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**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE CITY OF ELY COUNCIL HELD AT 7.00 PM ON MONDAY,  
15TH JANUARY 2024 AT THE MALTINGS, SHIP LANE, ELY**

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

Cllr C Phillips, Mayor

Cllr L Fox

Cllr M Wade

Cllr R Moss-Eccardt

*County Cllr P Coutts*

*County Cllr A Whelan*

*District Cllr C Whelan*

*2 members of the public*

*A Hefferman and G Hughes, Ribe Association*

Cllr R Denness

Cllr M Banyard

Cllr R Trent

Cllr R Morgan

Cllr C Ní Dhónaill

Cllr S Austen

Cllr D Warman

### **1. APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Pitt, Ward, Gardner and Holtzmann. The reasons for their absences were accepted.

### **2. COUNCILLOR REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS**

There were no requests for dispensations.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON THE 4TH DECEMBER 2023 AND MATTERS ARISING**

Minutes of the last meeting held on the 4th December 2023 were proposed by Cllr Phillips and seconded by Cllr Denness as a correct record. This was unanimously agreed and signed as a true record. They were signed by the Chairman. Pages 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077 and 2078 refer. Matters arising:- Cllr Wade felt the Council should reiterate and record their support for the 20 mph scheme.

### **5. PRESENTATION FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF ELY RIBE ASSOCIATION, ANNE HEFFERMAN, REGARDING THE VISIT ELY GUIDES VISIT TO RIBE IN NOVEMBER 2023**

Anne Hefferman, the Chairman of the Ely Ribe Association gave a presentation to the Council regarding the successful visit to Ribe in November 2023 by the Visit Ely Guides and the Tourism & Town Centre Manager. She gave details of what activities they undertook and the attractions they had visited. It was unanimously agreed this had been an excellent staff development opportunity for those that had attended. The Chairman thanked her for the very detailed presentation.

*A Hefferman and G Hughes left the meeting at 7.28 pm.*

## **6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman gave an update to Councillors on the further meetings with the Restorative Justice Service regarding the damage to the skate park. He agreed to keep them updated as this process was about to come to an end shortly.

## **7. QUESTION TIME**

Two members of the public spoke about their concerns regarding the closure of Barclays Bank in Ely. The Chairman thanked them for expressing these concerns and Councillors agreed Cllr Moss-Eccardt and the Clerk would contact Barclays Bank to see if a meeting could be arranged with the Council to discuss the decision to close the branch. Concern was expressed that the Post Office in Ely was not accessible for disabled persons.

*Two parishioners left the meeting at 7.46 pm.*

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

A written report was received from County Cllrs Coutts and A Whelan. A copy of which will be attached to the minutes. Cllrs Wade and Fox asked Cllr Coutts if the biodiversity and habitat restoration scheme would provide like for like if losing habitat. Cllr Coutts agreed to find out. Cllr Austen asked Cllr Coutts if there was an update regarding Upherds Lane and the ownership of the road. Cllr Coutts said he had received an email today and updated that an expert was looking in to this matter and would be reporting back once this has been undertaken. He did query as to whether there had been any commitment to adopting this road by the County Council. District Cllr Christine Whelan provided a verbal report. She reported that there were some problems with some of Sanctuary's houses. If Councillors are made aware of these they should report them to ECDC Councillors as a process has now been put in to place for such reports.

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

The Mayor had visited Santa's Christmas Toy Bank; the Children's Society Christingles; Ely Choral Society's Carols for All; the City of Ely Military Band Christmas Concert; meet with the Dean and the Ely Muslim Association; visited Ely Foodbank; attended the KD Theatre Pantomime Gala Night; given a talk to the Ely Rotary Club; opened the Ely Computer Centre and attended St Mary's Winter Tea Party.

