

# DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

JUNE 2019

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## NORTHSTOWE COMMUNITY UPDATES

To listen back to the forum on the Facebook live recording and see slides go to:  
<https://www.facebook.com/NorthstoweCommunity/videos/2302101546745783/>

Here are some brief updates from the meeting:

- Northstowe Community Wing – the official opening is being finalised as we speak, and the wing will be fully opened imminently.
- Defibrillator – David Wilson have agreed to donate a Defibrillator to the Northstowe community, and this will go on the David Wilson show-home. The community has been raising funds for this defibrillator and this will now instead go to providing training for people to use the defib.
- The Green has now been officially opened. The Noticeboard, bollards and electrical sub-station keys have now been handed to Jon London as key holder.
- After delays caused by the collapse of Hawk, one of the key contractors used by L&Q (formerly Gallagher's), contractors have now been appointed for the Western Park work beginning in Sep 2019. This covers the synthetic pitch, MUGA, linear pathways, bowling pitches. Seeding and then planting will be done before Christmas. Soft landscaping will be done by a different contractor.
- Work will begin on the Formal Park – Pioneer Park – this month and 2 paths that criss-cross the park will be completed by the end of June.
- Guided Busway path – completion on this depends on several factors. The design has been completed; construction should be done next year but can't open formally until the bus lane is completed through Phase 2 & 3

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## NORTHSTOWE PHASE 2A UPDATE

Homes England have appointed Urban Splash to take on the Phase 2a parcel which is 406 houses. There will be 40% sold at market price, 40% are starter homes – these are homes designed for first time buyers and must cost below £250k – the remaining 20% are for older people. This parcel is the first to be developed in Northstowe Phase 2 and sits between Rampton Drift and the Education Campus. Urban Splash are largely known for their urban redevelopment work, the Dunlop building in Birmingham for example, but have begun to build modular houses. We have uploaded their presentation to our Facebook page.

In summary:

- Buyers will be able to specify the layout of their houses e.g. there is flexibility in having main living space on the ground floor or first floor for example.
- The houses are all built in a factory in Alfreton, Derbyshire using volume truck construction. They are delivered on a low loaded and comes as a completed house in 1 or 2 deliveries – considerably cutting down delivery journeys.
- Three houses can be put up in a day when they are on site and then everything is connected internally, and the services are connected.
- The houses are exceptionally well insulated and airtight & is a low energy house. Solar panels are installed as standard.

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#### NORTHSTOWE SECONDARY SCHOOL UPDATE

- Kier have made a lot of progress and the site is on schedule to be opened to the 70 children (120 were on the plan, so slightly lower than anticipated) who are on roll to start at the school in September.
- In September the Performance Hall, Art rooms, drama spaces and music spaces will be open
- They are going out to tender for sports provision company to run the sports facilities. The sports hall and the 3G pitch will be open in May when sports bookings will be taken. The admin will be managed by CMAT, the school's Trust.
- Transport access – car access will be via Northstowe Phase 1, there will be a footpath from Rampton Drift. Cycle routes will be worked out and they are working with Highways Agency to ensure this is safe. The school have not looked at the potential issue of vehicular access through Rampton Drift and drop off at the top of the road – this might be something the Parish Council & County need to look at.
- Open event for Community will take place in September so they can view the school
- Adult Education will be provided as they are at Swavesey, with some courses available at Northstowe: yoga, Pilates, mindfulness, Mandarin – starting in October 2019.
- A question was asked on the issue of losing pupils from Swavesey to Northstowe? The school share an Executive Principal who will ensure this won't happen as it will impact on Swavesey.
- Road safety for pupils going from Bloor was raised, traffic on B1050 still too fast and traffic calming measures need to be considered.
- Phase 2 Construction traffic will not go via Phase 1, on the haul roads within Phases 2 & 3

#### RAMPTON ROAD BRIDLEWAY CLOSURE

We were advised by the contractor Sisk that as part of the on-going Northstowe Phase 2 development works being carried, the Rampton Road Bridleway, between Rampton Drift and the Guided Busway, will continue to be closed until the opening of the school in September. They have written to residents and diversions routes are in place. They are currently completing the drainage works, which will soon progress to the earthworks, roadworks and footpaths connecting Phase 2 to Phase 1 and the School to Rampton Drift/Longstanton.

