

2015/2016



East Cambridgeshire District Council



End of Year Performance Report

Foreword

We are pleased to provide you with an update on our key performance outputs in 2015/2016. Over the last 12 months the Council has continued to focus on providing high quality, value for money services which are built around the needs and expectations of you, our customers.

The Council continues to make positive progress towards our strategic priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. We are particularly proud of the development of our new trading company. It was set up to help generate money which will be reinvested into services for our customers.

We have seen the development of a number of Community Land Trusts across East Cambridgeshire where to date 23 new houses have been built by the Trusts and we look forward to being able to support them in the future with more sites.

Infrastructure development has thrived over the past year with some truly exciting and ambitious projects being agreed by Members. Projects including, the new multiplex cinema in Ely and the district wide leisure centre, will provide facilities which support our on-going health and well-being agenda and encourage more people to visit the area.

The economy across East Cambridgeshire continues to thrive. The development at North Ely is progressing well (the Isle of Ely Primary School has already been completed). Our new "Enterprise East Cambridgeshire" website now provides the opportunity for local investors and employers to see the clear benefits of growth in the district. In addition, the district has been awarded a new Enterprise Zone for Lancaster Way Business Park in Ely and a number of new employers have invested here (bringing in £5.127m worth of inward investment in East Cambs).

We are sure that you will agree that this is a truly exciting time for all of us and the foreword above only gives you a flavour of what has been achieved over the past 12 months. We look forward to keeping you up to date with the developments at the Council over the forthcoming year.



*Councillor James Palmer -
Leader of the Council*



John Hill - Chief Executive

Executive summary

In 2015, the Council agreed a new Corporate Plan which set out its priorities up to 2019. The Plan provides a clear vision for the future and some ambitious and exciting projects in the district which include a new district wide leisure centre, a new cinema and the development of a new Local Plan. Within the Corporate Plan there are six overarching priorities:

1

Delivering a financially sound and well managed Council - A customer driven efficient Council with a “can-do” attitude and pro business approach and commercially focused to ensure financial self-sufficiency for the taxpayer.

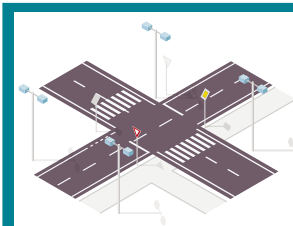


Genuinely affordable housing - Genuinely affordable housing by local people for local people.

2

3

A fantastic place to live - Making East Cambridgeshire an even better place to live.



Improving local transport - Making it easier to get around the District and do business.

4

5

Improving local infrastructure - Appropriate developments with better infrastructure and an improving Planning Service.



New jobs and funding – Driving economic success by creating the infrastructure to attract businesses and create jobs.

6

What has the Council achieved against our Corporate Plan priorities over the past 12 months?

We have continued to present a balanced budget.

The East Cambs element of Council Tax has been frozen for the third year in a row.

The Council has established the East Cambs Trading Company Limited to support the financial sustainability of the authority.

4 Community Land Trusts have been established in Stretham and Wilburton, Swaffham Prior, Soham and Witchford, and 23 new affordable houses have been built.

Secured planning permission and the funding package for the new district wide leisure centre.

Continued to enshrine free parking in the city and town centre car parks.

The first draft of a new Local Plan has been published for consultation.

Provided ongoing support to the developers in North Ely, to help ensure its successful delivery.

Even though our Government grant has been cut year on year, we have produced a balanced budget for 2015/2016 and 2016/17 while freezing Council Tax (and our Medium Term Financial Strategy further projects a balanced budget in 2017/18). Actual expenditure in 2015/16 was below the budget set, allowing further funds to be rolled forward to support future spending.

