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**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE CITY OF ELY COUNCIL HELD AT 7.00 PM ON MONDAY,  
21ST FEBRUARY 2022 AT THE MALTINGS, SHIP LANE, ELY.**

**PRESENT:** Mrs T Coulson – Clerk to the Council

Cllr S Austen, Mayor

Cllr R Morgan

Cllr C Whelan

Cllr M Rouse

Cllr A Arnold

Cllr C Phillips

Cllr K Wilkins

Cllr S Bellow

Cllr V Ganivet

Cllr D Warman

Cllr E Every

Cllr I Lindsay

Cllr A Whelan

*5 members of the public*

**1. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Denness and their reasons accepted.

**2. COUNCILLOR REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

There were no requests for dispensations.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interests.

**4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON THE 18TH JANUARY 2022 AND MATTERS ARISING**

Minutes of the last meeting held on the 18th January 2022 were agreed and signed as a true record. They were signed by the Chairman. Pages 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943 and 1944 refer. There were no matters arising.

**5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman reminded those present of her charity quiz night on the 27th February at the Maltings.

**6. QUESTION TIME**

A parishioner asked Councillors that as the Maltings Cottage forms part of the Maltings complex and was given to the people of Ely to be enjoyed by all and then ECDC had wanted to change it into holiday lets which they received criticism for as this did not meet the criteria of the original gift, now the City Council is proposing to make them into two residential units, is this not going full circle as to what ECDC were doing. He felt it was illegal and challenged the decision the City Council had made. Cllr Morgan, Chair of the Assets Committee informed the parishioner that the Council had agreed to this way forward for the Cottage and were currently awaiting a response from ECDC, the Council's landlord for the Cottage, as to whether they felt the proposal was acceptable. The parishioner felt the Council's response to their question was unsatisfactory. Cllr Rouse said that he took the parishioner's point of view seriously and after the Council have had discussions with ECDC the debate will be ongoing with the Assets Committee. The Council took the cottage on in good faith and at the moment the current proposals are the best way forward.

## **6. QUESTION TIME CONTINUED .....**

Another parishioner asked about the councillor vacancy and the process for ensuring there would be an election. The Clerk explained the process to them and gave the deadline for calling an election. They also asked about how the Council communicated with its parishioners as it was felt by the Waterside Residents Association that they do not get a lot of communication. The Clerk explained about how the Council communicates through the Elyi magazine, on the Council's website and Facebook. They felt that as this was mainly digital not all people could access this. The Clerk confirmed the Council felt it was important to have the regular pages in the Elyi as this is delivered to every household in Ely. It was agreed to ask the Communications and PR Working Group to consider the concerns that had been raised and how better the Council could communicate with its parishioners. Another parishioner raised their concerns regarding the potholes in Back Lane. It was suggested they contact County Councillor P Coutts, who could hopefully assist with getting these repaired sooner.

## **7. REPORTS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

A written report was received from County Cllrs Coutts and A Whelan which was noted and will be attached to the minutes. County Cllr Coutts had given his apologies as he was unable to attend the meeting. There were no reports from District Councillors.

## **8. MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS & REPORT**

The Mayor had attended the pantomime gala performance in December, the Accession Day service at Ely Cathedral and the Ely Beer Festival.

## **9. PLANNING**

A report of the Planning Committee meeting held prior to this meeting was received.

## **10. INFORMATION ONLY ITEMS**

The following information only items were received and noted: -

Notification of Road Closures:- Victoria Street, Ely - 2.3.22; 15-21a High Street, Ely – 7 – 10.3.22; Adjacent to 1 Station Road, opposite 2 Station Road, Ely – 1 – 3.3.22; Back Lane, Ely – 21 – 23.3.22; Kings Avenue, Ely – 4.4.22

