



Lina Nieto
Cambridgeshire County Councillor
Hardwick Division

February Report 2019

Dear all,

I wanted to wait until Full Council on the 5th February so that I can share with you the outcome of this meeting. You may know that we have set our budget for the coming year and it is very important that I provide you with up to date information regarding the County Councils financial situation.

I apologise also because I have been disconnected from my account for a couple of weeks but now it's all up and running. Just trying to catch up on my emails! Thank you for your patience and understanding. Please do ring me or text me if you need a quicker response. It's always nice to hear from you.

Full Council: Budget

As you may know because of current Central Government pressures, some grants have been reduced or are not being given no longer. In light of the increasing costs and reducing funding, significant savings are required across the planning period. As shown in the table below, the savings/income target for 2019-20 is £26.5m with more than £69m required over the next five years.

	2019-20 £'000	2020-21 £'000	2021-22 £'000	2022-23 £'000	2023-24 £'000	Total £'000
Total Saving Requirement	26,454	19,910	11,045	7,200	4,643	69,252

One of the key things Cllrs and officers have been working on are the large contracts. One of the most costly ones is waste. We have re-negotiated this contract and saved close to £1 million.

Unfortunately, we had to increase council tax to 2.99% this year to meet the funding gap. Some of you might ask why conservatives believe that council tax should not be raised. In my opinion the council should find alternative ways of generating an income in order to cover services. For example, our investment committee have been working around the clock to get projects started and we hope to be in a similar if not better position as South Cambridge District Council, when managed by a conservative administration. They have a portfolio of houses which currently receives an income of almost £2m, this money is re-invested in front line services.

I believe that the money each individual earns should be kept and have as much discretion on deciding where it goes and how it is spent, instead of being forced upon. In addition to this, there are many residents who have financial challenges and although you may receive support for council tax, it is still a large amount for some of our residents.

We will be using this year the smoothing reserve we put aside from last year around £9m. After having identified savings and income generation the figures look like this:

	2019-20 £'000	2020-21 £'000	2021-22 £'000	2022-23 £'000	2023-24 £'000	Total £'000
Total Saving Requirement	26,454	19,910	11,045	7,200	4,643	69,252
Identified Savings	-12,442	-8,978	-905	736*	306*	-21,283
Identified additional Income Generation	-1,778	502*	-5,791	99*	195*	-6,773
Residual Savings to be identified	12,234	11,434	4,349	8,035	5,144	41,196

*Positive figures represent a reversal of short term savings/investments from previous years



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A sound budget is essential to ensure effective financial control in any organisation and therefore the Business Plan is a key process within the Council's annual calendar. As the Council is responsible for the provision of a significant level of demand led services, where there is limited control over the quantum or complexity of that demand, setting an accurate budget is always going to be challenging. The budget is therefore a set of financial estimates and the definition of an estimate is a "guess as to what the size, value, amount, etc. of something might be".

It is hoped that the financial challenges of a county with a rapidly growing population will be recognised in the forthcoming Spending and Fairer Funding Review. It is however almost inevitable that any revised methodology adopted as part of this process will contain floors and ceilings that will phase any redirection of resources over a number of years. Therefore even with a positive outcome from this it is likely that the Council will still be faced with significant budget challenges beyond the 31st March 2020.

I must recognise that the financial situation is tight, however, we are doing better than other councils across the county which are currently closing libraries and stopping many services. We have opened 3 new libraries, 2 new mobile libraries, increasing investment in road maintenance, moving the council from Shire Hall which will bring millions of saving, investing in transformation programmes that support officers ideas in order to offer the best service we can for residents, and the list goes on.

I am not saying that everything is perfect but we are going in the right direction and every decision made is then reviewed and analysed. If something does not work than we will reconsider our position and what it is important is not only the amount of money a service has but the way it is used. We are putting great emphasis on outcomes for residents and how best to achieve this. Officers work very hard to re-think the way they deliver services and it is not good enough to say that this is the way we have always done things. We must question and review, innovate and trial new models. This is exactly what we are doing.

If you have any particular questions about this budget please let me know, happy to discuss further.

