

County Councillors Report

October 2018

Cllr Kevin Cuffley

Cllr Roger Hickford

Cllr Hickford is still very ill. He is making a good recovery. I am sure you join me in wishing him well and making a speedy recovery.

Children

From November 2018 the way Cambridgeshire County Council organises its services for safeguarding and supporting vulnerable children is set to change, with improvements backed by revised council funding, Members agreed today (Tuesday 23 October.)

Against a national background of increasing pressure on Children's Services departments, with increasing numbers of children being referred for support or needing council care – Cambridgeshire's changes aim to help more vulnerable children develop and thrive in their own homes or with extended families.

And to recognise that these changes are focused on making radical improvements to service, and not at delivering an immediate financial saving, Members of General Purposes Committee agreed to invest £3.413m from the council's smoothing fund into the children's services budget to allow the change to start with a clean sheet.

Council leader and chair of GPC Cllr Steve Count, backing the proposal from the council's Children and Young People's committee, recommended the move in order, to put the service which has been struggling with an unprecedented increase in demand over the past twelve months, on a firm financial footing to give the new operating model the best chance of success.

"Children grow up quickly, and where problems occur in a vulnerable family we need to work at speed and help them make changes at the time it can do the most good. The way we plan to work will do this, but it needs to do so, unhampered by the need to make immediate financial savings."

Cambridgeshire currently has more than 700 children in its care currently, but by 2020/21, the changes aim to reduce this by around 100, more in line with Cambridgeshire's statistical neighbours.

Changes from this November will see

- Social work teams based in districts led by non-case holding team managers who can provide more support and challenge; linking in to early help teams who already work in this way and are working well with our partners in schools and health to meet the needs of vulnerable children at the most early stage,
- Easier referrals into the council's contact centre, with trained call handlers able to make faster decisions on all clear cut cases, and referring only complicated or unclear issues on to social workers,
- Lower caseloads for social workers overall, with more resilience built in to larger teams,
- Two new dedicated teams focused on adolescents in the north and south of Cambridgeshire,
- More Child Practitioners focused on working with children in need and able to undertake more sustained and in depth work.

Changes are evidence based - following a series of reviews over the past twelve months by Oxford Brooks University, OFSTED, and a LGA peer review which showed the council's model of 32 units spread across the county, each with up to three qualified social workers and one trainee, led by a consultant social worker who also held a case load, led to less urgent issues slipping down the priority list.

Adult

Cambridgeshire County Council is to receive a one-off payment of £2.32m from Government to help alleviate pressures on the NHS this winter, getting patients home quicker and freeing up hospital beds.

The council will continue to work with partners to help reduce pressures across the health and adult social care system and to make sure the people of Cambridgeshire get the best possible value from every pound spent.

This extra funding comes at a time when adult social care across the country and in Cambridgeshire face unprecedented pressures on their services not just during the winter but all through the year. The demand for services has risen due to increases in the number of people now living for longer with a sharp rise in complex needs later in life. Over the next five years Cambridgeshire will have an increase in this population of two per cent, higher than the national average.

To deal with this demand and budgetary pressures, Cambridgeshire County Council has been focused on innovating and transforming adult services to support people's needs earlier closer to home to help keep them independent for longer. This transformation includes expanding the reablement services, uses of assistive technology and piloting the Buurtzorg Neighbourhood Cares model in St Ives and Soham.

The Council is a leading voice in the County Council Network's push for a fairer funding formula from central government working alongside Cambridgeshire MPs. Cambridgeshire is the fastest growing county in the UK, but the third worst government funded county.

The extra funding is part of a £240 million funding programme announced by Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock earlier this month.

Cllr Anna Bailey, Chairwoman of the Adults Committee at Cambridgeshire County Council said: "We welcome this financial boost from the Department of Health which seeks to ease the significant pressures Cambridgeshire faces when it comes to adult social care. This one-off payment will help more people to be discharged from hospital in a timely way and appropriate manner. We are focussed on increasing the capacity available in the community to discharge people from hospital who need support to return home – but this takes time to achieve. We work closely with our partners in the NHS, the voluntary and independent sector to achieve this all year round.

"We have been successfully transforming our adult social care services over the last two years, but we need Government to recognise there is a substantial funding shortfall in Cambridgeshire, which is the UK's fastest growing county, and that our services are under unprecedented strain all year long.

"I believe this funding signals that Government is hearing our message that Cambridgeshire needs a fairer funding deal."

