

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2018

CLLR SARAH CHEUNG JOHNSON & CLLR ALEX MALYON

NORTHSTOWE AND A14 CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC

South Cambridgeshire District Council had requested that the Cambridgeshire Northstowe Transport Working Group (NTWG) be reinstated. Unfortunately, this is currently on hold while some governance issues at the council are sorted out. Kirstin Donaldson, the SCDC Development Officer, is dealing with this.

In the meantime, a meeting has been organised for 7th September to discuss ongoing Northstowe traffic issues. Minutes from this meeting should be available shortly.

The disruption from the frequent closures of the A14 are felt far and wide in South Cambs. Proper diversions are put in place and yet lorries in particular ignore them causing disruption to the villages they choose to travel through. A number of South Cambs District Councillors have been monitoring these unplanned traffic movements to ascertain where they originate from (the A14 or Northstowe) and the villages that are most adversely affected. Cllr Pippa Heylings has been in successful negotiations with Highways England to get them to pay for proper traffic monitoring in order to help manage this unacceptable situation.

CONSTRUCTION NOISE

We have continued to receive reports regarding breach of planning conditions, with work outside of permitted hours on both the Northstowe site and the site on Woodside in Longstanton.

We confirmed permitted working hours for Northstowe with James Stone at SCDC. These are Mon-Fri 0800-1800, Sat 0800-1300, no work permitted on Sundays or Bank Holiday. Deliveries and removal of spoil are allowed between 0700-1900.

We have now met with the enforcement team at SCDC to discuss what further action can be taken and we are passing on all reports from residents to them. We have made the developers, Homes England and contractors Sisk aware that we are ready to take enforcement action if they do not comply with planning conditions.

Philip Harker promised a more proactive effort on their side. The foreman for Sisk rang us over the weekend to apologise in advance for 1 contractor working on the Saturday until 2pm and sent an email to Hawk to advise them further breaches will result in enforcement action on their part.

Gallaghers have been less responsive to breaches on Phase 1 so we will step up pressure on them.

FOODBANK COLLECTIONS FOR THE TRUSSELL TRUST

Over the summer we have set up food bank donation points in both Longstanton and Oakington at the Communita café and village shops and the Co-op. We would like to thank these local businesses for their support.

Families who rely on free school meals can need to find an extra £30-40 per week to feed their children over the holidays and may have to turn to foodbanks for emergency help. The Trussell Trust was calling for emergency donations to support local food banks over the summer period. Details of urgently needed items can be found here: <https://cambridgecity.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>

We have received many generous donations from local residents and we are very grateful. Along with the SCDC Chairman, Cllr Douglas De Lacy we encouraged other councillors to also take up this initiative and there are now 10 other shops in South Cambs collecting food donations.

NORTHSTOWE PHASE 3 CONSULTATION

The first phase of consultation with the online questionnaire has now closed. The next steps will be for further public consultation to take place later in 2018 and then in Spring and Summer 2019 on the outline planning application for Phase 3. Details will be available on www.northstowe.com and we will keep residents updated on this.

Earlier in the summer Homes England had commissioned traffic monitoring locally (many residents would have been aware of the cameras and monitoring strips which were installed around the villages). This data is intended to inform the development of final plans for the Northstowe road network, including the proposed route for the Southern Access Road East. This monitoring exercise will be repeated in late September, after which we should be able to have access to this data and a report.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Following expressions of interest from various residents we are helping to co-ordinate various people together to form Neighbourhood Watch and are happy to continue to assist in any way we can. We like many are concerned over the anecdotal rise in crime in our village and neighbouring villages (notably Willingham, whose Co-op has been ramraided twice in as many months).

COMMUNITY ROAD SWEEPER

Asked for an update on the Cleaner Communities Project and the community road sweeper. We have received this response from Helen Taylor at SCDC:

Currently we are due to evaluate the pilot at the end of this year. As a new scheme, which we don't think has been done anywhere else in the country, we are taking things one step at a time, to ensure that the scheme is designed safely and works well. Melbourn volunteers have so far used the sweeper twice on their own, as it were, without our supervision and there has been quite a lot of learning from both these occasions. Their next sweep is scheduled for early October, after which we will likely review the next steps for the pilot, including the current planned timescales.