## **11. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- (i) PERSONNEL, FINANCE & GOVERNANCE – No report as Committee had not met. The next meeting will be held on the 28th February.
- (ii) CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT – No report as Committee had not met. The next meeting will be held on the 7th March.
- (iii) ASSETS – Cllr Morgan presented a report of a meeting held on the 31st January 2022, which was approved. The procurement process through an ESPO framework, Agreement 115\_21 had commenced. Interest from 5 companies had been received. The closing date for submission of the tender documents was the 28th February. Cllrs Arnold and Phillips will undertake the scoring process with the Deputy Clerk. Cllr Rouse asked if any progress had been made regarding the Hopkins Homes play area and the type of equipment that had been installed. The Deputy Clerk is approaching ECDC with regard to how the decision is made on what equipment is installed in new play areas. The minutes of the Christmas Lights Sub-Committee meeting held on the 24th January had also been noted and approved by Councillors. The progress of the improvements to the Maltings was noted. A response to a letter sent to the Leader of ECDC would be considered in Committee at the end of the Full Council meeting. The decision from this discussion in Committee was to appoint Cllrs Morgan and Rouse to represent the Council in discussions with ECDC regarding the Maltings Cottage. Cllr Rouse also informed members that 52 years ago the Maltings building was given to the City. He is the only surviving member of the Council from that time. He felt that as we are doing a lot of refurbishment work to the building, he hoped

**11. COMMITTEE REPORTS CONTINUED .....**

the Council would be telling the community about this as the Council should be proud of maintaining this building. Cllr Lindsay informed members that the Climate & Environment Committee were looking at providing dog bins within the new Hopkins Homes open space area. Cllr C Whelan asked if the slide at the Paradise play area will be refurbished or replaced as this is the only disabled access slide that the Council has. Cllr Phillips confirmed this slide will be updated and the aim is to make this play area as accessible as possible. Cllr Every informed members the Trustees of the Paradise Sports Centre had refused the request for the splashpad on the Paradise field. The group is now looking at their options.

(iv) **TOURISM AND TOWN CENTRE** – Cllr Warman presented a report of a meeting held on the 24th January, which was approved. The update from the Tourism and Town Centre Manager on the service and town centre was noted. The 2022 Visitor Guide is nearing completion and will be printed and delivered very soon. It was hoped the new websites would go live in March/April. Cllr Warman informed councillors she still had to do the tour of the locations for the new digital boards. The arrangements for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations were making good progress with a variety of events planned over the 4 days. The Tourist Information Assistant vacancy will be advertised very shortly. The decision regarding the Switch-On event was noted.

**12. REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL MEETINGS**

Members noted the notes of meetings from:-

Prickwillow Village Council – minutes of the AGM held on the 25 January 2021 and minutes of a meeting held on the 29 November 2021.

**13. NOMINATIONS FOR MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR 2022/2023**

Councillors unanimously approved the nomination of Cllr Richard Morgan for Mayor, proposed by Cllr I Lindsay and seconded by Cllr R Denness and the nomination of Cllr Chris Phillips for Deputy Mayor, proposed by Cllr C Whelan and seconded by Cllr A Whelan.

**14. TO CONSIDER REQUEST FROM THE CITY OF ELY ROYAL BRITISH LEGION FOR THE COUNCIL TO ORGANISE AN APPROPRIATE CEREMONY TO MARK THE CENTENARY OF THE OFFICIAL UNVEILLING OF THE CITY’S WAR MEMORIAL ON 30 APRIL 2022**

Cllr Morgan proposed the Council approve this request. This was seconded by Cllr Rouse and unanimously approved.

**15. FINANCE**

*Members approved the following payments:-*

*Direct debit payments and BACS payments*

|                            |        |                      |
|----------------------------|--------|----------------------|
| Lex Autolease              | 383.70 | Paid by direct debit |
| Lex Autolease              | 439.06 | Paid by direct debit |
| Lex Autolease              | 352.06 | Paid by direct debit |
| Worldpay                   | 329.63 | Paid by direct debit |
| Worldpay                   | 168.30 | Paid by direct debit |
| Worldpay                   | 438.64 | Paid by direct debit |
| Worldpay                   | 143.61 | Paid by direct debit |
| Virgin Media               | 62.40  | Paid by direct debit |
| Virgin Media               | 62.40  | Paid by direct debit |
| British Telecommunications | 101.58 | Paid by direct debit |
| British Telecommunications | 42.54  | Paid by direct debit |

