

**Report to Parish Councils in the Fulbourn Divison for February 2025
from County Cllr Claire Daunton**

Teversham Issues

1. Street Lights: The council has embarked on a county-wide replacement of street lights to save energy and money (an estimated saving of £2 million per annum at current rates) and to reduce light pollution. The programme has thrown up some problems. The new lights come in different forms. In some areas 6-LED heads have been installed where 12-LED heads might have been more appropriate, or where expected. A review of the installations is underway. I have already reported concerns expressed in Teversham. The new lighting is also more directed so the beam does not cover a wide area. The matter is not helped by the fact that an earlier (2016) PFI contract with Balfour Beatty allowed lighting columns to be removed so there are, in any case, dark patches. This all to be followed up.
2. White Lines: these are still down to be done in February, but there is an issue with traffic flows because of continuing work on Coldham's Lane; and also with contractor availability and streetworks permit. Needless to say I continue to press and to send reminders. We have been waiting a long time and I know officers want to see this work done.
3. LHO post: the Division has been without a dedicated local highways officer for some time now – the post having been offered to someone who then took on another role – but the recruitment process has finished and it is hoped to have someone in post within a month or a little more. In the meantime work is being shared between a number of officers – not one or two – so the best approach to problems is to use the reporting tool as much as possible. If there is not a response within ten working days, with indication of action to be taken, then please let me know and I will 'swing into action'.
4. Drainage: the drainage work (soakaway) on Cherry Hinton Road has been planned in, but it is possible that other work there might need to be undertaken. Investigations are in hand.
5. Roadworks: Coldham's Lane cabling works carries on but should be finished in a week or so. This has caused traffic congestion; but the work has to be done. Repairs to Newmarket Road are needed and are being planned in but cannot be done whilst other work is going on in the areas
6. Cycle Path: the cycle path alongside the railway/Tesco car park is due to be resurfaced and a platform put over tree roots to ensure evenness of the surface. Work is due to take place in the week of 24th February.
7. VOI scooters: Voi are planning to extend availability of scooters and e-bikes to Teversham and Fulbourn. The Combined Authority scheme is working closely with the county council to find suitable on-pavement docking/pick-up spaces in these new areas. If you have suggestions for suitable places, do let us know. The bikes and scooters are tracked all the time, so any left abandoned will be picked up and removed back to base. All users must undergo safety training before being allowed to hire. Usage in the city itself and in areas close to the Cambridge city has increased significantly in recent months.

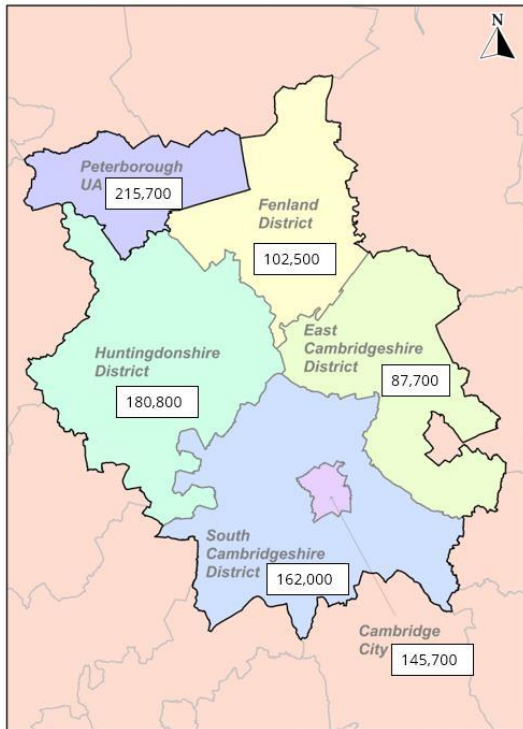
GROWTH ANNOUNCEMENT

The end of January saw a high-profile announcement from the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, about the Government's ambitions for growth.

Much of the announcement focused on Cambridgeshire, and in particular the decision to revive the Oxford-Cambridge corridor or 'OxCam arc' set aside three years ago. This plan, signalled as 'Europe's Silicon Valley', will now be overseen by science minister Sir Patrick Vallance, whom many will remember appearing as one of the health professionals advising during the early phase of the Covid pandemic.