OAKINGTON RURAL TRANSPORT HUB

Following a meeting set up by the Greater Cambridge Partnership on the Rural Transport Hub for community groups from Oakington and Cottenham it was clear there was much divergence in residents views on what would make a successful Travel Hub. The project team have gone back to incorporate concerns raised but we have not had another update over the summer.

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. An agenda will be available nearing to the meeting.

COUNCILLOR UPDATES AND SURGERIES

We are pleased to say we got a few residents at our first ever surgery in Oakington and even happier to report that we have already resolved one issue for a local resident.

Upcoming surgeries will be:

September 22nd 1000-1230, Longstanton Village Market

October 10th 6-8pm, Northstowe Community Wing

November 10th 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 – EMPLOYER OF CHOICE FOR DISABILITIES, REDUCTION OF SINGLE USE PLASTICS

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

BECOMING AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

A motion was passed by all elected members at South Cambs to look at ways in which the Council can become an employer of choice for people with disabilities be they physical, mental, sensory or anything else. The employment figures for people with disabilities is truly shocking and we feel that there is an untapped market of people who want to be economically active and who have a great deal to offer. Only 25% of people with a learning difficulty, speech impairment or mental health condition are

employed. If you are an employer who would like help in attracting disabled employees please contact us.

SINGLE USE PLASTICS

South Cambs also supported a motion to look at ways in which the Council can reduce its own use of single use plastics and encourage residents to do likewise. It is extremely difficult to avoid single use packaging and it must be up to Government to legislate to get the supermarkets to move from their over-reliance on plastic. Iceland and Morrisons have made a start so hopefully others will follow but we can all do our own little bit. As a start you can avoid buying anything that is in black plastic which cannot even be recycled and WILL end up in landfill.

DISTRICT WIDE UPDATES

THE LOCAL PLAN

After an unprecedentedly long time (over 4 years) the South Cambs Local Plan which sets out the Council's development strategy has finally been passed by the Inspector. This was not the Local Plan that would have been out forward had the Liberal Democrats been in power four years ago but even so, they now have to consider at their next Council meeting what is in the best interest of residents by either approving or rejecting the plan. A key consideration is that until very recently there was no 5-year housing land supply which together with no Local Plan has meant a free for all for developers to build houses just about anywhere. In fact, there are now 5000 houses with planning permission that are not in any local plan.

Key housing sites in the two Local Plans (for Cambridge and South Cambs) that have been found sound by the inspectors are below. Only a proportion of the homes at the larger sites would be built by 2031:

- A new town north of Waterbeach – approximately 8,000-9,000 homes
- A new village at Bourn Airfield – approximately 3,500 homes
- An expansion to Cambourne to the west – since the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan was submitted planning permission has been granted for 2,350 homes
- Homes on land north of Cherry Hinton and west of Teversham – 1,200 homes
- Around 900 homes in the better served South Cambridgeshire villages
- Continue to develop Northstowe – around 10,000 homes
- Continue to build homes in existing growth sites on the edge of Cambridge (Southern Fringe, Cambridge East, Darwin Green and Eddington)
- Worts Causeway – 430 homes
- Extension to Cambridge Biomedical Campus to support the growth of this cluster
- Extension to the Peterhouse Technology Park on Fulbourn Road

Other key policies in the plan and findings of the Inspectors include a commitment to an early review of the Local Plans. This was already a commitment of both Councils as part of signing up to the City Deal agreement. The review would commence in 2019 with submission for examination in 2022. The Inspectors confirmed that the Councils' Green Belt evidence is robust and that no additional sites,

beyond the limited sites proposed by the Councils, need to be allocated for development in the Green Belt

We need to put the best interests of the area as a whole first and our job now is to ensure that we put existing communities, especially those living nearest to where new homes will be built, at the heart of developing plans. Part of this is ensuring new homes and communities go hand-in-hand with the necessary transport improvements and facilities, such as GP surgeries. We will be working with the Mayor, Greater Cambridge Partnership and County Council to make sure transport improvements happen.

CAMBRIDGE AHEAD

Sarah and Alex attended a workshop to hear some development forecasting from Cambridge Ahead group, who have produced an interim Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER) report – it's well worth a read here: <http://www.cpier.org.uk/interim-report/>

Cambridge Ahead is an organisation comprising about 40 of the top Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire firms. They have commissioned some very interesting work looking at the economic future of the Greater Cambridge Region. This has shown that growth in this area exceeds any previous predictions and is at about 7% but also highlighted the risks around not being able to sort out housing as wages fail to keep up with house prices resulting in recruitment problems for business which will in turn start to drive business elsewhere – e.g. Singapore. The time frames are scarily short for the economy to potentially start to see a downturn.