**15. FINANCE CONTINUED.....**

|                                  |          |                      |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------------------|
| British Telecommunications       | 43.20    | Paid by direct debit |
| Greene King Brewing & Retail Ltd | 2260.27  | Paid by direct debit |
| Greene King Brewing & Retail Ltd | 588.02   | Paid by direct debit |
| Barclays                         | 118.40   | Paid by direct debit |
| Drax Energy Solutions Ltd        | 37.94    | Paid by direct debit |
| FuelGenie                        | 372.52   | Paid by direct debit |
| British Telecommunications       | 244.92   | Paid by direct debit |
| Cybertill Ltd                    | 65.68    | Paid by direct debit |
| Greene King Brewing & Retail Ltd | 1087.73  | Paid by direct debit |
| Liquidline Ltd                   | 368.70   | Paid by direct debit |
| TotalEnergies Gas & Power        | 147.11   | Paid by direct debit |
| TotalEnergies Gas & Power        | 267.45   | Paid by direct debit |
| TotalEnergies Gas & Power        | 68.65    | Paid by direct debit |
| TotalEnergies Gas & Power        | 3130.93  | Paid by direct debit |
| TotalEnergies Gas & Power        | 11.96    | Paid by direct debit |
| ESPO                             | 325.72   | Paid by direct debit |
| ESPO                             | 1226.53  | Paid by direct debit |
| ESPO                             | 196.32   | Paid by direct debit |
| ESPO                             | 710.38   | Paid by direct debit |
| Minerva Publications             | 190.80   | Paid by BACS         |
| Ely Cathedral Dean & Chapter     | 17.00    | Paid by BACS         |
| SMBE Direct Ltd                  | 280.50   | Paid by BACS         |
| S Bradley                        | 325.00   | Paid by BACS         |
| H C Electrical                   | 15449.28 | Paid by BACS         |
| SLCC                             | 287.00   | Paid by BACS         |
| A Arnold                         | 23.40    | Paid by BACS         |
| Local Media Publishing Ltd       | 180.00   | Paid by BACS         |
| RGP Security Services Ltd        | 201.60   | Paid by BACS         |
| S Blake                          | 880.55   | Paid by BACS         |
| V Rudkin                         | 195.30   | Paid by BACS         |
| Cameo Curtains Ltd               | 4056.60  | Paid by BACS         |
| M Chinery-Colyer                 | 157.00   | Paid by BACS         |
| R Venables                       | 41.57    | Paid by BACS         |
| S Routledge                      | 890.00   | Paid by BACS         |
| D Holt                           | 50.00    | Paid by BACS         |
| Anglian Lifts                    | 571.81   | Paid by BACS         |
| Amey                             | 12.61    | Paid by BACS         |
| Rialtas Business Solutions Ltd   | 70.80    | Paid by BACS         |
| CamAlarms Ltd                    | 817.09   | Paid by BACS         |
| Studio Nova Ltd                  | 9906.00  | Paid by BACS         |
| Trade UK                         | 142.94   | Paid by BACS         |
| S Robinson                       | 219.00   | Paid by BACS         |

*The following invoices had not been paid prior to the meeting*

|                                  |         |              |
|----------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Konica Minolta Bus Solutions Ltd | 158.29  | Paid by BACS |
| Thomas Ridley & Son Ltd          | 1440.63 | 113959       |
| Jewson Ltd                       | 397.38  | 113976       |
| Churches Fire Security Ltd       | 403.20  | 113977       |
| G&J Peck Ltd                     | 389.67  | 113978       |

**15. FINANCE CONTINUED.....**

|                                      |          |                      |
|--------------------------------------|----------|----------------------|
| Warren Access                        | 696.00   | 113979               |
| Verve Digital Ltd                    | 120.00   | 113980               |
| Allens Skip Hire Ltd                 | 190.00   | 113981               |
| PCC Ely Parish St Mary's Church      | 75.00    | 113982               |
| CoolerAid Ltd                        | 4.74     | 113983               |
| Securitas Security Services (UK) Ltd | 117.60   | 113984               |
| SLCC                                 | 216.00   | 113985               |
| S Bagnell                            | 18.93    | 113986               |
| Cambridgeshire County Council        | 13063.61 | 113987               |
| Ensign Solutions Ltd                 | 289.56   | 113988               |
| Glaswells                            | 594.00   | 113989               |
| Star Editions Ltd                    | 511.08   | 113990               |
| We Are Blueshed Ltd                  | 300.00   | 113991               |
| Ellgia Ltd                           | 91.17    | Paid by BACS         |
| City Cycle Centre                    | 47.80    | 113992               |
| Ernest Doe & Sons Ltd                | 186.41   | 113993               |
| ESPO                                 | 132.60   | 113994               |
| Nisbets                              | 146.36   | 113995               |
| Amazon Payments UK Ltd               | 281.77   | 113996               |
| Human Capital Department Ltd         | 600.00   | 113997               |
| ALCC                                 | 10.00    | 113998               |
| Eden Farm Hulley's                   | 246.82   | 113999               |
| G & J Peck Ltd                       | 28.77    | 113978               |
| Trade UK                             | 34.42    | Paid by BACS         |
| Gordon Harrison                      | 438.61   | 114000               |
| Allens Skip Hire Ltd                 | 190.00   | 113981               |
| ESPO                                 | 21.12    | 114001               |
| Stuido Nova Ltd                      | 1500.00  | paid by BACS         |
| British Telecommunications           | 476.59   | Paid by direct debit |
| Drax Energy Solutions Ltd            | 35.69    | Paid by direct debit |
| Francotyp Postalia Ltd               | 250.00   | Paid by direct debit |
| Greene King Brewing & Retailing Ltd  | 2589.20  | Paid by direct debit |
| Virgin Media                         | 62.40    | Paid by direct debit |
| Virgin Media                         | 62.40    | Paid by direct debit |
| Konica Minolta Bus Sols Ltd          | 158.29   | Paid by BACS         |
| Elyi Magazine                        | 174.00   | Paid by BACS         |
| Barclaycard                          | 1664.28  | Paid by direct debit |

