

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

MARCH 2020

CLLR SARAH CHEUNG JOHNSON & CLLR ALEX MALYON

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Longstanton & Oakington will remain separate parishes from Northstowe. Oakington to retain green separation within its parish.

The Civic Affairs Committee at South Cambs District Council has decided on three options to go back out to residents for the next round of consultation. None of them include merging to create one super parish.

The options are:

- A - All phases of Northstowe create a new Parish. Oakington & Westwick remain its own parish with the boundaries highlighted by Oakington Parish Council, to include the green separation land. Longstanton Parish would remain the same up to the roundabout separating Station road and the B1050 towards Willingham. Land north of the Guided Busway will go to Willingham Parish. (see map on Page 33 of agenda pack below for detailed maps)
- B - As above but land north of the guided Busway to go to Northstowe. (see map on Page 37 of agenda pack below for detailed maps)
- C - Only Northstowe Phases East of the B1050 would go to create a Northstowe Parish, Longstanton Parish would retain all land to the west of the B1050. (see map on Page 39 of agenda pack below for detailed maps)

These options were rejected:

A2 - Over Parish Council ceding some land to create a more natural boundary

A3 - A late submission from Homes England to extend Phase 3 land over the green separation for Oakington.

As District Cllrs we were happy with the committee's recommendations and supported rejection of A2 and A3. Thank you to Oakington Parish Chair Stephen Moore for speaking on rejection of A3 and maintaining the green separation for Oakington. We note and share the disappointment of Oakington Parish Council on Homes England lack of engagement and late response to this issue and we will be working to bring them to the table for better engagement on this issue going forwards.

We also do not support option C but as this was a preference given by a group of residents, we were keen for this to be included in the next round of consultation so that:

- 1) Residents of Bloor were able to give their views and preferences clearly on this option
- 2) Longstanton residents could fully appreciate the impact of adding the planned thousands of houses

to the west of B1050 would have on Longstanton - it would equal the amount of existing houses in Longstanton.

We are keen that residents north of the guided busway are given every opportunity to express their preference for A or B and will be guided by them and the Longstanton Parish Council on which is their preference.

We would like to thank all residents who took the time to fill out the form and know that many of you found this confusing. We are working with the Council to ensure the next consultation is clear for residents to complete and this will be launching next week.

This will also be followed by a series of consultations and presentations to be given at Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe, details can also be found in the pack below.

Full pack: <https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/.../Public%20reports%20pack%20...>

ENFORCEMENT UPDATE FOR NORTHSTOWE PHASE 1

Fiona Hunter our new planning officer for Northstowe Phase 1 pursuing the following pre-enforcement actions with L&Q:

- A: We have issued a letter on 30.01.2020 putting L&Q on notice that they must confirm the Community Building redline within 12 weeks (23rd April). If they don't, we will take over and ask the "Expert" to confirm.
- B - asking L&Q to submit a timetable within 5 weeks demonstrating when and how outstanding S106 infrastructure will be delivered. This will also ask that outstanding plans and strategies are also submitted within 5 weeks. If they don't we have advised them we intend to apply to the Courts for Specific Performance (similar to an injunction). Likely to be issued this Thursday, so the 5 weeks would end on 2nd April.
- C – preparing a letter to deal with breaches of condition, I am waiting on legal advise on this one, it is likely to include:
 - Infrastructure delivery not in accordance with approval of condition details S/2884/16/DC: Green Routes, Water Park, Primary Roads
 - No installation of the water fountain in the Local Centre Square, and no evidence this was agreed by the Council
 - Streetlights along Primary Road adjacent to Parcels H10 and H12 are not functional (at least 5 columns).
 - Request confirmation of the installation of CCTV and monitoring data for construction traffic.

CEO of SCDC is due to meet with Directors of L&Q to discuss the above as well as future Section 106 commitments, in particular the delivery of community buildings.

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.

MORE POTHOLES

We have sent a letter to our new MP to request an update on when we might expect to see the £2 billion promised to deal with potholes and how much of this we will see in South Cambs, we have yet to have an acknowledgement of this.

GIRTON TO OAKINGTON SHARED USE PATH

A brief update on the Girton to Oakington shared use path from the County Council:

We are still working hard to get a design for this cycling and walking scheme; it has been taking a long time due to the complexity of widening a path alongside a ditch, and the many surveys required to input to the design.

The scope of the initial planned work remains the same; to widen the shared use path to 3m between Manor Farm Road and the New Road junction, to modify the New Road junction to improve visibility, and to carry out minor improvements at the Oakington end such as dropped kerbs, line painting and relocating street furniture. We are now progressing a "swale and pipe" design for the ditch; creating a swale where possible and piping where not. This hopefully means we won't have to use any sheet piling which would have been more expensive and disruptive.

