

October County Council Report

Mark Howell: Cambridgeshire County Councillor for Bourn, Greater Cambourne, Little Gransden, Longstowe, Lower Cambourne and Upper Cambourne

Councillors urge government to confirm Adult Social Care funding for 'at risk' services

Cambridgeshire Council leaders are pushing government for clarity on adult social care funding, with a new report suggesting that £2.4bn of funding is at risk nationally.

The report from the County Council Network highlights how adult social care services provided by county councils are at risk due to an average 39 per cent of the funding from government being temporary.

With no guarantees that the temporary funding will continue for the coming year and beyond, County Councillors are pushing government for the continuation of all existing funding and to provide additional budget to meet growing demand for services.

The report comes at a time when adult social care in Cambridgeshire, like many other areas of the country, is under pressure. This is compounded by Cambridgeshire being the sixth worst funded County Council in the country and also the fastest growing area of the country, including a growth in the population of people aged 80 plus expected to grow by 30% by 2024. Nationally, the increase in estimated spending need across different types of councils in 2020/21 will add a further £652m of costs to councils.

Government grants fund around a third of the Council's adult social care services, with the remainder funded through core council funding such as Council Tax and charges. Of that government grant funding, 41% is temporary and unconfirmed beyond the current financial year – this is around £18m of the budget for adult social care. The level of unconfirmed government grant is increasing each year, adding uncertainty into the Council's budget.

To meet the growth in demand for adult social care in the face of a reducing budget, Cambridgeshire County Council is transforming services, focusing on early intervention and prevention to keep people independent for longer so they need less statutory care. This includes using technology to help people stay independent in their own homes, applying the learning from our Neighbourhood Cares pilots in Soham and St Ives to develop local solutions that build on community resources to improve people's wellbeing and independence and working with health partners to improve delayed transfers of care.

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To read the report click here

<https://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/download/2397/>

Cambridgeshire County Councillor Anna Bailey, Chairwoman of the Adults Committee, said: "It is really important for Councils to be able to plan, however we really are in the dark when it comes to the Government's intentions regarding adult social care funding. We are successfully transforming our services to manage demand but this can only go so far.

"We're calling on Government to recognise Cambridgeshire's unique position as the fastest growing county in the country while also being the sixth worst funded nationally too. This means providing us with clarity about the additional and ongoing funds so we can plan and provide high quality services that residents in Cambridgeshire deserve. Cambridgeshire County Council's Leader Councillor Steve Count has been working with all the county's MPs to raise this at the highest levels of Government and we continue to fight for fairer funding."

Council consult on adult social care charging

A consultation on proposals to increase adult social care charging has gone live.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Adults Committee considered carefully the plans before voting to consult on the proposed changes.

The plans to change the adult social care charging policy would bring Cambridgeshire County Council into line with the majority of other local authorities.

The alternative would be a reduction in the overall budget available to meet care needs or a reduction in prevention and support services that help keep people living as independently as possible.

Many people who receive social care from Cambridgeshire County Council receive disability benefits which are paid specifically by the Government to help meet the costs of their care and support. Since the introduction of the Care Act 2014, councils have been allowed to charge for certain non-statutory adult social care services and take into account some disability benefits when charging. The majority of councils across the country have subsequently introduced such changes.

Cambridgeshire County Council reviewed its charging policy two years ago and made no changes at that time. However, since then the financial situation has changed, other councils have made further changes, and the pressure on our adult social care budget has significantly increased.

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If the policy changes were to be adopted after the consultation, then the Council would ensure that any changes include protections to reduce the impact on the most vulnerable. The Council would also retain discretion to review the impact on an individual case-by-case basis and make appropriate adjustments.

The proposals come at a time when adult social care in Cambridgeshire, like many other areas of the country, is under pressure. This is compounded by Cambridgeshire being the sixth lowest funded County Council from Central Government and also the fastest growing area of the country, including a growth in the population of people aged 80 plus expected to grow by 30% by 2024.

The Council is holding the 12 week consultation on five proposed changes which will end on Sunday 15 December. Full consultation details are available on the Cambridgeshire County Council website

The intention is to give everyone who wants to be involved the opportunity to find out about the proposed changes and to give their views.

People will be able to give their views by a variety of methods, including: an online survey, paper survey (which is also available in Easy Read and large print versions), at community events and at meetings run by other interested groups.

