

# DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

FEBRUARY 2020

CLLR SARAH CHEUNG JOHNSON & CLLR ALEX MALYON

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The first phase of the public consultation for Community Governance Review for Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe has been completed. We would like to thank both parish councils and for residents for the support on this community engagement and the help promoting the CGR process to date. We would like to offer our thanks to Council offices Clare Gibbons and Liz Davy for their time and support on this, adding in additional sessions as requested by residents.

Over 430 responses were received and the team is currently analysing their findings. Themes emerging so far are:

- There is a strong desire expressed by residents of the existing villages for the governance arrangements for their villages to be separate from those for Northstowe and to remain as autonomous communities.
- Northstowe residents also appear to see their future governance arrangements as being separate from those for the villages of Longstanton and Oakington and Westwick. They strongly expressed a view that the entirety of Northstowe, i.e. Phases 1, 2, 3A and 3B should be considered as a single governance unit.

Clare Gibbons and Liz Davy will be at Parish Council meeting on the 10th Feb to give an update.

The next stage of the process will be for draft recommendations based on this initial consultation to be published in March 2020 and this will be followed up by further public consultation when you can again express your views on any proposals.

As District Councillors we will be seeking to represent the views of the whole communities we represent and should a preferred option emerge from the consultation, we will support this going forward.

The review will finish in September 2020. If any changes are proposed the Council will make something called a Reorganisation Order and then changes would come into force in May 2021.

For more information, the terms of reference for the review or to submit your views as part of the consultation go to: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/community-governance-reviews>

## A14 HIGHWAYS ENGLAND WORK

We have received numerous complaints from residents over the traffic on the B1050 over the Bar Hill junction and have engaged the A14 officer at the District Council to aid with these conversations and add pressure to the A14 team from the District Council. It is our understanding the team are engaged with trying to find a solution for this. We have also written to our MP for assistance on this but have thus far received no reply or acknowledgement.

## NEW PLANNING OFFICER FOR NORTHSTOWE PHASE 1

We're pleased to be informed we have a new planning officer, Fiona Hunter, dedicated to looking at Northstowe Phase 1 and within that, enforcement on outstanding issues with L&Q (Gallaghers), she will be working closely alongside Andrew Thompson, our Principal Planner.

Our new officer is working through the rather painstaking process of mapping what was agreed with the current state of where we are in the development. We understand the outstanding work on the L&Q side is rather long and we will be writing a letter as your Cllrs to the Directors to push for more work on this as we all share the frustration of there not being enough here for this growing community once this list has been formalised and checked. Fiona is also currently looking at the issue of Badger setts raised by residents.

## ADDITIONAL NORTHSTOWE BRIEFINGS

Following feedback from residents and Oakington Parish Council, we have arranged a specific briefing for Oakington residents on Phase 3 by Homes England. This will be on the 5th March at Oakington Pavilion 6pm and is open to all. Andrew Thompson, principal planner will also be present.

We have also asked community development officers to arrange a similar briefing specifically for Rampton Drift residents again with Homes England and our planning officer as well as Urban Splash the developers for the first phase of Phase 2 to address specific Rampton Drift concerns as well as wider questions, the date is to be confirmed and will be open to all to attend.

## NORTHSTOWE - TEMPORARY FOOTPATH TO BUSWAY

Following complaints from residents which we raised with L&Q, L&Q have resurfaced the temporary footpath to make this safer for residents. In addition, L&Q will install a fine gravel topping to this temporary path when they carry out similar works to the paths in the Formal Park during late Feb/early March, to smooth out any unevenness.

The permanent extension to the Busway and footway/cycleway adjacent to the east side of Bovis development, H6, is to be constructed by Cambs County Council as it is within the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway land. To date they have had to confirm funds for this but it

is our understanding that they now have funds and intend to construct 'this year'. At this point we will stop using the temporary footpath.

#### BIRD SCARER FIELDS NORTH OF B1050

A number of residents have complained that the bird scarer being used in the fields north of the B1050 are too loud and scaring pets and children and have been heard as early as 6.30am and as late as 11pm.

We reported this to Environmental Health who have responded with the below. We will contact residents to see if they wish to take this further.