Decision-making involvement for Parish Councils

One of the items of the agenda was the survey conducted and I must say that I will be pushing for more involvement at a local level. Parish Councils would like to play a more active role in the decision making of the County and probably the district too. I have already started discussions with colleagues and I will continue to pursue this important position. It is quite rightly that Parishes have more of a say in what happens in their local area, instead of being imposed upon them. If you have any particular comments or ideas please do let me know.

Meeting local businesses:

This year I will be going around and visiting more local businesses. I believe we should buy local and support them. Otherwise, local businesses will close down and will be dearly missed. They play a very important role in our communities and it's a responsibility of all. However, it is also about sustainability. Local businesses are much more sustainable than larger corporations.

If you haven't heard about Cambridge Sustainable Food than please take a look at their website. I am involved with them indirectly and they are fantastic!

<https://www.cambridgesustainablefood.org/directory/>



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This month I met with Scott, the new manager of the Meridian Golf Club in Toft. He has been reaching out to the local community and nearby parishes. The project in hand is a very exciting one, in my opinion. I believe this could be a great asset to the local community, it will probably have a positive impact on house prices too and employ local people. We spoke about light and noise pollution, traffic, and other potential concerns residents could have. He and the owners would like to make this process as easy as possible and if you have any comments they would very much like to hear from you.



Can you make a teenagers dream come true?

What was your dream for the future when you were a teenager? Whether it was becoming a rock star or leading your team to victory some teenagers just dream of having a safe place to call home.

In Cambridgeshire there are currently 369 teenagers who are looked after. We urgently need more local people to provide care and support for these young people enabling them to remain close to family, friends and their local communities.

Could you join those households who have responded to our Team Cambridgeshire Foster Carer recruitment drive which we launched in September?

Through our Teenage Dreams campaign we are encouraging people to reflect on their own teenage dreams and aspirations and to think about whether they could



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guide a young person through their teenage years and help them to realise their own dreams.

Find out more about Join Team Cambridgeshire and how you can make a teenager's dream come true today by giving a local young person a home at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/fostering

Boxing Futures in Peterborough uses the sport of boxing to have a positive impact on teenagers who have had a difficult start in life. Anthony York who runs the gym has been fostering for more than 10 years and is keen to encourage others to think about fostering teenagers. You can see more here - <https://youtu.be/JiWlI3qduNU>

Ryan, 17, attends Boxing Futures and said, "I don't know where I would be without my foster mum. She is the most important person in my life. She is there for me through everything - I don't know where I would be without her."

Councillor Simon Bywater, Chairman of the Children and Young People Committee, said, "When I was younger I really wanted to be a marine and thanks to the support of my family I was able to make this dream a reality joining the RM Commandos in 1985 and serving until 1991."

"Fostering teenagers can be very rewarding as you can really see the difference that a supportive and stable home can make to a young person and help them to make their dreams a reality— whether that is gaining a place at university or getting their first job."

Local Natural Partnership Board

As you may already know I represent the Council in this outside body. You have over 10 organisations represented and it's always active, trying to push the natural agenda forward and upwards. Recently we have been able to launch a new website, please take a look at it. This is a very exciting milestone. www.naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk

Events

Please take a moment to review the diary and contact me if you have any questions in regards to any of the events listed or if you are aware of any other events that are taking place that are not listed. All events can also be found on our webpage at <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/highway-events/>

Funding portal



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Please do share this link with community groups that wish to find funding pots.

<http://www.idoxopen4community.co.uk/supportcamb>

Highways

A reminder that you can report road maintenance issues here:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/roadworks-and-faults/>

Hedges

If you have an issue with hedges then they would be advised to log their complaint on our website

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/roadworks-and-faults/>

Roadworks

I had calls from residents regarding roadworks. If you would like to know what is happening in your area you can check in this website. www.roadworks.org

Just to remind you that the public is very welcome to attend committee meetings and Full Council. You can find all the details [here](#).

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,

Lina

Representing the villages of: Harlton, Barton, Great and Little Eversden, Caldecote, Kingston, Madingley, Hardwick, Coton, Grantchester and Comberton.

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