

County Council Report for Dry Drayton Parish Council – February 2025

Here is a full report, catching up on some matters from before Christmas which did not get included in the January report.

FULL COUNCIL

Five motions were debated at the December Full Council meeting summarized below:

- Being a ‘trauma-informed’ council - this motion (which was supported) was about those delivering council services needing to be aware of the effects of trauma on residents with whom they come into contact, and how to support trauma survivors. This is particularly relevant for people dealing with families of young adults whose experience of adult social care has itself been traumatizing.
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) – this motion (which was supported) asked the council to respond to the Government’s review of the school curriculum making clear the importance of an appropriate curriculum for SEND pupils, and to gather information from secondary schools in the county on how they are ensuring they are able to meet the needs of all pupils. It also asked the Children & Young People Committee to consider how the child and adolescent mental health system is working, and gather information about experience of special educational needs and disabilities in early years and primary school settings.
- Mill Lane bridge, Huntingdonshire – this motion was about flooding at this location and the timetable for an options appraisal. It was voted down as being unnecessary, as work is already under way.
- A1421 Haddenham to Witcham Toll – this motion was about road safety options at this location and the timetable for a report. Again this was voted down as being unnecessary, as this road will be included in a report coming to the Highways & Transport Committee shortly.
- Family farms and inheritance tax – this motion (which was supported) asked the council to write to the Secretary of State calling on the Government to stop changes to inheritance tax on family farms, and engage with the local farming community to offer support.

STRATEGY RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE

Council budget

Cambridgeshire County Council will set its budget on Tuesday 11 February 2025, with recommendations being considered in advance by the Strategy Resources & Performance Committee on Tuesday 28 January 2025. These have now been agreed.

Each year councils are required to set a balanced budget for the year ahead. This has become more difficult in recent years for several reasons including the growing demand for services and increasing complexity of health and care needs, inflation, and significant

market failures in services (such as support for children in care, with high demand, insufficient supply, provider profiteering, and diminished council negotiating power). The totality of the council's gross budget, including schools and services funded by specific grants, is expected to be over £1.1 billion for 2025-26. Of this, over half (£567 million) is proposed to be spent on children, education and families, and health and adult social care.

In December, councillors were told that efficiencies and savings or additional income of £34 million would be needed to set a balanced budget for 2025-26, and considered draft proposals to achieve this. However, the coming five years show an overall funding gap of £132 million, of which £73 million is not yet addressed.

ADULTS & HEALTH

Social care reform—but no proposals until after 2028?

The Government has promised to 'finally grasp the nettle on social care reform', with an independent commission due to begin work in April 2025. Proposals on a stable system for the long-term funding of adult social care in England have been needed for years. But these are unlikely to be delivered before 2028 at the earliest, the government has confirmed. The proposed commission, chaired by Baroness Louise Casey, is not due to publish its final report until then.

Meanwhile, councils and care providers across the country are saying this is far too long to wait for reform of vital social care services which are already on their knees.

Urgent and emergency care

The County Council's Adults & Health Committee received a report last month for their scrutiny on the performance of the NHS in urgent and emergency care.

During 2024/25, performance has been below the planned trajectories submitted as part of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) operational plan, and below national standards. Two key national metrics for urgent and emergency care are that:

- Emergency departments should see and treat a minimum of 78% of patients within four hours of arriving in the department by the end of March 2025, and
- Patients categorised by the ambulance trust as Category 2 emergency, should have an ambulance response time within 30 minutes.

Both these targets remain behind plan, with the NHS under considerable pressure locally and nationally.

COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY & INCLUSION (COSMIC)

CAB grant for income maximisation

The County Council's COSMIC committee has agreed a grant of £800,000 over two years to Citizens Advice in the county for income maximisation—working with residents to ensure they are in receipt of all financial assistance they are eligible for, and helping people out of poverty across Cambridgeshire by providing a long-term solution to financial hardship.

Since this income maximisation work began in 2023, 5,455 Cambridgeshire residents have

accessed the service, resulting in an income gain of £3,887,844.

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

Non-recycled waste

A recent article in the *Guardian* newspaper reported that 87% of Cambridgeshire’s non-recyclable waste goes to landfill—second only to Essex. The council commented: “Our first priority is to reduce, re-use and to recycle as much as possible, as there are limited methods available to treat the waste that is left over in the short-medium term. We are actively working with both our waste contractor, as well as Central Government, to try and find the best long-term solution to manage the county’s waste.”

It is important to note that:

- All mixed dry recycling collected from Cambridgeshire households and household recycling centres is recycled
- All food and garden waste collected from households is composted.
- Where legislation prohibits sending waste to landfill the council is in full compliance.
- Where possible, black bag waste is treated using energy recovery or mechanical biological treatment, to divert as much as possible from landfill.

