

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT – FEBRUARY 2024
LONGSTANTON, NORTHSTOWE, OVER, OAKINGTON & WESTWICK

CLLR FIROUZ THOMPSON

FULL COUNCIL

Councillors were saddened to hear the announcement at the start of the year of the death of Cllr Mac McGuire, the councillor for Yaxley & Farcet in Huntingdonshire and the longest-serving member of the County Council. Mac served on Cambridgeshire County Council from 1985 to 1992, and then again from 1997 until his death over the Christmas holidays. An election to fill the vacancy on the council will be held in due course.

Meanwhile Cllr Ryan Fuller (St Ives North & Wyton) and the Conservative Party have parted company with one another. Cllr Fuller will remain on the council as an independent councillor.

The composition of the various committees on the council will be adjusted to take account of these changes, and then readjusted once Cllr McGuire’s replacement in Yaxley & Farcet is known.

STRATEGY RESOURCES & PERFORMANCE

Budget

At the time of writing, the county council’s Strategy, Resources & Performance Committee is being asked to make its final budget recommendation at its meeting on Tuesday 30 January for Full Council to debate on Tuesday 13 February.

The county council’s various policy committees have scrutinised the draft budget proposals, and three of them—Communities Social Mobility & Inclusion, Environment & Green Investment and Highways & Transport Committee—have all asked that the Strategy, Resources & Performance Committee give consideration to increasing the funding available for Emergency Planning, in view of the increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather leading to flooding.

ADULTS & HEALTH

Measles

Measles cases have been rising since last November, with the West Midlands seeing more than 200 confirmed cases, the largest outbreak outside London. The UK Health Security Agency declared the outbreak a national incident on 19 January 2024.

Measles is highly infectious. Nine out of ten unvaccinated children can catch measles if someone in their class has it. It can be severe, particularly in the immunosuppressed and infants, and can be more severe in pregnancy. It can be mild for some children, but one in five will require a hospital visit. At its worst it can lead to complications such as meningitis and pneumonia and can in rare cases be fatal.

Currently there are no confirmed cases in Cambridgeshire and in 2023 there were only eight confirmed cases across the East of England. But there is a strong likelihood that it will spread to Cambridgeshire. Uptake of childhood vaccinations has been low in Cambridge and parts of Huntingdonshire and Fenland. A target vaccination rate of 95 per cent is considered necessary to prevent outbreaks, and both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have rates lower than this.

If the outbreak spreads to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, control measures such as isolating unvaccinated school contacts for 21 days may be necessary. This will have an impact on school staff, parents and the economy, and an outbreak of any size will stretch health care capacity at the busiest time of year.

- Parents should have their children vaccinated if they have not already done so.

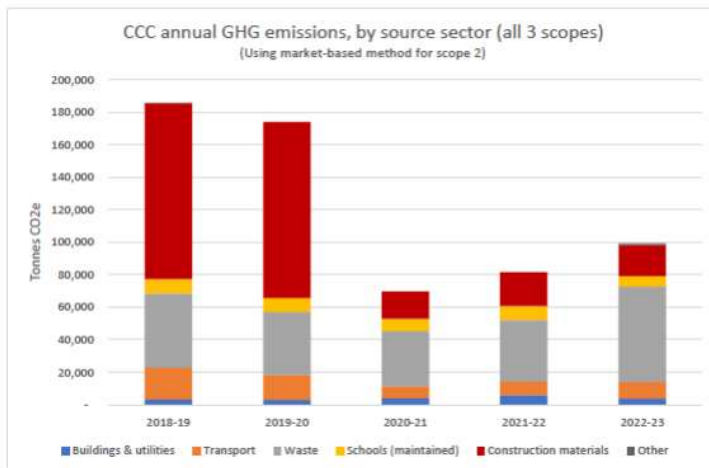
- Residents should call their GP or 111 if measles is suspected or if someone who is at risk has been in contact with a confirmed case. Typical symptoms include a high fever, sore red watery eyes and a blotchy red brown rash.
- Isolating when asked to do so is important if any outbreak is to be contained.
- There are a number of measles myths—such as the idea that it is a good idea to deliberately infect children with the disease at ‘measles parties’— which should be ignored.
- Information about vaccine outreach clinics can be found at <https://www.cpics.org.uk/measles>