Ground breaking new housing support service launches in Cambridgeshire

A new 'floating' support service for adults who are at risk of homelessness or need support to set up their new home launches this month in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Social inclusion charity P3 has been commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council to provide the newly remodelled 'Floating Support Service' from Monday, October 1.

The innovative service will provide early intervention, homelessness prevention support to people at risk of losing their home and who are struggling to manage independently.

Designed to be both flexible and responsive, the new service will provide support for people at their point of need in a way that is best for them. This could be in their own home, over the telephone, in community-based group sessions or even digitally via apps like Skype and WhatsApp.

Cllr Anna Bailey, Chairwoman of the Adults Committee at Cambridgeshire County Council, said: "People reach crisis point in their lives for a multitude of reasons and there is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to offering support. This innovative service will enable people to access the right support, at the right time, in the right place so that they can resolve the other issues in their lives which will then help to deal with their housing situation and manage independently in the future."

Health

New support service brings drug and alcohol treatment to door of communities

A new innovative way of delivering adult substance misuse treatment services in Cambridgeshire launches this month.

The national health and social care charity, Change Grow Live (CGL), has been commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council to provide the new specialist treatment service for people affected by drug or alcohol misuse from October 1 2018.

The Service will be brought to the doors of local communities that need it most by operating from hubs in Cambridge, Huntingdon and Wisbech and community satellites across the Cambridgeshire County Council area.

The new contract will include information and advice about how the harms of drug and alcohol can be reduced, medical and psychological treatment along with support for recovery. Help will also be provided with housing, education, training and work, all of which are important on helping people recover from misusing drugs and alcohol.

Cllr Peter Hudson, Health Committee chairman at Cambridgeshire County Council, said: "Our public health team has been working closely with service users, their families and key partners within health, social care, housing, employment and the criminal justice system over the past few months to develop a new Drug and Alcohol treatment service for Cambridgeshire. We are really pleased that CGL will be taking over the service, their innovative model of treatment provision means anyone experiencing drug and alcohol substance misuse in the county is able to access the support they need as quickly and easily as possible."

The CGL Service aims to support individuals to achieve long-term positive change through its comprehensive service and also a dedicated web page that includes webchat and online referrals and provision for people in the criminal justice system.

Those tackling drug and alcohol misuse will be supported by dedicated Recovery Coordinators together with pharmacy services coordinated by Lloyds Pharmacy across Cambridgeshire.

Vicki Markiewicz, Director at Change Grow Live, said: 'We are pleased to bring our drug and alcohol support services to those affected by drug and alcohol misuse across Cambridgeshire. We are looking forward to working with existing pharmacies and innovative GP-shared care provision across Cambridgeshire.

"It is really important that anyone experiencing drug and alcohol misuse in the region is able to access the support they need as quickly and easily as possible. We shall focus on tailoring our services to provide individualised support and help to support and transform the lives of people affected by drug and alcohol problems. We have a real commitment and passion to work in the region and bring positive change."

Education and investment

Full steam ahead for Northstowe Education Campus

Planning permission has been granted for Cambridgeshire's largest education campus which once completed will provide teaching and learning facilities for more than 3,000 students aged 0-19.

Cambridgeshire County Council has received the go ahead to develop Phase 1 of the Northstowe Education Campus, in partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council and Homes England (HE), the government's national housing agency.

The first phase of the campus, which will cost around £45m, includes a secondary school, a multipurpose school hall / theatre space and drama studios, a sports hall large enough for four tennis courts, a gym, two dance studios, an all-weather floodlit football pitch and a 110-place Special Education Needs (SEN) school.

Located on the site of the former RAF Oakington base on the northwest edge of Cambridge, Northstowe will be a sustainable new development with up to 10,000 new homes and an anticipated population of around 24,400 people.

Cllr Simon Bywater, Chairman of the Children and Young People Committee at Cambridgeshire County Council, said: "It has taken several years to get to this point and a huge congratulations to all the parties involved that have made it possible to get to where we are today. This is a truly one-of-a-kind, landmark project bringing all core education and community facilities together into one place for the children of Northstowe and Longstanton and the wider community."

Cllr Peter Hudson, local member for Longstanton, Northstowe and Over at Cambridgeshire County Council, said: "I am thrilled to see plans for what will be the County's largest education campus finally come to fruition. This is an important step in the development of Northstowe Education campus."

The secondary school, planned to open in September 2019, will be run by Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust (CMAT) and will provide places for up to 600 pupils aged 11-16. It will then be extended in two subsequent phases to 1,200 and finally 1,800 pupils. The timing of these phases will be dependent upon the pace of housing development and demand for places from families moving into the catchment area.

