

# CAMBOURNE TOWN COUNCIL

District of South Cambridgeshire

Council Meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021

## **Council Reports**

### **10 COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS**

To receive a report from the County Councillor for Cambourne Ward.

Report attached

**Cambridgeshire County Council approved a budget aimed at keeping the council tax burden as low as possible for local residents**

Cambridgeshire County Council today (Tuesday 9 Feb) approved a budget for 2021/22 aimed at keeping the council tax burden as low as possible for local residents, while still investing in things most important to them.

In proposing his budget amendment, approved by a majority vote, Cllr Steve Count - Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council - set out plans to invest almost £30m more over the next five years in key areas such as footpaths, flooding prevention, biodiversity and key road improvements.

Cllr Count outlined a package of additional investment as part of his budget proposal to meet areas which are currently high local priorities – referring to similar action in previous years when the council had made additional investments of £24m in Highways and £16m to accelerate plans to reach Carbon Net Zero by investing in making its buildings more efficient and moving its vehicle fleet to electric.

The new proposals will see additional investment over the next five years of:

- £20 million extra in footpath maintenance with 50% of this sum to be spent on surface treatments, such as footway repairs, and the other 50% on deeper treatments, such as resurfacing and reconstruction. This is in addition to the current annual budget for footpath maintenance across Cambridgeshire of £1.3m
- £2.73 million extra in measures to prevent flooding and improve local biodiversity. This will include new measures such as rapid gully clearing at all known risk sites, better verge maintenance on rural roads avoiding peak flowering times and an urban verge 'cut and collect' trial, plus a series of initiatives to provide both active and practical support for local communities to address flooding
- £6.97 million in improvements to the B1050 Shelfords Road at Willingham. This site has been a well-known, longstanding concern for a number of years is a busy route, and one of only a limited number of river crossings, and a main

commuter route from the Fens towards Cambridge and the A14. Significant work has regularly been undertaken on this road in an attempt to keep it safe and serviceable, but historic construction destabilised by poor ground conditions make it a prime candidate for a full reconstruction. Without which it would ultimately need to be closed.

“Now more than ever we need to concentrate on keeping the burden of tax as low as possible for our residents,” Cllr Count said. “The Coronavirus pandemic has impacted on our residents and their families, our way of life and the local as well as national economy. To automatically inflict the maximum possible increase, of 4.99% is unthinkable to us.

So to achieve the extra investment, and close a predicted budget gap in the next financial year of £9.6million, the accepted proposal was for the council to:

- Release an immediate £4.115m in revenue in 2021/2 by halting any further top-ups to the Transformation Fund from the Council’s Minimum Revenue Provision\* (MRP)
- Redeploy £3.767m already in the Transformation Fund for one year – to keep any possible council tax rise as low as possible.

“Only as a last resort, my administration recommended to Council that it should balance the remaining budget gap by setting the **Adult Social Care Precept at 1% and Council Tax at 1.99%.**” Cllr Count added.

**A 2.99% increase will add an annual £40.59 to a Band D Council tax bill, or 78p per week.**

“Benchmarking from external independent sources, shows that we are a low-cost authority with good outcomes. We provide high quality services yet still have **£155 a head less to spend than the county average.**

“The reason we have and we will continue to campaign for fairer funding, is because quite staggeringly, **if Cambridgeshire residents received the same core funding allocation as London residents, this Council would receive an additional £132m per year,**” he concluded.

**A campaign has been launched to encourage more people to apply for social work vacancies in Cambridgeshire.**

These crucial roles – across both children's and adults' services – play a pivotal part in improving the lives of the vulnerable.

Cambridgeshire County Council is recruiting workers to join a range of teams in Children's Services including assessment, family safeguarding, disability, fostering and children in care.

Social workers do all they can to make the lives of children and families better and enjoy the challenge that every day brings.

Adult social workers are needed in the adult and autism team, the care home support team, learning and disabilities, adult mental health, the older people's team, physical disabilities, reablement and the transfer of care.

As part of the Adults Service you'll have the opportunity to empower vulnerable residents to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. You will strive to support independence amongst our service users and will in turn be supported in using your own ideas and making your own decisions in doing so.