## **10. PLANNING**

The Planning Chairman gave a report on the planning meeting prior to Full Council. He also confirmed that the applications for the open space at Holly Walk and Birch Close, Ely to be listed as an asset of community value (ACV) had been submitted to ECDC. These had been acknowledged and will be considered within 8 weeks.

## **11. INFORMATION ONLY ITEMS**

The following information only items were received and noted:-

Street Naming & Numbering:- 1 new property – Etheldreda House, 206 Lancaster Way, Ely

Notification of Street Closures:- Chapel Street, Ely – 27-29.2.24; Mildenhall Road, Shippea Hill, Ely- 30.3–2.4.24

## **12. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

(i) PERSONNEL, FINANCE & GOVERNANCE – No report as Committee had not met. The next meeting will be held on the 29th January 2024.

(ii) CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT – Cllr Denness presented a report of a meeting held on the 18th December 2023 which was unanimously approved. Cllr Denness confirmed the two LHI bids had been submitted. These were for a crossing at Cam Drive and A142 speed reductions. The 20 mph scheme for Ely had been approved, with the issue regarding the installation of cushions being discussed separately. Quotes had been obtained in relation to the new floral displays contract for 2024-2026, with RHS Services being awarded the contract. The Climate Action Plan had been produced but further amendments were still necessary. It was agreed a staff member should receive carbon footprint training to assess the buildings used by the Council on an annual basis. Cllr Fox agreed to source this training. A CIL application will be made to repair/replace the solar lights in the park. A quote for the required work at a cost of £8,582 had been received by the original contractor. The Committee had agreed the Outdoor Sport & Leisure Working Group should be disbanded and there was a need to form a Climate Action Working Group. Applications for a disabled persons parking space in 5 locations in Ely had been considered with no objection from Councillors. A site visit had been held at Orchard Green with regard to issues that need to be addressed by the developer before the City of Ely Allotments & Gardens Association can agree to take over responsibility for these new allotments. The agreement between the Association and the Council is currently being reviewed and updated.

(iii) ASSETS - No report as Committee had not met. The next meeting will be held on the 22nd January 2024. Cllr Morgan informed Councillors that the new fitness equipment along the bund will be installed very shortly. This had been publicised on Facebook with comments regarding the need for this type of equipment in the North of Ely. It was agreed to discuss this at the next meeting. Cllr Wade also raised the comments regarding the need for lighting along the bund. The Clerk confirmed that this was ECDC land so she would need to bring this up with them. She agreed to do so.

(iv) TOURISM AND TOWN CENTRE – Cllr Warman presented a report of a meeting held on the 11th December 2023 which was unanimously approved. An update on the services was noted. The Visitor Guide for 2024 was nearing completion. It was suggested they could reform the Sessions House Working Group to discuss possible events at Sessions House.

## **13. REPORTS FROM EXTERNAL MEETINGS**

Cllrs Phillips and Denness had attended a meeting of Ely Trinity Dole, which is in the process of winding up and joining the Needham's Foundation. Cllr Moss-Eccardt had informed Councillors he had attended a recent meeting of the Cawdle Fen Internal Drainage Board.

## **14. TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW ESTATES TECHNICIAN AND TO PASS A RESOLUTION THAT THIS PERSON BE SPECIFIED AS A PENSIONABLE EMPLOYEE UNDER REGULATION B1(5) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS 1986 (AS AMENDED)**

The Clerk informed Councillors, interviews had been undertaken and the successful candidate, Mr L Samuels was recommended for approval to the appointment as an Estates Technician and that a resolution be passed so he can be specified as a pensionable employee under Regulation B1(5) of the Local Government Regulations 1986 (as amended). These resolutions were proposed by Cllr Phillips, seconded by Cllr Ní Dhónaill and unanimously approved.

**15. TO CONSIDER PROPOSED STREET NAMES FOR SITE AT ANGEL DROVE, ELY**

The Council felt that they would like to offer other possible suggestions for street names on this development instead of those proposed. These being:-

Westmill Close – named after the factory that was situated on this site for a considerable number of years before being demolished. It links the use of the site.

