

# DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

JUNE 2020

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A reminder that information about South Cambs response to coronavirus can be found on the regularly updated coronavirus pages on the SCDC website: <https://www.scams.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

## SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS

One of the Councils main roles continues to be in providing support for local businesses. For the most up to date information on the support available to businesses or the self-employed, we recommend checking the Council webpages <https://www.scams.gov.uk/business/coronavirus-information-for-businesses/> or visiting the governments business information pages: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>

It is also possible to sign up for the regular South Cambs 'Open for Business' newsletter via the SCDC website link which has lots of helpful information on funding, grants, reopening and post-Covid business recovery.

### **Additional business grants for small businesses- Discretionary grant fund**

This grant fund is aimed at supporting small businesses who have been impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, are struggling to survive, and who are not eligible for existing government support schemes such as the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Fund.

Through the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund (LADGF) the council can dispense grants to the value of £25,000, £10,000 or any amount below £10,000.

For details of eligibility and details of how to apply please visit:

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/business/coronavirus-information-for-businesses/financial-support-for-business/discretionary-grant-funding/>

## UPDATE ON SERVICES IMPACTED BY COVID 19

Officers are doing there very best to maintain services during this period, but some council services have been impacted. Full details of services that are currently impacted can be found via:

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/coronavirus/our-services-that-are-impacted/>

### **Reinstatement of Green Bin Collections**

Green bin collections have now restarted across the District, with guaranteed monthly collections at present. Residents are still encouraged to put there bins out fortnightly with their blue bins as crews

have been trying to do extra collections where possible. In the first week of resuming collections they were aiming to collect 33,000 bins but managed to empty 48,000!

There are some FAQs about the reintroduction of the green bin collections on the SCDC website:

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/bins/green-bin-re-introduction-fags/>

Residents can check their guaranteed collection date via the online calendar. As a reminder collection dates may be different for different parts of a village or town as guaranteed days are organised by rounds. <https://www.scams.gov.uk/bins/find-your-household-bin-collection-day/>

### **Community Governance Review for Longstanton Oakington and Northstowe**

Unfortunately, as you will already know, all face to face meetings and consultations planned as part of the CGR process in April have had to be cancelled due to the current restrictions. A proposal was approved by the Civic Affairs Committee on June 2<sup>nd</sup> to extend the consultation period for three months until September 15<sup>th</sup>. It is hoped that this will allow for further face to face engagement with residents as lockdown restrictions are eased. This should also still allow time for any proposed changes to be brought before the Full Council and for any reorganisation order to be made by April 2021 to make any new governance arrangements.

It is still possible to view and comment on the three options being proposed as part of the second phase of the CGR consultation. We are told that response rates are currently low to the second phase of the consultation and so we will be working with SCDC Comms to try and increase engagement with the review. We have also been working to get some virtual consultation event set up. Jon London is working on a format for these.

Full details of the three proposed option, maps and a link to respond to the consultation can be found here <https://www.scams.gov.uk/cgr-lown>

DIGITAL PARK CONSULTATION EXTENSION UNTIL JUNE 16TH

### **Planning application for Digital Park site S/3854/19/OL**

The consultation on this application, for 106 houses on the site west of the B1050 in Longstanton, has now been extended until June 16<sup>th</sup>. This is to allow more time for comments in view of the current restrictions due to coronavirus.

For background:

- this is part of the Phase 3b build out which was part of Northstowe plans.
- a consultation on this was launched last year so this is not the first time the community were informed, and the developers came to present at the Northstowe Community Forum last year.
- South Cambs District Council did not approve the developers plans, partly on the grounds it did not submit an environmental impact assessment. The developers appealed this decision. The Secretary of State overruled the councils request and said there was no evidence there would be material impact on

the environment. We are exceedingly disappointed at this outcome and yet more evidence the planning system can be circumnavigated by developers and that the government can override decisions that local planners, councillors and the community do not agree with.

We therefore recommending that residents please add their comments to the consultation in the link below (not here on Facebook as we can't submit these as formal comments) in full.

We as district councillors have made our own representations.

