

# DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

JULY 2019

CLLR SARAH CHEUNG JOHNSON & CLLR ALEX MALYON

## PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

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 checks 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 that could be taken to Court if legal action is to be taken against developers.

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 or neighbour 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://scams-framework.egovhub.net/REPORTABREACHOFPLANNINGCONTROL/launch>

These reports are now also being collated by Andrew Thompson, one of the lead planners and the issues have been escalated to the Major New Sites Board. It is hoped that this approach should ensure we are dealing with the issues in a systematic way and that issues will have the prioritisation they deserve. The planning team will also be available at the next Northstowe Forum to speak with residents about the enforcement process and speak with residents.

## NORTHSTOWE SECONDARY COLLEGE

We received the following information with regards to delays in the opening of Northstowe Secondary School:

*'Following the Northstowe Education Campus progress meeting this week. We have been informed that, primarily due to the weather, but also the delay on delivery and commissioning of key mechanical and electrical components due to manufacturing, the handover date for Phase 1A has been delayed.*

*This delay means that we will not be able to move into the building until Monday 30th September with an official completion date currently of Thursday 26th September.*

*This news is obviously disappointing for all involved with the opening of Northstowe Secondary College but we are committed to ensuring that from the first day of school on September 4th we will be in position to deliver the curriculum and extended-curricular opportunities as planned, for our students.*

*We have considered a number of options for ensuring we can start on the 4th and the one that ensures the highest quality of education for students, in the safest environment is to utilise dedicated space at Pathfinder Primary school. This space was always designed to accommodate the Secondary school students for an interim period and whilst not what we would have wanted still allows us to open with our first cohort as scheduled.*

*We are currently in discussions with CMAT, South Cambridgeshire District Council, the leadership team at Pathfinder and the Diocese to make the necessary arrangements and ensure that the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities can be delivered for the first three and half weeks of term.*

*Whilst the completion of Phase 1A is behind schedule the full completion of the site is ahead of schedule and expect to have full occupation with building work complete on site by May Half-term 2020 so students will have the benefit of the full site in year 7.*

*A letter will be sent to the parents and carers advising them of this news within the next day prior to the Induction Evening scheduled for Monday 1st July.'*

#### NORTHSTOWE SECONDARY SCHOOL ACCESS

We are aware that concerns have been raised regarding access to the secondary school:

Car access will be via Northstowe Phase 1. There will be a footpath from Rampton Drift for children from Longstanton. We have asked whether this route will be lit.

Cycle routes will be worked out and they are working with Highways Agency to ensure these are safe.

Parents will be notified of access routes the school and children will be encouraged to walk and cycle to school.

It is not anticipated that parents will use Rampton Road as a route to drop off children, but this will be monitored.

#### LONGSTANTON BIG WEEKEND, PATHFINDER SCHOOL FETE, OAKINGTON VILLAGE DAY

We would like to say how much we enjoyed Longstanton Big Weekend, Pathfinder School Fete and Oakington Village Day and add our congratulations to the organisers for organising such great events. Thanks to those who came to speak to us with their questions, concerns, feedback and thanks - it's always great to hear directly from residents.

Alex and Sarah were the organisers of the Craft and Produce Fair, our first in Longstanton and are very grateful for those who participated and who came to see the exhibits. In order to run these events we need more people to get involved.

#### OPENING OF THE COMMUNITY WING AT NORTHSTOWE

The Community Wing is now open! The Community Wing will be open and available for room bookings:

09:30 - 16:30 Mondays and Tuesdays

15:00 - 16:30 Wednesdays

and available for room bookings only (subject to key holder availability)

16:30 - 21:30 Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings

09:30 - 21:30 Sundays

For more details or to book a room then please visit the website

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-development/northstowe-community-wing/>

#### NORTHSTOWE COMMUNITY FORUM

The next Northstowe Community Forum will take place on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019, drop in from 18.00, meeting from 19.00-21.00 at the Community Wing. Agenda will be published shortly.

#### COMMUNITY CHEST GRANTS

Community and voluntary groups can currently bid for a share of South Cambridgeshire District Council's Community Chest fund, which helps fund local projects. More details can be found here:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-development/grants/community-chest-grants/>

#### PROPOSED CHANGES TO STREETS TEAM AND ROAD SWEEPING

SCDC Streets service is provided by 11 staff covering works teams and 5 LGV sweeper drivers.

We cover 106 Parishes over 901.6 Square Kilometers, servicing 156,705 residents

We empty 1003 Litter bins and 704 dog waste bins per week approx.

We Sweep 1,186,125 meters of adopted roads require sweeping and 56,893 meters of adopted paths require sweeping.