Details included confirmation of

- East West Rail, with a new station at Tempsford



- The new Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital
- A University of Cambridge Innovation Hub in central Cambridge
- Development at the Beehive Centre site in Cambridge, and at Waterbeach
- The new Fens and Lincolnshire reservoirs
- Upgrading of the A428 Milton Keynes to Cambridge.
- There will be a new delivery body for development around Oxford, to mirror
- The growth company for Cambridge already established by the Government, headed by Peter Freeman, the former chair of Homes England.

This announcement is a recognition of Cambridgeshire's significance to the UK economy. But it is also an urgent attempt to revive flagging economic growth, and much of what has been announced by way of infrastructure to support intensified development around Cambridge consists of schemes already planned or under way. It is not clear

whether the money is there for the whole route of East West Rail to Cambridge, and residents and businesses need certainty about this so that they can plan for the future.

House-building plans in and around Cambridge are already ambitious, developed through the local planning process. The infrastructure in the Chancellor's announcement is needed to meet these existing plans, not additional ones. For example the proposed Fens Reservoir—still in the early stages of consultation—will not be supplying water until the late 2030s, and is intended to enable the existing housing targets. Additional development will require further investment to ensure communities have access to sufficient water, health services, and transport. Anglian Water is continuing to object to a number of development proposals on the basis of the insufficient sewage systems. Commitment to the Cambridge Cancer Hospital is welcome, but our health services, from GP surgeries and access to dentists, to accident and emergency facilities in our hospitals, are already struggling.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

An announcement by the Government in December on the future shape of local government is being followed through at breakneck speed. The Government wants elected Mayors in all parts of the country and no two-tier (county and district) councils anywhere. Areas without Mayors are being prioritised to bring them in and two-tier council areas are being invited to submit proposals for moving to single-tier 'unitary' councils in the coming months. Those council areas that want to move really quickly on this have been given the opportunity to request cancellation of their upcoming county council elections this May. In Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, however, the elections for the County Council and the Mayor on Thursday 1 May will go ahead.

Unitary councils

The Government's specification for new unitary councils continues to emerge. Broadly, new Mayoral authorities should have a population of around 1.5 million (ours has about 900,000 so is a little on the small side). Each Mayoral authority should have at least two unitary councils under it. Each of these councils should have a population of at least 500,000. This means that unless there's a lot of special pleading, we should expect two unitary councils for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It may be possible to cut up existing district councils and reallocate the pieces, but this would slow up the process and make it more complex, and the Government doesn't seem to be in that sort of mood. The populations of the local authorities in the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority area from the most recent (2021) census are as follows.

The county council's Insight team is producing data to help council officers advise and help councillors come to conclusions about sensible, workable proposals.

More powers for Mayors

At the same time as all this, the Government also wants elected Mayors to have more powers.

- All areas will have to produce a Spatial Development Strategy, to be adopted with support from a majority of constituents.
- Mayors will be given new development management powers 'similar to those those exercised by the Mayor of London'—including the ability to call in planning applications.
- Mayors will be able to charge developers a 'Mayoral Levy' to 'ensure that new developments come with the necessary associated infrastructure'. Such a levy was used to help fund London's Elizabeth Line in 2012.
- Homes England will have a stronger partnership with established Mayoral Strategic Authorities and increased accountability to mayors to help them deliver on their plans. As part of this, the government says it will move Homes England to a more 'regionalised model' over time, 'so that the agency is even more responsive to the economic plan of an area'.
- Mayors will be given 'the funding they need to deliver on their housing ambitions, with control of grant funding for regeneration and housing delivery'.
- Established Mayoral Strategic Authorities will be given the power to set out the strategic direction of any future affordable housing programme.

STRATEGY RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE

Council budget

Cambridgeshire County Council Strategy Resources & Performance Committee met on Tuesday 28 January and considered its budget proposals to the Full Council, which will meet on Tuesday 11 February. Plans for the coming year include an investment of more than £56M in highways maintenance to tackle the significant backlog of repairs. This includes £14.5M for day-to-day management of the highway and an additional £20M in planned maintenance including roads, pavements, drainage, bridges, safety barriers, traffic signals, public rights of way, and cycleways. The proposals include £3M to cover inflation for local care providers and an extra £8M for the five per cent increase in the Real Living Wage. The draft budget also invests an additional £9M for children who become 'looked after' by the care system, and £4.7M to support home to school transport services. In addition, an estimated £6M of Household Support Fund will support those most in need, alongside further improvements in libraries through £1.3M already committed to the Libraries Plus programme.