#### NORTHSTOWE PHASE 3A AND B CONSULTATION

The government has made it clear that the planning process should continue even during the current crisis and so plans for Northstowe Phases 3A and B have now gone out to consultation.

The outline plans for 3A reference 20/02171/OUT (the phase closest to Oakington, on the south of the site) include 4000 homes, 2 new primary schools, a local centre, including shops, offices and research and development space, open spaces and lakes and community and sports facilities. The consultation on 3A is due to run until July 6th.

Phase 3B reference 20/02142/OUT (the phase west of the B1050 in Longstanton) includes plans for an additional 1000 homes, a primary school, local centre and orchard and allotments. The consultation for Phase 3B is due to close on June 23rd. Closing dates for both consultations will be kept under review considering current restrictions and can be extended

We are encouraging residents to submit their comments via the formal consultation process and the easiest way to this is online via <https://applications.greatercambridgeplanning.org/online-applications/> You can search for the plans using the above reference numbers or using keywords 'Northstowe Phase 3A' and 'Northstowe Phase 3B'.

Homes England have also produced some short videos explaining the plans which you can access here: [www.northstowe.com/phase3](http://www.northstowe.com/phase3)

If residents have any questions or comments, they can contact the planning department via [planningcomments@greatercambridgeplanning.org](mailto:planningcomments@greatercambridgeplanning.org) or as ever, please feel free to contact us.

#### NORTHSTOWE PHASE 1 LOCAL CENTRE

We received an update from L&Q regarding their plans for the Local Centre in Phase 1. They say they are currently working up a comprehensive design for the mixed-use Local Centre which will include up to 1,950sqm of A-Class uses (including some, but not all, shops) and the community building. This may consist of a single larger convenience store, plus 4 smaller units for other commercial / retail / leisure / food and drink / community uses. It is important to consider the character, siting, orientation and access and parking arrangements of all these uses as one, in accordance with the Design Code.

They anticipate starting pre-application discussions with Planning Officers in June.

#### NEW PLANNING OFFICER FOR PHASE 1

Unfortunately, Fiona Hunter who had taken on responsibility for planning for Northstowe Phase 1 has now left SCDC to take up a new role at Breckland Council. We are pleased though to report that there has been no gap in cover with an experienced planning officer, Jess Hill, now taking on responsibility for Phase 1 and the Digital Park application.

Andrew Thompson continues as our planning officer for Phases 2 and 3 and is happy to provide guidance to the Parish Councils on outline plans for Phases 3A and B.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON EXTENSION OF WORKING HOURS FOR CONSTRUCTION SITES

Many of you will have seen the Government's announcement about temporarily extending working hours until 9pm, 6 days per week on construction sites to try to ensure social distancing and allow safe working on site. You can read the full ministerial statement and find more details via <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-construction-update-qa>

While we understand the need to ensure the safety of construction workers as work gets started again, we are concerned that they have not fully considered the impact these extended working hours will have on the quality of life of the residents living on or near sites like Northstowe.

The developers will have to agree any changes to their working hours with SCDC. Unfortunately, the government have made it clear that planning authorities will be expected to approve requests and that these will need to be processed within 10 days, which allows little time for effective consultation with Parish Councils or residents, which is extremely disappointing.

We are not aware that the developers have made a request to SCDC to extend working hours on the Northstowe site but if they do, we will push back strongly on a blanket extension of working hours to 9pm, 6 days a week as we don't think this would be acceptable. We would prefer if we are forced to make changes for a temporary period (any proposed changes could not extend beyond May 2021) that at least a compromise could be reached, such as limiting what work could be carried out beyond 6pm or not allowing late working on a weekend.

#### ZERO CARBON STRATEGY

The first ever Zero Carbon Strategy for South Cambridgeshire pledges to lead a green local economic recovery out of lockdown and reduce the Council's carbon emissions by at least 75% by 2030.

