

## South Cambridgeshire District Councillors' Report March 2018

The agenda for the **Environmental Services PfH** meeting included a review of Fees and Charges for 2018/19. Many of these are statutory and fixed. Factors such as Council policy and its aims/objectives as well as economic factors including inflation, neighbouring authority charges, market conditions and the need to recover costs are taken into account when deciding any variation to discretionary items. In recognition of the changes to the way in which some businesses operate, the PfH approved the restructuring of some licensing charges. Businesses providing acupuncture, ear-piercing, tattooing and electrolysis services now increasingly operate through chair rentals and/or mobile units. There is an increasing demand for cosmetic processes [eg Botox and fillers] and, although there is no formal regulatory control for such businesses, the Council is responding to enquiries from some practitioners who seek the status of having their operations formally inspected, by extending its schedule of charges to include this type of service. A new 1 year licence has also been introduced for Houses in Multiple Occupation in line with an amendment to licensing legislation which is due to come into force this year.

Charges related to waste collection are probably most relevant to local residents. The charge for bulky household collections has been frozen at 2017/18 levels to support those residents who are unable to access the household waste and recycling centres. The administration charge for provision of replacement black bins increases by £1.50 to £75 and there is a new charge of £50 for the provision of an additional black bin. The Council will continue to replace lost/damaged/stolen blue bins and provide additional ones free of charge.

The PfH also agreed a proposal for the sharing of data with the Centre for Diet and Activity Research [CEDAR]. Given the emerging evidence linking the food environment with health outcomes, it is considered that the marked increase in hot food outlets in SCamb over the last 3 year period warrants further monitoring and investigation. That evidence suggests that there is an association between local accessibility to food outlets and diet, body weight and health inequalities. CEDAR has already published research on this link based upon a large population study of adults in Cambridgeshire. In return for its participation CEDAR will provide the Council with updates on its data analysis at intervals of 12 months or on request. This will help to inform future policy making by SCamb.

Agenda pack/printed decisions: <https://bit.ly/2pYovBk>

There were no planning applications of direct local interest at this month's meeting of **Planning Committee**. However, local support for an outline application for development of 13 homes including 40% affordable units at Great Abington was reflected in committee's decision of approval against the Officer recommendation of refusal. Members requested that all affordable units should be allocated for those with a local connection with first priority to Great and Little Abington.

Again reflecting local support, Committee approved an application in the Green Belt for an exception site in Fulbourn. This development will provide 14 affordable units of which 9 will be offered at affordable rent [no more than Local Housing Allowance levels] and 5 will be for Shared Ownership.

A self-build plot in Fowlmere was also given permission. This will make a further, albeit small, contribution to satisfying local demand for such plots which is clearly demonstrated through the Self Build Register held by the Council. SCamb's is one of the eleven councils selected by Government as Right to Build Vanguard Authorities. The Council has just over 800 applicants on its self build register all keen to become self or custom builders and it will sell plots of land that it owns once outline planning permission has been granted. Currently 11 of 100 identified plots are being progressed. A sale has been agreed on the first plot, a further 5 are being marketed and the remaining 5 are in the planning process. Estimated receipts for these are £1.825m and this money will be used to match fund Right to Buy receipts to build new council homes. SCamb's is also talking to both SME builders and volume developers to increase the availability of land for self/custom build. Agenda pack/printed decisions for Planning Committee: <https://bit.ly/2H4fa2u>

At the March meeting the **Housing PfH** approved the principles of Heads of Terms between SCamb's and Homes England [formerly the Homes & Communities Agency] for a 'Northstowe' version of Starter Homes. With no underpinning legislation having yet been published by the Government for this type of housing, the Council has seized the opportunity to make changes that will mean that the 1400 Starter Home units at Northstowe Phase 2 will be better suited to local needs and, importantly, will in the longer term provide a very significant source of funding for the Council's housebuilding programme. Agenda pack/printed decisions: <https://bit.ly/2uHGqkl>

This year's **Community Awards** event saw recognition of the many local people and organisations that make outstanding contributions to their communities and congratulations must go to everyone on the long list of nominees. Local members attending the presentation event were delighted to see Cambridgeshire Repair Cafe Network being announced as winners of the Environment Award. The network was set up in 2016 by a group of volunteers from villages including Cottenham with the objective of matching experienced repairers with people who need items fixed. The overall benefits of the scheme are a reduction in waste and the sharing of practical repair and re-use skills. In the 2 years since the network was formed events have been held in several villages and the popularity of the concept has led to many others now queuing up to get involved.

We welcome your questions and comments on the foregoing or any other local or strategic matter.

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