Those people who may be directly affected by the proposed changes will receive a letter from the Council with a paper survey and a pre-paid envelope enclosed for a reply.

Campaign aims to dispel fostering myths

A campaign is being launched by #teamcambridgeshire to dispel some of the myths about fostering and to encourage more people to come forward.

Fostering is a hugely rewarding role, but there are many myths surrounding the role which can stop people from making an enquiry.

In particular, one myth is that foster carers do not receive any support with their work however all of our foster carers receive a generous allowance as well as 24 hour access to support and training with the allocated fostering social worker who will be the main point of contact.

The only requirements are that prospective carers are over 21 and have a spare bedroom, but they can be single, married, in a civil partnership, in rented accommodation or retired.

Cambridgeshire County Council's fostering service will be holding a series of information events to provide more detail about what people can expect and what they need to do to become a foster carer.

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For more information, visit

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/fostering-and-adoption/foster-carers-experiences/>

Council given green light to build new Alconbury Weald Headquarters

Cambridgeshire County Council has been granted planning permission to begin work on its new purpose-built civic headquarters in Alconbury Weald.

The Council can now move forward with their plans to break ground in late autumn this year.

The new two-storey building, which aims to be 'bright, flexible and productive', will incorporate 350 desks for staff, along with a number of informal meetings spaces and a public reception. Environmental factors such as charging points for electric cars and solar panelling will help the building remain energy efficient and forward-thinking.

The building will house a number of essential county-wide support services, such as Finance, IT and HR, and will be the home for the Council's democratic functions.

Frontline services will operate from buildings and spaces around the county – putting them closer to the communities they serve.

Deputy Chief Executive of Cambridgeshire County Council, Chris Malyon added: "The decision today is a significant step forward in our plans to be more present across the County, and I'm pleased that we remain on-track and on budget. It shows our commitment to investing in our services and people – putting us in the best position to support our growing county."

The proposed cost of the new Alconbury build, estimated to be in the region of £18m, will be offset by the Council moving away from their Shire Hall site – a move that is set to save in the region of £60m over 30 years.

Alongside the planned new build, the Council have been investing in their own buildings around the County, including upgrading their IT infrastructure so staff can work in a more agile manner, enabling them to be closer to the communities who need them most.

Help choose the arts events in your local library for Spring 2020

'The Library Presents' invites members of the public to help choose which performances and workshops they would like to see in our next season (Spring 2020).

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Communities can view a “menu” of events in participating libraries or on-line at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/arts.

The menu includes dance, theatre, music, magic, comedy, circus, puppetry, storytelling, poetry and workshops in a variety of disciplines, from visual and digital art to music, theatre and dance.

Menus and “choosing slips” will be available in participating libraries from Wednesday 11 September. People can browse the menu, fill out a slip with their choices and add it to the box.

Alternatively, people can browse the Menu in the comfort of their own home and then go to the library to fill out the slip.

All the choices will help decide what is programmed at each individual library. The full programme will be announced in January 2020.

Cambourne is a participating library

Joanne Gray, Partnerships, Projects and Funding Manager at Cambridgeshire County Council said: “Each season of The Library Presents is shaped by the community. The programme will be different in every participating library, and your opinions now help shape the programme in the Spring. Come and have your say in the next season and help us bring an amazing range of theatre, music, and dance performances, children’s activities and workshops for all ages to the heart of your community.

The [choosing menu can be viewed on our website](#) and the selection is open until Saturday 5 October 2019.

Tickets for our Autumn Season programme of events can be purchased at the participating libraries, by phone or online at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/arts.

One year on and #teamcambridgeshire is celebrating

In the last year, 24 new Cambridgeshire families have been approved to offer local homes for children in care.

On 12th September 2018 we launched our Team Cambridgeshire fostering recruitment drive and one year on we are celebrating the new carers who have joined the fostering team.

Since the beginning of September 2018 we have received an impressive 369 new enquiries from the public seeking information about becoming one of our foster carers and we are hoping that over this next year even more local families will come forward to find out more about providing a stable home for a local child in care.

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Over the last year we have also gained the support of around 20 local business and organisations who have pledged their support for Cambridgeshire County Council's fostering service including Cambridgeshire Police and Fire Service, Marshalls of Cambridge, Cambridge United, Serpentine Green Shopping centre and the North West Anglia Health Trust who are all helping us to promote fostering.

