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January 10-January 16, 2018 | cambridgeindependent.co.uk

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Spend £510m to dual A10 – and do it fast

As mayor backs new scheme, commission is launched to explore county's powers

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A £510million scheme to dual the A10 between Cambridge and Ely received widespread backing this week.

It currently has no funding – but that didn't deter Cambridgeshire and Peterborough mayor James Palmer from calling for spades in the ground in the next few years.

He told the *Cambridge Independent*: “Cambridgeshire is one of the most economically dynamic parts of the country but is held back by inadequate transport infrastructure.

“Without doubt, making significant upgrades to key roads such as the A10 is central to enabling Cambridgeshire to achieve its economic potential.”

The study recommending the A10 scheme was published on the same day a high-powered independent commission was set up to consider whether the county should get more powers and money from the government.

Chaired by leading economist Dame Kate Barker, with serial entrepreneur Dr David Cleevly as vice-chairman, it will consider whether there should be more fiscal devolution for the region to help fund vital infrastructure, reduce inequalities and make the most of the burgeoning economy here.

A UK Powerhouse report, from lawyers Irwin Mitchell, this week concluded that Cambridge has the fastest-growing economy in the UK – and

that is forecast to remain the case through 2018.

One concept the new commission might consider is whether Cambridgeshire should keep all of the proceeds from its business rates – something Mr Palmer is known to favour.

Dr Cleevly told the *Cambridge Independent* the commission aims to match the ambitions of the region's mayor.

“I like ambition,” he said. “We're going to be ambitious too. We understand what the mayor's priorities are but we're independent. We're going to have our own views. But we're going to be as ambitious as the mayor wants us to be.”

He said the explosion of knowledge-intensive jobs in the city is putting a great strain on Cambridge and the commission will be looking at ways to spread growth to benefit the whole region economically.

Dr Cleevly continued: “For example, one of the issues we're going to be looking at is how do you make sure that the area is all moving forward?”

“Cambridge and Peterborough are very fast-moving cities. Fenland is much smaller and is contributing less than one third of the economic value in Cambridge and Peterborough.

“We have got to think as a whole region, as I can tell you from Cambridge's point of view the city is overheating.

“How do you make sure that growth is better integrated? And how do you achieve more growth, but also higher quality growth to benefit all people?”

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Time for horror: Film crew sets up in city house



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Picture: Keith Heppell

Council proposes big investments – and tax increase

Gemma Gardner

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Cambridge City Council says this year's proposed budget represents its biggest investment in major sites and community assets.

The Labour-run authority is promising an additional 500 council houses, significant redevelopment of the land it owns, and investment in digital technology, despite a 50 per cent reduction in the government grant it receives.

But it is also proposing to raise council tax by 2.7 per cent as it looks to next year when the government grant will be scrapped.

Cllr Richard Robertson, executive councillor for finance and resources, said: "Our proposed 2018-19 budget for Cambridge has twin objectives. First, protecting and improving services for all residents, particularly people who are vulnerable and in greatest need; and second, undertaking the most significant council investment programme for Cambridge for well over a decade."

The report proposes investing an extra £5.76m in the redevelopment of the council's Mill Road depot to increase the percentage of new council housing there to 50 per cent; commit £1.7m to a major transformation of the council's digital technology and IT; investing more than £600,000 in replacing 103 council CCTV cameras; and £566,000 for a new set of public toilets at Silver Street.

There is also £799,000 funding towards a development partnership and detailed proposals for essential housing of up to 7,600 homes on the North East Cambridge Fringe site, including on eight hectares of council land, and £250,000 for new projects to reduce the council's energy bill, its emissions and carbon footprint.

The city council is also looking to explore potential improvements to Market Square, carry out a review of streets and open spaces

and continue to tackle homelessness.

There will also be funding for a joint Greater Cambridge Planning Service with South Cambridgeshire Council and £600,000 over four years for the city's contribution in a new joint plan.