Cambridgeshire County Council has recently introduced a new way of working in its children's teams, which is already delivering improved outcomes for the most vulnerable children and their families despite the recent challenges of the pandemic.

The support offered to social workers comes in many forms. This could be providing flexibility to those going through difficult personal circumstances, encouraging those that want to take the next step in their career or even helping social workers with a background in adult social work transition to the children's service.

John Ball is a Senior Practitioner (QSW) within the Assessment Team at Cambridgeshire County Council. He said: "I wanted to become a permanent member of staff as Cambridgeshire's Children's Services have a very child focused approach and a clear emphasis on trying to search for the positives in every family circumstance. If you talk to a senior member of staff and mention a child's name, they know all about the case. In Cambridgeshire people are cared about – the children, the families and the staff members. It is a very humanistic approach."

Megan Smith is a Senior Practitioner (QSW) within the Adolescent Team of Cambridgeshire County Council. She joined as a student and was thrilled to be offered a job upon completion of her Masters' degree. Megan completed her Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and qualified as a social worker.

"I absolutely love this role," Megan said. "The adrenalin rush created by the work is addictive. Every day is different, and working with teenagers can be a real challenge, but it is one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. I can really see the positive impact that my work has had with young people and their families and am so proud to be part of such an exciting and important team."

Kate Scott has been part of Cambridgeshire County Council's social work team for two and a half years. She specialises in continuing healthcare – an area she loves. "My manager knew my strengths and expertise so let me focus on continuing healthcare. This allowed me to build autonomy and gave me confidence and is probably the biggest thing she could have done for me," she says.

"I work with families and service users to support them through complex issues. The main thing for me is that every day is different. You meet new people, who by the very nature of being older, have extensive life experience. That's what I love about my job the most. I feel honoured that they'd share their story with me - it really is a privilege."

Cambridgeshire County Council is looking for enthusiastic and pro-active social workers to join their fast-paced and dynamic teams. Candidates must be qualified social workers with current SWE registration.

On offer are relocation packages, generous annual leave entitlement, local government pension scheme, agile working, a supportive management team and excellent training and career progression.

Anyone interested in children's social care work should call Jess on 01223 729028,

For adults' social care work Hannah on 01223 699263.

Further information on either is available by emailing:  
[welovesocialworkers@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:welovesocialworkers@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

### **Rapid testing sites now open across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough**

Almost 3,000 rapid tests were carried out by people who are leaving home regularly for work, volunteering or training last week at one of six new testing centres launched to seek out people with no symptoms who have Covid-19.

Testing sites are now open in Peterborough and every Cambridgeshire district, with the final two centres, in Cambridge and Huntingdon, opening at the end of last week.

In the week commencing 8 February, 2,975 tests were carried out. Everyone who tested positive has been offered guidance from NHS Test and Trace around the self-isolation process and the support available if they need it.

Since the rapid testing began at the start of the month, 4,735 tests have been carried out.

More than 80 workplaces have also expressed an interest in conducting lateral flow testing on site for staff members who cannot work from home.

Dr Liz Robin, Director of Public Health for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, said: "This is a really good start to our roll-out of rapid testing for key workers and those who need to leave home regularly for work, volunteering or training across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

"Some of the sites have only just launched, so we expect the numbers accessing the tests to rise in the days and weeks to come.

"It remains that up to one in three people with Covid-19 infection show no signs of the virus and could be spreading the disease without knowing it. So it is really important that we continue to offer rapid turnaround tests to as many people as possible who are leaving home regularly, to break the chains of transmission.

"By testing these people on a regular basis - twice a week ideally - we can reduce the number of cases of Covid-19 across

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, limit the number of people who might die or become very ill as a result of the virus and protect our NHS."

Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council are offering the tests as part of a six-week pilot, with the potential for this to be extended. It follows the commencement of rapid testing in Peterborough in December for communities where rates were the highest.

Rapid tests are being offered to people aged 18 and over who have no symptoms of Coronavirus. There is no cost to take a test. The process of taking a test takes on average 15 minutes from arrival to departure.