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Our leader, Cllr Bridget Smith, met with Jason Abelwhite, the Police and Crime Commissioner, last month and learnt that he is not taking over the fire authority immediately as the service has taken out a Judicial Review against the Secretary of State for allowing such take overs to take place. He has promised not to close any police stations in S Cambs but is replacing PCSOs with warranted officers as they now cost the same amount. He is recruiting 168 new officers and reducing PCSOs from 126 to 80. He also has a lot of money in his Casualty Reduction fund and will pay for all the equipment and training for any community wanting to do Speed Watch.

EAST WEST RAIL AND PROPOSAL FOR NORTHSTOWE STATION

CamBedRailRoad (CBRR) is a community based group (chaired by fellow LibDem County Cllr Sebastian Kindersley) that is promoting an alternative route for the 'missing link' on the Cambridge to Oxford railway. The section between Sandy and Cambridge has not yet been planned – and an announcement is expected very shortly. CBRR consider that the current preferred route corridor (which includes 4 different lines one of which goes through Gamlingay Heath) is inadequate. We are actively promoting an option running along the A428 corridor connecting the new developments at Bedford, St Neots, Cambourne and Northstowe before dropping into the new station at Cambridge North. This would have the advantage of connecting 3 major North/South rail routes and provide an east/west line that

connects major centres of population – which the preferred route corridor does not. You can view the plans at <http://www.cambedrailroad.org>

ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE COUNCIL HOUSING

Council homes across South Cambs are now among the most energy-efficient Council properties in the country. This means they are better for the environment, and easier and cheaper to heat and run for tenants. This follows a £15-million, four-year programme to make the District Council's housing stock as green as possible. This has been funded almost entirely by the authority itself, through the rent it receives. Improvements carried out since 2014 have combined to give the Council's 5,700 homes the equivalent of a 'C' score on Energy Performance Certificates.

This was achieved by upgrades to homes, including the installation of extra loft insulation, fitting external solid wall insulation and improving heating systems, especially at homes not supplied with mains gas. The programme has also seen older windows replaced with triple glazing and older doors bought up-to-date to prevent draughts.

Additionally, during the past few years, around 2,400 Council properties have benefited from the installation of solar panels, providing clean, renewable electricity and further reducing energy bills, particularly during the recent heatwave. Where possible and appropriate, air source heat pumps have also been installed.

A428 DUALLING PLANS DELAYED

It is very disappointing to learn that the dualling of the A428 has been put back by at least a year. This work was to start as the A14 upgrade completed in 2020 but is now due to be completed sometime between 2020 and 2025. The preferred route announcement is still scheduled for 2018.

THE COMBINED AUTHORITY

It seems that every week there is another bit of bad publicity associated with the Mayor, James Palmer and the Combined Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Combined Authority. We have just witnessed the recruitment of a County Councillor into a £120,000 pa directors job (he has now stood down from CCC) and the latest is the surprising departure of the £190,000 Chief Executive. Bridget is a Board member of the CA and is getting increasingly frustrated by the governance arrangements and lack of transparency of decision making. Aside from all the money being spent there is – so far – precious little to show for it.

LONELINESS TOOLKIT

Loneliness is a huge problem for far too many people from all walks of life. Village life should ideally protect people from suffering from loneliness because we all know our neighbours but the reality is that it is all too frequent and contributes to poor physical and mental health. The District Council is putting together a Loneliness Toolkit to help communities come up with ways of tackling this increasing problem which could affect any of us at any time be we young or old. If you have any good ideas please get in touch!

BUILDING MORE PARK AND RIDES

For those of living at a distance from Cambridge and wanting to visit for work or pleasure, there is little other choice than drive as the public bus service if any is rare, slow and expensive. The only way to transfer onto public transport is by using the Park & Rides which are largely at capacity. After a lot of debate over the past 3 months the Mayor, James Palmer, has finally agreed to allow the Greater Cambridge Partnership (administrators of the City Deal money) to get on with building some more Park & Ride sites in order to combat the ever increasing congestion in the City. The slightly bizarre thing is that these P & Rs are going to have to be 'temporary' which could well mean they are not a solid surface and have no loos or waiting rooms. There will be a full consultation process.

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

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