**Payments relating to staff since meeting on the 18th January 2022**

|                           |                  |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Salaries and wages        | £27,737.39 (Jan) | £25,391.88 (Feb) |
| Inland Revenue (tax & NI) | £8,041.70 (Jan)  | £8,365.94 (Feb)  |
| Pension fund payments     | £8,946.03 (Jan)  | £8,688.46 (Feb)  |

**Members noted and approved the bank reconciliation against the accounts for the period ending 31st December 2021 and 31st January 2022**

*The meeting closed at 7.58 pm*



# Ely County Councillors' Report

Cllr Alison Whelan, Ely North

Councillor Piers Coutts, Ely South

February 2022

## Summary

- Covid-19 Overview, Case rates in East Cambs, Testing
- Finances
  - County Council Budget 2022-2023
  - This Land
- Adults & Health
  - Integrated Care System
  - Staffing pressures
- Children & Young People
  - Mental Health Hubs
  - School admissions review
  - Free School Meals
- Communities, Social Mobility, & Inclusion
  - Household Support Fund
  - Cambridgeshire Skills Learner Voice Forum
- Environment & Green Investment
  - Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
  - Carbon footprints Cambridgeshire
  - Envar planning application
  - Council climate change plan scores well
  - CUSPE research
  - Digital connectivity strategy and the copper switch-off
  - 20MPH fund
- The Combined Authority

## COVID-19 (Information dated 6 Feb)

### Overview

Whatever the Government may say, rates of the virus in Cambridgeshire are currently the highest they have ever been and continue to rise. In Cambridge they are particularly high—the city has the sixth highest rate in the country. In the East of England, one in 20 people currently has COVID-19. Omicron symptoms are milder than those for other variants of the disease with the protection of the vaccine, but high case rates lead to high numbers of people self-isolating which impacts public services—the running of

schools, care for vulnerable children or older people, or refuse collections for example. A high number of people in hospital with COVID-19 is creating additional pressures. Other routine appointments with the NHS such as planned operations might need to be cancelled. The local Director of Public Health is continuing to ask people to

- Vaccinate: get COVID jabs and booster jabs when offered.
- Test: take a rapid test before meeting others, and isolate if positive. If you have symptoms, always isolate and get a PCR test.
- Protect: wear a face covering in crowded indoor spaces, keep your distance, wash hands, and meet in well ventilated spaces.

### Case rates in Cambridgeshire

The following shows the number of Covid cases per 100,000 population in the local Director of Public Health's most recent report, with the highest first.

| Area                 | Cases per 100,000 |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Cambridge            | 1,412             |
| Fenland              | 1,240             |
| South Cambridgeshire | 1,195             |
| Cambridgeshire       | 1,180             |
| East Cambridgeshire  | 1,123             |
| Huntingdonshire      | 999               |
| National average     | 985               |

### Testing

Changes in testing policy (removing the requirement for confirmatory PCR tests) are affecting the reliability of data, both nationally and locally. Cambridgeshire's high case rates may also be reflective of the county's very proactive management of COVID-19 in schools, which is leading to more cases being identified, as many young children do not show symptoms.