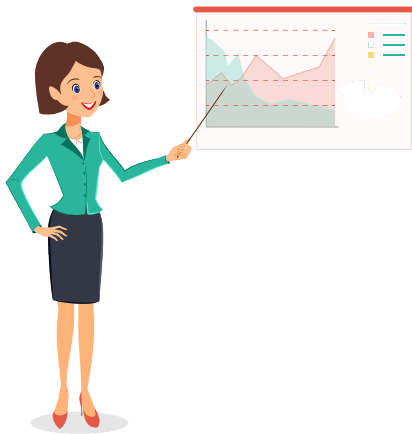
In January 2016, Members approved the establishment of the new East Cambs Trading Company Limited. This new commercial arm of the Council will allow us to generate money which will then be reinvested into services for our customers. We will focus on innovative ways to support commercialisation to enable us to be financially self-sufficient.

The district has seen a number of successful Community Land Trust projects delivered over the last 12 months, where we have actively supported local communities who are driving them forward.

Economic growth continues to be a primary focus (which is shown within the outputs in infrastructure and business development within this report) and the Council has and will continue to invest significantly in this area.

Delivering a financially sound and well managed Council

The vision of the authority focuses on being truly customer driven and over the past 12 months we have carried out a number of customer engagement activities to gather feedback on how well you think we are performing and ways in which we can improve. We appreciate that although we can never be perfect in all that we do we still aim to provide excellent customer service. We will use this feedback to help improve and inform our future planning.



We have **embedded performance management** into the Authority and use it to identify future priorities and assess effectiveness against our Corporate Priorities and the needs of you, our customers.

We have recently replaced automatic pay rises for our staff with performance related pay. This offers a fairer opportunity to recognise and reward our high performing staff.

Our Transformation Programme has continued to grow in momentum, with Members committing £400,000 to Phase 1. The three areas of focus have been identified as:

- Developing a **new Council website** which is based around the needs of you, our customers
- **Improving IT infrastructure** to make sure that our systems are robust to meet with the demands of the Authority and improve processes
- Using **new mobile technology** for our staff to bring about efficiencies, which provide better value for money for you, who funds the Council through Council Tax



**East Cambs
Trading CO. Ltd**



Many Councils find themselves in financial difficulty due to the continued reduction of centralised Government grants. East Cambridgeshire District Council has been working hard on prudent financial planning and as a result we have put in place a number of cost cutting initiatives including:

- **Identifying efficiency savings** throughout the Authority
- **Developing a trading arm of the Council** to generate income, reduce costs and improve efficiency savings

Genuinely affordable housing

East Cambridgeshire continues to be a popular commuter belt, with easy access routes and good rail links. However we are conscious that this has led to increasing house prices, out of the financial reach for some.

The average UK house price (as detailed within the UK House Price Index from the Land Registry, April 2016) is £209,054 but in East Cambridgeshire this stands at £260,893. The Council recognises that this increase in average house prices can lead to families being forced to find other, less expensive districts in which to live (especially for first time buyers).

The Council has recognised the impact this can have on a local community. This is why we have made a commitment to support local residents to develop Community Land Trusts (CLTs) in the district. CLTs offer an opportunity for local residents to manage land and buildings to support the needs of the community. Once completed most sites will have 40% of affordable homes, which are offered to people with local connections.

To date there have been 4 CLTs developed; Stretham and Wilburton, Swaffham Prior, Soham and Witchford. There are 15 new affordable homes currently under construction in Stretham and 8 affordable homes built and occupied in Swaffham Prior. The Council has supported these sites with planning advice, funding information, long term governance guidance and general information relating to the development of the CLT.

In addition to the 4 established CLTs, there are two additional villages in the district which are set to get going with their own CLT imminently.



Swaffham Prior Trustees outside CLT buildings



Stretham Community Land Trust

A fantastic place to live

The past 12 months has been a really exciting year for the district. The **Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) awarded the Council £197,000 for a two year campaign** which has been paying for a monthly prize draw for residents who put their recycling bin out for collection. The campaign “It pays to recycle in East Cambridgeshire” is encouraging households to increase their recycling rates.

