

Joint District and County Councillor Report

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This summer has been shaped by two hot topics: climate change and changes at all levels of government. It has been exceptionally hot and dry. It is hugely concerning that several fires have been set locally. Please report all criminal activity to the Police, including by calling 101 or using the online forms for non-emergency criminal activity, or to the British Transport Police, for example by texting 61016. Reporting is crucial so that the relevant services are aware, can act on patterns of incidents, and involve local council-run services. Please also observe any water conservation measures, such as Cambridge Water's hosepipe ban.

Second, as part of Andy Burnham Government's 'Rewiring the State', the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority has been granted 'Enhanced' status. This means new powers for the Mayor. From 2028, Mayors will also receive a share of local income tax, and councils will retain more business rates. In London, the Mayor is held to account by a full, elected London Assembly. Outside London, it is less clear from the proposals that any attention is being given to an increase in the effectiveness of scrutiny to match this accumulation of power. Going forward, we will therefore be looking for opportunities to engage the Mayor to bring local improvements and hold the Combined Authority to account.

LOCAL ISSUES

Buses

Adam will give a verbal update about buses and post something on his website shortly. In short, Whaddon's response to the consultation by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority was strong, and this was noted in the papers that went to the CPCA Transport Committee on 9 September. Nevertheless, transport policy continues to be shaped by the Mayor's throttling of funding for bus franchising. The proposals for the buses as far as Whaddon is concerned, are:

- Cardiff Place, Whaddon continues to be served but not all buses will call
- Whaddon village loses its regular bus service
- Instead Whaddon riders would be able to use the "Tiger on demand" service
- Note that this contrary to councillor input and indeed contrary to the recommendation of consultants SYSTRA working for the Combined Authority.

Adam asked a public question at Transport Committee and there is still time to lobby and try to influence things. We have strong concerns that "Tiger on Demands" is a practicable and accessible solution, let alone being cost-effective.

The proposals are due to become effective in August 2027, prior to the start of bus franchising.

Railway Station

We are aware of reports of vandalism of bikes parked at Meldreth railway station and are exploring ways to discourage this criminal activity together with the Community Rail Partnership.

HIGHWAYS

£5M highways investment for winter readiness

Last winter, the rapid and early onset of wet and cold conditions triggered an eruption of potholes, a direct consequence of insufficient national spending on road maintenance over many years. In response to public feedback, Cambridgeshire County Council has now allocated an additional £5 million to help prepare the county's roads for the coming winter. The investment will fund additional preventative mastic repairs, crack sealing, and patching. As reported previously, the renegotiated highways maintenance contract also includes financial penalties for poor repairs. In addition, the council will run a pothole innovation trial in October to test new equipment and materials to identify the most effective approaches for future highway maintenance. We hope that these measures extend the life of our roads and reduce the likelihood of potholes next winter.

Rights of Way improvement plan

The County Council has now begun its review of its Rights of Way Improvement Plan and is seeking comments from parish councils and other stakeholders.

Comments are now invited on key questions about our local rights of way network, and the priorities residents would like to see in a revised Plan. Comments can be made at <https://yourvoice.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/place-and-sustainability/95349146/>

New 20mph zones show drivers have slowed down

This BBC News item may be of interest to councillors.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9dw15d8xj3o>

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local Government Reorganisation

On the last day of Parliament before its summer holiday, the (then) Secretary of State announced he will be delaying his decision for the reorganisation of local government in our area to October. However, on Monday 7th September, the newly appointed Secretary of State, Angela Raynor, paused plans for Local Government reorganisation 'in light of new legal advice'. As you can imagine, this has led to even more uncertainty for our area

and councils. We now know that local elections will **no longer** take place in May 2027 but we still don't know: what the timetable is for the review; the scope or details of the review; when, if ever LGR will resume; if government will give us money to cover the cost of the pause: what the cost of the delay will be to each council and if councils can submit new/ revised proposals during the pause. We will do all we can to keep our parish councils updated.