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

### General Covid information

- <https://twitter.com/CambsC>
- <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/coronaviruscovid-19-overview>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirusvaccination/coronavirus-vaccine>



## FINANCES

### County Council budget and spending plans

Cambridgeshire County Council's Joint Administration proposes to set up and spend a £14 million 'Just Transition Fund' over the next five years to tackle inequality, improve lives, and care for the environment. The Council's Strategy and Resources Committee on 27 January recommended proposals for the fund, as part of the new administration's plans which also include a set of new priorities for the council. In its first year, as agreed at the Full Council budget meeting on Tuesday 8 February, the Just Transition fund will fund schemes that:

- Increase flood prevention, continuing a recent rapid increase in gully clearing
- Help tackle climate change
- Widen opportunities for children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Increase independent living services
- Expand direct payments and individual service funds, where adults assessed as needing support can choose and manage their own care services
- Expand the 'Care Together' programme, providing care services close to where people live

When the Joint Administration took control of the council in May last year, it inherited a potential budget gap of £86M by 2027. The new leadership invited in an independent and cross-party team of local government experts in July 2021 to review the council, who highlighted this as an issue 'of significant magnitude' for the new council administration.

In order to help balance the county council's finances, the Joint Administration policy, agreed at the Full Council meeting on 8 February, is to raise the County Council's share of council tax by 4.99 per cent—an extra charge of £1.04 per week for a Band B, and £1.19 for a Band C household. More than half of all homes in Cambridgeshire are in these two bands. The local government experts who visited in summer highlighted that historic decisions not to raise council tax in previous years had led to significant ongoing lost income to support local services.

This is a difficult time for many people who are struggling with factors including the financial effects of the pandemic, enormous increases in energy bills, national insurance rises of over 10 per cent, and loss of universal credit. The council's business plans therefore include direct support for those most in need. If Cambridgeshire received the same level of funding as the average county council, it would have received an extra £23M for services in 2022/23. Instead, the Government has announced that a review of local government funding expected in 2020 has been postponed for at least another year and is now not expected until 2023/4.

Current funding baselines for local authorities in England come from an assessment of relative needs and resources which has not been reviewed since 2013/14. It takes no account of Cambridgeshire's 27 per cent increase in people aged 65+ in the past ten years, compared to the national average of 19 per cent.

### **This Land**

One of the commitments of the Joint Administration on taking office was a thorough review of the council's development company This Land. The independent report, by Avison Young (AY), a multi-national real estate services consultancy with no prior involvement with This Land, was discussed by the council's Strategy & Resources Committee at the end of January. The report referred to 'unusual' accounting practices, and to 'shortcomings [which] require immediate attention'. It said, 'Overall we do not consider that there is a full understanding within This Land of the level of risk exposure the business is under,' and that 'it did not seem that there was a sufficient level of familiarity and understanding of the sites during the meeting [between consultancy AY and This Land].' AY made a number of recommendations to the council, most to be carried out within three months. The committee will receive a further report in March.

## **ADULTS & HEALTH**

### **Integrated Care System**

Along with every other part of the country, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough is preparing for the 'Integrated Care System' which will become statutory from April. This will involve health and social care systems coming together to meet health and care needs across an area, to coordinate services, and plan in a way that improves population health and reduces inequalities. ICSs are based on Primary Care Networks, groups of GP practices serving 30,000- 50,000 people. This is a whole new way of working for the NHS and for council social care systems, with a lot of adjustments to make.

### **Staffing pressures**

COVID-19 continues to bring significant pressures to care services in the local community. Some of these challenges include

- Increased staffing costs
- Impact on staff wellbeing and mental health, with some leaving the sector
- Increased insurance
- Increased cleaning and PPE costs
- A competitive job market and challenges recruiting and retaining staff

The Adults & Health Committee has therefore agreed to invest £4.2M to ensure continued support for care providers to meet the needs of their clients.

## CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

### Young persons' mental health hubs

A motion from Fenland councillor Samantha Hoy calling for a network of mental health hubs to meet the needs of young people received unanimous support by the County Council last month. Work is beginning on putting this into practice.

### School admissions review

The Children & Young People Committee has agreed to undertake a full and comprehensive review of admission arrangements for all own admission authority schools. This should include the published definitions of existing school catchment areas, and admission policies for schools with a sixth form.

