



End of Year Performance Report 2014/15

Executive summary

The Council is committed to ensuring that East Cambridgeshire continues to be a district where people want to live, work, invest and visit.

Despite further cuts to the Council's budget we continue to provide high quality services and look for innovative ways by which we can improve the quality of life for our residents whilst balancing our budget. Therefore, we are proud to say that we have achieved a balanced budget for 2014/2015 against our Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In addition we have recently embarked on an ambitious but exciting Transformation Programme involving all staff which will seek to ensure the long term self-sufficiency of the organisation.

Key Achievements against our Corporate Priorities

Every year Members set a list of priorities for the council to deliver on. Our priorities help to provide a vision for the council in order to help make East Cambridgeshire a thriving and vibrant district.

Over the last 12 months we have;

- **Frozen Council Tax.**
- Gained planning approval from the Council for a **new multiplex cinema** on Downham road, Ely.
- Completed the **GRIP3 Study on Soham Railway.**
- Worked with **3 Community Land Trusts** in Stretham and Wilburton, Swaffham Prior and Soham which will provide **15 affordable homes** in Stretham and Wilburton and 8 in Swaffham Prior for local residents.
- Supported the roll out of super-fast broadband across **69 areas** in East Cambridgeshire.
- Completed the initial concept design for the proposed **leisure centre in the district.**
- Generated **£27m of external funding** to develop the **Ely Southern Bypass** and obtained Planning Permission.
- Secured the necessary **infrastructure contributions** that will be required to meet demands arising from the North Ely developments.
- Supported the creation of an additional **460 jobs** in East Cambridgeshire.
- Had the **Local Plan for East Cambridgeshire**, which sets out clear guidance on development in the district, formally adopted.
- **Approved Stage 2** for the North Ely Park development.





Customers are at the heart of everything we do

The council is committed to designing services around the needs of our customers.

We have recently implemented a new Customer Relationship Management System. This will help to improve the customer experience by speeding up the enquiry process and utilising on-line capabilities more effectively to allow customers to take ownership of their queries.

Future planning

We are currently undertaking a Transformation Programme to identify what our customers need from us and how we can achieve them.

The Transformation Programme consists of 4 programme streams; Creating customer focussed services, Creating a “learning and improving” environment, Running efficiently and making better use of technology and delivering a commercially focused organisation.

The programme streams will help the council to explore new ways of working, face our challenges as an organisation head on and look at creative opportunities to help drive forward our commercial agenda. Over the coming months we will be looking at undertaking some exciting projects built around the needs of our customers.



We were asked to;

Facilitate economic growth within the district, including jobs growth and apprenticeships and the introduction of super fast broadband.

- We have generated £1.9m of external funding to help fund:
- Capacity building for the North Ely urban extension (£200,000).
- The Agri-Gate research and development centre at Hasse Fen to look at new technology for the fruit and vegetable industry (£600,000)
- New starter units at Lancaster Way business park from the Greater Cambridgeshire, Greater Peterborough Partnership (£1.1m).
- 9 approved apprenticeships.



We were asked to;

Deliver Neighbourhood Action Days involving Parish Councils in Ely, Littleport and Soham.

- We organised a successful Parish Conference with 29 parishes attending. The event helped to highlight community safety concerns and effectively engage with the public on local issues.
- New starter units at Lancaster Way business park.

Community sustainability and safe, vibrant and inclusive communities

Supporting the Localism Agenda is very important and the council values its relationship with the community and voluntary sector. Members have continued to support local groups by setting aside over £50,000 worth of grant funding to help fund community projects.

In addition the council has been committed to supporting the development of Community Land Trusts across the district where groups can apply for up to £5,000 towards initial set up costs and additional loans to help develop the sites. We are particularly proud of this on-going support.

We have responded to requests to build upon the highly successful Thursday and Saturday markets by recently starting a new Market on Sundays and made an incredible £35,709 profit across the Market and Town Centres service (going beyond our target of a balanced budget by 2017).

The Council has been working closely with the local community to help keep local assets run by local people for local people. We have had 3 registered; The Red Lion Public House at Kirtling, Three Blackbirds Public House in Wooditton and The Bull Public House in Burrough Green.

We have had ongoing, regular engagement and consultation with site users and local interest groups of Ely Country Park to ensure that the park reflects what the community want which will help to develop the Ely Country Park Improvement Plan 2015-2017.