Skanska are close to finishing the design, and so after going through all the statutory processes, we are hoping to be able to start work on site later this summer. In preparation for this we need to trim back the hawthorn hedge between Beck's Brook and the New Road junction before the bird nesting season at the end of March. The County Council's Arboriculture Officer has inspected the site and doesn't have any problems with this, and in addition has recommended we remove two young trees from the hedge line; a field maple and an ash close to Beck's Brook. Both of these have roots which stand adjacent to the hedge line and would prevent the path widening.

If you have any concerns about this vegetation work please let us know as soon as possible.

NORTHSTOWE FORUM UPDATES

Thanks to the work of Jon London, the Northstowe community forum updates and videos have been clipped in short videos so you can watch only the parts you're interested in.

The link below is for the most recent forum.

https://www.scambsgov.uk/community-development/northstowe-community-forum/northstowe-community-forum-22-january-2020/?fbclid=IwARo8fAxyZN1Vu-JCiE1l6Do8ng-Dg5XqgeKY5JkWy_uP9lCRYIKoJZjrso8

The next forum is on 1st April 2020 at the Community Wing.

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
(Note to help us manage GDPR it is easier for us to host from the LibDems webpage, but we absolutely promise this link will NOT subscribe you to LibDem news)
- For all the latest news & updates so far please go to: https://www.sclibdems.org.uk/longstanton_news
- For those on social media we have a very active Facebook group covering the whole ward here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/>

DISTRICT WIDE UPDATES

VE DAY EVENTS

South Cambs District Council are offering a VE Day grant for residents to apply to help fund their celebrations. Details are here: <https://www.scambsgov.uk/deadline-to-apply-for-funding-for-ve-day-commemorations-extended/>

Over the three day period the events — the first of which on Friday May 8 has been declared a special public holiday — will include the playing of specially written musical tributes to highlight the Nation's Toast to the Heroes of WW2. There will also be a Cry for Peace around the World and all Churches and Cathedrals are being asked to take part in sessions of Ringing out for Peace. Street parties and parties in pubs, clubs, Hotels, on town and village greens and in halls etc will be the plans for the Saturday and services of commemoration and celebration in churches, including the reading of the Tribute to the Millions and the playing of the Last Post on the Sunday.

NEW ELECTRIC BUSES

Stagecoach have purchased 2 electric buses to run in Cambridge using £400,000 of funding from

the Greater Cambridge Partnership which South Cambs and the County Council are partners in. They can travel 160 miles on one charge and you will have seen them running the Citi 6 route. We are particularly pleased the Oakington route was chosen given the routes proximity to the Primary School on Water Lane. We are anticipating that this will be the beginning of a much larger electric fleet serving South Cambridgeshire in the near future.

COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS TO SOUTH CAMBS

South Cambs District Council have now launched our Open Process portal, which allows customers to create an account where complaints can be raised and tracked throughout the investigation, until resolution. There is the facility for supporting documents to be uploaded and messages can be sent between investigators and customers, which will help to speed up the process. All complaints need to be made through: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/your-council-and-democracy/feedback/compliments-complaints-and-suggestions/> (selecting the option for the "Online Complaints Form").

ANNUAL SURVEY OF COUNCILS

Interesting to see some of the key findings from all UK Councils. Nearly all councils (97%) plan to increase council tax in 2020/21, with most (93%) planning to raise it by more than 1.5% and nearly all councils (97%) plan to increase fees and charges. 12% say they are in danger of being unable to fulfil statutory duties this year with Children's Services & Education the top immediate pressure, while Adult Social Care remains the top long term pressure. There was near universal disappointment in the Government's progress delivering a sustainable funding system for local government (97%) and a long term social care strategy (98%).

SOUTH CAMBS – MORE GREENERY...

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%

LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION.

A further reminder to get involved with the local plan consultation. This is being described as the most important document you have never heard about but it will determine where future jobs and housing is to go for decades to come, what infrastructure we will be needing, where new open and green spaces will be located and how we will be managing the challenges of climate change, air pollution inequality and growth. The reality is that Cambridge and S Cambridgeshire are going to be the focus for significant growth in coming years in terms of jobs and housing. The fact that we are actually more successful than just about anywhere else in the country means that we should attract further investment so that our success can be capitalised on. The big decisions are around where that growth is focused - around Cambridge City (which is green belt), around existing communities such as Cambourne, Northstowe and larger villages, or in new communities? It is all up for discussion and your views really matter.

We were disappointed to note that during last year's election our new MP was suggesting he would be against further house building in South Cambs when it is the Conservative government which has given the District the housing growth numbers it needs to reach. Should the council fail to show it has adequate plans for a housing land supply we risk being taken into special measures. It'll be interesting to see if this means our new MP will be calling for a reduction in the numbers of houses South Cambs needs to deliver.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL BUDGET

£5 million has been pledged in South Cambridgeshire to tackle the global climate emergency. The money will go towards improvements linked to the District Council's 'green to the core' priorities. This includes improving the Council's offices to cut carbon emissions and energy bills, providing communities with grants for projects that cut carbon emissions in their areas, making Council houses more energy efficient and helping people cut the amount of food they waste.