### Free school meals

The numbers of children in Cambridgeshire eligible for free school meals has continued to increase significantly across the county. The numbers were included in a report to the Children & Young People Committee

|         | Jan-18 | Jan-19 | Mar-20 | Apr-20 | Jan-21 | Oct-21 | Increase since Mar-20 | % of children eligible |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| East    | 1,029  | 1,349  | 1,697  | 1,838  | 2,138  | 2,254  | 33%                   | 17%                    |
| Fenland | 1,978  | 2,438  | 2,926  | 3,160  | 3,631  | 3,863  | 32%                   | 28%                    |
| Hunts   | 2,121  | 2,715  | 3,546  | 3,811  | 4,430  | 4,599  | 30%                   | 19%                    |
| South   | 1,115  | 1,497  | 1,821  | 1,981  | 2,397  | 2,639  | 45%                   | 11%                    |

## COMMUNITIES, SOCIAL MOBILITY, & INCLUSION

### Household Support Fund

A reminder that the County Council's Household Support Fund is still open (to 31 March). It offers:

- Support with food, household energy and other essentials for individuals and families: residents are eligible to access this support if they earn less than £17,940 per year, or are in receipt of certain state benefits
- Direct food vouchers: as in previous school holidays, supermarket vouchers will be issued to eligible families.

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/household-support-fund](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/household-support-fund)

The County Council is offering a one-off payment of £20 from this fund to all 39,000 people in the county who are on Universal Credit. More information at [orlo.uk/97w7o](http://orlo.uk/97w7o)

## **Cambridgeshire Skills Learner Voice Forum**

Cambridgeshire Skills are looking for past and present learners from a wide range of backgrounds willing to give their time to participate in a new Learner Voice Forum. The Forum will advise staff on a variety of issues and will have the opportunity to work in partnership to shape the future of Cambridgeshire Skills. The Forum will meet termly but may also be invited to get involved in projects and activities as they arise. These could include sitting on the interview panel for staff recruitment or representing Cambridgeshire Skills at networking events.

More details from 01353 613013 or [cambsals@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:cambsals@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

## **ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT**

### **Local Flood Risk Management Strategy**

The consultation period on the revised flood risk management strategy has now closed, and the responses are being reviewed before the strategy is finalised. The Chair of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Flood & Water Partnership Lorna Dupre has had initial conversations about whether that body—which brings together a range of agencies with flood and water responsibilities—can take on the oversight and monitoring of the progress of actions in the strategy's Action Plan.

Meanwhile, the Council is continuing to address the huge backlog of gully clearing left by the previous administration, with a cyclical programme covering the whole county.

### **Carbon footprints Cambridgeshire**

The county council's Environment & Green Investment Committee, of which Piers is a member, received its latest carbon footprint report, on the carbon emissions of the county council, and of Cambridgeshire as a whole.

2020/21 was an unusual year, with COVID lockdowns and reduced economic activity. So it is not surprising that the council's carbon emissions from its own sites and assets, and from its purchased electricity, were down twenty per cent on the previous year. Adding in indirect emissions, from the activities of the Council's contractors and suppliers, the Council's carbon emissions were down a staggering forty per cent. Much of that drop is likely to be temporary.

The most recent figures for Cambridgeshire as a whole are from 2019, and show a steady decline, mostly due to the decarbonisation of electricity generation (see charts on next page).

It is interesting to note the very obvious differences between the different districts. These include the huge contribution of LULUCF (Land Use, Land Use Change, and Forestry) in East Cambridgeshire and Fenland.

And of course the similarly very significant contribution of transport in Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire.

Without these two major pressures, Cambridge's footprint is very much smaller.