*The farmers are advised to use the NFUs code of practise which gives them guidelines as to how to prevent a nuisance. The hours on the guidance are not prior to 0700 and not after 2200. They are advised to set the timer so that they do not go off more regularly than 4 times an hour (it takes birds approximately 15 minutes to re group).*

*The code of practise is not enforceable however we can use it as a tool if a statutory nuisance is reported from the gas guns. They should only be used when the crops are most vulnerable. This year this has possibly been delayed due to the majority of crops only just being planted (crops which usually would have been planted post harvest in September).*

*If there is a particular resident who is close to the location of the scarer and are experiencing a continued disturbance and would like to report it as a statutory nuisance then please get them to contact us directly. We would then investigate as a statutory nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and this process would start by asking them to keep a diary and then possibly installing recording equipment in their property.*

#### COUNCILLOR UPDATES

We send 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/>

#### DISTRICT WIDE UPDATES

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[GREATER CAMBRIDGE PLANNING SERVICE \(GCPS\)](#)

The performance of the joint planning service continues to improve as the service settles down after the re-organisation in 2018. The focus on improving the customer experience went a step up as a new service-wide performance officer joined the service in early December 2018, the focus is on making the service easier to navigate and friendlier to customers whilst ensuring national planning laws are kept! 85% of all householder applications submitted are approved and this has been consistent since 2016, even though there was a significant increase in the number of applications during the past few years. 83% of applications are also determined within the statutory time set by government. There's always room for improvement and the pre-app service is one of those areas of planning we need to improve on as well.

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#### GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN – ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

This consultation is running to 24th February 2020. This is an early stage in what will be a 4-year process. South Cambs needs to put together the foundation of the plan so it is important that residents engage and tell us your views and ideas. The government has set minimum targets for housing for all councils, and the plan must meet national policy guidelines too. So there's a lot to consider, to make sure the plan will pass examination. We want to build the foundation right so please spread the word to your community, friends etc., so we can reach a wide range of people. Use the hashtag #GCLocalPlan if you talk about the consultation on social media.

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#### PLANNING SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The Council was made aware of a letter from Fewes Lane Consortium to Parish Councils alleging that the Council was changing the way in which decisions were made about requests for an application to go to planning committee. This is not the case. The process remains the same as it is now.

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#### SOUTH CAMBS DISTRICT COUNCIL

South Cambs DC are currently reviewing their Business Plan to identify the priorities for the forthcoming year. The focus is still on climate change and business support as well as housing that is affordable for people to live in. The winners in our £120,000 Zero Carbon Grants programmes which has given money to parishes and communities for green schemes have just been announced.

The Council will be helping to establish a district wide Community Warden Scheme to help keep people well and happy in their own homes. Please contact the council if this is something you are interested in being involved in. We will be running a celebration event for community volunteers shortly and District Councillors have been asked to nominate someone in their community who has made an outstanding contribution to their residents. There are now plans to establish a Business Support team at the Council which will fill the gap left by the loss of agencies such as Business Link in supporting grass roots business. This will consist of 4 people at a cost of £200,000. A big focus will be on getting our Enterprise Zones fully populated and in ensuring that our village based businesses continue to thrive – this will mesh with a 'single point of contact' for businesses at the council in response to feedback about difficulty in accessing services and in responsiveness.

Proposals have been put forward to make the Council offices less dependent on fossil fuels, including installing a solar car port which will generate more than 20% of the electricity for the entire building and installing a ground source heat pump to reduce the amount of gas used on site by at least 80%

For the full details: [https://www.scambs.gov.uk/making-south-cambs-hall-green-to-its-core/?fbclid=IwAR0pf8WgF8sXWrpaErM\\_slIqkCbwVMewUDhsszh\\_OdPX5Gk5\\_lKR2h8pFpc](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/making-south-cambs-hall-green-to-its-core/?fbclid=IwAR0pf8WgF8sXWrpaErM_slIqkCbwVMewUDhsszh_OdPX5Gk5_lKR2h8pFpc)

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#### EAST WEST RAIL ROUTE CONFIRMED

The route for East West Rail has been announced by the Government. Leading Councillors have welcomed that the environment was a top consideration in deciding the East-West rail route.

Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, made the announcement this morning that route E had been selected for the railway line linking Cambridge and Oxford.

The route via Cambourne was the option South Cambridgeshire District Council said should be chosen when asked during a consultation. Alternatives through the district were via Bassingbourn.

Cllr Aidan Van de Weyer, Deputy Leader and lead Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure at South Cambridgeshire District Council said: "We are pleased and relieved that an announcement has finally been made on the route of East West Rail. We are also supportive of the decision to run the new railway from Bedford to Cambridge via Cambourne. We were told that one of the key factors in determining the route was the environmental opportunities that this option offers. Any project of this size has an impact, but overall it will offer huge scope for environmental enhancements, much of which be in South Cambridgeshire.

"The decision on whether this will be an electrified line has not yet been made but we are told that it will be a net zero carbon railway which is exactly what we would want as we move towards being a zero carbon district by 2050."

Cllr Bridget Smith, Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council, said: "I have asked East-West Railway Company to work very closely with local councillors and officers, and to fully engage with all of our affected villages from the outset. This is vital so they know exactly what is going on and have every opportunity to input their views into the whole process."