There are now six sites across the county, with the potential to set up pop-up sites in areas of high need if required.

Tests are available in the following locations:

- **The Hub, High Street, Cambourne, South Cambridgeshire, CB23 6GW.**
- Queen Mary Centre, Queen's Road, Wisbech, Fenland, PE13 2PE.
- Soham Town Rangers Football Club, Julius Martin Lane, Soham, Ely, East Cambridgeshire, CB7 5EQ.
- Huntingdon, The Coneygear Centre, Butts Grove Way, Huntingdon, PE29 1PE.
- Cambridge, The Meadows Community Centre, 1 St Catherine's Rd, Arbury, Cambridge, CB4 3XJ.
- St Mark's Church, Lincoln Road, Peterborough, PE1 2SN.

To book a test, people need to visit

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/rapidtesting](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/rapidtesting)

[www.peterborough.gov.uk/rapidtesting](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/rapidtesting)

Dr Robin added: "We not only need people to have these tests regularly if they are leaving home for work, we also need them to act responsibly when they get their result. If you test positive, please isolate at home with other members of your household and ask for help if you need it. There is lots we can do to help you to self-isolate, including offering grants to those who will struggle

financially or help with accessing food shopping, fetching medicines and so on.

“The NHS Test and Trace Service will also get in touch with you to offer advice and ask about contacts. If you test negative, please continue to follow national guidance and limit all non-essential contact with others. While the rapid test identifies many people with the virus it doesn't identify everyone - so following the lockdown rules and other Covid-safe behaviours is essential even if you have a negative test.”

Lateral flow tests are a new kind of technology that can be used to test a higher proportion of asymptomatic people and do not require a laboratory to process the test.

Extensive clinical evaluation from Public Health England and the University of Oxford shows lateral flow tests do not detect all positive cases, but they can be helpful as part of a targeted testing programme to identify asymptomatic people quickly.

Everyone who takes a test, even if it is returned negative, must continue to follow the rules which includes leaving home only for essential reasons, limiting contact with people they do not live with and ensuring good practices where contact has to be made, such as social distancing, wearing a mask or PPE and hand washing.

People with symptoms will not be tested at the rapid testing sites. Anyone with one or more of these Coronavirus symptoms – a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – should book a test at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://nhs.uk/coronavirus) or by calling 119.

### **Libraries in Cambridgeshire offering select and collect service during lockdown**

Libraries in Cambridgeshire remain open to the public but are offering a restricted service in accordance with the current lockdown restrictions.

Customers can return books, pick up pre-ordered books, or use a pre-booked computer to access essential services only.



The Select and Collect service, which enables customers to choose and pick-up titles is still being operated.

When customers enter library buildings, they will be required to comply with national safety guidelines by sticking to social distancing and wearing face coverings.

Call the Customer Service Centre on 0345 045 5225. Customers will be notified when their books are ready to collect.

**Cambourne library services and opening hours are: -**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
Closed	10am to 2pm	Closed	Closed	10am to 2pm	10am to 2pm

**Laptops campaign reaches half a million pounds**

A campaign to help disadvantaged children across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to get internet and laptop access is gathering pace, with the first batch of equipment being delivered to schools this week.

Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council launched the 'Laptops for Children' campaign earlier this month in partnership with the Youth Panel, Cambridge Digital Direct, Cambridge 2030 and the Cambridge Culture Foundation, aimed at purchasing laptops and 4G routers for vulnerable young people.

Around 8,000 children in the region do not have use of a computer or broadband, meaning they cannot access lessons and online resources, putting them at risk of falling behind with their studies.

Just over two weeks after launching the campaign, an impressive £567,845 has already been raised thanks to support from businesses and individuals, as well as funding from both authorities. A first batch of over 1,000 laptops and 460 routers have been purchased and will be distributed to schools from this week.

A total of 352 laptops have also been donated to drop-in centres and libraries across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. These will be checked and updated before being distributed to schools.

The campaign will continue to secure sufficient funding so that every young person in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has the necessary equipment to continue learning. Both councils are writing to businesses and Chambers of Commerce this week to drum up further support.