Cawdle Close – which provides the link to the ancient Cawdle Fen which runs through this area.

Rouse Close – recognises a former City Councillor, who was also a local historian and well known in the City.

If the proposed names were not felt to be appropriate, the Council would point out that the first suggestion of Stamford Close is incorrect as it is actually Barnack Stone and not Stamford Stone that was used to construct the Cathedral. So this should be Barnack Close.

**16. TO MAKE COMMENTS ON ECDC’S BUS, CYCLE, WALK WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

Councillors agreed it would not submit comments to this update. However, Councillors should make comments as individuals.

**17. TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NO – TPO/E/12/23 – AT LAND ADJACENT 104 BROAD STREET, ELY TO MAKE ANY COMMENTS ON THE APPLICATION**

Councillors unanimously agreed to support the serving of this new Tree Preservation Order.

**18. TO MAKE COMMENTS ON CONSULATION FROM CAMBS COUNTY COUNCIL REGARDING TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 – SECTION 257 THE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL (PUBLIC FOOTPATH NOS.2, 3 AND 5, ELY (PART)) PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION ORDER 2023**

Councillors agreed the Clerk would submit the same comments as had been made on a previous application for this location.

**19. FINANCE**

Cllr Phillips proposed these all be approved, which was seconded by Cllr Banyard and unanimously approved.

*Direct debit payments and BACS payments*

FuelGenie	172.10	Paid by direct debit
Worldpay	130.00	Paid by direct debit
Worldpay	379.61	Paid by direct debit
Francotyp Postalia Ltd	67.80	Paid by direct debit
Cybertill Ltd	74.82	Paid by direct debit
Virgin Media	62.40	Paid by direct debit
Virgin Media	62.40	Paid by direct debit
Liquidline Ltd	231.28	Paid by direct debit
SSE Energy Supply Ltd	74.46	Paid by direct debit
Lex Autolease	772.90	Paid by direct debit
Barclays	125.97	Paid by direct debit
Barclaycard	2240.96	Paid by direct debit
Bidfood Ltd	1500.13	Paid by direct debit
TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd	10638.72	Paid by direct debit
TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd	121.76	Paid by direct debit
TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd	40.96	Paid by direct debit
TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd	487.33	Paid by direct debit

2082

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MAYOR  
26th February 2024

**19. FINANCE CONTINUED .....**

TotalEnergies Gas & Power Ltd	497.16	Paid by direct debit
ESPO	706.80	Paid by direct debit
ESPO	450.79	Paid by direct debit
ESPO	1729.34	Paid by direct debit
ESPO	2415.76	Paid by direct debit
ESPO	656.77	Paid by direct debit
British Telecommunications	298.12	Paid by direct debit
British Telecommunications	46.54	Paid by direct debit
British Telecommunications	56.34	Paid by direct debit
British Telecommunications	56.34	Paid by direct debit
British Telecommunications Ltd	78.66	Paid by direct debit
EE Ltd	22.80	Paid by direct debit
Greene King Brewing & Retail Ltd	1094.45	Paid by direct debit
M Chinery-Colyer	186.00	Paid by BACS
M Chinery-Colyer	192.80	Paid by BACS
N Booth	28.00	Paid by BACS
Studio Nova Ltd	41.99	Paid by BACS
Konica Minolta Bus Sols Ltd	115.83	Paid by BACS
Gem Heating Solutions Ltd	186.00	Paid by BACS
RGP Security Services Ltd	222.00	Paid by BACS
Market Kitchen Ely Ltd	91.70	Paid by BACS
P Sadgrove	47.00	Paid by BACS
Mrs K Evans	201.00	Paid by BACS
G & G Gallo Enterprises Ltd	440.48	Paid by BACS
Warren Access	299.64	Paid by BACS
East Air Conditioning Services Ltd	198.00	Paid by BACS
S Slezacek	714.00	Paid by BACS
Ligma Consultancy Ltd	2178.00	Paid by BACS
G & G Gallo Enterprises Ltd	849.28	Paid by BACS
St Ives Town Council	25.00	Paid by BACS
L E Enterprices	850.25	Paid by BACS
E R Copley	14.85	Paid by BACS
Grocer's Brockers Ltd	67.20	Paid by BACS
Ellgia Ltd	235.05	Paid by BACS
Eden Farm Hulleys	1929.05	Paid by BACS
S Bradley	700.00	Paid by BACS
Gem Heating Solutions Ltd	718.98	Paid by BACS
G & G Gallo Enterprises Ltd	908.12	Paid by BACS
Human Capital Department Ltd	178.80	Paid by BACS
Studio Nova Ltd	24.00	Paid by BACS
ATS Heritage Ltd	234.00	Paid by BACS
CamAlarms Ltd	2016.40	Paid by BACS
D Holt	75.00	Paid by BACS

