

# East Cambridgeshire District Council



## END OF YEAR COUNCIL REPORT 2018-2019

# FOREWORD

Anna Bailey, Leader of East Cambridgeshire District Council



I am delighted to be presenting my first report as Leader of East Cambridgeshire District Council. The following document gives an overview of what the Council has achieved over the previous 12 months and I hope it gives you a flavour of the sort of projects we have been working on.

I'm pleased to see that a personal priority of mine has been embraced by the Authority. Single-use plastics are continuing to blight our planet and we have all seen the impact that they have on the environment. At the Council our staff and Councillors are making small changes which all contribute to reducing single-use plastics. Small changes can make big differences in the longer term.

You will see in the report that the Council continues to build on its firm partnership approach with local Town and Parish Councils through initiatives such as Neighbourhood Plans and parish engagement events. These will be a focus moving forward, offering the incredible skills of our Council staff to help local community-led projects.

I can't believe it's been a year since the "Hive" leisure centre opened for business. The centre had 278,720 visits made over the past 12 months, which is incredible. In October, we saw the official opening of the Ely Southern Bypass. The Council contributed £1m towards the project and it has made such a difference in reducing congestion.

I'm pleased to say that the Council has continued to freeze our element of Council Tax for the sixth year in a row and ensure that our town centre car parks remain free of charge.

Officers have also been instrumental at rolling out free Wi-Fi in the centre of Ely and Soham. This will help to make the internet more accessible to everyone.

We have a very exciting twelve months coming up in East Cambs. Not only are we going to look at upgrading the A14, help to improve our cycle and walking networks and we will also continue to focus on developing affordable accommodation.

We look forward to updating you with further infrastructure projects in the forthcoming months and we hope you enjoy reading about what we've achieved during 2018/2019.

John Hill, Chief Executive of East Cambridgeshire District Council



I am delighted to share with you the progress and achievements the Council made during 2018/19. There have been so many exciting changes during the last financial year but I'd like to share with you my particular highlights.

Bringing the waste contract in-house has been a major focus of the Council. Not only has it enabled the Authority to manage the waste collections more effectively across the District, it has also paved the way to look at creative solutions to providing more efficient waste infrastructure for the future. Forming East Cambs Street Scene (the Council's company which runs the waste service) has meant that the Council has saved money, improved working arrangements for our waste crews and increased our performance. Thank you to everyone, both internal staff and external colleagues who have supported this transition.

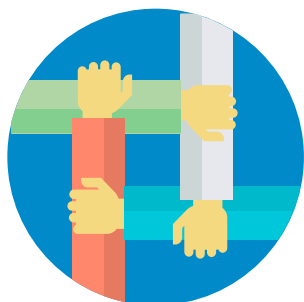
The Royal Visit to Cambridgeshire is something I will look back fondly on. We were able to show their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall the wonderful assets which the District provides to both residents and tourists alike, including the Cathedral, the Almonry restaurant and tea rooms, Parson's Almshouses and our award winning Ely Market. The Royal couple both commented on how valuable a local market is to the community and I couldn't agree more.

We saw the opening of the Community Land Trust site Covell Corner, in Soham. This was a community led housing development in Soham developed by our East Cambs Trading Company. We are delighted that the site is now occupied with new residents and look forward to offering more communities our support with their future developments.

I would like to offer my personal congratulations to our Housing and Community Safety team for securing a Silver Award from the National Practitioner Support Service for their work in preventing homelessness throughout the District. The award has been the culmination of hours' worth of dedicated partnership working to ensure their processes and methodology are of best practice standards. They are eagerly awaiting the results of the Gold Standard Award, so I wish them all the best of luck.

The last particular highlight has been with our "Be like Michael, Recycle" campaign. I'm sure you've all seen our recycling hero on our waste trucks, but you may not know that we have been visiting schools, and the campaign recently won a Gold Pride Award from the Anglia, Thames and Chiltern Chartered Institute of Public Relations. Well done Michael and well done to everyone involved.