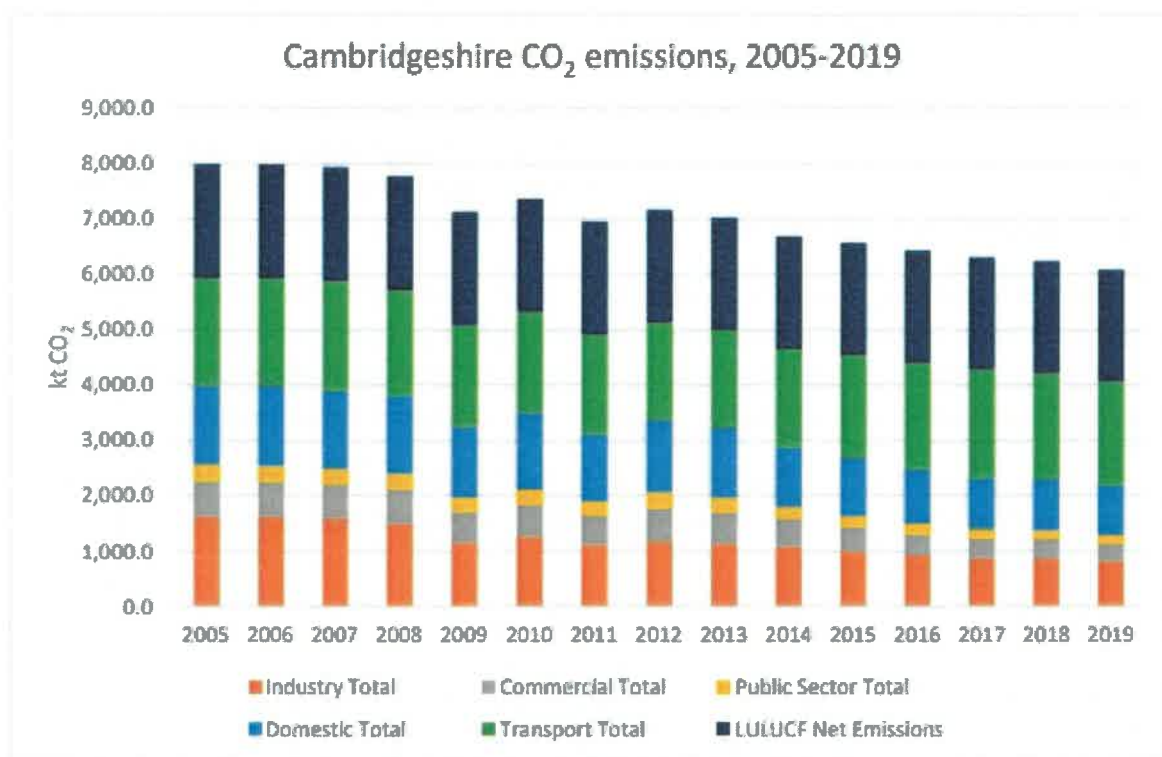
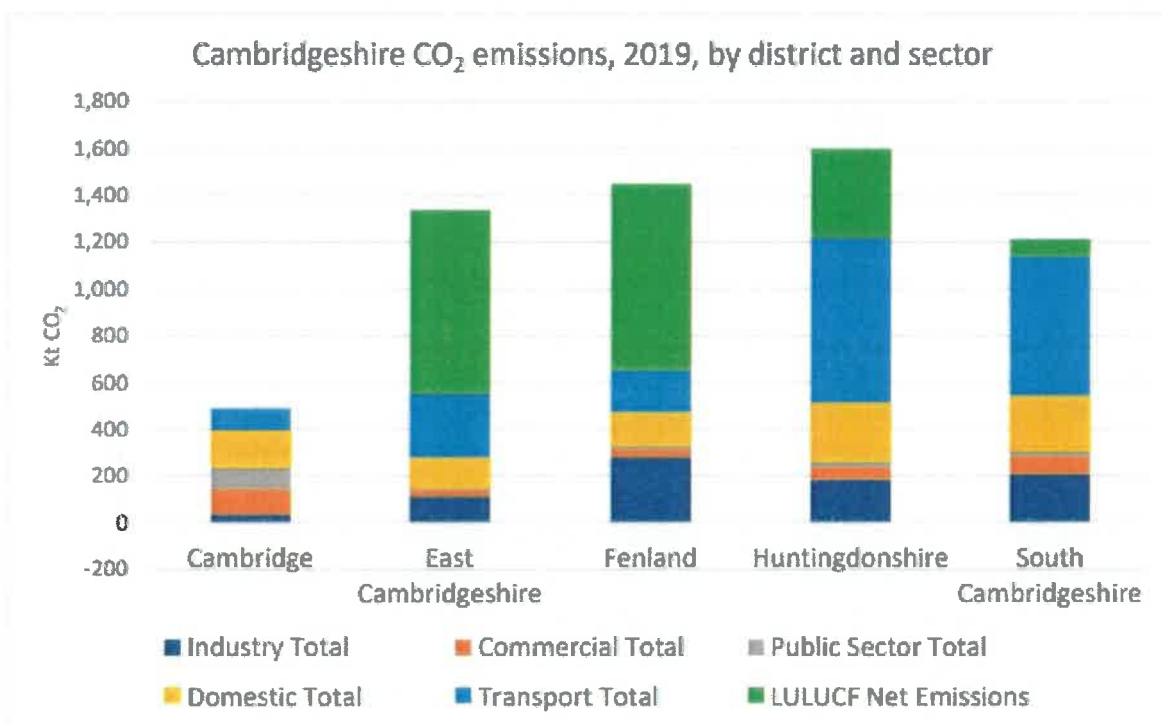


Figure 8 Cambridgeshire CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, 2005-2019 (data from BEIS)

The report compares carbon emissions between the Cambridgeshire districts.