We were asked to-

Use Community Land Trusts as a preferred mechanism to enable people to live and work locally

There have been 3 fully formed Community Land Trusts developed in Stretham and Wilburton, Swaffham Prior and Soham.

These will provide 50 additional homes (15 of which will be affordable) in Plantation Gate, Stretham and 20 houses in Rogers Road, Swaffham Prior (8 of which will be affordable).

We were asked to-

Facilitate the re-opening of Soham Railway station, including the Newmarket link.

We have completed the GRIP 3 study on a new railway station in Soham and continue to progress with this project.

We were asked to-

Work in partnership to deliver the Connecting Cambridgeshire Broadband programme and provide 25 new cabinets across East Cambridgeshire.

- We have supported the creation of 60 new jobs across the district.
- We have rolled out 69 fibre optic cabinets across East Cambridgeshire with 18578 businesses utilising the increase in broadband speeds.





Maintain sound finances and improve systems and practises

Although we realise we have some tight budgetary constraints moving forward, we continue to look creatively about how we manage our finances and invest our money. However, due to the forethought of our Members we put in early mechanisms to help reduce the negative impact of limited government grants and we are proud to say that for 2014/2015 we have achieved a balanced budget. Through stringent financial planning and effective utilisation of our reserves we are also firmly on target to achieve a balanced budget in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2015/2016 and 2016/2017.

It has recently been resolved at Planning Committee to approve the planning application for a new multiplex cinema for Ely. The project will help to provide a large cinema complex with a number of restaurants.

The Council is continuing to make progress with the Leisure Centre project. A Steering Group continues to discuss the Leisure Centre proposals with public consultation taking place during May. It is envisaged that a planning application will be submitted in December 2015.



We were asked to;

Keep council tax as low as possible through prudent budgetary control

We have maintained a freeze on council tax for the past 3 years.



We were asked to;

Be prudent with our budgetary control.

We have achieved a balanced budget for 2014/2015 and in our forward financial strategy are on target to achieving a further balanced budget in 2015/2016 and 2016/2017.



We were asked to;

Provide a business plan for a cinema complex in Ely.

We have recently had planning consent confirmed by members and we are currently waiting imminently for the decision to advance with the consent from Central Government.

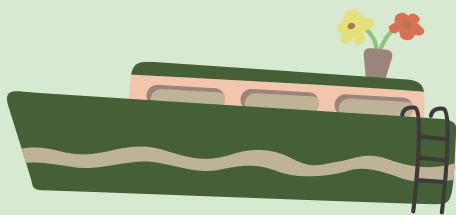
A clean, green and attractive place

The Council continues to invest in our parks and open spaces. We work closely with our customers to ensure that we have well kept green spaces for everyone to enjoy.

We are currently looking at extending our waste and recycling contract with Veolia in order to keep well maintained streets which are free from litter, fly-tipping and waste recycling.

We have recently secured an additional £200,000 over 2 years from the Department of Communities and Local Government to encourage all households to recycle their waste more effectively under the “It pays to recycle in East Cambs” scheme.

We have received Member approval to undertake much needed improvements on the Ely riverside to help encourage more tourists to moor their boats in the city and in turn help increase the local economy.



We were asked to;

Increase recycling of waste and reduce waste sent to Landfill.

- We have secured £200,000 for a new waste recycling campaign “It pays to recycle in East Cambridgeshire”.



We were asked to:

Secure Member agreement about the District Council’s role in managing the moorings in Ely riverside.

- We achieved Member approval and are currently working on riverside improvements.

Be an excellent employer

We are proud of our employees who do a fantastic job across our District.

The council is committed to investing in all of our staff and we take an active One Team Approach.

At the end of 2015 we introduced a new service delivery plan across the organisation which enables us to focus on effective performance management.

We have also introduced an holistic approach to developing new service plans through the introduction of service planning workshops for all areas across the council. This ensures that all



staff has the opportunity to take an active role in shaping their particular service.

The Council has recently introduced “Leading Lights” to celebrate and reward all employees who have “gone the extra mile” and demonstrated a clear “can do” approach to their role.

Leading Lights has four categories; Annual Outstanding Award, Annual Employee’s Employee of the Year Award, Customer Service Award, and the Innovation Award.