## NORTHSTOWE CONSTRUCTION NOISE

Unfortunately, we must include this in our report yet 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 and making spot check to site. 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 are not always receiving reports from residents and where they are receiving them, they do not have sufficient information or evidence to be able to take legal action.

Ideally reports should include date, time, location (with may if possible), what work is being carried out and if possible, time and date stamped photos or video. In absence of photo evidence corroboration from another resident is very useful. We realise this seems like a lot of information, but they require evidence for any future legal action.

To directly report issues with breach of planning conditions, this is the best link: <https://scambs-framework.egovhub.net/REPORTABREACHOFPLANNINGCONTROL/launch>

## KINGFISHER POND

Following a meeting between members of Longstanton PC and Bridget Smith, the following questions were taken to be followed up and for us to engage with Sharon Brown, the Planning Director for Delivery.

- Have L&Q (formally Gallagher's) fulfilled the requirement for ongoing monitoring of the water table? LPC seemed to think that an interim report was completed in July 2017 but that a final report due in April 2018 never appeared.
- The responsibility for the watercourses is ours and not the Environment Agency or Internal Drainage Board. Why then have we not undertaken any assessment of our own to identify any detrimental impact due to the dewatering of the site in phase 1 or 2?
- L&Q are required through the AAP to maintain the ponds on Hatton Road. Is this the case and have they been doing so?
- Was an Environmental impact assessment of Longstanton ever carried out as part of any planning application associated with Northstowe and was the RSPB ever consulted?
- When will the work to the road verges be completed?

We were also invited to officially open the David Wilson Show Home at the Northstowe and met with the Divisional Manager Director, Adam Knight. We discussed the Kingfisher Pond with him, and he says they are actively pushing L&Q from their side, as the Pond borders their parcel of land.

## ZERO CARBON GRANTS

We are really pleased that it has been confirmed that a grant fund is to be established to help community groups across South Cambridgeshire shift towards a zero-carbon future.

The new Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme will provide funds for local groups to spend on ambitious activities that reduce carbon emissions and reliance on fossil fuels – as well as helping communities spread awareness and promote behaviour change towards low carbon lifestyles.

As a result, this summer community groups will be invited to bid for grants of between £1,000 and £15,000 each. These funds will be able to be spent on projects such as:

Energy-saving improvements to community buildings, such as insulation, secondary glazing, energy efficient lighting, battery storage for solar panels or other low carbon energy generation measures

- Community energy projects such as solar panels, community wind turbines and battery storage
- Electric vehicle charging points which the community could use
- Purchase of an electric vehicle for community use
- Community tree planting, to absorb carbon and increase biodiversity
- Community schemes to scale up local circular economy initiatives (food, fashion, waste, travel)
- Cycle paths and stands
- Projects that tackle fuel poverty
- Simple proposals such as cycle racks at bus stops or drinking fountains to encourage the use of reusable water bottles

A total of just over £90,000 is being made available for the scheme for 2019/20. The money comes from business rates from renewable energy sites in South Cambridgeshire that are retained by the Council and earmarked for use in green initiatives.

Non-profit groups or organisations that are based in South Cambridgeshire, or parish councils based within the district, will be able to apply from a date to be confirmed this summer. Other groups, such as schools, colleges and community interest companies will also be able to apply, if they apply as part of a partnership with a parish council or not-for-profit group.

## TRANSPORT UPDATE- OAKINGTON

We received the following update from our fellow councillor for Cottenham, Eileen Wilson. She met with members of the Oakington TAG and Tom Williams, the Innovation Lead for Whipper. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss whether there was any way of getting transport from Cottenham and Oakington on to the Guided Busway via the proposed RTH.

Tom was very open to ideas if there was some way of subsidising the bus. He is in contact with several organisations that want to provide transport for staff e.g. Science Park, St John's Innovation Centre to and from Cambridge North, other organisations providing various types of community transport etc. His idea is that, if all the money that these organisations are putting into their schemes was pooled, it could also serve Oakington/Cottenham at peak times to these places and then be used for community

transport during the day and weekends. He was going away to draft a document putting together these thoughts and to contact the GCP and Combined Authority for support.

Another point that cropped up was the 20mph idea that both Oakington and Cottenham have been thinking about separately. It was agreed that we need to bring together the two TAG from Oakington and Cottenham.