**19. FINANCE CONTINUED .....***The following invoices had not been paid prior to the meeting*

G & J Peck Ltd	127.71	114555
ESPO	168.12	114556
S Taylor	23.48	114557
Greenworks Washrooms Ltd	150.96	114558
Soham Pest Control	99.00	114559
L Pridmore	9.52	114560
City Cycle Centre	9.16	114561
Amazon Payments UK Ltd	54.85	114562
Ely Tool Hire Ltd	127.80	114563
Konica Minolta Bus Sols Ltd	319.92	114564
Ely Skip Hire Ltd	304.00	114565
ECDC	2027.51	114566
Thalia WB ODC Ltd	14.15	114567
We Are Blushed Ltd	324.00	Paid by BACS
City of Ely Allotments & Gardens Assoc	2880.00	114568
Shefs	970.20	Paid by BACS
RGP Security Services Ltd	122.10	Paid by BACS
Trade UK	328.29	Paid by BACS
ECDC	292.16	114566
G & J Peck Ltd	224.02	114555
Konica Minolta Business Solutions Ltd	65.10	114564
Greene King Brewing & Retailing Ltd	1196.88	Paid by direct debit
Anglian Water	70.99	114569
Anglian Water	38.88	114570
National Federation of Cemetery Friends	10.00	114575
Jewson Ltd	157.50	114571
Anglia Sprayers Ltd	11.02	114572
RGP Security Services Ltd	111.00	Paid by BACS
S Slezacek	941.04	Paid by BACS
Mr M Chinery-Colyer	146.00	Paid by BACS
Amazon Payments UK Ltd	14.99	114562
Millennium Pest Control Ltd	75.00	114573
Warren Access	1209.60	114574

**Payments relating to staff since meeting on the 4th December 2023**

Salaries and wages	£37,491.86
Inland Revenue (tax & NI)	£22,079.31
Pension fund payments	£17,803.65

*The meeting closed at 8.41 pm.*

# Cllrs Piers Coutts and Alison Whelan

MONTHLY REPORT JANUARY 2024

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## FULL COUNCIL

Five motions from councillors were debated at the Cambridgeshire County Council full council meeting on 12 December. Four were passed, one was not.

1. Noting the crisis in adult social care caused by chronic Government underfunding to councils, and asking officers to be ready to take advantage of any future change in Government policies. (Passed)
  2. Asking the council's Communities, Social Mobility & Inclusion Committee to consider actions to ensure a more diverse council. (Passed)
  3. Expressing concern at the lack of availability of NHS dentistry, and committing to take action to address the problem. (Passed)
  4. Complaining of confusion about highways consultations, and wanting to consult all who could potentially be affected by changes to the highway. (Not passed)
  5. Welcoming options for more flexible working, and committing to promote these within the council and among local employers. (Passed)
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## STRATEGY RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE

### Joint statement on 'Cambridge 2040' announcement

The Rt Hon Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, unveiled updated plans for the Government's 'Cambridge 2040' vision on Tuesday 19 December 2023. These include 'northwards' of 150,000 new homes around Cambridge as part of a major new expansion of the city.