The school will be the seventh secondary school to join CMAT and will work closely with CMAT's other schools across Cambridgeshire and surrounding areas, including Swavesey Village College, which has been rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted since 2011.

Cambridgeshire County Council's astute investment programme delivers almost £2m more for frontline services

The purchase of a purpose built student accommodation block in Cambridge, will allow Cambridgeshire County Council to plough £1.9m a year back into vital frontline services – as well as supporting more students to find high quality accommodation in the city.

The council's investment of £38m in the 251 bed Brunswick House on Newmarket Road is the first acquisition in its strategy to build a portfolio of investments that both support its objectives - and raise an excellent return, helping to safeguard the future of vital services for people across the county.

The completion of the purchase, agreed by the council's Commercial and Investment committee, was reported to Members in this week's General Purposes Committee.

This is the Council's first major purchase as part of a plan to invest a total of £100m raised from sales of land to another successful investment initiative, "This Land" a property development company owned by the council. As a result the Council is increasing its total asset portfolio, improving the supply of homes to Cambridgeshire residents, and creating an on-going revenue stream.

"With rising demand for our services, the council is determined to consider all opportunities to invest in schemes that will help us maintain and improve our service levels and stand on our own feet financially. Our ethos of transformation, commercialisation and sound financial management means we are better able to deal with financial pressures, meaning cutting back on services is a last resort." said Cllr Steve Count, leader of Cambridgeshire County Council, and chair of General Purposes Committee.

"We are being economically prudent, and are taking advantage of current low interest rates which means we can make a return as well as improve the local area. Helping to alleviate a chronic lack of high quality purpose built student accommodation in Cambridge, is something that completely fits with our council objectives."

Brunswick House offers 231 en-suite rooms and 20 self-contained studio flats in a building directly opposite Anglia Ruskin University's Computer Science centre.

Cambridge faces a severe shortage of student accommodation with 44% of students currently unable to access university or private sector purpose built student accommodation in the city – amongst Anglia Ruskin students (the nearest University to this building) the figure rises to 77%.

Community and Partnerships.

Hate Crime

As part of the Community and Partnerships strategy of creating safer community environments. At the Committee meeting on 18th October a paper was presented on Hate Crime. To give a brief background. Hate crimes are any crimes targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's.

Disability

Race or Ethnicity

Religion or belief

Sexual orientation

Transgender identity.

In 2016/17 there were 80,393 offences recorded by the Police in which one or more hate crime strands were deemed to be a motivating factor. This was an increase of 29% compared to 2015/16.

The increase is thought to reflect both a genuine rise in hate crime around the time of the European Union (EU) referendum and also due to ongoing improvements in crime recording by the police.

In 2016 the Home Office launched the Hate Crime Action Plan. This identified 5 key areas and called upon the police and partners to focus activity on these.

- Preventing Hate Crime
- Responding to hate crime in our communities
- INCREASE THE REPORTING OF HATE CRIME
- Improving the support for victims of hate crime
- Building an understanding of hate crime

Cambridgeshire Constabulary conducted a legitimacy review and made a number of recommendations to seek to ensure effective service delivery to victims and to build upon the partnership response.

The hate crime strategy group, Chaired by the Detective Superintendent strategic lead of hate crime, convened in May and is now attended by a range of partners including lead officers from the county council.

The Hate Crime Tactical Lead, a Detective Inspector, Chairs the tactical Hate Crime meeting and monitors countywide activity against the Home Office Hate Crime Action Plan in the five key areas outlined.

A Police Hate Crime Coordinator works with partners on all five areas of the Home Office Action Plan whilst also reviewing all hate crimes reported in the last seven days to identify and risk or vulnerability. The coordinator ties in with council officers and the 6 community safety partnerships to help drive joined up activity.

Cambridge County Council now has a nominated head of community resilience and integration who oversees a team of community connectors whose role is to work in support of all community groups to improve cohesion.

Proposals

Cambridgeshire County Council takes the lead on identifying one location per operating area, identifying staff to be trained and publicising the new venues.

The Police Hate Crime Coordinator oversees training of staff and ensure a framework is in place to capture the returns from each venue, allowing their effectiveness to be monitored. A small working Group is convened to lead this activity and help oversee communications with partners.

Other

As your local County Councillors we are constantly lobbying for road improvements and that our roads to be better maintained. This includes road surfaces and resurfacing as well as keeping our highway verges better maintained and cleared.

There has been an increase in concerns of signs on the highway either being obstructed or in poor state. This issue has also been brought to the county highways.