Cllr Robertson continued: "These budget proposals lay the foundations for 2019 onwards when there will no longer be any core government grant for Cambridge, will



Cllr Richard Robertson says the budget proposals lay the foundations for 2019 onwards when there will no longer be any core government grant

reduce homelessness, and maximise the benefits to residents from the best possible use of council land and financial reserves.

"The proposals include a substantial council investment in digital technology to radically improve the efficiency of frontline services including street cleaning, open space management, recycling and waste, housing and planning services, building on already high standards of service for residents and customers.

"Our proposals demonstrate our determination to lead a united city that is 'One Cambridge – Fair For All' despite the continuing damage of seven successive years of additional government cuts every year to local services for residents."

Cllr Tim Bick, Lib Dem group leader, praised the council for incorporating issues they have campaigned on, including the refurbishment of Market Square and a licence fee waiver to incentivise the adoption of electric taxis.

"We are delighted with victories on these long-running campaigns," he said.

The report will be discussed by the council's strategy and resources scrutiny committee on January 22.

Extra slice of Pizza, Pots and Pints



Award-winning pub The Salisbury Arms is expanding its Pizza, Pots and Pints pub concept to The Carpenter's Arms on Victoria Road.

It will be the second Pizza, Pots and Pints in the city, and the fifth in the region.

The Carpenter's Arms will close for a full refit on January 22, and plans to reopen at the end of March.

Operations director

Benjamin Smith said: "Cambridge was home to our very first Pizza, Pots and Pints and has proven extremely popular. Of course it made perfect sense to open another on the other side of what is our home city.

"There's passion in everything we do at Pizza, Pots and Pints, from our freshly-made artisan pizzas, cooked on-site in our wood-fired ovens, and warming

terracotta pots of comfort food like mac'n'cheese, to bottled craft beers, pints of cask ale, and wines and spirits from across the world.

"Pizza, Pots and Pints is all about great food and drink that can be shared in a fun, friendly and sometimes crazy place."

Full and part-time jobs are being advertised, email careers@PizzaPotsandPints.co.uk to find out more.

Health

Anoop Kuttikat



The importance of sleeping well for your health – and the impact of smartphones, TV and drink

A good refreshing sleep is essential for a healthy body and mind. It is increasingly recognised by medical experts that many aspects of human biology are affected by sleep deprivation.

Multiple health conditions including heart disease, obesity, dementia, chronic pain and poor mental health have been linked to lack of good sleep.

Modern lifestyle choices including going online on smartphones late at night, long commutes to work and the

increasingly blurred line between personal and professional time have all contributed to a sleep deprivation epidemic. Groups such as night-shift workers, truck drivers and parents of young children are at particular risk. Stress, alcohol abuse, bladder problems, painful conditions such as arthritis, side effects of certain medications such as steroids and anti-depressants can all affect sleep.

Although individual sleep needs vary, most healthy adults require around eight hours of sleep at night. Some people do not wake up

feeling refreshed even after sleeping for an adequate amount of time. This is because quality of sleep is as important as the quantity.

Sleep hygiene refers to practices and habits that improve the chances of getting a good refreshing sleep. These include the following: have a set bedtime routine; avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol close to the bedtime; take daytime exercise such as walking, cycling or swimming (but avoid strenuous exercise too close to bedtime); steer clear of heavy food and carbonated drinks late at night;

avoid watching TV and checking phones in the bedroom.

Insomnia refers to difficulty in getting to sleep or staying asleep despite adequate time and opportunity. If this causes significant impairment of daytime functioning, you should consider seeing your GP. The GP will make recommendations based on the full medical history. Behavioural interventions such as sleep hygiene and talking therapies (CBT) are initially recommended.

A short course (less than two weeks) of sleeping tablets may be

given in severe cases but their long-term use is not recommended. In some cases where primary sleep disorders (for example, sleep apnoea where you get excessive snoring and choking noises when asleep) are suspected, the GP will consider referral to a 'hospital sleep clinic' for an expert consultant review.

■ Dr Anoop Kuttikat is a consultant rheumatologist at Mulberry Clinic, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital and Kettering General. Visit cambridge-kettering-rheumatologist.com.