ENVIRONMENT & GREEN INVESTMENT

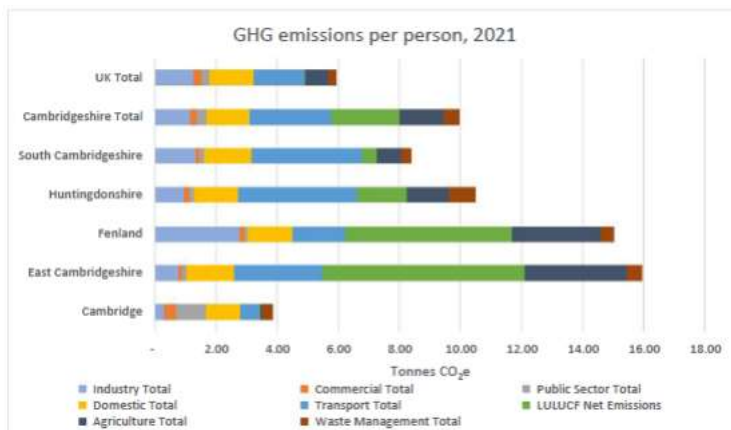
Carbon footprint

The Environment & Green Investment Committee last month received the council’s carbon footprint report for 2022/23. As usual, this reports on the council’s carbon emissions, and the carbon emissions of the county of Cambridgeshire as a whole.

The Council’s total known greenhouse gas emissions in 2022-23 amounted to 99,104 tonnes CO₂e. The largest share, nearly sixty per cent, was from waste, with construction materials second at nineteen per cent, and transport third at ten per cent. This is 46 per cent lower than the council’s baseline year of 2018/19.



For Cambridgeshire as a whole, the most recent year of data is 2021—the figures are published by Government. Total greenhouse gas emissions for Cambridgeshire that year were 6.78 million tonnes CO₂e. Transport was the highest emitting sector in the county, accounting for 27 per cent of emissions, followed by land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF), at 23 per cent.



South Cambridgeshire produced the second lowest volume of greenhouse gas emissions per person in the county, mostly from Transport and Domestic. There has been a twenty-five per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in Cambridgeshire between 2005 and 2021. However, there was a 6.1 per cent increase in 2021 compared to 2020, because of the effect of covid in 2020.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Weeds Policy

The council's Highways & Transport Committee has changed its policy on highways weed spraying. It will now be reverting to regular twice-yearly weed killing in the places where it used to do this before last year's policy change. Communities which do not want chemical weed spraying in their area will however be able to opt out in favour of manual weed removal by volunteers.

Cllr Alex Beckett, chair of the Highways and Transport Committee at Cambridgeshire County Council, said: "I know we didn't get this change right, which is why I asked for a review of the policy. While some communities really appreciated the reduction in chemical weed killing, a large number did not. Local decision making is important, we have listened to that feedback and hope these new changes, if approved, will allow those communities who wish to continue without chemical weed killing to do so whilst allowing those who preferred the previous regime to go back to that."

Further details can be found on our website with links to the papers incl. response to survey, survey trends and YouTube recording:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/weed-changes-set-to-be-discussed>

Peat soil roads

The Highways & Transport Committee approved a report on action to address the problem of Cambridgeshire's collapsing fen roads. The report identified 156 such roads which are increasingly failing due to historic lack of maintenance, and more extreme weather. Most of these roads were not constructed to carry the volume and weight of traffic they are now seeing. In South Cambs, these roads include:

- A603 Wimpole Cambridge Road
- B1042 Tadlow Wrestlinworth Road
- B1042 Croydon Lower Road
- B1046 Longstowe High Street
- C195 Madingley Cambridge Road
- C196 Madingley Dry Drayton Road
- C200 Granchester Coton Road
- C273 Guilden Morden Potton Road
- Comberton Long Road
- Orwell Wimpole Park Road
- Gamblingay Hatley Road

In 2018 £5M was spent on ten roads, and in 2021 a further five received investment. Further crack and safety repairs have been carried out to a number of roads in 2023. However, the problem has been growing for years, and is now growing much faster.

