

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

OCTOBER 2018

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NORTHSTOWE

Local Centre Square - Gallagher's have confirmed that work on the new Northstowe Square will begin by 5th November at the latest. A contractor has been appointed to carry out the works which are expected to be completed by end of March 2019.

A meeting on Northstowe traffic issues was held on 7th September. The enforcement team reiterated they are not legally allowed to do surveillance, including following vehicles to see where they go. However, they can act on information provided by residents. This information ideally should include: registration number, brand name on the vehicle, direction the vehicle came from and the destination on Northstowe site. With this information enforcement officers can pursue the reports.

Mobile phone coverage – within current planning regulations, it is not mandatory for mobile phone companies to be told of new settlements. Going forwards, SCDC will be putting these requirements into the Supplementary Planning Documents. In the meantime, mobile providers have been notified of Northstowe build out plans.

Streetlights are still not operational on the Linden Homes site. They have been installed but the GTC have not connected them, we will continue to chase this.

CONSTRUCTION NOISE

Following reports of breaches of planning conditions on the Northstowe site, Charlie Swain, Planning Enforcement officer has spoken to the Director at Gallagher's and have their assurance that the times on construction will be respected.

We had reported regular breaches of planning conditions, with work starting before 8.00am, on the site at 53 Woodside, Longstanton. Enforcement have now visited the site to speak with site manager and have issued him with a copy of the planning permission conditions.

Planning conditions for Phase 2 also state that reversing alarms must be white noise. We have had confirmation from the sub-contractor the £100 alarms have been ordered and will be fitted to all vehicles.

We have now brought enforcement out to monitor both these sites which is a positive but we must continue to diligently report this so the developers know we are serious about wanting the planning conditions respected. If there are further issues on either site then we would encourage residents to contact us or report directly to planning enforcement via SCDC <https://www.scams.gov.uk/report-it/website>

LOCAL CRIME AND PCSO MEETING

We have met with our local PCSO's – the ward covers Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe and all 3 sites are covered by a different PCSO. They have re-iterated that residents should be encouraged to report crimes or concerns about suspicious or antisocial behaviour to them directly (either via 101 or online <https://www.cambs.police.uk/report/Report>) and not via a third party, e.g. the Parish Council or Councillors as evidence taken from third parties is treated differently to direct reports.

A Northstowe resident has had his car stolen from his driveway at 6.10pm on 1st October. The residents were at home and had left briefly for a walk down the road to speak to a neighbour which has made residents feel like they are being watched. We are reaching out to the Police and to Gallagher's to look at options for increasing security in Northstowe.

TEMPORARY PATH TO BUSWAY IN NORTHSTOWE

A temporary footpath to allow residents to safely get to the busway from Northstowe has finally been planned. This route has been agreed with Gallagher's, SCDC and the house builders and the plan is for Skanska to begin constructing later in October (final date to be confirmed). The route will go along land earmarked for commercial use in a later stage of development.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Following interest in Neighbourhood Watch, Tom Baugh, Longstanton PCSO is running a training session for those interested and hopes to bring together other PCSO's and senior police members. This will be held at the Longstanton Village Institute on 28th November at 7pm.

STREET SWEEPING

Roads on Woodside have finally been swept but paths have not yet been done. We have chased this with the SCDC streets team, together with clearing of pavements on Clive Hall Drive and spraying/clearing of weeds coming through the pavements and road margins (particularly on Home Farm). We have also chased what is happening with the missing dog bin!

OAKINGTON RURAL TRANSPORT HUB

A consultation is planned beginning in November and running through to January as this period runs through the Christmas holidays. The GCP will be consulting on the Oakington hub with the emphasis being placed on two designs, one with parking and one without. Both designs include a bus turning circle, disabled parking bays, and secure cycle lockers.

This consultation will be a formal process and the team say the hub designs are aligned with the feedback received during the previous engagement phase. Although this will be a formal consultation they have confirmed there is still the potential for the hub to not go ahead should there be an overwhelming lack of support.