The leaders of Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, and the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, said:

"Despite working hard to engage constructively with Government officials since the Secretary of State's initial Cambridge 2040 announcement in the summer, it's deeply disappointing that once again Government plans for Cambridge seem to be being negotiated through the press.

We note in the latest announcement that the number of new homes put forward by Rt Hon Michael Gove MP has come down from 250,000 to 150,000, but this is still substantially more than the over 50,000 homes we have identified as needed in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan (to 2040)—a number which will already be incredibly challenging to bring forward. We are ambitious for high quality sustainable, green growth but

can't stress enough how vital it is that Government supports us to tackle the issues that will otherwise act as roadblocks to sustainable growth.

We have written to the Secretary of State a number of times over the past month to stress the importance of committing to sustainable growth, and to reiterate the support that is needed to enable us to plan for the homes set out in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

This includes prioritising sustainable public transport, community infrastructure such as schools and GPs, and water shortages in this region, which are putting our chalk streams under extreme pressure—an issue which the Greater Cambridge Planning Service warned in January 2023 could delay existing plans for housebuilding if not addressed by Government. We are still waiting for responses to these questions which would detail how Government proposes to support us in delivering a proposed 50,000 or so homes responsibly, let alone 150,000.

Clarity is also needed as to who is involved in the 'Cambridge Delivery Group', what it will do, and how it will be governed. Devolution works best when local politicians are empowered to lead and deliver sustainable development and we will continue to work hard to represent our residents and ensure that Cambridge and its surrounding villages grow in a sustainable and carefully planned way."

Since the initial announcement in summer 2023 about the Government's 'Cambridge 2040' plans, council leaders and officers have begun to explore the vision for Cambridge 2040 with Government officials.

Following a visit to Cambridge by the Secretary of State in November, leaders from Cambridgeshire County, Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District councils, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, the Greater Cambridge Partnership, and local business wrote to urge Government to make a number of commitments—including water supply and transport—necessary to support sustainable growth in and around Cambridge.

### **£368,000 to help council respond to major projects**

A successful bid to Government means an additional £368,000 to help the council respond to proposals for major infrastructure in Cambridgeshire.

The money will help support the council with the administration of Development Consent Orders (DCO) for schemes like East West Rail, the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet upgrade, and the Fenland Reservoir, as well as other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). £268,000 will bring in extra technical and specialist resource, and a further £100,000 will enable work across all these types of projects.



## Consultation begins on budget proposals

Consultation is to begin on the council's proposals for its 2024/5 budget, in what is being called 'the toughest year to set a balanced council budget'.

The Government's one-year Local Government Financial Settlement announced last month does not compensate for the levels of demand and inflation that the council is faced with, particularly in areas such as children's social care, home to school transport and provision for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities. A fair funding review for local councils promised by the Government has never materialised. And all local authorities face significant financial uncertainties as a consequence, as reported last month.

The council is looking to support vulnerable people and improve highways maintenance, while still seeking to bridge a remaining £2M gap—even with a proposed council tax rise of 4.99 per cent (two per cent for adult social care services, and 2.99 per cent for general services).

The Strategy, Resources & Performance Committee received and considered draft budget proposals at its meeting on Tuesday 19 December. The council's service committees will consider these at their various meetings in January. An online public survey has been launched and is open until Tuesday 16 January <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/budget-consultation-2024-5>

The Strategy, Resources & Performance Committee will make a final budget recommendation at its meeting on Tuesday 30 January for Full Council to debate on Tuesday 13 February.

The draft proposals have been shaped by views gathered in the council's first Quality of Life Survey conducted over the summer. They focus on sustaining social services, continuing to provide free school meal vouchers for eligible children during holidays, progressing the council's commitment to pay the real living wage to people providing adult social care, and prioritising highways and cycleways maintenance across the county.

