



Lina Joseph
Cambridgeshire County Councillor

December/January Report

Dear all,

During December I attended the first Cambridgeshire Culture Steering group meeting. I would like us to do more in this area. Culture and Arts are in my opinion, extremely important. We are currently setting the terms of reference, vision, and aims. Cambridge City started a pilot with a so called Culture Card. Is exciting to see the use of technology and the potential benefits it can bring. You can read more about it [here](#).

Furthermore, I visited Cambridge Women Aid. They support woman who are fleeing domestic violence and offer advice. It was very interesting to understand the processes, challenges and how the County Council can improve procedures. We work very closely and I have taken the suggestions and comments to officers. I would like us to be less bureaucratic and take more a needs approach when assessing resident's situation.

I arranged a meeting with the Chief Constable, Alec Wood, and a couple of charities, regarding Human Trafficking. Although this is primarily a police matter, I believe as an authority our officers should be trained and ready to identify and support victims of this horrendous crime. I am spearheading the Councils strategy on this matter and I am working very closely with senior officers. You can find some information about the subject [here](#).

I was back the first week of January. The year began with a meeting with the assistant director of the Children's and Young People Service. Another of my key interests is fostering and adoption. The number of children under our care has been increasing. One challenge that we have ahead of us is to recruit more foster families. You may not know but many families decide to go with independent fostering organisations and this costs us more money, increasing the pressure on the service. We are currently working extremely hard to address this and will be launching a campaign shortly. If you have a free room, you want to transform the life of a young person, and you can offer a nurturing home, please click on this [link](#). We want to hear from you. Help me spread the message.

The following week I met the CEO of the Citizens Advice Bureau for Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. I invited the manager in charge of Libraries. I believe that we can do more to build stronger partnerships with organisations like this one, who are doing an incredible job. We spoke about potential areas where we could collaborate. It was very exciting.

Later on I went to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Section 75 Governance Board. It was fantastic to see, firstly, that most of the senior officers were female, and the passion for the work that they do. Everyone was offering ideas, constructive opinions, challenging each other. I raised the need for more joint up work. Sometimes it can be a challenge to see the opportunities, however, I will keep pressing for this to happen across the board. There was also a discussion about data sharing and how in an ideal world all the different organisations would have one system! At the moment, everyone has different providers, programmes, databases... this has to be addressed.



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Finally, you may already have seen that the General Purposes Committee will be recommending in the next Full Council that we increase our precept to 2.99%. It is advised that we do this year and the following. In 2020 we should be back to 0%. Most of our budget goes to supporting vulnerable Children, Adults & Older People. We are investing considerable amount of resources in developing innovative projects in order to deal with these pressures. It's still early days but we have seen already a return, for example in our Neighbourhood Cares pilot scheme there has been £20m saved.

Another point regarding this, is the fact that we are one of the fastest growing economies in the Country and the third worst funded for Adult Social Care. The Leader of the Council, Steve Count, has been working relentlessly to press government, and lobbying MPs, and our Mayor for a fairer funding formula. This work is going to continue as we have proven to government that we are one of the most cost/effective Councils in the area. There was an independent report commissioned which came to that conclusion.

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 Joseph