# HELPING TO ENABLE AND EMPOWER COMMUNITIES



Over the past twelve months the Council has been working closely with the local community to help develop and enable the successful delivery of a number of key initiatives. We have so many skilled people at the Council and it's important for us to utilise our employees' knowledge to support the aspirations of local communities.

## Neighbourhood Plans

Our Strategic Planning team has been supporting several parish councils with their Neighbourhood Plans.

If you are not familiar with Neighbourhood Plans they are community led and provide a clear framework on the future growth and development of a local parish area. A plan can help to identify the priorities of a local area, such as the provision of affordable housing or the preservation of green spaces.

A Neighbourhood Plan complements the Local Plan as it can influence where the identified number of houses might be located at parish level and highlights the development needs of that local community.

Whilst the Council has helped many parish councils over the past few years, we are pleased to say that both Fordham (December 2018) and Sutton (May 2019) have successfully gained a Neighbourhood Plan for their area.

This means that those Plans will now be used within the decision making process for any new developments which are submitted for Fordham and Sutton.

A Neighbourhood Plan shows how local residents can be the driving force behind helping to shape their communities. They are the people who understand their local needs and the District Council will continue to support their production.

We have continued to reinforce our support to local parish councils by organising the annual Parish Council Conference and this year (2019) it was held at Isleham. We had 15 East Cambs parish councils represented at the event. The topics on the agenda included; open space maintenance, community infrastructure levy, disabled facilities grants and how to develop sports facilities.

East Cambs District Council doesn't decide the agenda items, they are decided by the parish councils themselves. We actively engage with the parish councils to think about the topics which are important to them. These can be areas which have been in the news recently or ones which will directly affect them.

It is important to continue to build upon our already established relationships with local parish and town councils so we will be looking to work together on more collaborative projects in the future.

Our support with community led planning through our company, East Cambs Trading Company, has continued and in October 2018 East Cambs Community Housing and Thrift Community Land Trust (CLT) in Soham welcomed six new tenants into the brand new development at Covell Corner.

The six one bedroom properties provide genuinely affordable homes for local people with strong local connections to Soham. The flats are part of a bigger development of 13 homes, 8 of which are affordable and have been made available at genuinely affordable rental levels. The two remaining affordable properties are shared ownership and currently sold subject to contract.



*Katie Duffen and her partner at Covell Corner, Soham*

Katie Duffen, one of the new residents, commented "It's great that my partner and I finally have a home of our own in the town where we were born and grew up, and where lots of our family and friends live. We couldn't afford to move out before, despite both working, so it is great to have a brand new, high quality apartment offered to us at an affordable rate. I can even walk to work from our new flat!"

We are pleased to say that Haddenham CLT is just about to start work on site. We will of course update you on its development in the next edition of the End of Year report.



Over time, the properties will generate surpluses for the CLT to re-invest back into future projects to benefit the local community.

To enable further community led initiatives the Council also works actively with local communities to provide additional funding. This includes distributing funds from the Community Infrastructure Levy.

When a new property or development is built a levy is payable to the local Council depending upon the floor space, size and the location of the site. This is called Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) a proportion of which is then distributed to local town and parish councils for local infrastructure projects. The projects must be match funded by another funder. Here are some projects which CIL has recently funded;

- Burwell Parish Council recreation ground improvement project was allocated £295,000 to help convert the existing pavilion into a multi-purpose changing facility with netball/tennis courts, a trim trail and a skate park.
- Ely Museum was allocated £165,000 for its redevelopment project. This funding will help towards building an extension and education space.
- The Mill Project by Viva Arts and Community group, Soham was allocated £280,000 towards converting a disused mill into a multi-purpose theatre space. They have just found out that the Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded them £608,200 towards the project too, so without the CIL contribution the match funding wouldn't have enabled the group to realise this exciting project. We look forward to the theatre opening in Autumn 2020.



