

## March 2020 Report

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

### Council Tax

Cambridgeshire County Council has passed its annual budget with Adult Social Care Precept of 2% and Council Tax of 1.59%, a total of 3.59% for 2020/21

The maximum available was 3.99%, so we have not charged the maximum. This brings the budget of £612m

<b>Table 1</b>	<b>Band A £</b>	<b>Band B £</b>	<b>Band C £</b>	<b>Band D £</b>	<b>Band E £</b>	<b>Band F £</b>	<b>Band G £</b>	<b>Band H £</b>
County Council	906.12	1,057.14	1,208.16	1,359.18	1,661.22	1,963.26	2,265.30	2,718.36
Police & Crime Commissioner	155.10	180.95	206.80	232.65	284.35	336.05	387.75	465.30
District Council	100.21	116.91	133.61	150.31	183.71	217.11	250.52	300.62
Fire Authority	48.06	56.07	64.08	72.09	88.11	104.13	120.15	144.18
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

### Cambourne Primary Schools

Regarding a question I was asked last month, I am providing you with an update on place planning and our thoughts with regard to the future pattern of provision for Cambourne. The position, summarised below, and remains largely unchanged from November 2019.

The feasibility study we commissioned did not support a case for a one form of entry (FE), 210 pupil expansion of Monkfield Park Primary School. The constraints of the existing site and the potential disruption an expansion project would cause were key factors, as was our Strategic Education Capital Program Manager's view that a new 2FE (420 place) primary school to serve the Cambourne West development could be built for £7.5M, making it more cost-effective than a 1FE expansion of Monkfield park at an estimated cost of £5.9M. We explained this to Sarah Jarman, the Head Teacher at Monkfield Park, who seemed to accept the study's findings.

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Additionally, any use of Section 106 monies to expand the existing schools in Cambourne rather than building a new site would require unpicking existing S106 agreements, therefore this would not be our preferred option.

In Autumn 2019 we received updated forecasts for the number of children expected to be living in the catchment area of Cambourne primary schools, with the new data projecting a lower need for places than we had previously thought. They also forecast a greater need for places in key stage two (KS2) than in key stage one (KS1), so our preferred method of opening new schools with only a reception class for the first intake and them growing naturally year on year would not address the issue.

The idea of running one-off bulge classes at the existing schools to deal with the KS2 shortfall was put to all the head teachers of the local primary schools, but was initially unpopular. One head cited data that tracked the progress of children in bulge classes and showed a pronounced negative trend when compared to their peers.

Generally speaking, the Place Planning team and the local schools are in agreement that a new primary school in Cambourne is not an immediate need. We have not set a specific date for opening a new provision as this is likely to be steered by the rate at which new housing in the area comes to market, something we will continue to monitor while working with existing schools to manage the demand for places.

### **Cambridgeshire County Council's Business Plan**

This sets out how Cambridgeshire County Council will spend the resources we have at our disposal to achieve our vision and priorities for Cambridgeshire, and the outcomes we want to achieve

It is a statutory requirement under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for the Council to approve a balanced budget "*before 1 March in the financial year preceding that for which it is set*". In doing so, the Council undertakes financial planning covering a five year timescale in order to align spending plans with the projected resources available and ensure that we recognise and provide for growth in demand for services. The budgets set out in this report are robust for 2020-21 given the information the Council has available at this point. The figures for 2021-22 and the three years after this are based on prudent assumptions and modelling but will naturally become less accurate for projections looking further forward.

For 2020-21, Cambridgeshire will receive £608m of funding, excluding grants retained by its schools. The key sources of funding are local taxation (council tax and business rates), central Government grants and fees and charges income.

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Council tax falls in to two elements. These are the core council tax that is used to support the delivery of all Council services, and the Adult Social Care precept which can only be used to support the delivery of social care services to adults. The assumptions that are currently upon which the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) financial forecasts are predicated are zero % general council tax increase and 2% adult social care precept increase for each year of the Business Plan.

Total expenditure for 2020-21 will be £612m. The costs of running the Council have risen by £36m (6.3%) as compared to 2019-20. This is primarily due to inflationary and demand pressures across service areas generally but especially in respect of Adult and Children's Social Care provision.

In light of the increasing costs and reducing funding, significant savings are required across the planning period. The savings/income target for 2020-21 is £21.0m with over £68m required over the next five years.

The above savings requirements are predicated on the following assumptions for raising Core Council tax and the Adult Social Care Precept.

Band D increase Core Council tax 0% £0.0m £0.00  
Adult Social Care Precept 2% £5.9m £26.19

### **County Ciouncil achievements during the last finical year**

The Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and committed itself to actions to address it in collaboration with our public and private sector partners.

2017/18 We delivered £32m of savings, 18/19 £42m of savings, by April of this year we will have delivered another £27m this year, a combined total of £101m.

In Adult social services a peer challenge confirmed that we provide good outcomes for vulnerable adults, delivered with one of the lowest unit costs per head.

In Highways our funding is in the top band due to our asset management approach, ensuring we receive maximum funding in fact for 2020 -21 this means an additional £2.5m

Whilst other authorities have cut library services, we have expanded ours, including the addition of two new mobiles for our more rural communities.

Our commercial investments now total £163m, next year providing an annual revenue surplus of £4.3m. That is £4.3m a year that we do not have to ask the taxpayers for.

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We invest in, train and nurture our staff, for example our apprenticeship programme is an excellent way of bringing through new talent in our organisations. Alongside that this year two of our newly qualified social workers, won national Newly Qualified Social Worker of the Year Awards

In 2018 Cambridgeshire County Council won the British Renewable Energy Awards' pioneer category in 2019 at the national Energy Efficiency awards East of England Council of the Year.

Internationally recognised Friends of the Earth group, on their website hailed "Cambridgeshire's Corporate Energy Strategy ...as essential reading

Our Connecting Cambridgeshire programme of superfast broadband rollout, has surpassed other non-urban areas by already reaching more than 97% of the county.

Our Smart Cambridge partnership has been shortlisted – in the Future Places category - in the LGC Awards.

The Conservative proposed and built guided busway has delivered more than 30million passenger journeys since opening.

The Park and Rides we delivered and invested in, took 3.6million journeys of the roads and increased patronage by around 10% last year.

Led by Public Health, our whole system falls prevention programme, highlighted as best practice by the National Centre for Ageing Better.

Our work on suicide bereavement support, led jointly by our public health with our local NHS, is a best practice example, quoted in the NHS Long Term Plan and our local model is about to be rolled out nationally.

We also created the transformation fund, having already banked savings of £19m and successfully invested £11m, it has an expected total return of £28m Medium Term Financial Strategy. Another £28m that we will not need to ask the Taxpayer to fund.

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