

## Section 1 – Vision and Priorities

### Introduction

This Business Plan sets out how we intend to do the best for the people of Cambridgeshire in the face of increasingly challenging conditions. This is our ambitious and innovative blueprint showing how the Council will always put Cambridgeshire first.

Over recent years we have tried to protect frontline services, but inevitably we have had to change the way we do things and reduce some of what we do. In the last three years alone we have saved over £100m.

Despite the way in which we have been able to stimulate and support local economic growth, and despite the improving national economy, the foreseeable future is going to continue to be tough for the Council. This is largely because of the demand pressures that come with being the fastest growing county in the country, combined with the impact of inflation and a continuing reduction in the funding we get from Government. This means we must focus our efforts on keeping communities healthy and resilient, minimising the amount that people rely on intensive and expensive services.

Although Cambridgeshire is an economic powerhouse, many of the proceeds of that success do not flow directly back to local public services.

Over the course of this Business Plan (2015-20) we will be required to find a further £119m of savings. We have hard and

unpalatable choices to make. We must deal with this challenge head on and have honest conversations with our residents and partners about how we can respond.

This year, the Business Plan has been produced through the collaboration of all political groups that make up the Council. Broader and closer democratic involvement in developing the Plan has been beneficial in numerous ways, bringing the diverse viewpoints and needs of our communities even closer to the way decisions are made.

The whole Council is united behind the need to explore new relationships with our partners and our communities to find solutions to the challenges we face, join up local public services in ways that make sense, and ultimately provide the best possible value to local taxpayers.

To do this we need to be clear about what it is we want to achieve. The vision for Cambridgeshire County Council remains; making Cambridgeshire a great place to call home.

Our three strategic priorities remain:

- Developing the local economy for the benefit of all.
- Helping people live healthy and independent lives.
- Supporting and protecting vulnerable people.

This year the Council also emphasised its commitment to tackling deprivation and narrowing the inequalities gap. Therefore this features as a cross-cutting priority within this Business Plan, with activities ranging from targeted health work for communities that experience the most deprivation,

through to targeted work to prevent scams in areas that are the most vulnerable.

### **What we are proud of over the last year**

There have been many significant achievements over the last year which we are proud of, which will make Cambridgeshire a stronger and better place for generations to come.

We have signed a ground-breaking new 'City Deal' with Government which puts control of our future much more in our own hands. Partnering with Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Councils we have negotiated around £500m of devolved funding from Government that we can invest in priority schemes. Primarily this is for transport and housing which will boost the long-term economy in and around Cambridge. The City Deal marks the beginning of a new relationship with Government that we will want to build on as we argue for greater local control of public services.

After long and determined lobbying we have this year been able to introduce fairer funding for our schoolchildren. Up until national announcements this year, Cambridgeshire had the lowest pupil funding in England. This year saw the welcome announcement that the county will receive an extra £311 for every pupil. However, we will continue to argue loud and clear for fairer funding for Cambridgeshire in the long term and this good news was offset by a further Government announcement that our funding for building vital new school buildings has been cut dramatically.

This year we were rated as 'good' under the new Ofsted inspection criteria. This represents a huge acknowledgement of the way that the safeguarding of children and young people is administered in the county across a range of organisations, and is recognition of the hard work undertaken by all those working with young people.

We have launched a new approach to Social Work Practice in Adult Social Care and Older People's Services called 'Transforming Lives'. The new approach aims to identify older people and adults with disabilities who are starting to struggle, but then focuses on what they can do, what their interests and priorities are and how we can help them to remain as independent as possible for as long as possible, rather than how we should assess their needs and entitlement to ongoing care. The approach is also about working as actively as possible with carers, groups in the community and the voluntary and community sector rather than focusing only on the assessment and care the local authority can offer.

We have improved and modernised the way we interact with people by launching a new website and now have a lot more services available online. The new site is mobile and tablet friendly, and has seen a dramatic uptake of online transactions; from 25% in February 2014 to 84% in August 2014. This is part of our ongoing commitment to offer services the way people want them and get the best overall value for taxpayers' money.

## Making this vision happen

This document sets out how we will work to implement our vision and priorities with the resources we have. In many cases, this involves finding new ways of working with others to achieve outcomes. In some cases this means we have to reduce or stop doing certain things to maintain other services that people depend on.

We will continue to make far-reaching savings in our back office services in order to protect front-line provision. Over the course of this Business Plan we will save £8.3m from back office services, through our LGSS shared services partnership and from our own corporate services.

We will remain focused on supporting new and innovative ways of achieving better outcomes. For example, our new 'Together for Families' approach to addressing long term and complex family needs has turned around many lives and subsequently saved significant money across the public sector. We are now looking to expand this work and explore what other areas this approach might be able to help with.

Building of key infrastructure for Cambridgeshire remains critical now and for future generations. Our capital programme spans the next ten years; we will invest a further £436m in building new schools and expanding existing school provision. We will spend a further £143m on roads, footpaths and cycle paths. We will also be continuing to invest in major transport schemes like Ely Crossing, the A14 upgrade and King's Dyke crossing, as well as £100m over the next five years via City deal schemes.

We are ambitious about the way in which we can support and shape the future success of our communities. We want to work with you to achieve our aspirations for our county.

Signed by the General Purposes Committee of  
Cambridgeshire County Council