For those who want to find out more about fostering we are holding a number of information events across Cambridgeshire this month to raise awareness of the amazing role that our foster carers do by providing safe and loving homes for our most vulnerable children and young people.

If you would like to register your interest then email fostering@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or call **0800 052 0078**

Meet the robotic cats – they're fur real

Robotic cats can be 'purrfect' companions for people with learning disabilities and dementia – and we're not 'kitten around'.

The robotic cats are part of a pilot exploring how technology can improve people's wellbeing, with the cats able to reduce anxiety and stress levels in people with learning disabilities and dementia.

The furry companions are part of a suite of technologies that Cambridgeshire County Council is using to improve people's wellbeing and also to help them stay independent, safe and well. These technologies mean that people can stay in control of their lives and include things that help with everyday tasks and situations, such as special cups that remind people to drink, or motion detector lights to help people move around their home in the middle of the night. They can also help save lives and reduce serious injury, with tools like the lifeline system that allows an individual to raise the alarm if they have a fall or finds themselves in a difficult situation.

Cambridgeshire County Council is transforming its adult social care services to meet a rising demand for services and also to bring the best practice to Cambridgeshire. Other examples include the Neighbourhood Cares pilots in Soham and St Ives to develop local solutions to improve people's wellbeing and independence and working with health partners to improve delayed transfers of care.

Lucy Forrest, Technology Enabled Care Team Manager at Cambridgeshire County Council, said: "As part of the pilot to explore enabling technologies we've invited people to test the cats and to give us their feedback. Not only do they purr, they also roll over, play and have sensors that respond to touch.

"Though they are fun, in no way are they a gimmick or a toy, they do have a serious role to play in reducing people's stress and anxiety and potentially

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trigger happier feelings. The reaction we have received has been amazing, bringing a smile to people's faces and we're now investigating whether they can improve people's wellbeing over the long term. The good news is they've had an immediate impact and actually bring out people's caring side."

Giving children in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough the best start in life

A new strategy that aims to ensure that all children in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are healthy, happy, safe from harm and ready for learning –will be discussed by the Children and Young People Committee on 10 September. The experiences of babies and children from pre-birth to five lay the foundations for their future, and shape their development, educational attainment and life chances.

The Best Start in Life programme brings together a wide range of organisations and professionals representing the wider early years system, including, early year's education, early help, maternity, healthy child programme and voluntary sector.

The Strategy is, in part, a response to an Early Years Social Mobility Pilot Peer Review of Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) in 2018. And in June this year we had a follow up visit from the LGA team to check on our progress.

The follow-up report acknowledged that progress had been made in the last year, noting that, "There is a strong commitment from senior leaders and elected members to the Best Start in Life (BSiL) transformation programme underpinning the Strategy.

"There has been rapid progress towards the development of a multi-agency strategy with a commitment to release capacity to progress the work through the implementation and stakeholder groups. Relationships and networking across agencies have been strengthened through the strategy and stakeholder groups and staff value this."

The report noted improvements over the last year including 'increased clarity around early help for families and 'considerable progress around the provision of speech and language therapy.

For more information, visit

https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccs_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1025/Committee/4/Default.

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'Every little helps' as Council diversifies its commercial portfolio to support frontline services

Two major investments have been announced by Cambridgeshire County Council as it moves to further diversify its commercial portfolio, making healthy returns to invest in essential frontline services.

Members agreed to invest £51.4m in a 986 year lease of the Tesco site in Cheddar's Lane, just off Newmarket Road in Cambridge – in a deal which will generate enough revenue to employ 56 social workers, pay for more than 149,000 hours of home care or support 80 older people with dementia each year.

And in a further acquisition, completed just days ago, the council has followed up the Tesco site lease purchase by buying a ten acre industrial estate in Peterborough, an £11.5m investment which will generate an annual return enough to fund the entire countywide trading standards operation.

The total 2.8 hectare central Cambridge site is home to a 2002 purpose built supermarket building, and includes parking for 530 cars. The current lease to Tesco has 10.5 years to run, with index linked annual rent increases – which will give the council a 4.5% return on its investment –with expected rises to almost 6% per year by the end of the ten years. This lease is guaranteed by Tesco PLC, which is 22nd largest company in the UK, and is a full repairing lease meaning the council has no liability to maintain or repair the building.