# CLEANER, GREENER AND LEANER

## Cleaner and Greener



Ensuring that we care for the environment is paramount. What we do now will affect generations to come so it's important to make even the smallest changes now to make the biggest differences later.

There are huge opportunities for councils to reduce their environmental impact and ECDC are making changes across the Authority and its companies.

We have recently devised a strategy on "purge on plastics" and the Council has conducted an audit of each team and assessed what measures they have put in place to reduce single use plastics. Although we are in the early stages of implementing changes, it was clear that our staff has embraced a number of small changes which all go to making large differences. We all bring our own water bottles in with us, we encourage external visitors to bring their own bottles in too so that we can reduce the use of disposable cups and we are soon getting rid of all disposable cups for committee meetings and replacing them with glasses.

If you have visited the Council offices recently you may have noticed the new crisp packet, coffee pod and sweet wrapper recycling bins from Terracycle. These items would normally go to landfill but now through Terracycle can be recycled into other items. If you have any such items that you'd like to bring in for recycling then please feel free. In addition, we have a free water refill point in our reception area for residents to use.

Our Parks and Open Spaces team actively utilises as much of its green waste as possible. The team collect grass cuttings and take them back to the depot to be mulched down. This reduces not only costs of purchasing compost from external providers but also reduces non-recyclable packaging.

The new black sacks are made from 100% post-consumer plastic which are items that have been used once, thrown away and recycled into something else, in this case the black sacks. In addition, we have tested the quality and elasticity of the bag to ensure that it meets your needs. We will be looking for a longer term solution and will update you with developments.

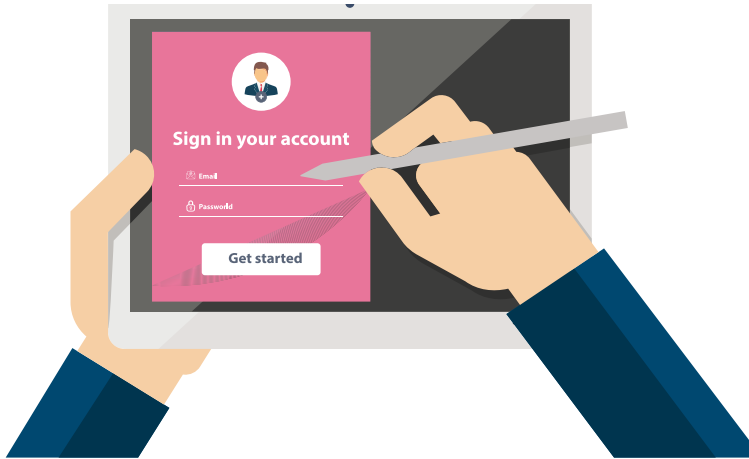
New signage has been installed in popular dog walking areas and problem hotspots around the District to remind dog owners of their responsibility. Breach of the Order is a criminal offence and will result in a fixed penalty notice of £80.00, or upon summary conviction, a fine of £1000.

The team has had a successful year with the first prosecution for fly-tipping and an increased number of fixed penalty notices issued for both fly-tipping and littering offences. This has been possible because of evidence gathered following information received from residents who identify and report fly-tips that have then been investigated. If you would like to report a fly-tipping incident, please log onto the Council's website and click on the "Self Service" link.



# Leaner

In previous End of Year reports we've touched upon how we are conducting business efficiency reviews to improve performance and efficiencies. We are always striving to look creatively at how we can improve the way we work so we have continued to make this a priority.



One of the most successful outcomes from the reviews so far has been increasing the turnaround time to assess and complete the Disabled Facilities Grants. This has been achieved by reducing the amount of steps within the process and ensuring that duplication is removed. This streamlined approach has made it simpler for our most vulnerable residents to get much needed adaptations completed more quickly and efficiently. This has not only improved the outcomes for our

residents, it has made it easier for our officers internally and has helped to improve relationships between teams.

