

# DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

FEBRUARY 2019

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## NORTHSTOWE CONSTRUCTION NOISE

We continue to receive reports of construction breaches to planning conditions at Northstowe, for both Phase 1 and Phase 2. We are encouraging residents to report this directly online as Planning Enforcement advise this is the best way to collate the data and build a record of the breaches. It appears that Enforcement have not always had all reports from residents from the first dates of construction activity which is very frustrating for residents.

Enforcement have provided the following update:

*On the 14th December 2018 formal letters were issued to six developers following investigations into an alleged breach of condition relating to operating times. The developers identified at that time were as follows:*

*Bloor Homes, Gallagher Homes, Barrett Homes, Linden Homes, Bovis Homes and Taylor Wimpey.*

*David Wilson Homes was not previously identified as being in breach however following a residents email a formal letter will be issued today regarding operating times. For clarification should any of these developers continue to breach the condition then a Breach of Condition notice will be issued on the company concerned including their directors and Company secretary after which the Council can take out proceedings in the Magistrates Court should further breaches of the condition be identified. I must point out that any such action will need to meet with the evidential test in order to secure a successful prosecution. For example, this might be photographic evidence, including video and dash cams however the pictures must have time and date stamp corroboration and must be set to the correct date and time. If photographic evidence is not available then statements corroborated by a third party is normally acceptable*

*With regard to noise generally if it is identified that a condition is breached that would prevent the noise then Planning enforcement can deal with it however if you are referring generally to noise within working hours then I can only refer you to the environmental health team and they will establish if the is a Statutory noise nuisance.*

*Whilst I can assure you that enforcement will not take sides it will deal with facts and evidence available and will where necessary instigate formal actions including Temporary Stop Notices, and Breach of condition notices etc to deal with such matters.*

Moving forward we will be having regular catch up meetings with Enforcement and Planning to ensure that we are all moving forward in the right direction with issues previously raised.

To directly report this is the best link: <https://scambs-framework.egovhub.net/REPORTABREACHOFPLANNINGCONTROL/launch>

#### COTTENHAM NEW DEVELOPMENT – OAKINGTON ROAD

Following efforts by Cottenham Parish Council and Cllrs Neil Gough and Cllr Eileen Wilson, there have had some success with the next road closure on Oakington Road – this is hopefully now to be planned to coincide (partially) with the half-term holiday and will be temporary three-way light system rather than a full closure.

#### OAKINGTON RURAL TRANSPORT HUB

We have not received any updates on the Oakington RTH consultation. There are GCP Transport Working Group and GCP Joint Assembly meetings in February where we should receive updates.

#### COUNCILLOR UPDATES AND SURGERIES

We continue to be keen to meet residents, especially for those who might find contacting us via email or social media difficult. These are the dates for surgeries for February and March:

11th Feb 2pm-4pm, The Dale, Longstanton

11th March 2pm-4pm Oakington Pavillion

We have started sending out email newsletters and have been posting regular updates on our Facebook group. Details are here:

- Monthly email newsletter - with updates on local news as well as wider district issues which will impact us all. To sign up please go to: [https://www.sclibdems.org.uk/email\\_signup\\_longstanton](https://www.sclibdems.org.uk/email_signup_longstanton) (Note to help us manage GDPR it is easier for us to host from the LibDems webpage but we absolutely promise this link will NOT subscribe you to LibDem news)
- For all the latest news & updates so far please go to: [https://www.sclibdems.org.uk/longstanton\\_news](https://www.sclibdems.org.uk/longstanton_news)
- For those on social media we have a very active Facebook group covering the whole ward here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/>
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#### DISTRICT WIDE UPDATES

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##### BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX

The Plan and Budget recommendations will be reviewed at the SCDC Full Council meeting on February 21st. The proposed increase in SCDC tax will be £5, taking the charge for a Band D property in the District to £145.31.

The consultation on SCDC Business Plan was interesting – the people that did respond particularly highlighted the issues around transportation and affordable housing. Copies of the Business Plan are

available via the following link: <https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s109820/Appendix A - Draft Business Plan 2019-24 for Cabinet meeting.pdf>.

Proposals will be discussed at the forthcoming Cabinet meeting to increase the premium for empty properties that remain unoccupied for extended periods of time. This is to encourage owners to bring properties back into use and to ensure that such properties do not attract vandals and/or become a magnet for anti-social behaviour.