Updated Greater Cambridge Local Plan published ahead of final public consultation

An updated version of the Proposed Submission Greater Cambridge Local Plan has been published, marking a major milestone in preparing the first joint Local Plan for Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire.

The Greater Cambridge Local Plan has been developed to shape how Greater Cambridge grows over the next 20 years, identifying where new homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure should be located. It also sets planning policies on themes including climate change, biodiversity, wellbeing, sustainable transport and creating great places to live and work.

The latest version of the Plan reflects continued work on infrastructure constraints such as water supply, forecasts on job creation and housing need, confirming a requirement for over 50,000 new homes between 2024 and 2045. Around 37,000 of these are already planned through existing permissions and the current, adopted Local Plan allocations.

Residents can sign up for updates and find out more at:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/local-plan>

Communities are also invited to attend Local Plan exhibitions and have their say on Greater Cambridge's future, locally on Monday 7 September, 4pm to 7:30pm at [Melbourn Hub, 30 High Street, Melbourn, SG8 6DZ](#)

Greater Cambridge Development Corporation

At the end of July, the Government established the Greater Cambridge Development Corporation to deliver long-term sustainable growth in the area covering Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. The Corporation will be in existence for 25 years. A first meeting of its Board has been held, and negotiations are underway to establish ways of working together with the elected local councils.

ENVIRONMENT

Minerals and Waste local plan

Consultation on this stage of the plan is still open and closes on 10 October.

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/mwlp-review

Agricultural water resilience grant scheme opens

Cambridgeshire County Council has launched a new water resilience grant scheme for farmers and growers. They can apply for grants of between £2,000 and £50,000 to improve water efficiency, strengthen resilience to drought, and support sustainable food production. Further information, including on application windows and deadlines, is available from Water Resources East's website.

<https://wre.org.uk/agricultural-water-resilience-grant/>

CARE

Helping residents stay independent for longer with Mobile Wardens

Hundreds of South Cambridgeshire residents are already benefiting from a simple service that reduces loneliness, boosts confidence and helps people stay independent at home for longer – and the District Council is urging more people to take advantage.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/news/helping-residents-stay-independent-for-longer-with-mobile-wardens>

Unpaid carers invited to share their experience

Unpaid carers across Cambridgeshire are being invited to share their experiences to help shape the future of support services in the county.

Cambridgeshire County Council is bringing together unpaid carers, people with lived experience, local organisations and others with an interest in supporting carers to design future Adult Carers Support Services.

The council is keen to hear from people who provide care for family members, friends or neighbours, as well as young adult carers and others with experience of caring. Their insights will help ensure future services reflect the needs of carers and the people they support.

A series of workshops will take place between September 2026 and March 2027, giving participants the opportunity to help develop future service priorities, shape how services are delivered and contribute to wider commissioning plans. There is no expectation that people attend every session, with all involvement welcomed based on individual availability and interests.

The workshops will build on feedback already shared by carers and provide another opportunity for people to influence how support is delivered in future.

Anyone interested in taking part, or who would like more information, can contact Commissioning.FPTeam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Shaping the future of adult social care

Have your say on the future of adult social care as part of a national public engagement launched by Baroness Louise Casey. The Big Conversation on Care aims to give people across England a direct opportunity to influence the future development of a National Care Service and help shape how care and support will be provided for years to come. The County Council is the statutory adult social care authority for Cambridgeshire.

<http://www.caseycommission.co.uk/bigconversation>

FINALLY...

Ever wanted to ride an autonomous bus?

Government-funded research to the tune of £3.8 million will consider how self-driving buses could be used on guided busways in Cambridgeshire in the future. If you want to ride an autonomous bus now, e.g. from Trumpington Park & Ride to the Biomedical Campus, as part of the current Connector trial, timetables and other details can be found at:

<https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/smart-technology-innovation/connector>

Adam Bostanci, Cambridgeshire County Councillor

Sally-Ann Hart, South Cambs District Councillor

Jose Hales, South Cambs District Councillor