##### Phase 1- Streets Team

Traditionally we had several groups of staff covering the SCDC area performing separate individual tasks and criss-crossing the district with no clear round structure or accountability.

The works teams have now been restructured into five zone teams. The purpose of remodeling the works teams was to achieve improved efficiency and work area accountability. To achieve this we have devised 5 works team zones covering all of the SCDC service area and consolidated bin and dog waste rounds with other work team tasks such as litter picking, fly tip removal, dead animal recovery and other adhoc streets tasks.

We now have 2 streets operatives / vehicles dedicated to each of the five zones, within each zone the team of two are responsible for all works tasks within their zone. The improvements we expect to see from the smaller zones (previously 4) are that we respond proactively not reactively to fly tips, litter and waste bin emptying with an emphasis on improving overall service to residents and decreasing complaints and service requests.

Each zones assigned operatives can work individually in a single vehicle to cover a greater area of a zone or combine efforts for larger tasks such as fly tip removal or safety critical tasks that requires multi operatives present

## Phase 2 – Mechanical sweeping.

Traditionally our 3 large sweepers and 2 small sweepers covered the SCDC area predominantly on a reactive basis and there was limited monitoring of sweeping locations or forward schedules routes.

Therefore, work has been undertaken to remodel the mechanical sweeping teams in to 5 work zones. Up to a maximum of 5 mechanical sweepers will operate each given zone for two weeks before moving onto the next zone for two weeks moving around the zone map in a clockwise direction.

The benefit of this system is very valuable as it ensures that each zone receives a full two weeks of cleaning up to 5 times per annum and from that a schedule can be produced and published advising the public on which weeks of the year their area is due to be swept. Whilst we visit each zone 5 times a year it's important to note that this does not mean a zone within its entirety will be cleansed, each area will be assessed and cleansing will be performed on a as required basis including targeting hotspot areas.

Adding the zoned structure ensures that the sweepers are clear on their works areas and the tasks within those areas which will consist of deep cleaning of arterial routes as well as general sweeping tasks.

Other parish or works team tasks can also be scheduled throughout the year to correspond with the mechanical sweeping schedule to aid clean ups and joint working.

Further sweeping efficiencies are also being sort by the siting of two skips into the community to enable our smaller sweepers to be able to tip off without returning to the land fill site enabling a second load.

For both works teams and mechanical sweepers we expect that there will be an acceptable level of deviation from zones to take into account the need to act responsively to unforeseen situations that may arise or seasonal demands. This deviation time has been factored into both teams work plans within each zone.

Streets enquiries should continue to be emailed to: [streets@scamb.gov.uk](mailto:streets@scamb.gov.uk) as opposed to an individual officer as this ensures during times of absence or leave enquiries can be handled promptly by the team. On reporting or enquiring about a streets issue it is important beforehand to have a detailed location of the report as well as any photos or supplementary information that can aid handling of the enquiry.

We have asked when the specific timescales on this and when the timetable for street sweeping will be available.

## COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

SCDC be undertaking a Community Governance Review for Longstanton Parish which is due to begin in Autumn of this year. We have asked about details of this process. Below we have also outlined the general, proposed timescales for this :

- The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("the 2007 Act") provides for a Principal Council to conduct a review of the community governance arrangements for the whole or part of its area for the purpose of considering whether or not to make any

changes to Parish boundaries or size, and/or the creation of new parishes; and the review of the electoral arrangements for new and/or existing parishes. Section 93 of the 2007 Act allows principal councils to decide how to undertake such a review, provided that they comply with the duties in the Act which apply to councils undertaking reviews. If, following a review, the Council decides that changes should be made to the electoral arrangements; they may make an Order giving effect to the changes.

- Section 93 also states that in reaching conclusions on the boundaries between parish wards the principal council should take account of community identity and interests in the area and consider whether any particularities or linkages might be broken by the drawing of particular ward boundaries. Principal councils should seek views on such matters during the course of a community governance review and seek sound and demonstrable evidence of such identities and linkage.
- The guidance states that when considering parish ward boundaries principal council should ensure they consider the desirability of fixing boundaries which are, and will remain, easily identifiable, as well as taking into account any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries. A review offers an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features, and remove anomalous parish boundaries.
- The Principal Council is required to determine the terms of reference under which a community governance review is to be undertaken. The terms of reference must clearly specify the area under review and must be published. The guidance states that “Ultimately, the recommendations made in a community governance review ought to bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services”.
- When considering the timeframe for the CGR with respect to Northstowe, we must consider the forecast housing trajectory for the development, the electorate forecast and any scheduled ordinary elections. The process must last no longer that one year from the publication of the Terms of Reference to the point at which the Council resolves to make any Reorganisation Oder required (which then comes into effect from the 01 April following that Reorganisation Order).
- Here are the steps which must be followed and the time we would normally allow for each one:

Publication of the Terms of Reference	This marks the start of the process
Local briefings and meetings	Over the course of the first month
Stage One: Submissions invited	One month from publication of the ToR, with a two month window allowed for submissions

Stage Two: Submissions considered and recommendations prepared	Draft recommendations published two months following the close of submissions
Stage Three: Consultation on draft recommendations	Three month consultation window on the final recommendations; responses gathered and analysed
Final recommendation to Civic Affairs committee	Final recommendation prepared and presented to committee one month following the close of the draft recommendation consultation
Council resolves to make a Reorganisation Order (if required)	One month allowed for preparation of the Order

## DISTRICT WIDE UPDATES

### MONEY MATTERS

The national tables showing Council Tax & Business Rates collection have just been published and South Cambs has retained its place as 3rd best in the country at collecting Council Tax. From total Council Tax due of £114.2m, we had just £716k outstanding at the end of the financial year.

For Business Rates, we've improved on our position of 26th in the previous year, to achieve a placement at 16th nationally. Business Rates collection rate was 99.5%, compared to 99.4% for Council Tax, with just £404k outstanding at the end of the financial year from a total charge of nearly £88.4m.

### HOUSING UPDATES

South Cambs is top nationally for SAP ratings in the Housemark tables (energy efficiency in council houses) and second for rent collection. The new administration pledged to double the number of new council houses it builds from the inherited target of 35 per year to 70 per year and this work is well on track and likely to be exceeded this year.

### PARKING AND PAVEMENT PARKING

At the Parish Liaison meeting last month many parish councillors and clerks expressed frustration about the lamentable figure presented of 22 parking enforcement notices issued in the whole of South Cambs this year. Obviously, that fails completely to address the problem that many of our villages are facing. We have been under pressure from the Police and Crime Commissioner to agree

a civil enforcement scheme for the district and it is surprising that he has failed to accept that the legislation prevents us from doing this and that responsibility for parking enforcement will have to remain his. The problem is that we cannot use council tax to fund such a scheme. It can only be funded from money earned from parking i.e. car parks, fines, residents' parking schemes. We have no car parks and no residents' parking schemes in the district and we know that income from fines would fall far short of the significant amount that would be needed to fund a district wide scheme. The Police have reiterated that if regular offenders are reported to them 3 times they will take action. We suggest we put this to the test and if it fails that you let us know. On the subject of pavement parking there has been some discussion at government level about legislating but as things stand it is at the discretion of the police whether they issue a penalty notice or not. The advice we have had is that they will do so if the gap is not large enough for a wheel chair to pass through.

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#### NEW CEO AT SOUTH CAMBS

By the time you read this there will be a new CEO for South Cambs District Council. Over 60 people were interested in the job which reflects what an exciting and go ahead place South Cambridgeshire is. The candidates were all of very high calibre and to some extent we were spoilt for choice.

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#### ANOTHER NEW TOWN AND A NEW VILLAGE FOR SOUTH CAMBS

We were pleased to learn that the 3 villages of Cambourne have decided that they should be 1 town of Cambourne. This decision was taken by the parish council who will now become a town council. In reality it makes no difference but residents feel that it better reflects what is now a very successful, established community.

Adjacent to Cambourne there will be a further new village on Bourn Airfield and residents have been commenting on the draft guidance that will outline how the new village will come forward as an exemplar in green, healthy living.

South Cambridgeshire District Council's Local Plan, which was adopted last year, allocates land south of the A428 at Bourn Airfield for the new community of approximately 3,500 homes along with facilities and transport links.

The site is a former World War Two airfield and sits between Cambourne and Caldecote. It's a mixture of previously developed land and agricultural fields and currently used for farming, recreational flying, storage and employment.

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#### POLICE STATIONS

The Police and Crime Commissioner has been inviting local people to come and hear his plans for a new police station to serve the south of Cambridgeshire and located on the outskirts of Milton in Cambridge

A number of other locations have been looked at, but the proposed site at Milton provides the best location to meet operational demand. This site has better road access and will enable officers to respond to calls for service more efficiently. It also provides increased custody provision to meet Home Office requirements for new builds.

Whilst the proposed new station will service the south of the county, a Police Information Point and community policing team will remain within Cambridge city, the precise location of which will be decided in due course.