Nationally, the financial picture for councils is not good. Four in five county councils are saying that they will be worse off than before the Government's autumn budget and financial settlement. 93 per cent of county and unitary councils will have to raise council tax by the maximum permitted, which is 4.99 per cent in all but exceptional circumstances. County councils face huge challenges meeting the need for adult social care, provision for special educational needs, and school transport. 93 per cent of Cambridgeshire County Council's spending is on things it must do by law, and 86 per cent of the council's income comes from council tax and business rates. It really doesn't leave much room for manoeuvre.

ADULTS & HEALTH

Frequent users of A&E

A new specialist team is helping to reduce avoidable visits to Accident and Emergency (A&E) departments across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Known as the High Impact Use team (HIU), the service is a partnership between NHS Cambridgeshire & Peterborough and the County Council

(who host the service) on behalf of the Integrated Care System (ICS). This service helps those who often attend A&E for reasons that extend beyond medical interventions and for needs which would be better met by other professionals.

Since its launch in October 2024, the team found that many of the frequent visitors to A&E at local hospitals were experiencing issues such as loneliness, financial problems, and poor physical and mental health, rather than medical emergencies requiring urgent hospital care. The HIU team works alongside partners to build a trusted relationship with each person identified as requiring non-clinical support through their frequent attendances at A&E, and help meet their needs. This can include arranging and attending appointments with the patient, enrolling them in community groups or charity services, and assisting them to access other support such as counselling services, housing advice and employment guidance.

The service is provided to people aged eighteen or over who are registered with a GP in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough or Royston.

Falls prevention

Cold homes can affect mobility and put older people at greater risk of falling. It's important to be extra careful to avoid falls during winter months. There's an online interactive risk checking tool to help identify your risks, or those of older family, friends, or neighbours.

www.steadyonyourfeet.org/cambridgeshire

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

Contract for collection of recyclable waste

There has been much discussion recently of a new contract for disposal of recyclable waste which involves transport for processing in Northern Ireland. This contract is for the contents of our blue bins. Recyclable materials dropped off at Household Recycling Centres are dealt with under different contracts. The contract for blue bin waste is let by RECAP, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Waste Partnership (**www.recap.co.uk**). The County Council's procurement team assisted RECAP with the procurement process because the council hosts the RECAP Manager role, but the contract award decision was made by the waste collection authorities (the district councils). The waste collection authorities have managed this contract for the last ten years. The current contractor, Thalia at Waterbeach, did not submit a compliant bid. so was disqualified. The contract was awarded to two successful contractors:

- Biffa (London) for material from East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Fenland
- RE-GEN (Northern Ireland) for material from Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Bids were awarded on quality as well as on price, and transport considerations were part of the criteria.

It has been suggested that the new contract with RE-GEN will mean thousands of miles of additional HGV journeys, compared to the current contract. However, RE-GEN already has contracts with sixteen other authorities and distributes sorted recycling back to the UK before making the return journey to Northern Ireland. The company intends to build a new processing facility in the Midlands during the lifetime of this contract.

RE-GEN can recover up to 99 per cent of material through their plant, compared to 80 per cent under the current contract. This will mean capturing an estimated 400 tonnes more material a month. This is not only important in its own right environmentally, but also in light of the forthcoming national 'extended producer responsibility' scheme. Under this scheme the original producers of waste are required to fund the lifetime costs of its recycling and disposal—and councils will be required to demonstrate as efficient and effective recovery of packaging as possible. In short, goods and packaging are manufactured around the UK, and indeed the world. Recycling and recovery of these materials is also carried out nationwide and worldwide.

New strategies to come to committee in March Two new environmental strategies are to be presented to the County Council's Environment & Green Investment Committee in March—a Tree & Woodland Strategy for management of trees and hedgerows on the council's own land (including road verges), and a Biodiversity Strategy.

Waste water treatment decision delay A decision by Government on the move of the waste water treatment plant from North East has been delayed again. It could come as late as mid April.

Meanwhile on the Combined Authority The Transport & Infrastructure Committee unanimously recommended to the Mayor that he agree to introduce franchising of bus services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This would put control of routes, fares and timetables into democratic hands, and enable profit-making routes to subsidise socially needed but less used ones.

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