Within the period July 2015 to March 2016 the **recycling rate has improved by 2.7% to 57%**, which shows how the campaign has helped to encourage more people to recycle. However, we want to reach a rate of 60% and will therefore look for new ways to encourage residents to improve even more!

Another aspect of the campaign is an art competition to help engage school children and highlight to them which items can be recycled and encourage them to become actively involved in recycling at home. There were 13 winning designs in total from across 9 schools with each design being featured on the waste collection vehicles. We were so impressed with the competition entries and we will be running a similar art project in 2016/2017.



Ely Country Park

Health & Well-being

The health and well-being of our residents is very important to us. We have engaged with parish and town councils on this topic and are working with the local Health

and Well-Being Partnership to develop joint initiatives. In September we will have a free district wide event at the Country Park in Ely.



Example of winning entry

Improving local transport

We know how important good transport links are both in terms of improving commuter times and increasing economic growth so we have been working in partnership with a number of key organisations to make it easier to get around including Network Rail, The Department for Transport and Cambridgeshire County Council.

The popularity of the district has led to an increase in traffic. This can be regularly witnessed in the area around the station in Ely which is often congested and leads to long waiting times. The Council has therefore been a driving force in progressing the Southern bypass in Ely. Not only will the bypass reduce congestion it will also help the local economy by encouraging growth around the area. The tender has been awarded, the Government grant approved and the bypass is on track to be delivered by the end of 2017.



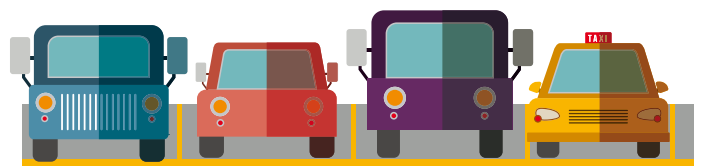
Artist's impression of the new Southern bypass



Artist's impression of the new bypass

We have been working in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council on a new Transport Strategy for East Cambridgeshire (2016-2031). The Strategy will support the Local Plan for the district and take into account permitted and emerging development in the area. A consultation with members of the public was held and the results are currently being analysed and will be available at the end of the Summer. An Action Plan within the Strategy will demonstrate how partner organisations and the Council will tackle future transport pressures. This will be a "living document" responsive to the changing needs of the area and the impact on transportation.

Land has been acquired at Angel Drove in Ely to increase the number of car parking spaces near the railway station, and we continue to look for opportunities to increase car parking at Littleport Station. We have worked with Cambridgeshire County Council to increase traffic flow on some of the area's key roundabouts.



Improving infrastructure

The Council's Planning Service has recently completed a full review to help facilitate growth and ensure that the customer is at the heart of everything we do. The review included a consultation to identify which improvements you would like to see happen. The feedback led to a review of the pre-application advice service. As a result we have developed a more efficient and streamlined service, no longer charging charities, Parish Councils or small businesses (with 5 or less employees) for pre-application advice.

We have also been preparing a new **Local Plan for East Cambridgeshire**. The Local Plan sets out the main priorities for the development of our area and includes: housing, transport, infrastructure and commercial developments and also identifies areas which should be protected from development. We have been consulting and engaging with local residents on our Preliminary Draft Local Plan to ensure that we reflect the needs of the community and will continue to progress this as a priority.

Various options are being explored regarding the proposed new station at Soham and an improved station gateway in Ely. We have set up a working party to discuss the Soham station project, we are continuing to monitor the progress of both.

The development in **North Ely** has been steadily moving forward. The development, which will provide up to **1200 homes**, (which includes **16-30% affordable housing**, business units, a pub/restaurant, allotments and a cricket facility) has been granted outline planning permission and the Council has recently completed a Section 106 agreement which will help pay towards new public open spaces. We envisage that the first houses will start to be built in early 2017.