Tesco has the right to renew its lease in ten year blocks up to 2059. The central Cambridge location and length of the lease make it an investment which is much sought after by investors.

In Peterborough, the Kingsbridge Centre in Sturrock Way, Peterborough is home to the UK headquarters of both E-Leather Ltd, a global award winning materials technology company, and Finnings (UK) Ltd, the world's largest distributor of Caterpillar products - with lease agreements up to the next 15 years.

The return on investment for the site is currently 6%

Funding available for local groups ready to leap into action

Organisations with great ideas for improving the lives of people in Cambridgeshire can apply for funding from the Innovate & Cultivate Fund before the next deadline on 1 November, to get their project started or to expand it further.

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Since its creation in 2016, Cambridgeshire County Council's Innovate & Cultivate Fund has supported 43 local projects, investing nearly £1m in communities across Cambridgeshire.

In the last round of funding agreed by members in July, a total of £106,460 was awarded to eight new projects that build a network of community support and help make the lives of children, families, vulnerable adults, and older people better.

Among the successful projects is an innovative pilot from the Cambridge Acorn Project CIC, designed to help reduce emotional distress in 50 vulnerable children and their families using the Tetris video game.

Matt Edge, from Cambridge Acorn Project said: "This funding will have a huge impact for us as a small charity with a significant growing demand on our very limited resources. With this funding, we will be able to expand some innovative work we have been doing using the video game Tetris to help children and young people talk about, and process, traumatic memories and distress. We have seen some initial positive outcomes with this work, but thanks to this funding we can expand its impact and reach more children experiencing distress and work to improve their wellbeing in an evidence-based way".

Over £18,000 have also been awarded to Arthur Rank Hospice Charity to get their new befriending scheme for people with life-limiting conditions off the ground.

Isla Rowland, Grants and Trusts Manager at Arthur Rank Hospice Charity explained:

"It is common for people who have a life-limiting illness or who are reaching the end of their lives to feel very isolated and lonely, particularly if they are less active, unable to leave the house or live alone. We often hear from patients how much they would value and benefit from visits at home so we are delighted to be able to set up a project where volunteers can be matched with, and visit patients in their own home.

"This will connect these people with their wider communities and provide companionship and social interaction, to help them to remain independent for longer.

The Edmund Trust has also been successful in securing over £17,000 for a befriending scheme providing friendship and support to young people with a learning disability.

The money from the Innovate and Cultivate Fund will allow the trust to expand the scheme further from its base in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, into East Cambridgeshire and Fenland, and support 50 more young people with learning disabilities and their families.

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Roland, who is a volunteer at The Edmund Trust said: "As a volunteer for The Edmund Trust's befriending scheme, I have been introduced to and made friends with a number of different people. In each case, the person benefiting from the scheme is able to form a new relationship with someone who is not a family member, a professional or a carer, but someone who they get to know as a friend. That seems to me to be something that everyone deserves.

"The very first person I was connected with through the befriending scheme is Sean. Sean is 28 and we are firm friends who share many of the same interests and hobbies. We enjoy bowling, swimming, going to the cinema and eating cheeseburgers. If you asked Sean he might also tell you that we both enjoy singing along to Olly Murs while we're in the car, but I wouldn't ever admit to that publicly. Sean is a kind, happy and compassionate young man. I'm proud to have him as a friend."

The five other successful projects awarded funding in July were: a new Timebank in Sawston, a research based training programme for early year's practitioners provided by Cambridgeshire Early Years Teaching School Alliance, a personal service to carers and older people in Gamlingay, a Good Neighbour scheme at Hemingford's Hub and Disability Cambridgeshire's recruitment of a specialist case worker to support vulnerable adults with financial and benefits advice.

Large and small pots of funding are available for local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in Cambridgeshire. Applicants can bid for funding ranging from £2,000 - £19,000 for small 'Cultivate' grants and up to £50,000 for larger 'Innovate' grants which can demonstrate how their good ideas can make a difference, and prevent the need for Council services.

The deadline for the next round of Cultivate applications is Friday 1 November 2019. A free advice session to support potential applicants to develop their project ideas and grant applications will be held on 19 September (9.30am - 12.30pm) at Ely Community Centre.

Organisations and local groups looking for further information can see full details at the Innovate & Cultivate website <http://www.cambscf.org.uk/icf.html>.

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