

## South Cambridgeshire District Councillors' Report to Parish Councils March 2017

Both the **Greater Cambridge City Deal** [GCCD] **Assembly** and **Board** met this month. The Assembly made recommendations to the Board in relation to the allocation of funding/resource. Two proposals may have direct benefits for our villages. The first is to allocate £480K for a 2 year programme of work [2017-2019] to develop up to 12 cycling 'greenways' in South Cambridgeshire. The second is the allocation of £100K to carry out initial feasibility work on South Cambridgeshire Travel Hubs. Both were subsequently agreed at the GCCD Board meeting.

The Assembly asked the Board to note that all partner authorities had agreed to contribute 40% of their respective New Homes Bonus [NHB] allocation from 2017/18 to 2019/20 and that this would be used to fund the strengthening of the GCCD programme management, governance, strategy and coordination of capacity as well as the cost of finance and democratic services support. This budget is to be kept separate from the infrastructure budget. The Assembly also asked the Board to note that, if all the proposed allocations should be approved, this would mean an over-allocation of existing available resources of £4.8m. This it said would have to be treated as a managed risk to be offset with either new Tranche 2 funding, other funding, or reductions in agreed schemes in future years. Given that over half the Infrastructure Programme budget is forecast to be spent beyond 2020 this is considered an appropriate strategy to maximise outcomes within available resources. The Board subsequently noted these points at its meeting.

The GCCD Board also agreed to consider later in the year an indicative request and to develop a detailed business case to enable Board decisions to be taken on scaling up original pilot skills work. This will help stimulate business demand for apprenticeships and improve careers advice in schools through a second phase of activity and allow investment in a wider reach. [An indicative maximum of £2.1m over 3 years.]

Full details: Assembly - [bit.ly/2nVK8lQ](http://bit.ly/2nVK8lQ) Board: <http://bit.ly/2nKxPIC>

Cabinet also had an opportunity this month to meet with the new Chief Executive for the GCCD. The appointment of dedicated officers for the GCCD is a positive step forward which will provide clearer direction. During the meeting she gave assurance that progress on Tranche 1 will be sufficient to provide the necessary qualification for Tranche 2 funding.

**Planning Committee** met twice this month to accommodate consideration of a growing number of 5 year land supply applications. This issue was relevant to four of the six items on the agenda for the first meeting. [Hardwick - up to 98 dwellings - delegated approval; Cottenham - up to 200 - withdrawn; Guilden Morden - up to 16 - approved and Great Abington - 8 - delegated approval]. Full details: <http://bit.ly/2nvW0YH>

Two of the applications considered at the second meeting were 5 year land supply sites. The Linton application [up to 50 dwellings] was refused. The second, the Gladman application in Cottenham was given permission on the chairman's casting vote. It is understandable that parish councils and local residents are growing more and more bitter about the effect that the the 5 year housing land supply issue is having on bringing forward unplanned-for development proposals, many of which have been/will be approved in one way or another. Full details: <http://bit.ly/2n0GCaD>

This and the extended examination in public [EIP] of SCambs' Local Plan were items that I discussed with the Housing Minister when I had a meeting with him and Heidi Allen this month. Whilst there can be no immediate resolution to either of these challenges, the Minister listened very carefully to my concerns about the damage that is being done to the relationship between local people and SCambs as the local planning authority. He was understandably concerned about the length of time that the EIP is taking and asked for details which I supplied. However, the Local Plan being found sound provides no insurance that the 5 year land supply issue will be forever resolved and my ambition is to find a way that a high growth area like SCambs can protect its villages in the future. The Minister seemed understanding of this need and offered information that Heidi and I will follow up on. I am not optimistic that we shall be able to call a quick halt to the situation that the district currently finds itself in but the important thing is that we seek to make its future position as secure as possible and I am using all my efforts to do this.

At the **Housing** PfH meeting approval was given for use of the £50,329 funding that SCambs has received from a new Government annual fund of £60m. The purpose of this fund is to help almost 150 councils to tackle the problem of high levels of second home ownership in their communities. The money is intended to support those communities to deliver affordable housing aimed at first time buyers who are particularly impacted by the reduction of supply caused by second home ownership. It was agreed that this level of funding can best be used through a joint programme with the City council [also a beneficiary]. Utilising the service offered by CLT East support will be offered to those communities with ambitions to bring forward Community Land Trust [CLT] developments.

Approval was also given for the Interim Housing Strategy Statement 2017 prior to the development of a joint SCambs/City Housing Strategy in 2018. The housing sector has been going through a period of unprecedented change. Many new government policies have been introduced and whilst underpinning legislation is awaited there is still uncertainty over their implementation. It is considered that an interim statement will allow the Council to take stock and evaluate policy changes before moving to a joint strategy with Cambridge City. Both councils face the same challenges and opportunities and there is already a good working relationship between the two. Full details: <http://bit.ly/2nNCJV>

SCambs Community Awards 2017 saw many local individuals and community organisations recognised for their work on behalf of our villages. Congratulations to all and to the villages who benefit from the efforts of these unsung heroes. The number and quality of nominations was higher than ever this year. At the event held at Cambourne to celebrate all the nominees, Oakington's Environmental Group was awarded the Portfolio Holder's Special Award and Sustainable Cottenham gained third place in the very widely contested Environmental Award category.

Finally a reminder that the Community Chest opened again for applications from 01 April. There is a total of £55,000 available and community organisations can apply for £1,000 per application or a maximum total of £3,000 whilst funds last.

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