#### VICARAGE CLOSE EMPTY PROPERTY

We were made aware of an empty property in Vicarage Close in Oakington. We chased this up with enforcement who visited the property and have written to the owner asking that immediate action is taken to cut the grass and vegetation, paint the fascia's of the garage and garage door, re-stain the cladding on the main dwelling and wash the frames fascia's etc. They have until the 30th June to carry out the work failing which a formal s215 Notice will be issued.

We also chased this up with Housing to see if there was anything that can be done to bring the house back into occupation. They inform us that they have attempted to contact the owner but have not received a response. The property will, if it remains unoccupied for more than 5 years, be subject to the Council Tax premium.

#### 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](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/>

We have also been holding regular councillor surgeries for residents who would prefer to speak with us in person, dates TBC.

#### DISTRICT WIDE UPDATES

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##### ONE YEAR ON VIDEO

It has been one year on in our LibDem run District Council and the Council has put together a video of what we are trying to do

<https://www.facebook.com/SouthCambridgeshireDistrictCouncil/videos/456049921798850/>

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## PARKLIFE

Another successful Parklife was held on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May at Milton Country Park with estimates of over 4,000 people from across the district and beyond attending the event. The range of free activities promote health and wellbeing with many residents, especially children, trying out a range of sports and outdoor activities from paddle boarding to caving. The numbers were up on last year possibly due to the weather not being as sweltering, and from the feedback it looks as if a great time was had by all. We are very grateful to all the paid staff and volunteers from the council and the Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust for the hours of work put in over the weekend and in the weeks prior to the event; and also our thanks go to the exceptional small business caterers, the exhibitors, Tesco for all the free fruit provided and to those who came along to make it a success.

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## INVESTMENTS

Government grants to local authorities to pay for services such as bin collections and planning services are a thing of the past. The only option that councils of all tiers now have is either to cut services or to find ways to generate income either through investments or through their own operations and activities. However, there are limitations on which of their own operations and activities they can earn money from.

For example, we are not allowed to make a profit from handling planning applications. South Cambs has decided that it does not want to decrease the services it offers its residents and in fact aims to increase and improve them. In order to achieve this, South Cambs has committed to an investment portfolio of up to £100 million over the next 5 years. Though the council does hold some modest reserves it is able to borrow relatively unlimited sums from the Government's Public Loans Work Board. The fixed, long term interest rates mean that councils of all tiers (including parish councils) can borrow money to purchase assets that will deliver them an income. South Cambs has already installed photo voltaic panels on the roof of its waste collection depot in Waterbeach. In the past 3 weeks we have also purchased a premium office block on the prestigious Cambridge science Park at a cost of £13 million. This will deliver a return of over 5% which we shall use to support services to our residents.

We are especially interested in investments that, as well as giving a financial return, also provide what is referred to as Environmental Capital or Social Capital. Environmental Capital means that the project does something to improve the environment such as generating sustainable electricity or saving water. Social Capital means that it benefits our residents. So, investing in a doctors' surgery would benefit the patients of that surgery.

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## CLIMATE CHANGE

Following a resolution to aim for zero carbon by 2050, South Cambs has sponsored a symposium in Cambridge on Climate Change Research and Action, along with a number of councillors and officers from both councils. The most impressive presentation was from Leeds Climate Commission: they have mapped the necessary actions for their area to get to zero carbon by 2050.

80% of the houses we'll be living in in 2050 are already built, so retrofitting and improving the existing housing stock must be a priority, and South Cambs is already reviewing its housing stock maintenance plans with this in mind. One of the easiest ways we can make a serious difference is to eat less meat and

dairy products. We have to increase recycling rates and generate as much renewable energy as possible. With new houses being off the gas grid from 2025, much more electricity generation will be required, and air- and ground-source heat pumps will be needed. New housing needs to be planned for comfort, with solar panels and orientated to avoid overheating in summer, with ventilation and passive cooling, avoiding the need for air conditioning. To what extent can we plan for a Passivhaus standard? These houses generally cost 19% extra, and purchasers are only prepared to pay 5% more, but some councils have built them. We also need to plant more trees. The Centre for Sustainable Energy website has suggestions that can be added to Neighbourhood Plans, and local plans. There was a lot of food for thought.

Last November, South Cambridgeshire District Council declared a Climate Emergency and set itself a Zero Carbon by 2050 ambition, setting the basis for adapting new policies to meet its goals. The new Zero Carbon Communities Grant is one example (see below).

In April, school children planned a demonstration at Shire Hall to raise awareness at Cambridgeshire County Council of the Climate Emergency.

