequently I joined a county officer to look at road traffic and its implications for vehicle access to the site.

I met parish officers and IVC staff to look at bus related safety concerns outside the school.

I attended the developer presentation regarding the proposed student block on Orchard Park. Subsequently I met county officers about their opinion, they are recommending refusal.

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And finally ... and I'm sure I've said something similar before but mid-month I headed off to North Wales for a school reunion. That was on the Friday night and Juni and I then spent the night in Dyffryn Ceiriog, that's south of Snowdonia. It is what you might call a different world: hills if not real mountains, sheep farms and not a housing development in sight. Perhaps surprisingly the roads all seem to be in a good state of repair and we drove down lots of country lanes, we don't get them in Cambridgeshire either, with immaculately trimmed hedges on either side. I read an article in a local magazine about expectations for the sheep farmers post Brexit. It was a leave voting region but the general consensus now seems to be that sheep farming as we know it today will not survive outside the EU.

4 Dec	1400	Children and Young People Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
4 Dec	1000	*Highways & Community Infrastructure	Shire Hall, Cambridge
5 Dec	1000	Economy & Environment Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
6 Dec	1400	*Health Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
6 Dec	1600	Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board	SCDC offices, Cambourne
11 Dec	1030	Full Council	Shire Hall, Cambridge
12 Dec	1000	Communities & Partnership	Shire Hall, Cambridge
12 Dec	1400	Adults Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
13 Dec	1000	*Commercial & Investments Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
13 Dec	1000	Planning Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
17 Dec	1000	*General Purposes 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
7 Feb	1400	Cambridgeshire Fire Authority	Hinchingbrooke Park
27 Feb	1400	Greater Cambridge Partnership Assembly	Shire Hall, Cambridge

*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.