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#### BRIDGET'S BLOG

Also on the South Cambs website is Council Leader Bridget Smith's new blog which will hopefully keep you up to speed on some of the many things she is doing these days. The success of South Cambs over the past year has meant that its local members are being asked to help out with many projects and issues across a much wider geography. The most important of these is Bridget's new role as the political lead for the environment for the OXCAM Arc. In simple terms this is our version of the Northern Powerhouse - an economically vibrant area with huge potential, in government's eyes, to grow the national economy. The risk is that more jobs and more houses damages both the environment and the quality of life for people already living in the Arc. Bridget's role will be to ensure that every opportunity to improve the environment and consequently our quality of life is taken and exploited to the full. Bridget has also been elected as the Lib Dem spokesperson on Safer Communities for the Local Government Association. This will hopefully be very helpful to the Gamlingay Community Safety Group who have been doing such sterling work at a local level.

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#### A14 NEWS

Highways England have failed a number of times to adhere to the noise restrictions put in place by South Cambs at the road works near Milton. They have now appealed against the Council in the hope that they will be able residents longer. Local councillors have been working closely with local residents and HE to try to find a solution which we will report further on next time.

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#### THE LATEST FROM THE MAYOR AND THE COMBINED AUTHORITY

The CA are consulting on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Transport Strategy. It is disappointingly road focused when there is the opportunity to push for better sustainable transport links and better public transport. We know that building bigger roads just encourages more cars on to them especially when there is no alternative. Please do take part in the consultation to share your views. <https://bit.ly/2JeHwIN>

Part of the Devolution Deal was £100mil for affordable housing to be targeted at areas where housing was least affordable. Using this criteria South Cambs should have had a fairly large chunk of the money in the form of grants. However, the Mayor has ring fenced £40mil for a rolling fund of loans, about 90% of which has so far gone to East Cambs - where the Mayor lives! Bridget voted against a loan of over £4mil going to a developer to turn, what the local member described as 'a notorious building' into flats. This building is currently offices located in the centre of Ely and was never intended to be a place where people lived. Only 4 of the 25 flats will be in any way 'affordable' and 4 are actually described as penthouses. The government recently changed planning laws to allow commercial properties to be turned into accommodation without planning permission. In some peoples' views this has resulted in many areas in modern day slums. The reason we have planning laws is to ensure that people get homes of high quality, in good locations with access to health and education facilities. This sort of ad hoc profit motivated project will invariably fail to produce the type of homes we would wish for ourselves, our family or our friends.

The Mayor has put forward the A10 for government funding and refused Bridget's plea to also put forward the A505 which already exceeds its limited capacity. Bridget had previously successfully persuaded the CA and the Mayor to develop a project just to upgrade the junctions on the A10 at a cost of about £40 mil rather than the extraordinarily expensive (£1/2 billion) dualling which the Mayor favours. Both these projects have been submitted.

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#### BLUE PLAQUE SCHEME

South Cambs has just launched this scheme which has been running in Cambridge since 2001. The first plaque was unveiled yesterday (Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June) at Girton College to honour its two principal founders, Barbara Bodichon and Emily Davies, who were pioneers in providing education at degree level for women in this country.

South Cambridgeshire residents are now being encouraged to nominate a person or event for commemoration. Visit the webpage at [www.scambs.gov.uk/blueplaques](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/blueplaques) for further details and the nomination criteria.

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#### STAGECOACH BUSWAY CONSULTATION

Stagecoach have launched a Busway public consultation. You can register your views on services and improvements needed here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/cambridgeshirebusway>

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#### PLANNING DEPARTMENT CHANGES

The planning service at SCDC is merging with Cambridge City Council and is nearing the end of its transformation programme. The new shared planning is the first service area to receive the ICT hardware and telephony for the Council Anywhere Programme which will enable its staff to work between two offices but also out in the community. There is a national shortage of planners and areas of the planning department are running high vacancies: much is being done to recruit more planning officers but it has meant that some applications are failing to meet target deadlines and also that planning officers have not been as available to residents as they would like to be.

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#### GREEN TO THE CORE

New initiatives at SCDC being explored:

Some of you will have seen reports in the local media of the Waste Service (SCDC and City) investigating switching to electric powered bin lorries. The current fleet meets the highest environmental standards for diesel engines but the trucks only manage 4-6 miles to the gallon and the fleet of 50 bin lorries and 18 street sweeping vehicles costs around £46,000 every four weeks to fuel. The cost of their replacement by electric powered vehicles is high and the two councils are exploring how this might be best managed.

Going paperless - plans are afoot to reduce the amount of printed council documents and to encourage all councillors to view the paperwork online.

Green energy initiatives - SCDC has pledged to generate 25% of its income from investments by the end of this administration. If we can do this and also tick our Green to the Core pledge box then all

the better. Green energy, be it battery storage, solar, EV charging points or others are all possible future investment opportunities for the Council.

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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