The whole waste industry and legislative framework is currently going through a period of significant change. The council is awaiting detailed guidance from Government to inform its long-term waste strategy. Meanwhile the council is actively looking at more modern ways to treat waste that can’t be recycled and is currently going to landfill.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

£10 million for road maintenance

The Government has announced how much each council area will receive for highways capital maintenance for 2025/26. For the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough area it’s £10 million, with a quarter of that amount to be held back until the respective councils have proved they will meet certain—still to be announced—criteria. £10 million sounds a lot, BUT:

- The Government hold back 25% of it
- It includes Peterborough as well as Cambridgeshire
- In Cambridgeshire alone the backlog of highways maintenance is around £600 million.

Better than nothing, then, but a long way from what we need.

Prioritising the highways capital maintenance programme

The council’s Highways & Transport Committee on 3 December 2024 approved a new scoring system to prioritise planned capital highways maintenance schemes.

Parish councils and county councillors were approached by the council to submit suggestions of roads that needed significant capital work. As part of this process I put forward a number of proposals for Dry Drayton including investing in improving drainage and anti flooding measures, and widening the pavement where it narrows (outbound after the Park Lane roundabout).

When it meets in March, the committee expects to receive a proposed three year forward capital maintenance programme and an indicative programme for the following two years. The same meeting will also consider a proposed hierarchy for maintaining walking, wheeling, and cycling routes. Proposals for a hierarchy for maintaining Public Rights of Way is expected to follow in July or October.

Active travel survey

Thanks are due to many people who have completed the council's active travel survey. It has just closed and although the full results are not out yet, there were some clear patterns emerging.

For example initial results include:

- 91% of respondents already use active travel
- 91% of respondents want to use active travel more
- Majority of respondents use active travel for leisure/exercise of accessing local amenities
- 70% of respondents face a barrier to using active travel
- Top 3 categories for where respondents would like to travel:
 - Around the perimeter footpath of Bar Hill
 - Along the bridleway to Dry Drayton
 - Across the A14 bridge and out onto the A1307 and wider network
- 52% of respondents would want to access the proposed travel hub by active travel

A more full report of the survey results – for active travel as well as my own residents' survey – will be available next month.

Sewer Drainage

Any parishes that are experiencing any sewer drainage issues should email Anglian Water at their Public Affairs mailbox on public.affairs@anglianwater.co.uk

Update report from drainage team

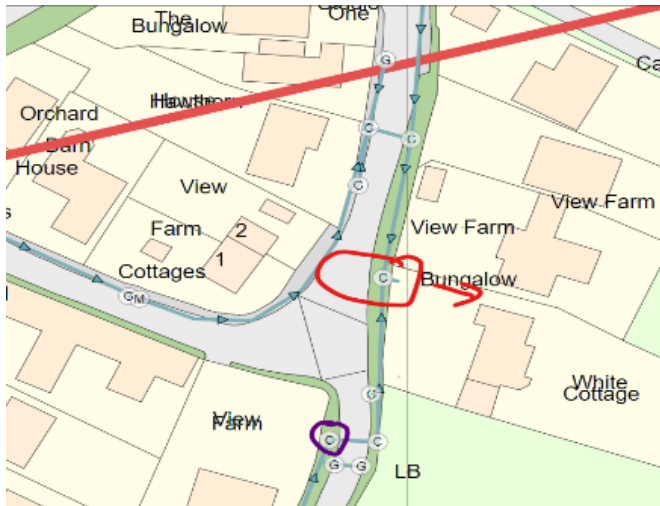
I have urged council officers to investigate the reasons why there has been surface flooding that has caused so much worry and concern in recent times. There is some complexity and it has proven difficult to secure information or even identify the right people to speak to. But they seem to have made progress. Once they are clear overall what the issues and options for improvement are it will be possible to discuss how to take the suggestions forward.

What has happened so far is that the county council's drainage team met the owners of the agricultural land between Park Street and Park Lane and discussed what the landowners were doing to meet their 'riparian' responsibilities including maintaining drainage systems. The council staff came to the conclusion that while there is a ditch taking surface water from Park Street to Park Lane, this seems to be less of an issue than the fact that the drainage at Park Lane is compromised by the lack of storage and run off.

The owners of the agricultural land said they were not aware of a ditch existing adjacent to their land (and Park Lane) which if working properly would alleviate the risk of highway and property surface water flooding.

Council officers are now getting quotes to find out the cost of creating a fresh ditch/swale to accommodate further run off, and will continue to engage with landowners to discuss this improvement.

The other issue they identified was further upstream, crossing the road and continuing to a catchpit circled red in the plan (below) where there seems to be a connecting drain in the direction of the red arrow. Council officers are speaking to residents whose properties run along the route to make them aware of the issues.



