

ADULTS & HEALTH

New Director of Public Health

Cambridgeshire County Council has a new Director of Public Health, Sally Cartwright, who joins us from Luton in January 2025. The Director of Public Health is responsible for identifying and improving the health and wellbeing of residents, reducing inequalities in health outcomes and protecting local communities from public health hazards, such as infectious diseases and environmental threats.

Vaccination update

Vaccinations are now available for eligible people against a range of conditions including Covid, flu, pneumonia, shingles, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Local GP practices are calling up eligible patients, or you can find out more at <https://www.cpics.org.uk/the-vaccinators/> and book with a local pharmacy or attend a convenient drop-in session without an appointment.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

New homes for children with complex needs

Cambridgeshire County Council's Assets & Procurement Committee has selected two former farmhouses close to each other in Soham as a pilot project to increase the number of local places available for children and young people with complex needs. Both properties, currently vacant, are owned by the Council.

They will be fully refurbished and a provider will be offered a contract for up to ten years to provide care services to best meet the needs of the children.

Locally and nationally there is a growing need for placements, with children having to be placed out of the county due to a lack of local places and a limited number of registered settings being available. This project offers an opportunity for local and more stable placements which is vital (but also noting it will then be possible to avoid more than £635,000 of costs each year on private placements).

Looked after children

The Council's residential strategy for looked after children will be referred to the Strategy, Resources & Performance Committee. There remains a shortage of care placements for looked after children across the country.

School place appeal panel volunteers

Volunteers are urgently needed to hear appeals when children are not offered a place at their preferred school. All parents or carers have the right to make an appeal to an independent appeal panel if their child is not offered a place at their preferred school. The role of the panel is to decide whether a child who has been refused a place by Cambridgeshire County Council should be given a place.

All parties involved must be given an appeal hearing that is transparent, accessible, independent and impartial. The appeal panel is independent of the local authority and its decisions are binding on all parties. Volunteers must also be able to:

- Communicate effectively with a wide range of people
- Read and assess information and identify key points
- Listen to key information
- Ask questions to obtain information and clarify points being made
- Analyse information and use it to form opinions and conclusions

- Obtain and weigh up evidence to reach a decision
- Work as part of a team, take advice and develop their own skills

All volunteer Panel Members receive initial and annual refresher training and will be fully supported by the Appeals Service. Anyone interested in applying or who would like an informal chat about the role should contact clare.cronk@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

Climate change progress report and carbon footprint

The County Council's Environment & Green Investment Committee received a progress report on its Climate Change & Environment Strategy, and the annual Carbon Footprint report. This is the 6th annual Carbon Footprint report, and covers both the County Council's own carbon emissions, and those of Cambridgeshire as a whole.

Carbon emissions are classified into three 'scopes'.

- Scope 1 is direct emissions such as from gas or oil boilers and vehicles.
- Scope 2 is emissions from purchased electricity.
- Scope 3 is indirect emissions such as those of contractors and suppliers

The Council's Scope 1 and 2 are 42% lower than in the baseline reporting year of 2018/19. Scope 2 is now always zero as the Council buys electricity through a zero-carbon contract. The Council's Scope 3 emissions for 2023/24 account for around 99% of its carbon footprint, and were 111,307 tonnes CO₂e excluding the Council's rural estate—39% lower than in 2018/19.

During 2023/24 the Council procured expert support to identify baseline carbon emissions for its rural estate, and more work needs to be done to agree an achievable target.

For Cambridgeshire as a whole, in 2022—the most recent available data—total greenhouse gas emissions were 6.45m tonnes CO₂e, a 3% fall from 2021. Transport (27%) remains the highest emitting sector in the county, followed by land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) (23%), agriculture (15%) and domestic energy use (13%).

The risk of not reaching the Council's carbon targets has reduced but still remains considerable. Delivery of these targets relies on collaborating with our partner organisations.

Newly discovered Roman town given heritage protection

A newly discovered Roman small town south of Great Staughton has been given heritage protection as a scheduled monument by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport on the advice of Historic England.

Cambridgeshire County Council is responsible for maintaining information about scheduled monuments in the county, and requested that test trenches be dug at Great Staughton during archaeology prior to the submission of proposals for a solar farm. As a result of the findings, panels will not be installed on that part of the site.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Local Highways Improvement schemes

The Highways & Transport Committee meeting on Tuesday 1 October was asked to agree which Local Highways Improvement (LHI) bids will be approved for the coming year.

Girton and Dry Drayton parish councils were successful in their non-complex scheme applications. Girton's application focused on double yellow lines and parking, while Dry Drayton's focused on improving safety outside the primary school. Also the Girton and Oakington joint scheme has been

fully funded. Unfortunately Bar Hill parish's application for MVAS narrowly missed the mark. (The application was strong but needed a bit more evidence to succeed – it is hoped another attempt would be successful.) The message from officers is that parishes are strongly advised to be in touch early on with ideas and plan early to ensure applications are properly evidenced and can be well supported.

Next year's application round starts soon - the application window for the next LHI application round is as follows:

- Application window opens: Friday 1 November 2024
- Application window closes: Friday 10 January 2025
- Feasibility studies undertaken: February—May 2025
- Panel meetings: June—July 2025
- Report to committee including prioritised list for approval: October 2025

Mill Road (Cambridge) closure

A special meeting of the Highways & Transport Committee took place on Friday 4 October to determine afresh the application for a Traffic Regulation Order. This restricts traffic over the bridge by motor vehicles except - local buses, taxis, Private Hire Vehicles, blue badge holders' registered vehicles, and other authorised vehicles. Access would be maintained for cyclists and pedestrians. The original Mill Road decision had been quashed by a court, so Friday's decision was taken afresh by a completely different group of councillors and without reference to the original decision and consultation.

Meanwhile on the Combined Authority

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has now been released from the 'Best Value Notice' placed on it in January 2023 as the Government has recognised the improvement in the organisation.

The Authority's Transport & Infrastructure Committee is recommending that the Board allow older people and those with disabilities to use their bus passes before the current 9:30AM start. The new Tiger Pass offers bus travel for £1 per journey for those aged up to 25. Details of how to apply for the new pass can be found at <https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/onepoundbusfare/>

The Vision Zero road safety project is being revived. Its aims are to reduce the numbers of people killed or seriously injured on our roads and the social and financial impact of this, and to develop financially sustainable models of road safety activity. The original prospectus in 2020 aimed for zero killed or seriously injured by 2040 though this seems unlikely to be met.

There are 14 buildings (located in Peterborough and Cambridge) which require remediation post Grenfell's report. The Mayor and the Fire Authority are working on this to ensure the lessons of Grenfell are translated into effective action and deliver safety for residents.

A reminder that the Combined Authority's consultation on bus franchising continues until 20 November. Short and long questionnaires can be found at <https://cpca-yourvoice.co.uk/bus-franchising-consultation/>

Cllr Edna Murphy is contactable on edna.murphy@cambridgeshire.gov.uk and 01223 577005