

# DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2019

CLLR SARAH CHEUNG JOHNSON & CLLR ALEX MALYON

NORTHSTOWE DEVELOPERS MEETING

Sarah and Alex met with Northstowe developers at the end of August at SCDC.

We were meeting them to primarily talk about construction traffic coming onto the site and through Willingham village as well as issues with construction noise on site and breaches of working hours conditions.

They had been invited to attend the meeting by our Lead Member for Planning Cllr Tumi Hawkins and our Enforcement Officers. We had representatives from Bovis, Linden, Taylor Wimpey, Barrett's (including David Wilson), L&Q and Homes England. Also present were our colleagues Cllrs Bill Handley & Dawn Percival who represent Over & Willingham and an officer from the County Council.

The following was agreed:

- They will write to their construction contractors reminding them of their obligations to abide by the transport plan (i.e. not to use Willingham to get to/leave Northstowe) and insisting that this is made clear to any sub-contractors.
- They will provide senior level contacts to whom breaches of condition should be reported.
- To research options for CCTV at the entrance to Northstowe (both inward and outwards facing) and to consult with specialist suppliers of this technology. There was agreement that CCTV was a key tool in the resolution of this matter and that SCDC should be the recipients of the data recorded.
- To implement either a log system or CCTV to monitor the individual sites for incoming and outgoing traffic. These would be used in conjunction with the CCTV at the entrance and would be freely available to SCDC Enforcement Officers).
- To install white noise reversing alarms on all vehicles.
- To proactively manage the noise issues and ensure construction is done only within the permitted times.

We reiterated that the complaints on noise in Northstowe was actively causing concern for potential house buyers as it is widely seen in social media. We are hoping this will act as sufficient motivators to resolve these issues.

We have all agreed to meet again on Friday 4th October (to give enough time for the developers to comply with the agreed action).

After the meeting, we had a useful conversation with the Head of Homes England Northstowe, Philip Harker. Although house building for this phase has not yet started, it was reassuring that he was there to hear the concerns and he sought to reassure residents that his organisation wishes to have a good relationship with residents. He said that he would accelerate plans to implement CCTV with Automatic Number plate Recognition (ANPR) and other monitoring for his sites.

We both felt that this was a very constructive meeting and we are hopeful that an agreement can now be reached.

#### ANGLIAN WATER WORKS IN LONGSTANTON- SCHOOL LANE AND RAMPTON ROAD

We asked Anglian Water for further details about the sewerage works in Longstanton. They have given us the following information which explains the reasons for the work being carried out:

'We are installing a new sewer from the Northstowe development direct to our Water Recycling Centre (WRC) on Uttons Drove just off the A14. This sewer is not a normal one like you are all connected to, it is called a Rising Main. It will move the foul wastewater, under pressure from a new pumping station within the Northstowe development direct to the mentioned WRC, it can't be connected to and doesn't add the wastewater to the existing network in the village. To do so would have overloaded the network and caused the need for extensive works in Longstanton. As you can imagine this is the last thing any of us wanted.

We appreciate that our works are disruptive but the decisions we have taken to get to this type of construction are the quickest and will save us from having to come back in the future. Let me clarify this for you:

Directional drilling – this technique is quick when compared to open cut/trench digging. With this technique we dig holes every 100 metres or so and then automatically drill towards the location of the next hole; each section should only take 2-5 days depending on the soil types etc. If we were to dig trenches we would need more machinery, cause a lot more disruption with top soil removals etc and require more time to complete.

Pipe location and direction – yes, we had options to go in different directions, but these had their own issues. To avoid going under existing or potential new housing developments our sewer pipe would have had to be much longer and take longer to complete. By going down the road we can take the shortest and less time-consuming route. Also, should there ever be an issue with the pipe in the future we would not have to dig up or around houses, we will be able to do any works in the road with less disruption.

Future growth – it is possible that in the future there will be a need to take away more wastewater as Northstowe grows. So, to avoid coming back to lay another pipe in the future we are laying two of these rising mains along Rampton Road to School Lane. This will ensure there is plenty of capacity in the coming years and mean we won't have to repeat this work if more/bigger pipes are needed.

Once we have completed the laying of the new pipes to School Lane our works will then enter farmland all the way to our WRC. We aim to be out of the highway and heading away from the village by the middle of November 2019.'