COMBINED AUTHORITY

Combined Authority restarts procurement for precept-funded routes

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is restarting the procurement process for the final seven precept-funded bus services. This is in response to news that a bus operator – who cannot be named for legal reasons – has withdrawn all of its winning bids to run these services. As a result, the tendering process for the remaining seven routes – covering places including Peterborough, Cambridge, Ely, Huntingdon, Wisbech and surrounding villages – now has to start over, meaning the services are now not expected to launch until May. More details are contained at: <https://tinyurl.com/2s46nyte> . The routes affected by the withdrawal of bids are:

- Tiger 1 – Huntingdon to Cambridge
- Tiger 2/3 – Cambridge North and South connections
- Tiger 4/5 Soham to Cambridge and Newmarket to Cambridge
- Tiger 7 – Chatteris to Wisbech
- Tiger 9 – Peterborough Orbital

The routes are part of a package of 53 services funded through the Mayoral precept. 38 routes across the region are already up and running, with a further four [Tiger on Demand services](#) – flexible, bookable buses serving rural areas – set to launch this weekend, covering Fenland, East Cambridgeshire, and two in South Cambridgeshire. If you have any questions, the Combined Authority have asked that you direct them to transport@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk

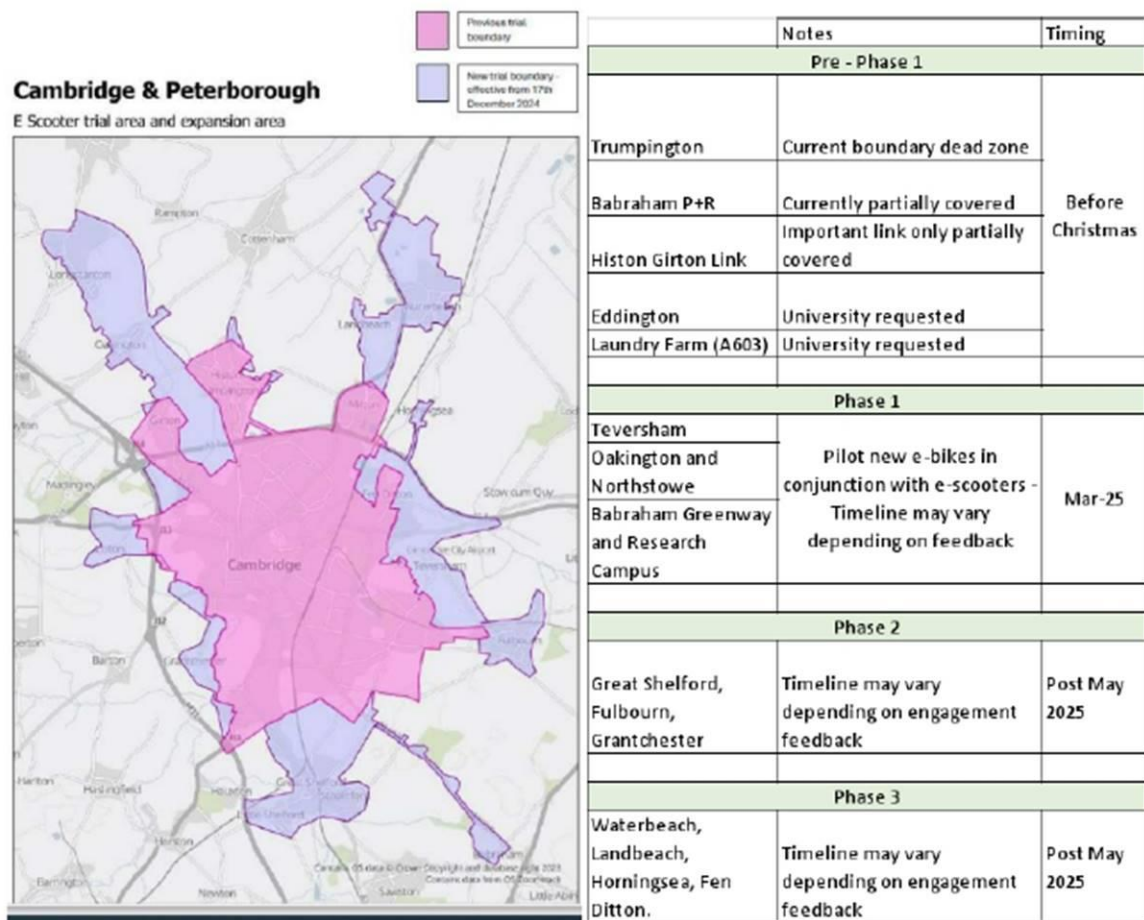
Bus fare cap at £2 extended – for now

The CPCA has decided not to increase the current bus fare cap of £2 per journey. This comes

despite the decision of the Government nationally to increase the fare cap to £3, and will be welcomed by many bus passengers.

Expansion of Voi Scooter Scheme (for information)

CPCA’s Transport and Infrastructure Committee has made an application to the Department for Transport (DfT) to expand the trial area of e-scooters, which currently operate in Cambridge. DfT has approved the proposal for the boundary changes to the existing e-scooter trial area as well as an increase in the fleet size. CPCA’s Transport and Infrastructure Committee advised that this will be a phased approach, the table below shows the proposed phasing order. Waterbeach and Landbeach are scheduled for Phase 3. Parishes will still have the option not to participate within the scheme if they have reservations.



Please do not hesitate to get in touch directly if you have any questions or concerns.

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