

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

MARCH 2018

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NORTHSTOWE CONSTRUCTION NOISE

Unfortunately, we must include this in our report again this month, as we have continued to receive reports of breaches to planning conditions at Northstowe, for both Phase 1 and Phase 2. Enforcement are now logging and investigating all these reports. Again, we are encouraging residents to report issues directly online as Planning Enforcement advise this is the best way to collate the data and build a record of the breaches and evidence which could be used for legal action. 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.

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.

We have also received reports of early working on the site at Woodside in Longstanton.

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

OAKINGTON RURAL TRAVEL HUB CONSULTATION REPORT

The report on the Oakington Rural Travel Hub (RTH) consultation has now been published. The full report can be accessed here:

<https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/transport/transport-projects/rural-travel-hubs/>

The key findings of the report were:

- The report says that analysis of the geographical spread and the breadth of responses from different groups demonstrates that the Greater Cambridge Partnership has delivered a sufficiently robust consultation.
- Over 80% of respondents supported the proposals for a Rural Travel Hub in Oakington, and the majority of respondents indicated that they would intend to use a Rural Travel Hub in Oakington.
- The majority of respondents preferred option 1 (with parking) to option 2 (without parking), although contrasting views were apparent based on respondent's location, with Cottenham residents most supportive of option 1 and Oakington and Westwick residents most supportive of option 2.

- All proposed elements were supported by the majority of respondents. The elements with the highest level of support were: 'Improved walking/cycling infrastructure linking the Hub to surrounding villages', 'bus shelter', 'drop off/pick up zone' and 'cycle lockers'.

A great deal of detailed comment was received, from which the most common areas of discussion were:

- The inclusion of parking spaces at the Hub
- Public transport links to nearby villages
- Concerns about increased traffic
- The need to increase bus capacity on the guided busway, particularly during peak times.

Responses received by groups (six responded) to the consultation will be given in full to board members for review.

The GCP board will meet on 20th March to decide the next steps for the project.

UPDATE REGARDING DOCTORS SURGERY

We have received the following update on changes at the Willingham/Longstanton surgery allowing them to manage the increased numbers of patients from Northstowe.

They currently have 423 patients registered from Northstowe.

They have a new Nurse Practitioner who has fitted in well at the surgery and is triaging patients where appropriate. This is proving very popular for patients as they are receiving a call from the nurse who talks through their symptoms and directs them to:

- They are asked to come in on that morning and see her.
- They are asked to come to the emergency clinic at the end of the morning and see a GP.
- They are given advice and asked to phone back if their symptoms persist or get worse.
- They are put in for a phone call with a doctor.

The patients all seem very happy with this service which speeds things up and minor things can be handled completely by the Nurse Practitioner.

The Thursday afternoon session was originally only one doctor on duty but has been increased to include the Nurse Practitioner and a new doctor who has come on board, Dr Segal. They have therefore increased Thursday afternoons from one session to three. They have increased the pool of locum doctors and now have a good supply of extra doctors to cover sessions when needed.

System changes have enabled them to manage the winter pressures more effectively. Allowing more book on the day appointments has decreased the number of emergency appointments that were added to the end of each doctor's session each morning. This has then allowed the doctors to have more time for referrals, bloods, letters etc. at the end of their morning. They have also limited the number of

phone calls that were being put on each doctor's session, as these were getting to numbers as high as 20 per doctor per morning.

NORTHSTOWE COMMUNITY FORUM

At February's community forum we got the latest updates from Northstowe, including updates from Phase 1 and 2, allotment and pavilion updates and update on the proposed town centre. The proposed masterplan for Northstowe town centre was presented. The plans reflected the changing nature of the high street and the move away from traditional retail, with more emphasis placed on working space and other leisure activities that would make the town centre a 'destination' and draw people in. Public transport and cycle access will be key to the success of the town centre. We were told the town centre would be approx. 8 minutes from Oakington and 13 minutes from Longstanton centres.

More details on plans for the Northstowe town centre, full notes made by Sarah and the slides from the Northstowe presentations can be found via our Facebook page.

https://www.facebook.com/pg/longstantonoakingtonnorthstowe/posts/?ref=page_internal

COUNCILLOR UPDATES AND SURGERIES

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 (*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
- For those on social media we have a very active Facebook group covering the whole ward here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/>

We have also been holding regular councillor surgeries for residents who would prefer to speak with us in person. We held surgeries on Monday 11th Feb and 11th March and will be confirming further dates soon.

UPDATES FROM SCDC FULL COUNCIL FEB 2019

BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX

At the meeting of full council on 21st February the new business plan and budget were agreed.

The four priority areas agreed in the business plan were:

- Growing local businesses and economies – which includes putting in place a single point of contact to support businesses through the planning process and making it easier for small local businesses to bid for Council contracts.
- Housing that is affordable for everyone to live in – which will see the Council double the number of Council homes built each year, deliver high environmental standards on new homes to reduce running costs and focus on working with partners to make sure walking, cycling and public transport improvements provide alternatives to using the private car.
- Being green to our core – by the Council developing a plan for a carbon-neutral future for South Cambridgeshire, exploring opportunities for green energy generation and improving air quality.
- A modern and caring Council – by being an employer of choice for people with disabilities and ethnic minorities, generating an income from investments to offset cuts to national funding and improving the way people can carry out transactions online.

At the meeting the Council's budget was also agreed. This included plans to generate a quarter of the money the Council spends on services from investments within five years. By the end of March 2024, Council investments are forecasted to return an income of just over £5 million a year which will be used to protect the services people want and need. The Council's administration has said that they want a range of investments in the district to generate a return in a way that also delivers on the priorities of local people and makes a positive contribution to the area. Investments could include investing to help provide space for small and growing businesses which will fill a recognised gap and make a return for the Council. This will also help businesses grow and create new jobs for local people.