There have been some concerns on the lack of consultation on how this exercise will look like and to ensure residents' concerns have been incorporated. It is not clear if Stagecoach have been engaged on extension of the Citi 6 which has been seen as crucial to the success of the project. District Cllrs for Oakington and Cottenham are to meet the project team next week to address these concerns.

SECTION 106 PROJECTS- CYCLEWAYS

To confirm Section 106 Phase 1 money has funded the cycle way to Bar Hill on B1050 from Longstanton and that the understanding is that this will be installed when the new cycle routes are provided as part of the A14 works at Bar Hill.

Section 106 Phase 2 money is funding the improvement of the cycleway to Oakington and Girton, designs are being worked on for this. We have no concrete dates or details as yet.

NORTHSTOWE COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

South Cambs District Council noted that Longstanton Parish Council had requested that the Community Governance Review be delayed until the summer of 2019. It was understood that this would allow residents of Northstowe to gain more experience as parish councillors on Longstanton Parish Council and would also mean that there will be more residents in Northstowe to consult on the Review. The Head of Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing estimated that there could be 350 occupations in Northstowe by winter next year.

In response to questioning, the Head of Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing explained that a management company would be taking on the maintenance of open space at Northstowe for at least the next 10 years. In the meantime, Longstanton Parish Council would be responsible for the day to day decisions, before the Community Governance Review concludes.

PLANNED CLOSURES OF GUIDED BUSWAY

As you may be aware there has been a programme of planned weekend closures of sections of the Guided Busway. These closures were to allow repairs to the busway itself but they have also been using the opportunity to cut back vegetation which has necessitated closure of the cycle/bridleway.

Unfortunately details of these closures have been very poorly communicated. There was confusion about diversion routes and temporary bus stops were inadequately signed with bus drivers failing to stop to pick up passengers. We have fed back concerns regarding this to the County Council and Stagecoach. We have asked that details of future planned closures are communicated to Parish Councils in advance to allow them to inform residents.

NORTHSTOWE COMMUNITY FORUM

The next Northstowe Community Forum will be on the October 17th, with a drop in 6-7pm followed by presentations from 7-9pm. The agenda can be seen on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/longstantonoakingtonnorthstowe>

COUNCILLOR UPDATES AND SURGERIES

We continue to be keen to meet residents, especially for those who might find contacting us via email or social media difficult

Upcoming surgeries will be:

October 10th 6-8pm, Northstowe Community Wing

November 24th 9.30am – 11.30am, Oakington Pavillion

We have started sending 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/>

COUNCIL MOTIONS

The following 2 motions to note were voted for at our latest Council meeting.

BREXIT

The council has backed a Peoples Vote – a vote on the final deal for Brexit. The full motion is below:

In the 2016 Referendum on the European Union the South Cambridgeshire District voted 60.2% in favour of remaining in the European Union.

The negotiations on withdrawal that have followed the national decision to leave the EU have progressed at a slow rate and the precise nature of any final deal is still uncertain with clear divisions among those who voted to leave and a lack of support among the Government's members of parliament for the adopted 'Chequers proposals'. It is therefore clear that there is uncertainty whether any final deal will have wholehearted support and can be carried through Parliament.

In recent months a campaign has developed which proposes a People's Vote on any final deal (or no deal), with the alternative to remain in the EU, to ensure that the path taken has majority support among the electorate.

A number of letters have been received by members asking the Council to support this initiative.

The Council notes that:

- (i) The Governor of the Bank of England has stated that the average household income in Britain is now £900 lower than that anticipated if the decision to leave the EU had not been taken.
- (ii) There are a large number of non-UK EU nationals resident in the district whose life, and that of their UK-national families, has been destabilised by uncertainty. Apart from the social impacts, this has resulted in the loss of staff by local businesses and the NHS.
- (iii) Due to uncertainty about whether the deal that will be agreed with the EU will achieve a Parliamentary majority, 'no deal' appears a very credible outcome. This has been described by Chancellor Hammond as having "large fiscal consequences" and by independent observers as "overwhelmingly negative".
- (iv) All avenues currently being considered by the Government impose increasing delays for goods at our international frontiers and no facilitation would be provided for trade in services which form a major element in the local economy.
- (v) Recent opinion poll evidence has suggested an overall trend in public opinion away from support for leaving the EU and in favour of a vote on the conditions of any departure. A vote on the terms of withdrawal with the option to remain would ensure that we leave, should we do so, with wholehearted support for the actual conditions of withdrawal.
- (vi) The anticipated rapidly deteriorating economic situation if Brexit proceeds is likely to accelerate austerity, which has already caused acute problems in providing local authority services and has severely affected local residents, in particular those in social housing or in receipt of benefits.
- (vii) Evidence of illegal overspending has been presented (and accepted by the Electoral Commission) and court challenges on the constitutional position are still continuing. A vote on the withdrawal terms would ensure that any decision is accepted as sound by both sides of the argument rather than being fought out in the courts

The Council believes that the interests of its residents would be best protected by a referendum on the terms of leaving the European Union with the possibility of rescinding Article 50 and remaining in the EU.

The Council calls on the Government to abandon plans for a hard Brexit and to give the South Cambridgeshire electorate the opportunity to assess the original promises of a seamless Brexit with minimal impact made by the Leave campaign by giving the electorate (including resident European citizens) a vote on whether to accept the proposed withdrawal arrangements or to retain the many benefits local residents currently enjoy by staying in the European Union.

The Council should write to our two local MPs calling on them to defend the interests of the District's citizens by supporting this campaign.

(Note Heidi Allen MP has said in event of a No Deal she would support a Peoples Vote).

EAST WEST RAIL

South Cambs also supported a motion to ask for all route options to continue to be considered and that the selection must be based on analysis of how they support our development aims. The full motion is below.

This Council welcomes the commitment by government to invest in the Oxford-Cambridge corridor and to enable it to make a nationally significant contribution to economic growth.

This Council sees the construction of the central section of the East West Rail line as being transformational for the regional economy, allowing sustained growth and geographical expansion of our high value industries such as life sciences, IT and digital.

This Council believes that at this stage in the design process it is essential for all route options to be evaluated. The selection of route options must take account of analysis of how they support and unlock housing and employment growth and how they fit with our existing development strategies.

This Council acknowledges that infrastructure investment on this scale carries enormous risks in its impacts on the environment while also presenting us with an unprecedented opportunity to make positive contributions to the net biodiversity and natural capital gain of the areas affected. This Council therefore commits itself to promoting environmental enhancement of benefits (such as flood management, water availability, noise and air pollution mitigation, health and landscape/amenities) along the corridor and asks that this is included in the route evaluation criteria.

This Council recognises that East West Rail and the growth of the corridor more generally will bring significant change to existing communities. It will work closely with those affected from the earliest stages of the project and will ensure that the delivery bodies do likewise.

This Council will continue to collaborate with the East West Railway Company on the route options and on analysing their benefits and impacts.

This Council will coordinate its work with all the local partners as well as the East West Rail Consortium, of which the Council is a long-standing member.

This Council requests that the Leader and Chief Executive write to the East West Railway Company, the Department of Transport, Network Rail and our MPs to express our aspirations for East West Rail in these terms.

DISTRICT WIDE UPDATES

COMMUNITY CHEST GRANTS INVITED

Voluntary and community groups are being asked to step forward and bid for a share of over £400,000 of grant funding to make sure vital services are delivered in South Cambridgeshire Villages.

The three-year funding deal by South Cambridgeshire District Council will see money available for groups supporting communities on issues ranging from community transport and homelessness to living independently and support for people for upcoming national changes to benefits.

The areas of work service support grant funding available include: housing options advice and services preventing and relieving homelessness, community transport, specialist and general welfare advice, Independent living and fit to learn as well as support for parishes and communities. Full details of the service support grants available along with application forms can be found by visiting <http://www.scambs.gov.uk/community/grants/service-support-grants/>

PROPOSED BIN CHANGES

Changes to some aspects of bin collections in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire are being proposed to streamline the service. Now that we have a shared service they need to be streamlined. Most of the changes affect Cambridge City only but the one proposed change for South Cambs residents is the introduction of a charge for those who want more than one green bin, which Cambridge City residents already pay. The first green bin will remain free. 95% of Councils that offer a garden waste service already charge for additional green bins, including Cambridge City Council. It will be £35 pa but reduced to £20 for the first year. The scheme would officially begin in April 2019 with residents able to sign-up from early next year.