The ambitious plan, agreed unanimously by the District Council at the Full Council Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May, sets out how the authority will meet its climate change goals and support residents and businesses to do the same. You can read a full copy of the strategy here

<https://www.scamb.gov.uk/media/15010/zero-carbon-strategy-final.pdf>

Measures highlighted in the Council's strategy include:

- Replacing its entire shared waste fleet of bin collection vehicles with electric or hydrogen trucks;
- Carrying out a major review of its 5,300 council homes to plan the next steps in cutting emissions to zero over the next three decades;

- Drafting a bold new joint Local Plan which will have the zero carbon and environmental targets as central to planning policy;
- Supporting businesses to improve their energy efficiency and reduce costs by making it easier to access advice and funding, particularly for those hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis;
- Working with developers to ensure new homes and their construction are as carbon-friendly as possible and supporting existing homeowners to make their properties more energy-efficient;
- Carrying out green refits at Council premises, including a solar carport and a ground source heating system at its Cambourne headquarters.
- Continuing its recycling focus, to include minimising waste in its own operations, working with eco-friendly partners to promote food waste, repair and refill schemes, and creating a resource toolkit for communities to use at their events.

#### GRANT FOR MILTON COUNTY PARK

We are very pleased that at the meeting of the Full Council on 21<sup>st</sup> May we also approved a grant of up to £50,000 for Milton Country Park to support them through the current crisis. Unfortunately, the park was forced to close due to covid 19 restrictions and therefore lost all sources of income.

Milton Country Park is being provided with up to £50,000 by the District Council, to ensure the park can stay open for residents to enjoy in future.

The grant will include a £25,000 payment now and the option of the second half from September. It is being made available to the Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust charity, which runs the 95-acre Park on South Cambridgeshire District Council's behalf.

#### NEXT STEPS IN DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL PLAN

The first phase of consultation on the Local Plan ran from 13 January to 24 February and marked the start of a lengthy process to develop the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan – the first joint Local Plan between Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District councils.

Once finalised, the Local Plan will set out where in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire development is allowed to happen – where homes, business space, community facilities, shops and leisure facilities can be built and where green spaces can be protected or created – while also providing policies to guide how development should help address current and future environmental, social and economic issues.

Seven big themes were also set out and organised into two groups. First, the overarching 'how' of the Local Plan: climate change; biodiversity and green spaces; wellbeing and inequality; and creating great places. Second, the underpinning 'what' of the Local Plan: jobs, homes and infrastructure.

From the circa 7,000 comments received, which the councils are still in the process of analysing, the Initial Feedback from the Consultation identified some key areas to be explored during the development of the Local Plan:

- On where to build, it appears there is support for densification of existing urban areas, along with development along public transport corridors. Views on development around villages were

polarised and, on green belt development, it appears there is some support for locations which are sustainable in transport terms, to reduce car travel from locations further away

- Most people agree that the right seven themes have been identified for the Plan, but there was a range of views about which themes should take priority.
- Infrastructure – which can refer to road and cycle networks, education and health provision, and more – was the theme that attracted the most interest, by a substantial margin, with transport being the most commented on topic
- The second most popular theme was homes, followed by climate change, which prompted a wide range of views – from those who felt it was a high priority, to those who felt that other issues should take precedence
- Many responses said that continuing economic growth was important, although many also raised questions around whether growth was desirable. Some stated that wellbeing was a priority over growth, while others expressed the view that economic growth was the means to raise quality of life.

The report, published for the meeting of the Joint Local Planning Advisory Group on 2 June, also outlines a proposed timeline for the next stages of the Local Plan process, which considers the comments received and the clear aspiration for continued involvement by communities in the early stages. The report can be viewed

here: <https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1125&MId=7955&Ver=4>

The new programme outlined in the report makes arrangements to do so, and includes:

- publishing emerging evidence from commissioned external experts in October 2020, followed by stakeholder engagement workshops to debate these in November/December
- the first key milestones for public participation in the plan in summer 2021, when members of the public will be asked to input into the proposed approach. This will be the 'Preferred Options' stage, which sets out specifics such as proposed levels of development for jobs and homes; sites allocated for development; and the preferred approach for key policy topics such as climate change targets, affordable housing thresholds, and approach to development in villages.

The proposed timeline is subject to approval by councillors during June 2020.

Updates on the Local Plan process will be available at [www.greatercambridgeplanning.org](http://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org)

#### COUNCILLOR UPDATES

- 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/>

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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