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## HOUSING

South Cambs and Cambridge City recently published our draft new Greater Cambridge Housing strategy, setting out how both authorities aim to meet the housing challenges in our area over the next five years 2019 – 2023.

The overall aim is to bring forward homes that are affordable for people to live in, energy efficient and close to where jobs are (ideally). This falls in line with our overall aim of reducing carbon footprint to zero by 2050. The strategy outlines key priorities such as homes for essential local workers, those on low to median incomes, older people, specialist accommodation for young people or those at risk, accelerating number of homes built per year, types of building companies involved in the delivery, high standard of design, promoting health and wellbeing through housing and working with key partners to deliver homes for our residents etc.

The public consultation was launched is ongoing and runs up to 25 January 2019, giving residents an opportunity to contribute and influence the strategy before it is finalised later this year. Read more and comment at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy-consultation/>.

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## "MY SOUTH CAMBS" CUSTOMER PORTAL

Councillors attended a demonstration of a new South Cambs Council customer portal that went live on 21st January. Users will be able to sign in using e-mail, facebook, Microsoft and Google. The system allows customers to submit questions, contact the Council about planning, benefits, waste collections etc as well as to report problems. The system is evolving and will enable customers to track the progress of their complaint or enquiry. As the system is web based, it will free up officer time to carry out their work – we welcome any feedback. The new portal can be accessed from the S Cambs Council homepage or on <https://mysouthcambs.scambs.gov.uk>.

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## PLANNING

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### WELLCOME GENOME CAMPUS EXPANSION – S/4329/18/OL

The world-renowned South Cambridgeshire Wellcome Genome campus have submitted a planning application to provide extra research space and up to 1,500 homes for staff working on the campus in

Hinxton. The proposal includes plans for up to 150,000 sqm of employment space, creating around 4,300 jobs (currently 2500 approx work on the site), up to 1500 homes and a nursery for up to 150 children, community hall, health centre, shops and food outlets, school (if needed), transport improvement (cycling, walking, new roundabout on the A1301).

Wellcome Trust have indicated that the campus will be open to the public allowing neighbouring communities to use some of the open space and community facilities. It is the first of its kind in the district, and will no doubt be of interest both inside and outside the district.

Public consultation is now underway and runs till Friday 25 January 2019.

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## CAMBRIDGE NORTHERN FRINGE

The Greater Cambridge shared planning service has published a joint plan for how a new district could be created on the land between the A14, new Cambridge North Railway Station and Cambridge Science Park.

This is the last brownfield site of its type in the area, and one that could be developed into a low carbon community with thousands of new homes, jobs and community facilities

Anglian Water's water treatment facility will need to be relocated for comprehensive regeneration of the area to take place.

In the past the cost of relocating the facility has meant this has not been an option the Councils could consider. However, a bid to Government under their Housing Infrastructure Fund – which was set up to help sites like Cambridge Northern Fringe get off the ground – has recently been submitted to move the water treatment facility. The bid successfully passed the first round of Government assessment and the final outcome is expected in the spring.

This is a unique opportunity for regeneration of a significant brownfield area right on the edge of the city, to provide an environmentally friendly way of living. Its location close to the Science Park, Cambridge North Station, the guided busway and the A14 means that it is well located in transport terms. The emphasis can then be placed on designing low-carbon development where the use of alternative modes of transport is giving precedence over the motor car. This should help its residents reduce their cost of living, running their homes etc.

Both SCDC and Cambridge City propose to carry out a public consultation early this year to give residents an opportunity to get involved and give suggestions on how to develop a plan for the area.

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## TRANSPORT

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### CAMBOURNE TO CAMBRIDGE BUSWAY – PHASE 2

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) is holding a Consultation Briefing on Phase 2 of the Cambourne to Cambridge busway route this month. The briefing is taking place at the Cambourne Hub

toward the end of January and councillors representing villages along the route are being invited to attend.

The reason for the briefing is that the GCP is hoping to open the consultation covering the section from Cambourne to Madingley Mulch roundabout in February 2019.