We have spoken with Nick Daubney from Anglian Water regarding complaints about the safety of the works. They have told us that as soon as they were made aware of the issues immediate steps were taken to make the fencing safe- these should now be secured when they are not on site. The entire team of contractors were re-briefed on their responsibilities, to themselves and customers, when it comes to how they leave a site at the end of the day. They will look to follow this up with spot checks for the remaining duration of the works. We have also asked that they ensure safe pedestrian access is always maintained, which we have been told they will do.

If you have any further concerns, then please contact [cllr.malyon@scamb.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.malyon@scamb.gov.uk) or [cllr.cheungjohnson@scamb.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.cheungjohnson@scamb.gov.uk) and we can pass these on directly rather than going via Customer Services.

#### NORTHSTOWE COMMUNITY WING

Northstowe Community Wing at the Pathfinder school is now open for bookings (with limited opening hours) all the details and to book go to the SCDC website and search for community wing.

#### NORTHSTOWE PHASE 3 CONSULTATIONS

In May 19 the masterplan went to the Cambridge Quality Commission. The emerging masterplan charts design ideas for the runway section, the military lake, open space and recreation strategy and Phase 3b.

13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> September Public Consultation at Homes England's new offices on Rampton Road. For those who can't attend the details will be on [www.northstowe.com](http://www.northstowe.com)

#### HEALTHY NEW TOWN NORTHSTOWE: A PARTICIPATORY APPRAISAL APPROACH

Alex attended the feedback session and workshop for the Northstowe Healthy New Town, where insights were shared from the Eastern Academic Health Science Network project exploring what future health services at Northstowe should look like. A team of volunteer researchers have been holding conversations with over 200 service users and community members, including residents from Northstowe to better understand what they want from health and well-being services. It is hoped that this work will help and inform the development of the New Care Model for Northstowe and development of services. The full report from this will be made available shortly and we will ensure that this is shared with residents and the Parish Councils.

#### A14 NOISE ISSUES

Oakington residents have reported hearing A14 piling works at night.

We sought advice from our fellow councillors in Histon who've been dealing with this issue for over a year. Please email all complaints to [ldf@southcambs.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@southcambs.gov.uk) as well as Highways England [a14.cambridgehuntingdon@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:a14.cambridgehuntingdon@highwaysengland.co.uk) with details of the noise, times, videos.

It appears Highways England are meant to notify the parish council 10 days in advance of piling work, and we have asked for them to ensure this is adhered to in future.

South Cambs District Council are now demanding stricter thresholds for noise and vibration under Section 61 of the Highways Act 1980- something which was not being done in the past. This means that Highways England now must apply for permission for out-of-hours working and night works should be kept to a minimum, only taking place if the work would be too dangerous or disruptive during the day. It also means that Highways England should carry out 'best practical means', such as using noise-absorbing barriers or digging trenches to reduce the vibration from piling.

Highways England is appealing against South Cambs District Council's use of Section 61. The appeal is ongoing and is currently with the Secretary of State. The council is standing firm on this and enforcing the conditions wherever it can.

#### ZERO CARBON ENERGY GRANT

The Zero Carbon Communities Grant supports voluntary and community sector groups, charities and parish councils seeking to deliver bold, ambitious projects that engage communities and help the district shift towards a cleaner, greener future in support the aim of zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Applications are invited for grants of between £1,000 and £15,000

We wish to encourage South Cambridgeshire communities of all sizes and levels of experience to apply for these grants and bid for a share of just over £91,000. The deadline for applications is 5pm on 31<sup>st</sup> October,

#### FLY-TIPPING

The council has recently launched a campaign to tackle the issue of fly-tipping across the District- over 900 reported fly-tipping incidents are reported in South Cambs each year. Unfortunately fly-tipping often comes from householders paying someone to remove waste for them. If you are booking someone you can check whether they have a waste carriers' licence via the Environment Agency website.

The Council will also take away up to three bulky items for a charge of £30, more details via <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/bi.../bulky-item-collection-service/>

If residents witness fly-tipping taking place, then they should contact the police via 999. If found afterwards it should be reported online to the Council as quickly as possible so it can be investigated and cleared up. In both cases, people are being asked to note the exact location, time, what the items are and if safe to do so to take a photo.

