



Vision and Priorities

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Introduction

We, along with the rest of the country and the communities we serve, are facing tough financial times.

These tough times call for strong leadership. This Business Plan is a bold statement of the Council's ambition and vision for Cambridgeshire.

This year the census confirmed that Cambridgeshire is the fastest growing county in the country. Our population grew by 12% in a decade, something which brings both opportunities and challenges.

At the same time, we face the tough challenge of significant reductions to the total budget we have to spend on vital services to our rapidly growing population.

Despite the increased pressure we are under, our vision has remained the same – to do what is best for the people of Cambridgeshire.

That is why our Business Plan is to continue our drive to:

- Develop the local economy for the benefit of all.
- Help people live healthy and independent lives.
- Support and protect vulnerable people.

What we've done over the last year

Like all Councils across the country we are facing a major challenge. Our budget is reducing at a time when our costs are rising sharply. A large increase in the demand for our services, coupled with the pressures of inflation, means that we have to do a lot more with less money.

Last year we had the challenge of delivering £42.2m worth of extra services, and this year we are required to find another £32m.

I am pleased to say we have done this while investing in areas that our residents told us to prioritise. This has meant some hard choices and being innovative about the way we deliver services.

We have already taken the bold step of cutting through red tape and barriers that held back projects which are vital for the future prosperity of Cambridgeshire.

This includes finding the funding for a new station at Cambridge Science Park; bringing Superfast broadband to the County; pushing for improvements on the A14 and bringing millions of pounds of investment to Fenland to help improve job prospects for youngsters.

Cambridgeshire's future prosperity relies on our workforce having the skills that our businesses need to grow and develop. Having launched a new approach to supporting apprenticeship schemes, we have seen 4,052 new apprenticeships taken up in Cambridgeshire over the last academic year, and more positive signs for the current year. We recognise the importance of investing in our future, and young people across Cambridgeshire are already benefitting from this.

Looking forward

This Business Plan sets out our vision and objectives for the next five years. We know that this is going to be an exciting but challenging period for Cambridgeshire.

One of our priorities is developing the local economy for the benefit of all. This is important for the people of Cambridgeshire, but also for the rest of the country. Because of the assets we have, our county will play a vital role in helping to kick start the national economy.

That is why we are investing over £1 billion in capital projects over the next five years in making sure the right transport infrastructure is in place, that youngsters benefit from the best school facilities and other key schemes are progressed.

Another theme of our work over the next few years will be transforming the way that people access our services. New technology and the web will play an increasing role in the way that we work. That is why we are committing to becoming a digital-by-default council, providing more of our services online. We will not stop providing information in other ways, when people need it, but we do recognise that we need to adapt at the same pace as people out there.

Since I took over the role of Leader I have made it my mission to find out firsthand what residents want. I have visited our frontline services and seen for myself the critical work we are carrying out with some of the most vulnerable in our society.

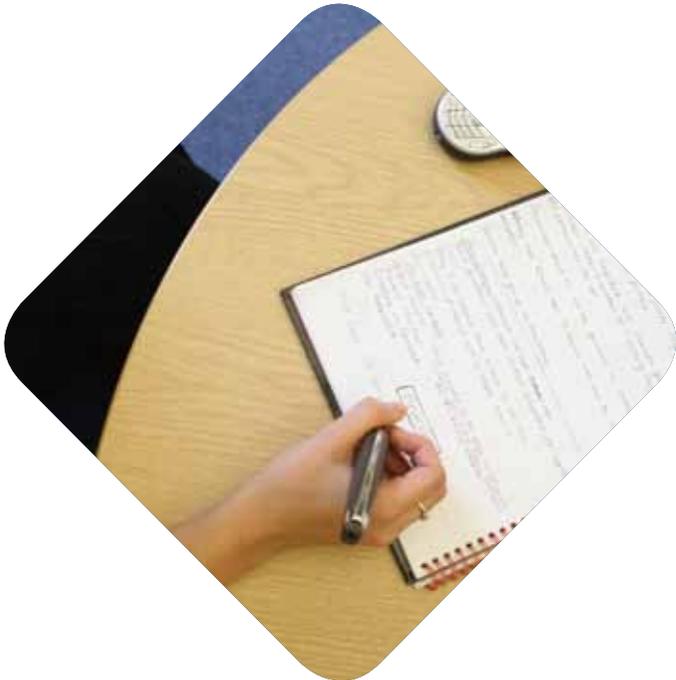
This continues to be where the Council focuses most of its money – helping those who find it difficult to help themselves.

Funding for Adult Social Care is a national issue and I raised it on behalf of all Councils to Government and continue to fight for a fairer deal.

With people living longer and care packages costing more, this call upon our diminishing funds is set to get worse.

But this does not mean we have stood still. We are transforming the way we deliver adult social care so we and partners intervene early.

This means helping preserve people's independence and perhaps more importantly their dignity. By working with people in this way we can prevent them from ending up needing much more critical care.





We have been working with high-demand families, looking at issues as a whole. This means working with families and supporting youngsters so they can make the right choices rather than ending up in the courts or becoming a bigger problem.

In our public surveys we have listened to how you want us to continue to invest in caring for our elderly and children.

We have also listened to your wish to keep Cambridgeshire moving.

Reducing congestion and giving people the right public transport choice is critical for helping the economy, people's health and reducing isolation.

We are investing in cycling measures with the ambition of being the best cycling county in the country.

Through the Cambridgeshire Future Transport project we are funding much more targeted public transport by listening to what the community wants.

This helps reduce isolation in our more rural areas but makes sure our spend on transport is put right where the community wants it.

This year sees Council's taking leadership of public health roles from the NHS. This is a thread that will run through all that we do – from building cycleways to community campaigns to reduce smoking, we will be at the forefront of helping our communities live healthy and independent lives.

We have joined forces with other Councils to share services and drive out millions of pounds in savings and reduced management costs so that we can concentrate on frontline services. Our LGSS shared service operation with Northamptonshire County Council has saved us over £3.8m to date.

The road ahead is challenging but by putting the needs of Cambridgeshire first we aim to deliver services that will grow our economy, create jobs, help our youngsters fulfil their ambitions and support the most vulnerable.

Our communities are at the heart of our vision and this Business Plan sets out how we hope to achieve the best for them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Clarke', written over a thin horizontal line.

Cllr Nick Clarke

Leader – Cambridgeshire County Council