The GCP has also issued a report giving an update on the progress of the C2C Busway project. You can read and download it from this link <http://bit.ly/C2CDec2018Update>. It focuses on Phase 1 of the busway project, and shows the preferred route alignment as being the one the GCP consultants have been pushing from the start, the off road option that cuts through Coton, West Cambridge and ends at Grange Road! How the buses get routed to the city after that is still very unclear.

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#### STRATEGIC BUS REVIEW BY COMBINED AUTHORITY

The Strategic Bus Review report, commissioned by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, was published on 23rd January. The options being considered will be outlined in a business case. These could include franchising and enhanced partnerships, but the timescale is depressingly long. Some improvements in bus networks could be introduced sooner but the report is rather disappointing given the time it has taken to produce. The report can be found on: <http://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/assets/Uploads/Strategic-Bus-Review.pdf>. We will endeavour to make sure that the interests of residents living in the village around Cambridge will be served as these proposals progress.

The total annual subsidy cost of buses is about £2 million. The County Council has been providing that subsidy on behalf of the Mayor but contingency funds for 2019-20 have not been identified.

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#### EAST-WEST RAIL ROUTE CONSULTATION OPEN

Elsewhere, proposals on the Cambridge/Bedford section of the East-West Rail Route between Cambridge and Oxford have been published for public consultation. The consultation runs from 28th January to 11th March. Information about the options being considered can be found on: <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/haveyoursay> - we encourage all to have their say.

This is just a start and there will be more opportunities for people to comment as proposals evolve. One point to note is that a proposal for a northern route from Cambridge North Station and linking to the Guided Busway through Northstowe has been eliminated, which we found disappointing. The Northern option was rejected due to higher costs and operational complications particularly for freight movements. The 5 proposals being consulted on are southern routes.

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#### BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Central government announced in the October 2018 budget, changes to Business rates. It proposed the introduction of a new business rates relief for retail premises that are occupied and have a Rateable Value (RV) of less than £51,000. It also announced an extension of the current relief scheme for newspapers.

As one of our three main priorities is to support economic growth in the district, and this involves supporting small and medium businesses too, the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance has agreed revisions to the existing Council rates relief policy to reflect the changes that government announced.

So if you are small business, you can find out more about the available relief by clicking on this link <http://bit.ly/NDR-Relief2019> or contact the Business Rates team at the Council for more information or to find out if you qualify.

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#### CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

Following on from our report last Dec, the decision by South Cambs councillors to raise the bar by aiming to be carbon neutral by 2050 has been making headlines. ITV News carried an interview with a resident of Histon and the District Councillor – which you can read about here.

<https://www.itv.com/news/anglia/2019-01-03/aiming-to-be-britains-first-carbon-neutral-council/>

It is encouraging to see that some residents are taking the carbon reduction challenge seriously.

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#### COMBINED AUTHORITY (CA)

The Mayor's antics have not gone unnoticed, including in the Private Eye magazine December edition and again in January. In December the top story was about the combined authority and the Mayor making what it called "an expensive pig's ear of running what was meant to be a lean and mean operations". In January this included a story about Deputy Leader of the Council Roger Hickford and the Mayor holding a ball with taxpayers money to raise funds for what was initially called a charity but has been subsequently found to not be a registered charity, though its trustees include ex-Tory councillors. You can find a link to the copy of the article which you can find here: <http://bit.ly/RottenBoroughCPA>

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!ArYIMhZXhOpbhMNMQJ5SxVhe5OqdEO> and for Mayor using taxpayers money on a ball to raise funds <https://1drv.ms/u/s!ArYIMhZXhOpbhMNNmnoMjZAV3fGmig>

The Mayor's statement on this is here: <https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/mayor-defends-16k-private-ball-9060252/>

Cambs Times on the council tenancy farm story: <https://www.cambstimes.co.uk/news/business-news/cambs-ccl-deputy-leader-farm-tenancy-probe-1-5852831>

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#### COMBINED AUTHORITY – BUDGET

Did you respond to the Combined Authority's Budget Consultation? Well it's not altogether surprising you didn't, as it was held over Christmas and there was no perceptible effort to publicise it. As you know, there is considerable turbulence at the Combined Authority. Questions have been asked about the escalating revenue costs, now over £5M per annum and rising, compared to the Mayor's promised figure of £850K. The authority's fourth Chief Financial Officer in 18 months was unexpectedly sacked shortly before the consultation was opened, for challenging the affordability of some of the Combined Authority's many promised schemes. The Combined Authority's finances are very much under the spotlight.