COUNCIL HOUSING CAP LIFTED BUT CALLS FOR NO RED TAPE

South Cambridgeshire District Council have called for no red tape on new Council Housing rules. This follows an announcement by the Prime Minister that the cap on borrowing, which currently means the Council cannot access more funding to build Council houses, will be scrapped.

Councillors have already said that delivering more housing that is affordable for everyone to live in is a top priority, and even with restrictions in place almost 100 Council homes have been built in the last three years.

The proposed scrapping of the borrowing cap could mean hundreds of new homes can be delivered faster. The Council already has plans for up to a further 200 new Council houses to be built over the next five years – but councillors have said that if the Government put trust in Councils the additional borrowing could deliver many more homes for local people in need.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Universal Credit is due to be rolled out in Cambridgeshire in October 17th. This Universal Credit replaces 6 benefits: Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Working Tax Credit

More details, including sources of support for benefit claimants, are available here:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/benefits/universal-credit/>

A428 BUSWAY PROJECT

Mayor (James Palmer) appears to have changed his mind about allowing an off-road busway to be built to link Cambourne with Cambridge City. Until a few weeks ago he had been vehemently promising that no busway would go through or near to the village of Coton. Rather surprisingly, we have now heard from residents that he had told them that at an informal meeting that he had changed his mind - before telling either the District Council or the Greater Cambridge Partnership

THE COMBINED AUTHORITY

This is now a standing update for us. The Mayor has been criticised by two separate groups in the past few days. The first group are the Universities of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin and senior business groups in Cambridge, who say they are “deeply concerned” about the breakdown in relationship between the Mayor and the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership (formerly City Deal). They say he is “damaging the strong relationships between the academic and business community and local government.” They have written to the James Brokenshire the Minister for Local Communities for “urgent government intervention” and say he is not building trust but reducing it. BBC Look East had a report on this which can be seen here: <https://www.facebook.com/1601232450145555/posts/2154966651438796/>

The second group are a Cambridgeshire County Council bosses, NHS, Chief Constable and Chief Fire Officer, saying the Combined Authority gave only limited or incomplete information on a number of major projects in which they would be involved. Full report is here: <http://www.cambstimes.co.uk/news/business-news/exclusive-report-on-camb-combined-authority-1-5722234>

COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET

Growing demand for the County Council’s services and reducing government funding means the gap between the money we receive and what we need to spend continues to grow. The County Council faces tremendous pressures – for example with a growing number of children in our care, currently around 700 at any one time. There has been a 17% growth in the number of people aged 65+ in the county in the last four years, and with increasing age there are greater complexities in the care needed.

Cambridgeshire is the fastest growing county in the UK. Our extra population means more demand on our infrastructure, yet we are the third worst funded shire county. This increased demand for services has seen our current budget gap leap to £5.2 million – with a predicted additional £20.7m to find in 2019/20.

Government funding to the County Council has fallen by £50m in the past four years, from £53m a year in 2014/5 to just £3m this year. This sum is set to go negative next year – meaning we will have to send £7m of Cambridgeshire tax payer money back to government to spend elsewhere in the UK.

Cambridgeshire was the only Combined Authority area last year not to be given a business rate retention pilot project – costing the council an estimated £8m. Steps to reduce spend include looking at all planned spending, and considering further reductions or postponements; considering all external contracts due to come up for renegotiation to look for further savings and freezing all nonessential vacancies.

WATERBEACH INCINERATOR

The planning application to build a giant waste incinerator at Waterbeach in which all our rubbish could be burnt for heat and electricity generation came to the County Council's Planning Committee where it was refused contrary to the Officer's recommendation. The impact on the landscape, the listed buildings at Denny Abbey and the immediate neighbours were felt to outweigh the benefits of the application

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about these, or any other matters.

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