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#### CAMBRIDGE SOUTH STATION

Please find a moment to respond to the consultation on the proposed Cambridge South Station serving Addenbrookes, Royal Papworth and the Biomedical campus. It closes on March 2nd and you can find it at

<https://consultations.networkrail.co.uk/communications/cambridge-south/>

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#### MARSHALLS RELOCATION

It is very disappointing to report that Marshalls have decided very reluctantly to drop Duxford as a potential relocation site for Marshall Aerospace and Defence. The most significant issue was that the airspace above any new buildings would, for safety reasons, have to become a no-fly zone. This, along with the existing restrictions over

Duxford village, would dictate flight patterns that would put undue stress on historic aircraft airframes making any sort of aerobatics from the airfield virtually impossible. Marshalls remain confident they will be in a position to confirm a preferred relocation option during 2020.

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#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Cambridgeshire County Council plans to increase its commitment to dealing with environmental and climate issues by proposing a new strategic object in its business plan of 'reaching a net zero carbon target by 2050. This is likely to include mitigating carbon emissions from our buildings and fleet vehicles – with a commitment to take all 69 of the buildings currently owned or occupied off fossil fuel heating by 2023 and to replace all fleet cars and vans with electric vehicles by 2025. Rather less specifically we will be “Managing changes to infrastructure to manage the risk of significant climate change” as well as looking after Cambridgeshire’s air, water and soil to ensure the future health of Cambridgeshire people, flora and fauna.

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#### FIRE AUTHORITY

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority is proposing a two per cent increase to the fire service’s proportion of council tax for 2020/21. This equates to an extra £1.41 a year for a Band D property, totalling £72.15 a year or £1.38 a week.

This is the most the Fire Authority is allowed to ask for due to capping restrictions. The Fire Authority’s government grant for 2020/21 is remaining the same as this year so the small council tax increase will only cover inflation costs. This will enable the Fire Authority to maintain the current service but will not allow for any growth or additional investment. The Fire Authority would like to know if you support this proposal. Please click here to have your say <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/H5BWSBV>. You can also email [enquiries@cambsfire.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@cambsfire.gov.uk).

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#### POTHOLES... AGAIN

Thanks very much to residents and parish councillors for reporting potholes and other highways problems on-line and alerting us to having done so. This really helps to get repairs into the queue sooner rather than later. Unfortunately, we continue to exist in reactive mode with emergency repairs and no prospect of any significant change to the status quo – we need much more funding.

The County Council now requires its employees to take off the Christmas to New Year holiday period, which means that there’s no one in the office to process reports of Highways faults during that time, causing a backlog in January. The Highways officers do their best in very difficult circumstances – and lack the resource to do their jobs to the standard they would like, and which people rightfully expect.

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#### (LACK OF) SCHOOL FUNDING

We are disappointed to note that the County Council has asked the Dept of Education if it can remove 1.8% of the main schools budget and put it in the High Needs Block to help meet the extra cost of providing for the increasing number and proportion of children needing extra help (and also to help pay off the £16 m deficit carry forward). This will mean, if approved, that the per pupil allocation in mainstream schools will go down by £50 per

head. A perfect example of how dreadfully central government view the education of our children.

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#### BUS PASSES

Unfortunately, the County Council no longer offers bus passes in paper form. To apply for a concessionary bus pass, you need to ring 0345 045 1367, or go on-line. To apply on line: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/buses/free-bus-pass/> The postcode field is designed to prevent non Cambridgeshire postcodes from being processed through the system. The postcode needs to be entered as three digits a space and then the last three digits, with the characters in upper case as it would appear on a postal address. Do please get in touch if you're experiencing any frustrations!

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#### ELECTRONIC HEALTH CARE

Plans for digitizing many aspects of our health services have been set out by our local NHS 'Sustainable Transformation Partnership', a management group tasked with overseeing coordination of the many NHS partners that combine to provide our health care. These plans are aspirational and not set out in any practical detail, and yet the intention is for digital transformation to take place quickly – the call having been issued by Health Secretary Matt Hancock.

With the goal of reducing Outpatients face-to-face time by 30%, as patients we may be asked to engage in consultations by video link or email. This will work for some but not others, given the lack of access to the necessary digital technology by a significant segment of the population. Patients should also be able to access their records on-line, though even now many of our local health partners are unable to speak to each other digitally, because they use different systems – for example, Addenbrooke's and Royal Papworth Hospitals. And some GP practices are not signed up to the principle of making their own doctors' notes available to patients on-line.

Meanwhile, new health apps like the 'NHS App' and 'Doctorlink' are appearing on the scene. Only after one has registered is it possible to see what they're about and to examine the fine print – raising more questions, including that of scams.

Goals are ambitious but reflect the urgent shortfall of resources seen across the NHS.

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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