Various repair types have been used, some more effective than others. Individual routes are being managed through localised repairs, more extensive patching, signage, and weekly inspections. The council's Highways Operational Standards have been revised to reflect the risks.

Short term measures being used include temporary speed limits, traffic signals, and consideration may be given to temporary road closures or weight restrictions.

In the medium term a number of roads have been included in the council's capital programme for more extensive works over the next three to five years.

Longer term however, the primary focus must be lobbying together with partner organisations including parish councils to gain the required substantial amount of funding to provide a systemic solution. Council officers have already been working with the Department for Transport to raise awareness.

Further details can be found on our website with links to the papers incl. Long list of Soil roads, LHO Guidance, Site review and treatment options, Lobby Plan and YouTube recording:
<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/peat-soil-affected-road-plans-to-be-considered>

Active Travel Maintenance

The Highways & Transport Committee has approved changes to the Highways Operational Standards to improve recognition of, and response to, faults on cycleways and footways. These changes will help ensure a safe environment for cyclists and pedestrians, encouraging and facilitating active travel.

South Cambridgeshire Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)

Following the launch of South Cambridgeshire Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) across South Cambridgeshire, the 4 week Warning Notice period on 31 January has now come to an end. From 1 February, vehicles observed to be parked in contravention, are likely to receive a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). Details on how to pay or appeal can be found on the reverse of the Notice.

Under CPE powers, Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) cannot enforce all restrictions. Restrictions such as dangerous parking, obstruction of the footway and moving traffic offences will continue to be enforced by the Police and need to be reported to them.

20mph funding

Application window opened on **15 January 2024 and closes on Friday 15 March 2024 at 5pm**. Some key changes to our website include around the narrative / guidance for applicants. This explains how you apply with additional narrative and provides some examples previously successful applications for reference.
<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/improving-the-local-highway/20mph-funding>

Traffic Management Centre (TMC)

The TMC responded to 163 incidents on the road network throughout Cambridgeshire in January covering 22 weekdays. This is an increase to December's figure but similar to that of January 2023. Please see the table below which illustrates the number of incidents over the last 6 months, compared to the same period last year;

Incidents by month/year

	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
2022/23	76	112	88	207	140	167
2023/24	61	103	109	144	81	163

Meanwhile on the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)

The Mayor has proposed to increase his precept on the council tax from £12 to £36 per year for the average Band D property. This is intended to enable the funding of a number of new or improved bus services. The below are details for the South Cambridgeshire:

Route number (or new link)	Further information
Integrate 1A and 5A services between Bar Hill, Swavesey and St Ives and enhanced frequencies	Develop draft route and timetable
Route 4 - Improve frequency Cambourne to Cambridge and investigate expansion of service to North East Cambridge	Engagement with incumbent operator to assess options for improvements
Route 8 – improve frequency. More direct route and expansion to Rampton	Engagement with incumbent operator to assess options for improvements
X13 Haverhill to Cambridge – increase frequency	Engagement with incumbent operator to assess options for improvements
New Demand Responsive Transport trial. Collaborating with the community to define a service zone that offers maximum coverage to rural communities	Development work to commence

The Government has issued a revised Best Value Notice in respect of the Combined Authority. The revised notice recognises the significant progress the Combined Authority has made as an organisation since January 2023, and also that some elements need further work. More importantly it makes clear that it wants Board members to work together with common purpose.

Board documents for 31 January, can be found on the link:

<https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2201/Committee/63/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx>

MEETINGS ATTENDED and COMMUNITY WORK 2 January to 2 February 2024

Local meetings:

Oakington & Westwick Parish Council meeting (8 Jan), Over Parish Council meeting (9 Jan), Northstowe Delivery Group meeting (18 Jan), Phase 2 Turf-cutting ceremony for Sixth Form at Northstowe Education Campus, organised by Meridian Trust (19 Jan), Northstowe Sports Pavilion opening (20 Jan), Northstowe Community Forum (24 Jan), Northstowe Town Council (30 Jan).