In June 2017 the nation was united in sadness by the devastating fire at Grenfell tower in London. It was the most catastrophic fire involving a residential building in the UK causing the death of 72 of its residents. The independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety commissioned by the Government has had implications for all councils across the country. This is being led by Dame Judith Hackitt- "Hackitt Review".

The Hackitt Review has called upon all councils to ensure that where there are multi-occupied high-rise residential buildings being constructed the council ensures a fully qualified team is tasked with overseeing the project from conception to occupation and beyond. The team must include representatives from Building Control, Planning, H&S Executive, Fire Service and any other interested parties.

The team will be responsible for ensuring buildings are designed, constructed, occupied and maintained in accordance with national fire safety standards. In addition, the review has recommended that existing guidance and processes are simplified to ensure a consistent approach can be provided throughout the country.

As a result of the Hackitt review, the team has recently reviewed all of its processes, using best practice in the industry as their influence.

We are delighted to say that they have been awarded ISO 9001 accreditation. This is the internationally recognised standard for quality and by being ISO certified, the Council is able to reassure customers that the team is fully committed to providing a quality service, especially as it has been scrutinised by external assessors.



*Jeannie Ambrose from our Building Control team*



Running alongside its accreditation, Building Control has looked at how to streamline the way it works in a “business to consumer” (or B2C) approach. This has involved reviewing how it engages with customers by utilising technology to make transactions more efficient.

Building Control now use tablets on site and use a recognised building control mobile app to record inspection information, so they can send it quickly to customers once they return to the office. This has led to a reduction in printing costs, with customer details being updated in real time so there is no need to type up inspection details at a later date. Customers have started to comment on how much quicker the service has become at turning around inspections so the benefits are already filtering through.

## NEW APPROACHES

It's been over a year now since the Council took over the waste contract and East Cambs Street Scene (ECSS) was formed to manage waste collections and street cleansing across the District. One of the new areas we are focussing on moving forward is engagement. By working with younger generations we can improve outcomes and change opinions about waste, recycling and help reduce their negative impact on the environment.

We have been working with local schools and community and voluntary sector groups on educating them about waste and recycling. As you know, our resident recycling super hero Michael Recycle has been zooming in to various areas across East Cambs telling people what they can and can't recycle and helping to encourage more people to actively get involved in reducing the amount of rubbish that goes to landfill. He has also been visiting local school children.



*Pupil from  
Lantern School*

*(photo courtesy  
of the Lantern  
Primary School)*



*Lantern Primary  
School waste  
and recycling  
education  
project*



*The finished installation  
at the Lantern Primary School*



Michael Recycle, his waste recycling truck and a few of his colleagues from the Council, visited the Lantern Primary School in Ely to talk to Year 3 children about recycling. The visit linked in with a wider art project around the theme of waste, recycling and the effects on the planet which was led by community artist Fred White.

The children's ideas were wonderful! Within the design they made sharks (in lots of colours), an octopus, dolphins and turtles as their imaginations were let loose.

The day enabled the waste team and the school to help children realise the importance of recycling and the detrimental effect our waste can have on marine life and the wider environment if it isn't treated properly. The project clearly resonated with the class, which shone through in their well thought out questions during the sessions.

We would like to thank the Lantern Primary school and in particular Year 3 class teacher, Miss Wyatt and Headmaster Mr Lawrence and following the success of the project we will be looking to do further engagement work with local schools across the District.

Another area of investment ECSS has been committed to is to support the development of its staff. Since taking over the waste contract it has increased staff salaries of the waste crews, improved health and safety equipment, and reviewed staff training requirements.

A number of crew members highlighted that they would like to become qualified HGV drivers, be given more responsibility and learn new skills.

Managers took this request seriously and as a result have provided HGV training. One member of the team who has recently qualified is Chris. He has worked for the waste team within East Cambs since 2017 and wanted to become a qualified HGV driver to help him progress further within ECSS and provide him with further skills.

There are more positive changes to be made over the forthcoming 12 months, many will be related to the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy. We will update you on these in the next End of Year report.