## **Envar planning application**

A motion was recently brought to full council for debate, about the application by Envar at Woodhurst for a new facility for incineration of medical waste.

The motion said that the council 'supported the objections' against the application. Whatever one's views of the application itself, this was singularly inappropriate, as it is the council's own planning committee that will decide the application, and it must do so on the basis of the facts in front of it.

The motion was passed, however, as members of the council's Joint Administration chose not to vote—refusing to be pushed into voting to disregard the clear wishes of residents, but also not prepared to agree a council policy on an application before the planning committee does the job it is supposed by law to do without prejudice.

The Environment Committee chair was interviewed on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire the following morning to explain what had happened, and the interview can be heard at <https://youtu.be/pvQ9x3le78Y>

## **Council climate change plan scores well**

A group called Climate Emergency UK has scored the Climate Change plans of all local councils in the UK, against 28 questions in nine sections. Cambridgeshire County Council was the second highest scoring county council. This is based on the council's current plan, not the updated and more ambitious one which was approved by the full council on 8 February. <https://councilclimatescorecards.uk/>

## **CUSPE research**

Postgraduate students from the Cambridge University Science & Policy Exchange have been working on a number of projects for the council, including two environmental ones. They reported back to the Environment & Green Investment Committee recently. One project was on setting up a Decarbonisation Fund for Cambridgeshire, and the other was on the potential for local heat networks to power homes sustainably in our market towns, using Huntingdon, March, and Ely as examples.

## **Digital connectivity strategy and the copper switch-off**

Connecting Cambridgeshire has produced a new digital connectivity strategy for Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. Councillors were particularly concerned at the lack of national government publicity about the imminent copper switch-off in 2025. Old copper networks will be phased out and start to be replaced with digital systems delivered over broadband connections. "This will affect all public services, businesses and domestic premises, making people even more reliant on digital connectivity and will require signposting and awareness raising, particularly among those who do not use mobile phones, or cannot access the internet," says the report. Many homes still rely on this network. But so do a great many specialised applications such as alarm lines, payment terminals and health-monitoring equipment. Many older telephone systems,

fax machines, payment terminals and alarms that do not have SIM card capability will no longer work after the 2025 deadline. There is concern that a great many people who rely on these systems have not yet been fully informed about the changes that lie ahead

## 20MPH fund

The council's new Joint Administration undertook to make the option of 20MPH zones more widely available, and easier to obtain. The Highways & Transport Committee has agreed to set up a 20MPH fund (expected to be around £400,000), and a working group to consider application criteria and priorities.

### Meanwhile on the Combined Authority

The Combined Authority's Local Transport Plan update, and its extension to include Connectivity, has been held up for several months. The proposed update was expected to be relatively minor, with a six-week consultation. However, it now appears that the changes will be more significant, and legal advice is that they will require a twelve-week consultation. This cannot be carried out during the local election period in Cambridge, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire. The consultation will therefore be launched on or after Tuesday 10 May.

The Combined Authority has approved a new Employment & Skills Strategy. This contained some interesting information about skills provision and opportunities district by district.

Only 25.4 per cent of pupils at schools in East Cambridgeshire progress to higher education, and rates of higher skills are falling in the district. However there is higher than average progression into apprenticeships in East Cambridgeshire, at 11.4 per cent compared to 10.6 per cent in Cambridge.

East Cambridgeshire is recognised by the Strategy as a 'cold spot' for further education provision, and supply chains and labour shortages from COVID and Brexit are affecting the range of industries. The strategy sets out priority actions for the Combined Authority to address these and other issues in our district and across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area.

The Combined Authority has granted Laragh Homes a three-month extension to its loan for the completion of its project at the former Alexander House at the bottom of the Forehill in Ely, at six per cent above base rate.