## 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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### TRANSPORT

The Greater Cambridge Partnership has postponed a decision about the route of the CAM Metro from Cambridge to Cambourne for additional studies to be completed. A final route decision is now expected in October which should hopefully be about the same time that we know what route the East West rail link will take. South Cambs District Council is supportive of a Northern Route that goes through St Neots and puts a station at Cambourne thus linking many thousands of residents to the London mainline station as well as to Oxford, Milton Keynes etc. What we do not want is a route running via Sandy through Bassingbourn to Cambridge which will essentially create a semi impermeable barrier right through the centre of South Cambs and potentially splitting established communities in two. Additional to this will be the environmental damage of running a rail line through virgin farmland. The northern route will hopefully hug the existing A428 thus creating a transport corridor where opportunities for environmental enhancement can be exploited to the full.

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### IS THERE TO BE A DROUGHT?

Within the Cambridge region we continue to experience lower than average levels of rainfall. This is now starting to generate concerns among the public, relating to levels within watercourses and the local environment.

We have seen a press release from Cambridge Water which says:

“We are closely monitoring the situation in conjunction with the Environment Agency. We are not at the point where we believe a drought should be declared. We have suffered from some exceptionally low levels of rainfall and without the rainfall, ultimately the whole system isn’t sustainable in the long term.

There's no imminent risk of anyone's taps running dry, as there are adequate supplies to meet everyone's demand at the moment but we're really conscious of the environmental impact associated with the abstraction of our water. We're working very closely with the Cam Valley Forum and the Environment Agency. We've limited the volume that we abstract and reduced our license capacity in order to make sure we minimise that environmental impact. We've done that by using some alternative sources and moving water around. However, in the longer term with the continued growth in population we are going to find it increasingly difficult to do that.

New developments will have a significant impact on demand. We're planning ahead and looking at our 25-year planning and investment strategy in order to make sure we'll be able to meet everyone's demands.

Invariably, we've all got a part to play in this. We all need to recognise that water is a precious resource and that we often take it for granted. So we all need to avoid, wherever we can, any waste or misuse of water. Increasingly we will need to implement recycling of grey water and rainwater harvesting, particularly in new developments, which will reduce the amount of water abstraction and allow us to better meet people's needs in the future.

We work with a group, called Water Resources East, where we look at the challenge across the region and what needs to be done. Within that group there are water companies and representatives from agriculture and energy, so all the users of this precious resource. Our challenge is to collectively look at how we can meet everyone's needs in a sustainable way. So the options we are discussing at the moment, construction of reservoirs, transfer mains using rivers to transfer water from wetter parts of the country and also desalination, which is an extreme measure and quite expensive to operate but potentially offers a solution to the problem."

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#### CAMBRIDGE ICE RINK

It's time to get your skates on as we now have a brand new ice rink in Cambridge. The company building this had quite a lot of money from the university but S Cambs Council was able to make them a pretty large loan when they overran their budget due to finding lots of unexploded bombs on the site (which is on the old military airfield run by Marshalls in Cambridge). We made the loan because we felt that this would be a significant attraction to the residents of S Cambs. Let us know what you think of it.

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#### HOMELESSNESS.

Homelessness is an increasing problem and is especially concerning when it involves young people as is becoming more common. If you think you see a young person rough sleeping please ring the duty housing officer at S Cambs straight away. If the office is shut phone the emergency number 01253 501117.

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#### NEW COUNCIL HOUSES

The District Council bought 144 new Council houses last month (81 at Northstowe and 63 at Sawston) for £24m, which is great news. The money comes from the reward government gives us for building new market homes - new homes bonus as well as the receipts we get from people using their council

houses under the Right to Buy Scheme. We are aiming to build or acquire over 70 council houses each year and so far have exceeded our targets.

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#### LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNDING

The keenly awaited Spending Review has now been postponed by Government and so local authorities have to battle on for a further year with the inadequate amounts of money they have been struggling with since the advent of austerity. The expectation was that there would be a reallocation of business rates between Government, district and county councils with the aim of addressing the crisis in health and social care. What moving money from district to county councils fails to address is the need for more money for district councils to develop the work they do in preventing people becoming ill and a burden on social care through any number of ways including public health, high quality building standards, council housing, homelessness prevention - to name but a few.

For those of you who would like a bit more detail about local authority funding:

The recent announcement means that the three-year Comprehensive Spending Review - which was due to be delivered in the autumn - will now be held in 2020. The Spending Review, which ordinarily sets Whitehall budgets for a three year period, was due to cover the period 2020-2023, but will now not begin until April 2021.

In overall terms, between 2010 and 2020, Councils will have lost almost 60p in every £1 of central government funding; which has had a significant impact on the services which local authorities deliver in their communities. S Cambs, for example, budgeted for £7.823 million Government Grant (Formula Grant) in 2010/2011 and, by comparison, identified £3.439 million in the Medium Term Financial Plan for "Retained Business Rates" in 2020/2021 (equivalent to 44%) and £1.798 million for New Homes Bonus (the money we get from government for building new houses).