In 2018 the Council declared a climate emergency and pledged to reach net zero carbon by 2050. To help move toward that goal the Council plans to invest in 2020-21 a further £100,000 on Zero Carbon Community grants for community initiatives to cut carbon emissions and tackle climate change, £1.9 million 'greening' of its offices to cut energy bills and show others how they could go green and a further £1.3 million on improving energy efficiency of Council homes. In addition £1.3m will replace 1,800 District Council owned streetlights with LEDs to reduce energy consumption by 60% and £400,000 on an electric bin lorry to see whether it is viable to shift from a diesel to an all-electric fleet.

In 2020-21 the Council expects to generate over £3.5 million from investments which will be spent on local services and help offset cuts to their funding by central Government. The Council's budget also proposes investing an extra £200,000 in expanding the mobile warden scheme in the district. Local Mobile Warden groups support older people to live independently by carrying out practical tasks such as making light meals, shopping, making appointments, filling in forms and collecting prescriptions.

A further £200,000 is also planned to be invested in increasing support for local businesses so that villages remain vibrant and new jobs are created close to where people live.

EXTRAORDINARY TIMES AT THE COMBINED AUTHORITY

At the end of February the Mayor announced that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority would take control of public transport improvements in the area. A decision on the final route for the Cambourne to Cambridge Guided Busway Scheme was due to be made at the GCP Executive Board on 19 Feb but the papers were pulled after the Mayor's announcement, in which he said that the plans didn't fit with his plans for the Cambridge Autonomous Metro. This despite the fact that the GCP has been working alongside the Mayor's office, which had not raised any concerns about the GCP proposals. The proposals included delivering phase one of the CAM including connections to Cambourne, Waterbeach, Granta Park and towards Newmarket. So the Mayor's announcement is completely at odds with recent Combined Authority decisions.

The Combined Authority plans a meeting on 6 March to consider proposals which would include an interim solution for the Cambourne to Cambridge route that would not involve ‘flooding the city with buses.

EAST WEST RAIL

East West Rail Co has now advised of the preferred route via St Neots/Tempsford to Cambourne and thence to a new station at Cambridge South. CamBedRailRoad continues to campaign for it’s own routing for three main reasons. Firstly the new railway line does not follow the proposed dualling of the A428. This is a missed opportunity to save money and disruption to the community. Secondly, the Cambourne station is proposed south of the town and not on the A428 where it would be most sensibly located as the new developments at Cambourne, Bourn Airfield and north of the A428 (probably) come forward. Lastly the line then drives through a series of villages to join the mainline somewhere near Gt Shelford.

Those Parishes need to be aware that the trainline proposed is not in any way similar to the Varsity line of old. It will run high speed trains carrying both passengers and freight and is proposed to be ‘zero carbon’. It will be segregated from the surrounding area by significant security fencing. It will sever nearly all bridleways and footpaths it crosses as well as local roads. Network Rail has a policy that the UK will never again build a level crossing. Roads will be bridged or tunneled with the consequent cost, visual intrusion and disturbance. As a high speed line it will not be able to weave in and out to avoid important buildings, woods or places of interest.

The East West Rail website has a number of useful maps and documents on it.

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING - BUDGET 2020/21 TO 2024/25

Cambridgeshire County Council approved a budget including a £4 million deficit while increasing Council Tax by 1.59% instead of by the permitted 1.99%. At the beginning of this financial year the potential gap was £21 million, so over the year the Council has had to make savings of £17 million to reduce the potential shortfall. Whilst some efficiencies have undoubtedly been justified, they have made dramatic cuts to Adult services (-£5.8m), to Highways and to Children’s Services (-£6.3m).

You will all be aware that our Local Highways Officer has been unable to commission work for lack of funds. Many Councillors report waiting years for simple maintenance jobs to be completed. At a liaison meeting on 20 February with the Clinical Care Commissioning Group and Healthwatch, County colleagues heard some stern words of warning about the impact of the new Adult Social Care charges. Council finance remains in critical state, as seen for example in new controversial and complex charges to vulnerable people receiving Adult Social Care that will save the council £3.4 million over the next two years.

This pattern over recent years (2016-2019) of not raising council tax by small permissible increments, including a sustained period of total council tax freeze, has cost the council £34 million that should have been deployed to prevent this tide of disappearing public services. The difference between 1.59% and 1.99% for a Band D home is 11p/week/household which could have added £1.17m to the Council budget this year and £6.39 million over the forward plan period. 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.

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

Contact details:

Sarah Cheung Johnson: cllr.cheungjohnson@scambsgov.uk

Alex Malyon: cllr.malyon@scambsgov.uk