The proposals published for consultation were the same as those presented to the Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee and the Combined Authority Board before the unexpected departure of the Chief Financial Officer. This is very surprising, given that disagreement with the Chief Financial Officer's judgement of those proposals was a key reason for his dismissal.

After almost 2 years in existence the Combined Authority led by Mayor James Palmer is still in chaos and is failing to deliver anything to benefit you and me even though they are spending millions. At the time of writing they have neither a full time Chief Executive nor a Finance Director even though the costs of running the office and staff is over £7 million. The last Finance Director pointed out that many of the grand plans, including the Cambridge Metro, had no money at all to build them and as things stand there is no clarity about where the required £3 - £4 BILLION is going to come from. However, we have been promised that all will be revealed in early spring so watch this space!

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#### CAMBRIDGESHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

We make no apology for starting with a recap of the CFRS over the last year – this is a vital service that none of us know we need until we need it really badly! With record calls, a very busy summer, new life-saving equipment and a good inspection result, 2018 was a demanding and memorable year for Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS).

Crews from stations up and down the county, were kept busy attending more than 7,000 incidents, including fires, rescues and road traffic collisions, as well as supporting other services in neighbouring counties. The Combined Fire Control, which also serves residents and mobilises fire engines to incidents in Suffolk, took more than 18,000 calls, of which 11,000 were received from Cambridgeshire residents. The summer period saw significant numbers of calls due to the hot and dry weather conditions, which caused a large amount of fires in the open across both counties.

Of the incidents attended by Cambridgeshire crews, more than 2,100 were fires, either in homes, buildings or outdoors. Crews also responded to 491 road traffic collisions, 126 animal rescues and 55 rescues in water. Staff across different areas of the Service completed more than 10,000 hours of community safety activity across Cambridgeshire ranging from visiting vulnerable people in their homes to carry out safe and well visits, to engaging with businesses and community groups.

Around 13 per cent of this activity was completed by crews on the new roaming fire engines, which were introduced last January. These fire engines are crewed during daytime hours and based in rural locations, providing additional fire cover for emergency calls, particularly in the areas where the local on-call fire engine is not available. During the year they attended more than 400 incidents while also delivering community safety activity.

At the end of 2018, CFRS was named as one of the two best performing fire and rescue services of 14 services inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS). The Inspectorate found the Service was one of only two services who were 'good' across the entire inspection process, and one of only two services who were 'good' across every aspect of looking after their people. The Service also welcomed more than 50 new firefighters during 2018, who

joined wholetime and on-call stations across the county. Combined Fire Control also welcomed 14 new members of staff.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority is proposing up to a three per cent increase to the fire service's proportion of council tax for 2019/20, equating to an extra £1.98 a year for a Band D property.

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## BREXIT

Councils (and Government) are now waking up to the realisation that Brexit is a matter of weeks away. From a County Council perspective urgent work is now being undertaken to cover a number of areas of concern. Firstly, EU citizens will need to apply for settled status by December 2020. There are County responsibilities for making sure any EU children who are looked after have applications made, and that children who have been adopted (but have EU birth certificates) are included. The County and the Police are working on concerns that hate crime and civil unrest may increase; and there are concerns that hold-ups at the ports will have a knock-on impact on the A14, which is already struggling (as some of you many have noticed!).

If we were to leave the EU without a deal all the EU regulations lapse. There is work going on in Parliament to bring those regulations into UK law, but all the Councils' documents then need to refer to UK law and not EU law for them to be valid. We will also lose some EU funding and urgent work is being done to identify what. District Councils are examining any potential impact on housing and there is increasing concern in the agricultural sector re workforce.

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## JOBS & EMPLOYMENT

House prices in South Cambridgeshire make it very difficult for many businesses, including the Councils to recruit staff. South Cambridgeshire District Council is hoping to fill quite a number of job vacancies early this year including apprenticeships. If you are thinking about a job change please do keep an eye on the website site. SCDC has a good reputation as a good employer and offers flexi-time, excellent training and many other incentives to ensure that it attracts the right people.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about these, or any other matters.

**Alex Malyon and Sarah Cheung Johnson**

***District Councillors for Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe***

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