There is currently no certainty of funding for local government beyond this financial year, though there are indications that Government will increase public spending and investment, with an expected review of funding for adult social care. Questions do, however, remain over the following areas which are potentially crucial for District Councils:

- The continuation of funding streams such as the New Homes Bonus;
- The impact of the Fair Funding Review on distribution of funding – with District Council's expected to be losers;
- The impact of the new business rates retention system and associated changes;
- The overall level of funding for the sector.

It is vital that the Government uses the Spending Review to deliver truly sustainable funding for local government as the investment in local services is good for prosperity, economic growth and overall health and wellbeing.

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#### PAPWORTH HOSPITAL

You will likely be aware that Papworth Hospital has moved to a new site near Addenbrookes Hospital. We have recently learnt that a company called Global Healthcare Real Estate Ltd has won the bid to acquire the site of the former hospital site in Papworth Everard. We are told that they plan to open a five-star health and wellness village comprising a country club and spa, convalescence and rehabilitation units, villas, and apartments. This will of course require planning permission from the Council.

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#### BREXIT AND BUSINESS

It is very worrying how few businesses have made any preparations at all for Brexit. Without wishing to go into any detail about the problems they might well be facing by the time you read this we are encouraged that a number of local business support bodies are mobilising their own resources to provide help and advice.

The Chamber of Commerce has a Brexit Hub on its website which is updated daily.

The Combined Authority has been very slow off the mark but now has its own Business Support arm Signpost2grow (created under the previous Local Enterprise Partnership) which is about to start to run series of meetings titled Brexit Basics. We pointed out that these sessions were not advertised on the Combined Authority's website - an error which we hope has now been resolved. If you still cannot find them try the website of Signpost2grow or the excellent business support pages on S Cambs council's own website.

If you are a local business experiencing particular problems as a result of Brexit please do let your councillors know.

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#### BREXIT AND TRAVEL

You may never have thought of S Cambs as having any 'ports' mainly because we are so far from the sea. However, Duxford and Cambridge airports are considered to be 'ports' and this means that the Council will have to start to man them with officers such as environmental health officers once Brexit has happened. The reason for this will be to ensure that no food stuff enters the country which is not permitted by our own laws. What the cost of this will be to the taxpayer we have yet to discover.

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#### BREXIT AND PEOPLE

At the time writing only about a 1/3rd of eligible EU citizens in the UK had applied for settled status. In South Cambs this amounts to only 2360 people having applied. A Government sponsored advert has been removed from the air waves for being misleading in saying that the process was very straight forward. It is actually rather complex - South Cambs and Cambridge City are planning a joint approach to helping people complete their applications. Please keep an eye on our websites and also on the .Gov website for updates. If you are struggling, then make contact urgently with your councillors.

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#### NEW POLICE STATION AT MILTON

Further information on the Police Station at Milton proposals are on the Police and Crime Commissioner website in support of his proposal to build a new police station in Milton, Cambridge.

Over the last few weeks, members of the public were invited to give their early views on the proposal, views which are being considered in advance of planning application.

Some of the concerns put forward including increased traffic, noise pollution, greenbelt concerns, and public safety. Those concerns will help inform future consultation on the project in the weeks to come.

A link to the published papers is here:

<https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/accessing-information/decision-making/business-coordination-board/bcb-31st-july-2019/>

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#### SUSTAINABLE COFFEE GROUNDS

Two local Councils are giving practical support to a rapidly growing green initiative that takes used coffee grounds from local coffee shops and turns them into biofuel.

Free caddies to collect and transport the coffee grounds are being supplied by the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste (GCSW) Commercial Waste team to Cambridge Food Hub, which runs the Green Coffee Shop Scheme. Greater Cambridge Shared Waste is a partnership between South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City Councils.

It collects recycling, food waste and rubbish from residents across the area and offers a commercial service for local companies, schools and other organisations too.

The Green Coffee Shop initiative involves Cambridge Food Hub delivering barista-style oat milk produced at Glebe Farm in Kings Ripton to coffee shops, while at the same time collecting used coffee grounds. These grounds are then delivered to bio-bean, a clean tech firm at Alconbury which manufactures biofuels and biochemicals from spent coffee grounds. New oat milk is then collected (Alconbury is around seven miles from Kings Ripton) and the process begins again.

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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