At the May meeting of Cambridgeshire County Council, the Council Leader brought forward a motion pledging to continue and improve the council's good work on environmental challenges and proposed that officers be given six months to develop a new Climate Change and Environmental Strategy. The Liberal Democrat group proposed an amendment acknowledging the Climate Change Emergency and setting a Zero Carbon target ambition for 2050, in line with many other local authorities; the amendment also tasked a group of cross-party and cross-committee councillors to take the lead on setting new policy. The amendment was lost, with objections raised against the Zero Carbon target and councillor involvement. However, the amendment proposer came back with a suggestion confined to the declaration of a Climate Emergency and this was unanimously agreed.

As painfully preoccupied with process as this might seem, the outcome was significant because consensus building does not often happen in this way. It's good to see consensus developing across the councils too. That said, the County Council's planned move to Alconbury, away from public transport links, will be difficult to reconcile in climate emergency terms.

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## UNIVERSAL CREDIT

We had a useful meeting on Universal Credit with Heidi Allen, who is still sitting on a Select Committee that is reviewing the implementation of UC (despite having left the Conservative party). Officers who help claimants were able to tell Heidi their first-hand experiences of the unfairness of the UC system. Many people are better off not reporting a worsening in their circumstances if it triggers a move to UC from other benefits. The website entitledto.co.uk has a very useful calculator which allows anyone to find out if this would be the case for them: once you've applied for UC there is no turning back even if you realise you've made a mistake and will be worse off. There are still serious anomalies in the system: if you try to start your claim early (e.g. before your final paycheque has come through) you will be paid UC even later than the normal 5 weeks wait. The main barrier remains that all claims must be made online, and not enough help is given to people who are not IT-literate.

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## 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY TOWN CENTRE PLANNING

At Cambourne we learnt from Bill Grimsey (ex-Chief Exec of a number of High Street names) what we should be aiming to provide to make for a successful town centre, in the age of internet shopping, drone delivery and low-carbon living. He is retired and spends his time advising councils with failing town centres how to regenerate them. In South Cambs we're in a different position, with one new town, Cambourne, which has just been upgraded from a village at the Parish Council's request, and other town centres on the drawing board. The town centre must provide a unique experience, quirkiness, recreation, food and drink, meeting places, a tech centre, fresh produce markets, and be easily accessible. It probably won't have large clothes shops in the future. Some of the Waterbeach developers were at the meeting to hear his opinions.

At the end of the symposium on 21st century High Streets we talked about the principle of making a library the heart of a community. During 2019 the County Council has been working with an organisation called Civic who are designing 'Libraries for the future' as the key element in any community hub. Northstowe is to be used as a pilot for this concept and Anna asked that Waterbeach New Town should be involved too, incorporating a library facility into Phase 1. Ideally this should be in consultation with and supporting the existing independent library in Waterbeach Village as well.

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## WATERBEACH NEW TOWN

Urban and Civics' outline planning application for up to 6,500 dwellings was approved by SCDC's planning committee on 13th May by 8 votes to 3. The application covers the Western half of the proposed new town site with the first primary access from the A10 at the Cambridge Research Park roundabout. The affordable housing for the site will be delivered on the following basis incorporating a Viability Review Mechanism (VRM.) A minimum of 30% affordable dwellings will be delivered across the key phases of development which totals 1950 homes with the following breakdown:

- 30% affordable rent
- 30% shared ownership
- 20% Rent to Buy
- 20% Discounted Market Sale

The first 300 homes will be open market – an affordable housing holiday for the developers – which means a floor of 30% is viable across the site. Any profit made by U&C beyond their agreed IRR (Internal Rate of Return) of 20% will be split 50/50 with SCDC. This will help to increase the affordable housing upwards capped at the policy figure of 40%. The top option of 30% affordable rent will remain affordable in perpetuity, in contrast to Rent to Buy, which better reflects the longer-term housing need of the district.

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## NEW BUS USERS GROUP FOR CAMBRIDGE AND SOUTH CAMBS

If you would like to have a voice in the debate about public transport you could join this new user's group. They are determined to force the Mayor and the bus operators to improve services from and to our villages.

Email: [secretary.cabu@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.cabu@gmail.com)

Cambridge Area Bus Users, an affiliate of Bus Users UK, seeks to represent, and campaign on behalf of, bus passengers in and around Cambridge and is independent of any political party.