Council meetings:

Children & Young People's committee (16 Jan), Monthly catch up with Tam Parry and Nigel Eggar (17 Jan), Members Seminar on Programme Management and measuring performance (17 Jan), Northstowe Bus Provisions (2 Feb).

Community work:

Parish/Town Council monthly report, Column write ups within Northstowe News, Oakington & Westwick Journal and Over News online magazine, Northstowe Town Council Market Working Group – promoting on social media and when possible volunteering, Northstowe Foodies.

Private case work:

Most Councillors will have private case work that they are dealing with, details of which cannot be shared due to GDPR – current themes are Transport, Flooding, Early Years, School admissions, Property asset and Highways.

WARD NEWS

HIGHWAYS

New Local Team

Local Highways Officer: Neal Stephens

Local Highways Officer: Aaron Boddington

Quarterly Highways meetings 2024 dates

Friday 26 January 12noon – 1.30pm rescheduled to Friday 23 February 12noon – 1.30pm due to officer sickness

Friday 26 April 12noon – 1.30pm

Friday 12 July 12noon – 1.30pm

Friday 1 November 12noon – 1.30pm

Old A14 handover

The old A14 including the A1307, known locally as the old A14 between Swavesey and Huntingdon, is due to be officially handed over from National Highways to Cambridgeshire County Council.

From Thursday, 8 February, the transfer process will be complete, and the county council will be officially responsible for maintaining this section of the highway. This will include any maintenance such as resurfacing, street lighting, bridges, barriers, traffic lights, drainage and public rights of way. The A1307 has already been added to our gritting routes for the winter.

Further details can be found on this press release:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/old-a14-handover>

B1050 Hattons Road Bridge (flyover the A1307)

The reason for the proposed works are that the new A14 scheme built between Girton and Huntingdon 14 new bridges carry the Local Highway Authority network of roads over the A14 Trunk road with new or modified structures. On completion of the scheme by National Highways, in June 2022, it has subsequently been found that settlement has taken place at the embankment/underbridge interfaces.

Both Cambridgeshire County Council and National highways are working jointly to address the embankment settlement issues at Bar Hill A14 Interchange and B1050 Hattons Rd bridge.

In October 2022 Cambridgeshire County Council undertook surface repairs to the B1050 Bar Hill Interchange bridge following numerous complaints from vehicle users. However, by January 2023 further movement/settlement was becoming evident at both sites and warning signs were installed.

Further settlement has continued to occur, so that further temporary surface patches will be needed at Hattons Rd bridge initially as stated above, these are planned for the 9th to 12th February 2024 with overnight road closures.

In parallel to this both National Highways and Cambridgeshire County Council are going to install some soil monitoring equipment to try to ascertain what is happening to the embankment fill materials (12 month period) with a view to gaining data to enable a long term solution to the settlement issues.

A14 Trees

National Highways have reported that the replanting is progressing well. Despite the recent inclement weather, they are still on schedule to complete the exercise by the end of March. It should be noted that any further poor weather may extend the replanting although April still provides a good environment (again subject to weather!). You may have noticed the new earthy coloured tree stumps that are now being used on our end of the A14 corridor, they are non-plastic fully biodegradable tree guards which National Highways are using for all replanting on the project. The tree guards have also won an award just before Christmas (please see data sheets attached to the email). The project is currently the largest user of this product in the country.

I would really like to recommend if you are considering any tree planting in your areas, that you use these new tree stumps, as I fear you may have a few residents complaining.

A14 Flooding Hotspots – Oakington & Fenstanton

We are still awaiting for the Environment Agency's modelling report on these flood spots around Oakington, so that we can share with Homes England for Phase 2 and 3a.

Gulley Cleaning

I have been notified that gulley cleaning has been completed in all my ward. Please continue to report any gullies that may not have been cleaned, if the team were unable to reach them or may have missed them.

