

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020/21

16 March 2021

Most of you are aware that, from almost the beginning of 2020, the year has been extremely difficult for, individuals, families, and communities. During this difficult time, Cambridgeshire County Council, working alongside Huntingdonshire District Council, have continued to support vulnerable individuals, educational needs e.g. for parents working from home and having to school their child/children at home. Also, CCC Staff have been re-deployed out to assist with Covid-19 enquiries/call-centres and, in my own area, this resulted in 80 Transport Staff being re-deployed.

Over this period, all meetings for CCC Staff, along with Councillors, have been carried out virtually (Zoom etc), personally, this required a very intense learning curve for me – my longest Zoom being from 09.00 – 18.30 hrs (we did have a few mini-breaks!) I very much believe this will continue as we emerge, slowly, from lock-down, I am predicting that people will not travel regularly into work as they once did, but to (occasionally) continue to work from home – if they are able.

Regular up-dates have regularly been held via virtual meetings by the Chief Executive of the Council also, most importantly, from the Director of Public Health who provided regular up-to-date, vital information for us all. Now this information is able to carry the good news of the increasing numbers of people receiving their 1st vaccination, with many also having their 2nd – these numbers continuing to rise.

Also, there have been regular up-dates provided by General Purposes, Adult Services, Children & Young People, Commercial & Investments, Communities & Partnerships, Environment & Sustainability, Health and Highways & Transport (which I Chair).

We have continued with our Full Council Meetings in fact, 6 times over this period, with all meetings being recorded and can now be viewed on CCC website, which also provides access to ALL reports, minutes etc.

A special thanks must go to our local community neighbours who have been involved in 'time-banks' and 'community hubs', along with the many individual volunteer residents giving time to support neighbours in any way they are able.

Just a reminder: Cambridgeshire is the fastest-growing County in the country, which brings with it many challenges. To give an e.g. Alconbury Weald will have one secondary school, 3 primaries, 1 special school, along with associated other facilities. There are 2 other sites of similar size, i.e. Northstowe which you can note from any Guided Bus journey, and Waterbeach.

I am sure many of you will be aware, there was quite a bit of 'rain falling out of the skies' during the Christmas period! This, naturally, caused flooding in places as the water tables were already full and could take no more. There are many agencies involved in this type of issue, i.e, Environment Agency, Anglia Water, Middle Levels, Internal Drainage Boards, District Councils along with The County.

With regards to our finances: there has been much discussion over the last year regarding budgets, particularly in relation to Adult Social Care. We have received Central Government monies to support our programme. At CCC Full Council Meeting, held on 9th February, a balanced Budget was set, with the most significant increase being for Highways maintenance, this allocated an extra £20m for footpaths maintenance yes, a huge amount! This amount to be spread over the period 2021/26. Further monies were also allocated for gully clearing and verge maintenance.

Remember: the up-coming County Council Elections in May for which I will not be seeking re-election, having decided to retire after my 20 years as your County Councillor, this followed from a 20 year involvement with HDC (the 2 Council positions overlapping). I began my long Local Government 'career' on Hilton Parish Council, being Chairman for many years!

Ian Bates

Councillor for Fenstanton, Hemingford Abbots, Houghton & Wyton, Hemingford Grey, Hilton

Chairman, Highways and Transport C'tee

Cambridgeshire County Council