Potential savings have been identified to help bridge the funding gap. These include

- Moving to LED streetlights (£1M in energy savings each year)
  - Rationalising office accommodation (£1.5M in the next three years)
  - Reviewing the highest cost children's placement costs, and home to school transport routes (more than £2M)
  - Driving down the amount of bad debt (£0.5M)
  - Reviewing income from permits and parking charges (Just under £1M)
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## ADULTS & HEALTH

### Covid

Covid is far from over. Our EU neighbours now seem to be able to purchase over-the-counter or online multi-tests which test for covid, flu, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) on a single test cassette. The Joint Administration has asked the Director of Public Health what the hold-up is in making these available in the UK.

### Preventing falls

Falls and related injuries are a common and significant problem for older adults and a major public health issue. Falls are a major cause of disability and injury-related death in people aged 75 and over, and have a large impact on quality of life—and as our population ages, this will become even more of an issue.

Around one in three people over 65 years old and half of those over 80 experience a fall at least once a year. In Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in 2022/23, there were 2,699 emergency admissions due to falls and 1,015 admissions due to a hip fracture. The estimated combined total cost of these hospital admissions was £16.3M, an increase of over £1.9M on the previous year. These costs do not include wider health and social care costs such as primary care, ambulance, or adult social care costs.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Adults and Health Committee has endorsed a three-year Falls Prevention Strategy and detailed delivery plan, working with a multi-agency Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Falls Prevention Strategy Group.

The strategy includes a number of interventions that have been shown to be effective at preventing some falls and fractures, and its intended outcome is a reduction in the rate of hip fracture admissions, and an improvement to the quality of life of older adults who experience a fall or fracture.

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## COSMIC

### Supermarket voucher scheme continued in Christmas holiday

The council's supermarket voucher scheme continued to operate in the Christmas school holiday for all eligible families in Cambridgeshire. The scheme will run until the February 2024 half term, using the Household Support Fund from the Department for Work & Pensions topped up with additional funding provided by the council.

Over 20,000 vouchers were claimed in the October half term alone. Over seventy per cent of families said the vouchers had helped them cope with the rising cost of living. More than half said the scheme had reduced the need for them to seek other sources of support in the school holidays such as food banks.

Total spend in the October half term week was £317,000, with this expected to have more than doubled to £660,000 in the two-week Christmas holiday. In addition to the holiday voucher scheme, there is further support available in response to the cost of living

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living>

### **Libraries offer a helping hand to stay connected this winter**

A successful pilot scheme offering free mobile SIM cards to those unable to afford internet access is now available in eleven of Cambridgeshire's libraries, including Ely. Cambridgeshire Libraries have signed up to the National Databank, an initiative run by Good Things Foundation which provides free mobile SIM cards to anyone over the age of 18 who is on a low income. The SIM cards are donated to the National Databank by Virgin Media, O2, Vodafone and Three. They are then supplied to members of the National Digital Inclusion Network, including the eleven Cambridgeshire libraries, to be passed on to those in need of data.

### **Life-saving defibrillators installed at thirteen council sites**

Life-saving automated external defibrillators have been installed at thirteen county council offices for use by local communities as well as county council staff and visitors. The venues include Noble House in Ely, off Angel Drove. The council purchased the units, but all installations were carried out free of charge by the county council's maintenance contractor GSH as part of their commitment to support social value in Cambridgeshire.

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## **ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT**

### **Network Rail signs up to County Council biodiversity site**

Network Rail is the first investor in the council's pioneering biodiversity and habitat restoration scheme at Lower Valley Farm in Fulbourn. Arable land is being transformed into a one-of-a-kind 345-acre biodiversity net gain site. Council land there will be used to replace habitat lost due to construction of the new Cambridge South railway station at Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

From January 2024, legislation comes into effect requiring new developments in England to not only provide for nature lost as part of works but to achieve a minimum biodiversity net gain of 10%. As part of the Cambridge South Infrastructure Enhancement scheme, Network Rail has purchased 65 biodiversity units at the Fulbourn site to create an environmental legacy that will complement their creation of Hobson's Park on the Campus.