The new Isle of Ely Primary School has been completed and has welcomed its first pupils.



The new Isle of Ely Primary School



Building works have started on the new multiplex cinema in Downham Road, Ely. We have been working closely with the

developers by offering support such as planning advice and we are pleased to say that they are set to open the site in the spring of 2017. In addition to the six-screen cinema the site will also include various food outlets.

The Council has been investing to improve sports and leisure activities across the district. Not only have Members agreed planning permission for the new leisure centre, a contractor and operator have now been appointed. We have committed £500,000 to the new district wide leisure centre

but we still provide ongoing officer support to ensure that the project is successful and will meet the needs of its users. The new Leisure Centre will open in January 2018.

The Council worked with Cambridgeshire County Council and Littleport Parish Council to remove difficulties with the delivery of the new Leisure Centre at Littleport which will form part of the new schools complex and will be available to the general public.



An artist's impression of the district wide leisure centre

New jobs and funding

The Council has been working closely with local businesses to help provide apprenticeships. Through our direct help eight young people have been placed and we wish them well in their future careers.

The Investment Programme has now successfully completed. The Programme consisted of a number of economic development projects;

- Enterprise East Cambridgeshire Web platform and branding
- Successfully secured Enterprise Zone status for Lancaster Way Business Park in partnership with Grovemere Property, which helps businesses to grow and will bring more jobs and investment
- Skills development with local partners including the Greater Cambridgeshire, Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership and Ely Chamber

These projects have all contributed to supporting economic growth in the district.



Council Leader James Palmer at Merlin Court, Lancaster Way. There are 9 startup units funded by £1m Growing Places Loan.

We have developed a new business website "Enterprise East Cams" which offers business support to employers.

We have continued to work in close partnership with The Greater Peterborough and Greater Cambridgeshire Local Enterprise Partnership on a 30 year manifesto for growth across East Cambridgeshire.

We have co-ordinated a successful Skills Fair for young people to highlight a variety of professions both locally and nationally. The event was attended by over 1000 young people from the district.

We have supported over 200 local employers offering business advice and guidance.



We have worked with partners to secure **£5.127m** worth of investment for local businesses in the district



Council owned E-space business centres offers support to local businesses



A high performing council

Although the Council has an overarching Corporate Plan our services achieve so much more that customers may not have the opportunity to find out about. Detailed below are some additional achievements over the past 12 months.

OUR SUCCESS



Ely Country Park

We have been completing improvement works at Ely Country Park with improved access and surface works to the gateway of Springhead Lane, and the addition of seasonal toilet facilities

Homeless prevention



330 Households have been prevented from becoming homeless.

More efficient planning service

We have turned around our planning service to be more efficient with 87% of householder applications being determined within 8 weeks.

Meeting your expectations

New on-line customer forms

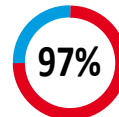
We have launched a new "self-service" part of our website where customers can report:

Customers can also pay for:

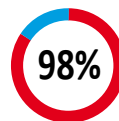
- Fly Tipping**
- Dog Fouling**
- Missed bin collection**
- Seasonal parking**
- Parking fines**
- Council tax**



We continue to carry out 100% of building control site visits on the day of request (if you request a visit before 10am).



We have responded to 97% of 627 Freedom of Information requests within 20 working days.




We have processed 98% of new hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licenses within 24 hours.

Administered £545,000 worth of funding for local residents

We continue to support local residents with physical, sensory or mental health issues to live in their homes for longer by administering £545,000 worth of funding across 62 homes.

Successfully awarded £10,000 to help prevent radicalisation

In December 2015, we were successfully awarded £10,000 from the Home Office to highlight the potential of radicalisation. The project will work with young people to educate them about radicalisation and how to look for the signs.



If you require this document in different formats
(e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape/CD or other languages
please contact the council's main reception
or email customerservices@eastcambs.gov.uk

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