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#### HELP TO CLAIM SERVICE FOR UNIVERSAL CREDIT.

The "Help to Claim" Universal Support Service is operated by Citizens Advice. This new service offers free, impartial and confidential advice on the Universal Credit application process from expert advisors. You can access the service by phone, face to face or online from your local Citizens advice - which for Longstanton is in our Doctor's surgery.

A recent survey has shown that:

- 65 per cent of council chiefs think universal credit is increasing homelessness in their areas, with only 2 per cent saying it has led to a decrease
  - 67 per cent of councils think they do not have sufficient funding to fulfil their statutory duty to prevent homelessness
  - 41 per cent of councils think they are unlikely to eradicate rough sleeping by 2027.
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#### NEW LOCAL PLAN

South Cambs is working with Cambridge City on a new Local Plan. The 'Call for Sites' has resulted in about 700 potential new sites for development across the Greater Cambridge area. Some of those will be relatively small but others will be very large and potentially for thousands of new houses.

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#### THE METRO MAYOR'S PLANS FOR A METRO

The Mayor's plans for a Metro running into the City from our surrounding market towns including St Neots, Haverhill and Duxford has been costed at a staggering £4 billion. The route from Cambourne to Cambridge does have funding through the Greater Cambridge Partnership (originally The City Deal) but this is only for the bit that runs over ground. The Mayor's plans for a network of tunnels under the City has no committed funding as yet and we are not holding our breaths until some is secured.

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#### POLICING

Our Council Leader Bridget Smith met with Jason Ablewhite, the police and crime commissioner to discuss plans to relocate the Parkside Police Station into South Cambs. The main reason is that Parkside only has 10 usable cells and, on a Friday, and Saturday night these tend to fill up pretty readily. The consequence of this is that officers are tied up driving criminals all the way to Peterborough where they have 24 cells. As soon as we know where it is going to go, we shall let you know.

Bridget did also voice the frustration of South Cambs residents about the lack of any police action on speeding, illegal and anti-social parking including pavement parking. Mr Ablewhite's advice was that if there is a repeat offender that you should report every offence on the website. He says that once there are 3 reports of a repeat offence that they will send someone out. If you succeed or fail on this one, please do let us know!

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## COMBINED AUTHORITY.

Our Council Leader Bridget Smith spent a with the Mayor and the Combined Authority Board interviewing for a new chief executive (you might remember that the last one disappeared under somewhat strange circumstance). The day was wasted because after 5 hours of interviewing candidates the Mayor decided that he did not want any of them and has subsequently said that he wants his 2 current interims to remain in post for the foreseeable future. Other than a concern on the lack of accountability on the Mayor's decisions, this is a concern as one of these people is also the CEO of East Cambs District Council and our view is that it is a huge job which needs the undivided attention of a really high calibre person.

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## PROCUREMENT

The new administration at South Cambs have been insistent that the council improves the experience of smaller companies wishing to bid for the Council's own contracts. Over the year it has been obvious that the hoops a potential contractor has to jump through are just as onerous regardless of the size of the contract they are bidding for and that some of the requirements for multi million pound insurance policies can make it impossible for any but the largest firms to stand a chance of success. A new procurement process is hopefully going to make the requirements proportional to the size of the contract which should be of particular help to small and medium size businesses. If you have good or bad experience of this, please do let us know.

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## TRANSPORT

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### M11 JUNCTION 11 PARK & RIDE

The Greater Cambridge partnership (GCP) is progressing proposals for increasing P&R capacity at junction 11 through a new site on the Hauxton side of the junction, on the north side of the A10. It's disappointing to say the least that this is where we are, the result of a whole series of poor decisions over many years that has effectively ended with the need to outsource the car park of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) a few miles down the road. That said, the risk of not putting in new P&R capacity now is that the junction will lock up at peak times, making traffic even worse for the communities along the A10.

Designs involving tunnel access from the M11 to improve traffic flow along the A10 have been dropped due to the Mayor's stipulation that new P&R capacity around Cambridge be 'temporary'. Officers believe that access can still be designed to minimise impact on the flow of traffic – we are curious to see what that looks like to put it mildly.

The GCP has committed to work with local communities in the detailed design phase to mitigate impact, in particular through phased delivery (to try to avoid any supply induced demand traffic), environmental enhancements and walking and cycle links to the hub.