The Council also wants to invest to deliver improvements in communities that have not been delivered commercially by the private sector. This could help deliver more homes or facilities for communities or improve the green credentials of a development to make sure it is of the highest standard.

The documents that were reviewed by the council at the February full council, including the full business plan can be found here:

<http://scamb.southcambs.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=410&MId=7348>

COUNCIL TAX

Councillors also agreed at the February meeting to a £5 per year increase in Council Tax for the average band D home. This is the equivalent of 10 extra pence per week. Even with the increase in Council Tax the Council must save a further £3 million over the next five years.

The Council's average band D charge for 2019/20 will be £145.31, meaning it remains one of the lowest taxing district councils in the country.

The council also agreed to increase council tax on empty properties with the aim of incentivising owners to bring them back into use.

- Homes that are empty for two years or more will be charged double their regular Council Tax (i.e. an additional premium of 100%). This will come into effect from 1 April 2019

- Homes that are empty for five years or more will be charged a 200% premium on top of their regular Council Tax. This will come into effect from 1 April 2020
- Homes that are empty for ten years or more will be charged a 300% premium on top of their regular Council Tax. This will come into effect from 1 April 2021

Currently across South Cambridgeshire, there are 100 properties that have been empty for between two years and five years. There are 41 homes that have been empty for between five and ten years. There are 39 properties that have been empty for more than ten years.

Despite these figures, in relative terms, South Cambridgeshire doesn't have very high numbers of long-term empty properties - especially in comparison to more urban areas. Around 1% of all the homes in the district have been empty for six months or more.

During a recent public consultation that asked for views on these proposals, almost two in three people who responded were in favour of the increased empty homes premium.

RETIREMENT OF SCDC CHIEF EXECUTIVE

South Cambridgeshire District Council has announced that, Beverly Agass, the Chief Executive, is retiring from her post. The following statement has been released regarding this:

Beverly Agass, who became Chief Executive of the Council in July 2017, has been working closely with the new Liberal Democrat administration elected in May 2018 as it establishes its programme.

At a Full Council meeting today (Thursday 21 February) Councillors agreed Mrs Agass leaving the Council with early access to her local government pension. In order for this to happen, the Council will be contributing circa £202,500 into the Local Government Pension Scheme towards the cost of early retirement.

Beverly Agass said: "I have very much enjoyed my time at South Cambridgeshire District Council. I am proud to be leaving such a fantastic team in place which is so motivated to serve our residents. I successfully supported the new administration in defining its programme and initiating the change process to enable that. I believe it is now the right time for me to hand over to a new person to lead the organisation on the next stage of its journey."

Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cllr Bridget Smith, said: "I want to thank Beverly for her commitment and work at South Cambs over the past two years. She was appointed by the Council in July 2017 and I would especially like to thank her for her support in managing the transition to the new Liberal Democrat administration in May 2018. The Council has an ambitious agenda, and this will require a change to the way the organisation is structured and led. The Council's business plan and detailed budget is being considered and now is the right time for new leadership to manage the implementation phase. I am very grateful to Beverly for enabling this transition. Beverly has had an impressive career in local government, and she deserves to enjoy her well-earned retirement."

At the meeting, Councillors also agreed interim arrangements for the position of Chief Executive. The Council's current Director of Health and Environmental Services, Mike Hill, will take up the role on an interim basis until a new Chief Executive is appointed.

DISABILITY CONFIDENT EMPLOYER SCHEME

At full council it was also confirmed that the council was signing up to the disability confident employer scheme with the aim that the council will become an employer of choice for disabled people. Sarah will be the councillor leading on this initiative.

<https://disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk/>

DISTRICT WIDE UPDATES

TRANSPORT

CAMBOURNE TO CAMBRIDGE BUSWAY – PHASE 2 CONSULTATION

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) has now opened the consultation on Phase 2 of the Cambourne to Cambridge busway project. The consultation is now open and closes at midnight on Sunday 31st March 2019.

The Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport Project is divided into two phases, with a new Park & Ride facility along the A428 being developed in parallel.

In this consultation, they are asking for views on Phase 2: the link west of Madingley Mulch roundabout to Bourn Airfield and on to Cambourne, and a new Park & Ride facility.

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.

CHOICES FOR BETTER JOURNEYS CONSULTATION OPEN

The Greater Cambridge Partnership has also opened a consultation asking for views on the future of the public transport network for the Greater Cambridge area. You can find more details about this consultation and complete the survey via:

<https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/choices-for-better-journeys/>

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 and will close on 11th March. Information about the options being considered can be found on: <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/haveyoursay>

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.

PROPOSED ROUTE FOR A428

The proposed route for improving the A428 between the Black Cat and Caxton Gibbet has been announced. It is hoped this will cut journey times and queues while also protecting the environment. It is expected that the route would cut the average commute between the Black Cat and Caxton Gibbet junctions by more than a third, saving drivers around 10 minutes on their commute.

The route put forward is close to the existing A428 and will therefore avoid miles of tarmac being laid through countryside where major roads do not already exist. The route put forward for consultation by Highways England is based on the one the SCDC preferred when it responded to an earlier consultation on options in April 2017.

More details can be found via the Highways England website:

<https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/a428-black-cat-to-caxton-gibbet/>

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

Following on from the decision by South Cambs councillors to raise the bar by aiming to be carbon neutral by 2050, solar panels have been installed on the roof of the waste depot at Waterbeach, which will generate around a quarter of all the electricity the building uses. The installation is expected to pay for itself within eight years. It will take advantage of the last of the Government's feed-in tariff, which is a payment to an energy user for the renewable electricity they generate. It will provide income to the Council for 20 years.

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

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