

## County Councillors Report July/August 2017

### Highway Improvement (LHI) Initiative

The new 'Improve Your Local Highway' web pages have been published, which include all of the usual information on the Local Highway Improvement (LHI) Initiative and online application form, which remains largely unchanged from previous years.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/improving-your-local-highway/>

The deadline for LHI applications has been extended to 15th October 2017, following which you will be contacted to look at the feasibility of your application in more detail. Your final application will then be presented to the LHI Member Advisory Panel in February 2018. Contact for more information and any questions is, [local.projects@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:local.projects@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

### More on using assets

Following on from my last update on how the County Council is using its assets to create income by building the Soham Solar Farm, another great project that will transform the Park & Ride site in St. Ives into a renewable energy generator has hit a major milestone. The County Council has been granted planning permission to build a Smart Energy Grid which will see a solar car port system generate electricity.

Solar panels will be installed on canopies above the cars to generate electricity and used to power highly efficient LED lighting, support electric vehicle charging while additional energy will be stored and sold to local customers. The pilot project, which is an amalgamation of innovative and novel technologies, will be three times larger than the largest solar carport in the country if built, and if successful will be rolled out to sites around the county. St Ives Park & Ride is a great asset, next to the guided bus and the town centre to pilot a Smart Energy Grid, the first of this scale in the country. This innovative type of technology is part of many projects the council is looking at to develop its assets to reduce costs and generate income to support services. I hope and expect that this project and its concept of generating, storing and selling energy locally to be widely replicated and become business as usual in the future."

The County Council is working closely with government, the town council, UK Power Networks and businesses to help make this scheme work as a model for the future, and securing European Regional Development funds for 50 per cent of the £3million project are essential to the project going ahead. If the bid is successful, the County Council will invest the other half. Over time, the aim is to recoup the investment through the sale of electricity.

### Consultation Starts on Children's Centre Proposals.

A consultation to redesign Children's Centre Services has gone live, which aims to ensure every child thrives in Cambridgeshire. Families can read more about the consultation at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/childrenscentreconsultation> and share their views.

The wide ranging plans, from Cambridgeshire County Council, propose to create 'family friendly' services in the heart of communities. It builds on the current offer, offering support to families of all ages, from expectant parents to young adults. The proposals look to deliver **the same level of services** but in a more local way, so those families can access them easily. The new children centre services will be more flexible and tailored for each community delivered in places they know

or already use, and in doing so, the Council will make savings of £1 million per year. The proposals will also see Children's Centres work more closely with parents and health professionals to provide a set of integrated services that seamlessly support communities. This service could include health visitors, midwifery and speech therapists. The new approach includes:

- **10 Child and Family Centres**, delivered across 15 buildings, that will continue to offer services in places of high need with extended opening hours, with skilled staff able to meet families needs
- **12 Child and Family Zones** - these will use community spaces, such as libraries and community centres, to deliver a range of services, including baby and toddler groups, activities for families with disabilities and places for community groups to meet.
- **Outreach Programme** – The Child and Family Centres workforce will deliver support across a range of community venues so families, particularly in rural locations, can access a regular programme of services and responsive support.
- **Online Offer** – there will be a comprehensive online offer to provide information and advice to help and support families.

**Local impact depending on the consultation – Oakington and Westwick, along with Cottenham and Girton, are served by centres in Histon Nursery School and Bar Hill Primary School. These sites are located in an area of low need. Depending on the result of the consultation, the proposals are that Child and Family provision will be delivered via outreach not only in Histon, but in the surrounding villages too, as a number of good community spaces are available in the area. This means that the level of service stays the same, but is conducted more within the community it serves. Residents can, if more convenient, use the Bar Hill/Longstanton service.** The savings are made by only hiring local community spaces when needed. A drop-in was held at Bar Hill Community Centre on the 6th Sept. 1700 - 1900hrs where staff explained the options and answered questions. The drop in at Histon is on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1700-1900hrs. An extra new family Zone is being proposed as part of the Primary Care programme for Northstowe.

The Chair of the Children and Young People Committee said “The welfare of our families across Cambridgeshire must be a top priority. They have told us that Children Centre Services are not always in places where they are needed most. We want to change this to ensure we have the right services, support and opportunities available for families if and when they need us. This is the right time to be setting out our proposals as we need to make sure that these key services are able to meet the challenges of the future. However, we cannot shape these services without your views. Local people are the experts on their communities and know what is needed where they live. Whatever your views, we would welcome your feedback by inviting you to take part in our consultation.”

The consultation ends on 22 September 2017. Hard copy versions of the consultation can be found at Children Centres and Libraries. Frontline staff will also be at a range of events across the summer. Details of these events can be found on:

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/childrenscentreconsultation>

Decisions relating to the final proposals for Children's Centre Services will be taken by the Children and Young People Committee when it meets in the autumn. Members of the public are encouraged attend.

Due to previous transformation programmes, the GPC (Executive) Committee on the 25th July was able to authorise **an extra £2.7 million be put into Children Services** to help the Looked after Children programme. **More backroom money into frontline services.**

Peter Hudson

County Councillor for Oakington, Westwick, Longstanton, Over and Northstowe.