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### CAMBOURNE TO CAMBRIDGE PHASE 2 CONSULTATION REPORT

The GCP has reported the results of the consultation on phase 2 (Cambourne to Madingley Mulch roundabout). The Scotland Farm site for the P&R was still strongly favoured, and a bus way separated from the main carriageway was also favoured (as opposed to on road / road widening). This consultation feedback will feed into final proposals for the complete scheme to be brought before the

executive board in the Autumn. On phase 1, the Local Liaison Forum (LLF) Technical Group continues to meet regularly with officers, and the GCP is drafting technical notes on these discussions to be shared at the next LLF meeting on 6th June.

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#### GREATER CAMBRIDGE PARTNERSHIP – CHOICES FOR BETTER JOURNEYS

The GCP Joint Assembly also meets on 6th June and one of the main things on the agenda will be considering the feedback from the “Choices for Better Journeys” consultation. There are some interesting results from the consultation, including significant support for either a pollution charge or congestion charge, provided money generated by any scheme is directed into significant improvements in public transport so that it can provide a genuine alternative to the car, particularly for those in South Cambs that have seen the bus service slowly decline over many years. The next steps are for the GCP executive board to outline the principles that will guide officers in developing outline proposals, including the fairness and equality of any scheme which are particularly important to us. We are also seeking more clarity on the public transport improvements we can expect to see in our communities.

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#### LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN CONSULTATION

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority’s Local Transport Plan (LTP) will be going out for consultation soon (probably starting later this month and running for about 12 weeks). The plan will cover the years to 2050 and should support the growth targets of Local Plans across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, as well as provide context for projects like the CAM Metro, Cambridge South rail station, duelling of the A10 and work on the bus network. Expect to see some consultation events and online engagement – more details when we have them.

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#### CAXTON GIBBET CONSULTATION

A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Improvements public consultation runs from 3 June to 28 July.

The Council has already responded to the consultation on Route Options (Spring 2017), expressing a preference for the Orange Route, now the Preferred Route (with some minor revisions). Following the announcement of a preferred route, this consultation asks for views on the detailed alignment, junction designs, enhanced routes for non-motorised vehicles and plans for environmental mitigation.

The consultation details can be found at the following web address:

<https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a428-black-cat-to-caxton-gibbet-improvements/>.

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#### MARSHALL’S SITE

Marshall have announced plans to move the Aerospace and Defence Group operations, opening up the Cambridge Airport site to be redeveloped as part of the next Local Plan. The airport site was submitted previously by Marshall as a site option for the last Local Plan but was withdrawn because the company decided at that time to continue its operations on the airport and adjacent sites.

At this stage there is nothing formal to consider, but it is positive to see recognition from Marshall in their initial announcement that any development would need to feature 'integrated, high-speed public transport connections' for the site.

Duxford is one of three sites the company is looking at to relocate its existing staff and operations to, and the council is also keen to explore with Marshall and the local communities the impact and opportunities of that.

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#### HINXTON AGRITECH PARK

Concerning interference by the Mayor in the proposal to build a huge business park at Hinxton that the applicants say will help to build up an agritech sector. The planning application is currently on appeal, having been rejected by the South Cambs planning committee, and the Mayor has written to the planning inspector urging the decision be overturned.

There is very little evidence to show that there is an economic need for what is a speculative application, or that it will contribute significantly to the growth of the particular industries that Greater Cambridge is specialising in. The recent CPIER report suggested promoting agritech as a complement to the agricultural industry in the Fens, so it seems strange that the Mayor is so keen for the site to be approved.

However, we're sure it has nothing to do with the £20,000 donation James Palmer's local Conservative Association received from one of the partners in the proposal two years ago, just before he was elected as Mayor.

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#### SOUTH CAMBS IS GOOD PLACE TO WORK

South Cambs is the only council in the area where women are paid, on average, more than men. So why is South Cambs bucking the gender pay gap when the national picture is terrible? The reality is that when we look around South Cambs' offices we see a real mix of men and women at all levels working together for our communities. We have been successful in recruiting and retaining talented females by being a flexible and modern employer offering flexi time, generous maternity leave and a lot of helping with work life balance including ensuring they have good mentoring and opportunities. Diversity is across the Council too as we have a proper mix of ages, background and sexes of our elected members. This certainly wasn't the case before the elections last year. For a list of jobs we are recruiting for please go to: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/jobs/current-vacancies/>

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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