LONGSTANTON/NORTHSTOWE Robots

A reminder that there is a Teams meeting with regards to the plans for Robots to be set up this year at the Cop in Longstanton, to deliver to Longstanton and Northstowe residents, timings are: Friday 9 February 12noon-1pm.

LONGSTANTON

- I have queried whether with the new South Cambridgeshire Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) the team are able to get Civil Enforcement Officers to attend around pick up/drop off at Hatton Park Primary School, to ensure parents/carers are parking legally around the school and surrounding roads. Once I have received a reply I will share details.

NORTHSTOWE

- Northstowe Support Group – following Northstowe Town Council meeting on 30 January, I am liaising with county community officers to discuss and meet with Town Clerk and Mayor to discuss S106 Funding that is available, which gets discussed at Northstowe Support Partnership meeting.

OAKINGTON AND WESTWICK

- The Drift pavement, although we were all very pleased to see that this pavement was finally resurfaced, following a conversation with Neal Stephens, Local Highways Officer on the week before Christmas, it seems that he is not happy with the works (also pointed out by Chair – Cllr David Reeves at December PC meeting), Neal is liaising with his line manager and the contractor. UPDATE: no update currently but we hope to pick this up at the 23 February Highways meeting.
- Station road ditch – Homes England confirmed this week that they would be attending site on 2 February and works will be carried out under an ecological watching brief, the delay was due to the wait for the ecologist availability.
- The drift – as per the email, it seems Brookfield have been appointed by Homes England to schedule the work to maintain the ditch by the entrance to the Homes England land before Christmas. Brookfield is due to open the short section immediately of the road plate so he can rod form the downstream end, completing the rest of the works. We are awaiting timelines.

OVER

- I have been liaising with an Over resident with regards to an issue over their land which is close to County land. The county officers are liaising with the residents following a meeting I had with them in December. No update.
- Flooding from Storm Henk to the ditch near the Over Community Centre - a site visit was made by county council officers and an officer from Flood and Water team on 25 January and they were able to also talk to the OCC manager. An update was shared with Over PC clerk and Over Community Centre manager on 2 February and we are awaiting further details from county officers.

COUNCILS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND KEY GOVERNMENT FUNDED ORGANISATIONS

If you have a problem or concern do not worry too much about who can solve it just ask the question and we will endeavour to signpost to the right person. The organisational structure of Cambridgeshire is complex, but it is important to identify where responsibility lies.

<p>County Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Education, Transport, Highways, Heritage, Social care, Libraries, Trading standards, - Waste management, Maintaining their estate.</p> <p>Some of these services are shared between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council but any concerns should be directed to the county council.</p>
<p>District Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Council tax payments and benefits, Household bin collections, Housing and housing benefits, Council leisure facilities, Environmental health, Residential planning.</p>
<p>Parish/ Town Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Looking after community buildings, Open spaces, Allotments, Play Areas, Bus shelters.</p>
<p>Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)</p> <p>'The local delivery body for a City Deal with central Government worth up to £500 million over 15 years, to vital improvements in infrastructure (decarbonising transport), supporting and accelerating the creation of 44,000 new jobs, 33,500 new homes and 420 additional apprenticeships.'</p> <p>Partnership between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, University of Cambridge.</p>
<p>The Combined Authority, Cambridge and Peterborough, our elected Mayor</p> <p>'A combined authority (CA) is a legal body set up using national legislation that enables a group of two or more councils to collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries.'</p> <p>What our mayor does – Business support, skills, housing, transport, environment, international, digital connectivity, resilience, research, and strategy. New homes.</p>
<p>Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridge and Peterborough</p> <p>To support and challenge the Chief Constable to provide effective and efficient policing services for the area.</p>
<p>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority</p> <p>The Fire Authority is the governing body responsible for delivering a fire and rescue service to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is made up of Cambridgeshire County Councillors and Peterborough City Councillors.</p>

CONTACT DETAILS

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the above, or any other matters.

Firouz Thompson, County Councillor for Longstanton, Northstowe, Over and Oakington & Westwick
Email: firouz.thompson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

For those on social media we have highly active Facebook groups:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/> - Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe

<https://www.facebook.com/libdems3rdMay18> - Over & Willingham