The Lower Valley Biodiversity Site is part of the council's commitment to a greener Cambridgeshire and helps tackle the ongoing country-wide nature crisis.

It also supports the council's aim to become a net zero county by 2045, five years ahead of national targets.

### **Change to access at Royston and Thriplow recycling centres**

Cambridgeshire residents now need to apply for a digital permit to use Royston Household Recycling Centre in Hertfordshire. The change comes following the announcement last year that Hertfordshire County Council would be adopting a policy restricting access to non-residents at Hertfordshire's network of sixteen recycling centres.

However, the county council has reached an agreement with Hertfordshire County Council that enables continued cross-border access to Royston Household Recycling Centre for Cambridgeshire residents living close to the county boundary, whilst allowing Hertfordshire residents access to Thriplow Household Recycling Centre in South Cambridgeshire.

Resident-only policies are becoming increasingly common across the region and indeed the country, with many neighbouring counties having had this policy in place for some time.

### **Sunnica further delay**

A decision on the Sunnica application for a large solar farm spanning East Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk has already been postponed from September to December. It has now been postponed again, to Thursday 7 March. This may mean no decision this side of a General Election.

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## **HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT**

### **20mph speed limit for Ely approved**

A city-wide 20MPH zone for Ely, put forward by City of Ely Council and funded by the Government's Transforming Cities Fund, has been approved following a consultation and a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process. In consultation with local county councillors, officers agreed to install the 20MPH speed limit zone with a minor amendment to include the section outside Tesco and the railway station. A decision about the installation of speed cushions was deferred.

### **But not for Soham**

By contrast, county councillors for Soham said they did not want officers to proceed with Soham Town Council's request for a 20MPH limit. Officers are considering whether it would be possible to carry out further consultation.

### **Electric vehicle charging**

An estimated 10,000 public electric vehicle charge point sockets will be needed across Cambridgeshire by 2030, as motorists choose electric vehicles over more

polluting petrol and diesel cars. The sale of new petrol and diesel cars is set to be banned by government from 2035.

Using up to £5M in Local Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding, the council is working with the Combined Authority on how to meet this need, with fewer than 500 public charge points currently installed. Officers will develop a plan informed by technical mapping and seek public engagement to find suitable charge point locations. They will report back to the Highways and Transport committee in March, prior to a decision by the Environment and Green Investment Committee later in 2024.

### **Wheatsheaf crossroads**

Work could begin in April 2024 to install a new traffic light-controlled junction on the B1040 Somersham Road / Wheatsheaf Road and Bluntisham Heath Road to reduce the number of collisions involving drivers failing to give way.

Funding of £6.8M is already in place, but works are dependent on being able to buy the additional land needed to widen the road. Subject to this, the next steps are to procure a contractor and then start the utility diversion work such as relocating the power lines, water, gas and broadband.

### **Civil parking enforcement starts in South Cambridgeshire**

New Civil Parking Enforcement powers are now in effect across South Cambridgeshire following a decision by Government. Drivers are now far more likely to receive a fine for parking incorrectly where there are restrictions, such as on single or double yellow lines.

#### **Meanwhile on the Combined Authority**

Despite the Code of Conduct complaint against Mayor Nik Johnson having been resolved, the leaders of East Cambridgeshire and Fenland district councils are continuing to make accusations against the Mayor which are not based on any information which is in the public domain. It has been reported that Mayor Johnson is now initiating a Code of Conduct complaint against Cllr Anna Bailey over her behaviour in this matter.

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## **Cllrs Alison Whelan and Piers Coutts**

County Councillors for Ely North and Ely South