“ Since ECSS took over the contract I have really felt that they have invested in the team and within 2 weeks of the Council bringing waste collections in-house everyone was asked what sorts of qualifications would help us to do our jobs better.

Although the exam for the HGV license was scary, I knew that I enjoyed the driving side so much I had to put my fears of exams at the back of my mind. I was so pleased when the examiner told me I had passed.

ECSS taking over has been a good thing and I'm learning new things all the time.

”

The Council has also recently invested in new printing and finishing equipment for our Reprographics Service. Our digital press offers a fast, flexible and affordable solution on a variety of materials.



Graphic Design	Leaflets	Flyers	Brochures
Posters	Booklets	Banners	
Pop-ups	Business Cards	Business Stationery	Postcards

[www.eastcambs.gov.uk/content/east-cambs-print-services](http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/content/east-cambs-print-services)

East Cambs Design and Print Services welcomes businesses, clubs, charities, parish councils and individuals on board! All your design, digital print, large format prints etc, supported by our experienced and professional staff all in one place.

If you would like to find out about our competitive prices then please contact our Reprographics Manager who will be able to provide quotations. Telephone 01353 665555 or email [print@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:print@eastcambs.gov.uk)

## ACHIEVEMENTS

You may remember that in a previous End of Year Council report, we updated you on the Council's achievement in obtaining the Bronze Award from the National Practitioner Support Service. The award recognises the Council's work and commitment to helping prevent homelessness across the District and forms part of a large 10 step assessment process. We are delighted to tell you that the Housing and Community Safety team has now been awarded the Silver Award and we are eagerly awaiting the results to see whether they have achieved the Gold Standard (the highest achievement).



We are keeping our fingers and toes crossed that they also secure the Gold Standard, but even achieving the Silver Standard shows the commitment and dedication to supporting people at risk of homelessness within East Cambs and the brilliant partnership work which the Housing and Community Safety team are undertaking on a daily basis. All the staff at the Council wish the team the very best of luck!

On the subject of gold awards, we are delighted to tell you that our campaign "Be like Michael, Recycle" has been awarded a Gold Pride Award from the Anglia, Thames and Chiltern Chartered Institute of Public Relations. The campaign was commended by the judges for actively engaging with children and young people.

In November, their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall visited Cambridgeshire. During their visit we were delighted welcome them to Ely. Prince Charles visited the Thomas Parsons' Charity Almshouses, and the Stained Glass Museum at Ely Cathedral, of which he is patron.

We were thrilled to have been able to introduce them to our local market stall holders and although it was a rather chilly winter's day there were many welcoming well-wishers cheering on the Royal couple.



*East Cambs District Council CEO John Hill, Director, Jo Brooks and Markets Officer, Julia Davis welcoming their Royal Highnesses to the award winning Ely Market*



## Looking ahead to the next 12 months - What will we be doing?

East Cambs Street Scene will be investigating opportunities to carry out commercial trade waste collections.

The "Let's Get Moving East Cambridgeshire" initiative will be further developing their activity programmes to include projects such as "walk to school" and "On Your Bike".

ECDC will be working with the Combined Authority to review the future of bus services. A consultation with the public will be carried out to gather your views.

We will be continuing to offer further support to local communities who would like to develop Neighbourhood Plans. If your Parish Council would like to talk to the Council about developing one in the future please contact the Strategic Planning team.

The Council will continue to work in partnership to help local businesses. In November, we are working with the Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce on the East Cambs Business Boost 2019. Last year over 400 businesses attended! To book please give us a call.

East Cambs Street Scene will be developing an education programme which encourages our local residents to recycle more and understand the impact of waste on the environment.

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](mailto:customerservices@eastcambs.gov.uk)

East Cambridgeshire  
District Council  
The Grange, Nutholt Lane  
Ely  
Cambridgeshire  
CB7 4EE

Telephone: 01353 665555

[www.eastcambs.gov.uk](http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk)