

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

OCTOBER 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.scambs.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW FOR LONGSTANTON OAKINGTON AND NORTHSTOWE

The consultation portion of the Community Governance Review has now closed. We had a good response from residents with 319 individual responses received and submissions from Longstanton Parish Council, Oakington Parish Council and Homes England.

Of the 319 individual submissions, 200 were residents who consider themselves to be living in Northstowe, 87 from elsewhere in Longstanton Civil Parish and 25 were resident in Oakington and Westwick. 5 lived elsewhere and 2 did not provide details.

Council officers are now reviewing submissions received and preparing final recommendations to Civic Affairs Committee for the 3rd November. A representative from each Parish Council is welcome to speak to the committee at the meeting. Neither of us sit on this Committee but we will be there to present our own responses in support of Option A. In November 2020 the final recommendations are published, and the review formally concludes. The reorganisation order can be made in February 2021.

You can find all the information about the CGR via <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/cgr-lown>

NORTHSTOWE PLANNING UPDATES

We have been meeting regularly with our planners for Phase 1 and Phases 2&3 to get updates and raise resident issues and questions. We have raised the concerns about the completion of roads and footpaths, and they tell us they are trying to work with L&Q and the housebuilders on this. We will continue to push for action. At the request of the planners L&Q have submitted a revised phasing plan for when elements of the infrastructure for Phase 1 will be finished. The old one was no longer accurate as L&Q have slipped so much on delivery. In this L&Q have given a 2026 date for completion of the primary roads which is not acceptable. There will be parcels of house building on Phase 1 up to this date, but a phased plan is needed for completing the primary roads and not a blanket date in 2026.

We have had to push L&Q repeatedly to complete Pioneer Park as again there have been unacceptable delays. We share resident's frustration that there is nowhere for children to play. We hope by the time of publication this will be open, but they would not commit to a completion date.

We have also submitted our responses to the Endurance Estates planning application for 107 new homes on land west of the B1050. We were pleased to see they have been working with Homes England on coordinating plans as it is important that there is integration across the Northstowe development. We support the request from our community officers for section 106 contributions to public facilities, open spaces, and faith provision for Northstowe. We have raised objections to the application, in particular

citing the lack of a plan for sustainable drainage and a failure to properly assess the existing wildlife habitats on site, to show how these will be protected or to demonstrate a commitment to biodiversity net gain through development, something which they are required to do.

Hatton Road Balancing Ponds – Non material amendments for alterations to permanent water levels and storage volume, landscaping and updated ecological plan were approved in May 2020. Seeding is due to start in April 2021, to complete in a month and permanent access to be provided for June 2021.

LEAP 1 – Being delivered concurrently with the adjacent section of the Northern Greenway. Works ceased due to Covid were restarted in August, earthworks, drainage and installation of play equipment, bare root planting are complete as is street lighting to the adjacent Greenway leisure route. L&Q state that rain and Covid have impacted progress.

HERITAGE STRATEGY

Following this topic being raised at Longstanton Parish Council last meeting and further email exchanges, we would like to set out the following points so that this is clear.

The Section 106 referenced is Schedule 12 – pages 138 – 142. The actual trigger for this in the Section 106 is 300 dwellings on Phase 2. As you are aware, we are currently at zero dwellings for Phase 2.

The money for this has already been paid from South Cambs District Council to Cambridgeshire County Council and County Council officers have confirmed receipt of this.

Once the trigger (300 dwellings on Phase 2) has been met, County, South Cambs and Homes England are required to establish the Heritage Core Team to prepare the Heritage Strategy, which will outline where to place the display of finds either within a community building (if so which one) or public realm as an educational resource.

The Section 106 puts that it is the County Council who is required to lead on the Heritage Core Team and the setting up and to lead on the Strategy and leading on the comments and responses to this drafting (para 3.7). This is because museums and heritage are within the remit of the County Council, not the District Council.

Ahead of these triggers, the Heritage Core Team was set up mid/late 2017 – so in advance of the triggers. County, District and Homes England participated. Approximately 10 meetings occurred to date but have not met since 2018.

The Brief for the Heritage Strategy has been agreed and County Council are now seeking further funds from SCDC that were outside the s106 to carry out this work.

As such this further emphasises that there is no breach of the s106, and that Homes England have met their obligations with the County now the responsible party under para 3.7 of Sch12 of the s106

The non-delivery of the Heritage requirements would also be the County enforcing against itself as Homes England have met their principal obligations (i.e. payment of the money) and para 3.5.3 could also have been considered to have also been met in terms of the approval of the Heritage Annex, if this is where the LDHS information is to be stored.

Similarly, County have not requested that Heritage display is required as part of the Civic Hub specification. Conditions 8 and 9 have been discharged in respect of the Design Code and Phasing Strategy as required by para 3.5.2.

It is very much and firmly for County to lead on the delivery of these aspects of the Agreement as signatory of the s106 and these clauses were drafted by them. They are also recipient of the money and any breach would need to be enforced by them (possibly against themselves).

It does not fall to SCDC to enforce this section of the Agreement and it is for County to set up the Heritage Core Team with ourselves and Homes England.

LONGSTANTON FLY-TIPPING

Work on prosecution is ongoing, we are currently well within the timelines for this

4 VICARAGE ROAD, OAKINGTON

Sarah & Alex are working to push planning enforcement on this following refusal from the Planning Area lead who does not "feel sufficiently strongly about serving of a notice in this instance. The garden is overgrown but not to the extent that the public amenity is significantly harmed."

DISTRICT WIDE UPDATES

PLANNING

South Cambridgeshire is maintaining a 5-year housing land supply when about a third of District Councils cannot. Obviously Covid is not helping the situation but building is continuing here and at the time of writing stands at 5.4 years. Regrettably a PINs Planning Inspector recently made a mistake when reviewing a planning appeal and wrote that we did not have a 5-year supply. Thanks to very quick action by council officers this was withdrawn within a matter of hours.

You may recall some years ago in the previous administration, over 4,000 homes were given permission in villages where they had not been planned because housing delivery was not meeting the government set targets. We do not want that to happen again.

BRIEF COVID UPDATE

Case update in South Cambs

We are now sitting at 44 cases per 100,000 up to 4 October.

Between 28 September and 4 October, we had 70 cases, with the highest of 17 on 30 September. From a case review today with the Public Health team at the county and Public Health England there is no clear pattern other than the majority of cases are in the 18-25 age range, male and female. Our EHOs are working with public health to see if we can identify any patterns. We have a member briefing on Thursday and will of course update you on any developments then.

COVID-19 insight reports

The LGA have two new additions to their family of LG Inform COVID-19 reports, in response to a request from councils. The COVID-19 Rolling Weekly Trackers use seven-day rolling totals to make it easier to pick up trends and patterns in COVID-19 cases and deaths for England, English regions, and local authorities. They make for an interesting read. The reports are updated daily with the latest data:

- [LG Inform - COVID-19 Rolling Weekly Tracker - Overview for England](#)
- [LG Inform – COVID-19 Rolling Weekly Tracker – Quick View for Your Local Authority](#) (select your authority at the top of the report)

Other [LG Inform reports](#) in this series, plus reports on a wider range of topics, can be accessed from the LG Inform themed reports page. Please contact lginform@local.gov.uk if you have any feedback or requests for additional analysis of COVID-19 data.

Incidences of Covid-19 are increasing in South Cambs and in nearby places such as Bedford and Peterborough. We know that people are finding it difficult to get tests and that tests are taking a long time to come back so we are very cautious about the figures we have as they are likely to be an underestimate. Admissions to hospitals across the county are increasing even though numbers are low, but the sad fact is that some of those people who go into hospital will not recover.

Can we please encourage you to download the Government Covid-19 App <https://covid19.nhs.uk/>? It can be used to login into to more and more venues using the QR codes that are being displayed at front doors. No personal information is gathered. Annoyingly, a great number of older phone models cannot use it, but it is nonetheless an important tool.

It is now the law that masks are worn in shops, cafes, bars, and restaurants and can only be taken off when eating or drinking. Obviously, some people are exempt from wearing them on medical grounds. We are also now restricted to groups of 6 or less indoors be it in public places or in our homes.

It is difficult to enforce mask wearing and the Rule of 6 and as a council our job is primarily to Engage, Encourage & Explain. Enforcement is a last resort and we are awaiting instruction from government on how they want us to do this for people and places that refuse to abide by the rules. Some premises have put up signs saying, 'No Mask, No Entry'. It is difficult to argue with that. Less impressive has been people's behaviour on trains where people like carers, the vulnerable and the elderly are put at risk by others who just do not seem to care.

South Cambridgeshire is one of the safer places at the moment and keeping it that way is absolutely in our gift. If we do not abide by the rules : Wear a Mask, Wash your Hands, Keep your Distance, then it is a matter of a couple of weeks before we have the same restrictions as the North of England and all the misery and mayhem that will go along with that.

COVID COMMUNITY GRANT

South Cambs will, on W/C October 13th, release a new grant available for community groups supporting people with Covid related issues. There is £50,000 available in the pot and we will send around the details once the grant is live.

TESTING

There is a shortage of testing capacity and new guidance now applies. Please only book a coronavirus test if you have any of the key symptoms; and booking is essential - there are no walk-in options available nor at A&E. If you cannot get an appointment straight away, please try again in a few hours. New appointments go live throughout the day. By calling 119, members of the public, who do not have online access, can book a coronavirus swab test, and ask any questions relating to having a test and getting results. This includes about drive through test sites, mobile test units and home tests.

SELF-ISOLATION PAYMENTS

All the information you need to apply for a government grant should you officially be required to self-isolate and consequently experience a loss of income is on the South Cambridgeshire District Council website. There are a number of eligibility checks such as what benefits you are in receipt of but once you have made your application the process should be quick and you should receive your payment within 3 days. More than one person per household may apply and you can apply again if you are required to self-isolate again. <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/coronavirus/self-isolation-payment/>

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE HALL.

Having just re-opened South Cambs Hall it has now been closed again as part of our efforts to do all we can to minimise the spread of Coronavirus locally. We feel this is the right and responsible thing to do following the latest Government announcements. Residents and businesses have been able to carry out the vast majority of transactions without visiting and for the small number of tasks that have required people to visit in-person, such as pension verification, we have made arrangements to continue delivering them in a safe way. Please check the website for further details.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

We continue to regularly update the information on our website for businesses – please sign up for the excellent newsletter which contains all the latest information. We now have a great team of 4 officers focused entirely on business support and recovery. If you are struggling, as many businesses are, please contact them - their job is to help you.

THE ECONOMY

We know that the economy is taking a huge hit throughout the country. That is the case for us too although we started off in a good position in South Cambs with low unemployment and lots of jobs of all types. 25% (19,900) of employees in the district have been furloughed though some are now returning to work. Unfortunately, others are losing their jobs. 3.5 % (3,370) of our workforce is claiming universal credit which is an increase this year of 2.6%. So, it could be much worse but we are aware that some of the jobs that have been lost, especially in retail, hospitality and leisure are unlikely to come back quickly.

POOR BROADBAND?

The Cambridgeshire County Council Connecting Cambridgeshire team has launched a top-up scheme for rural gigabit vouchers – topping up the voucher value for those on the slowest speeds. If you experience slow broadband speeds and live at the edge of the village have a look at www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk

Groups of rural premises with broadband speeds of less than 100Mbps can apply to the national Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme and pool vouchers worth up to £1,500 for homes and £3,500 for small to medium enterprises (SMEs) towards the cost of installing a new full fibre connection.

In addition, eligible rural properties getting less than 30Mbps will automatically receive a ‘top up’ to the voucher – offering an extra £1,500 per household or business towards the installation cost of gigabit-capable broadband. This means premises in group projects with the slowest speeds will get vouchers worth up to £3,000 per residential premise and up to £5,000 per business.

MARSHALL AIRFIELD MOVE

Marshall’s airport has officially announced the new site that they will be moving to. It is the Cranfield site, which is in Bedfordshire. You may remember that one of the sites considered was Duxford, some will be relieved it is not moving there and others will be disappointed that the business is leaving the county.

(ANOTHER) GCP CONSULTATION

The GCP will be consulting on their preferred new off-road route between the new travel hub/park & ride site and Cambridge. The consultation opens on October 12th and closes December 7th. The documents can be seen online at - <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/transport/transport-projects/cambridgesoutheast/cambridge-south-east-transport-eia>

‘CALL FOR SITES’ & THE NEW LOCAL PLAN

The “Call for Sites” is the first stage in the statutory process of creating a Local Plan – a responsibility of South Cambridgeshire District Council. The process must be transparent and needs to identify as many potential opportunities as possible. Around 600 sites of varying sizes have been submitted by landowners across South Cambridgeshire in response to the Call for Sites. These have not yet been assessed or filtered in any way, and therefore have no planning status. It is a list of potential sites that may be used in the plan-making process, after the council has decided on what spatial strategy to use. This is the same process followed in making the current Local Plan.

Following on from feedback received from the public during the Issues & Options First Conversation, there will now be a process of working out which of the spatial strategies will be selected for providing jobs and homes that are affordable for people in the district, whilst meeting our zero carbon and sustainable living objectives. Just as in the previous plan, where only a small number of submitted sites were selected – less than 10% – the district council envisages that only a very small number of sites on this list will be used in the plan.

There will be further consultations with the public later in the process, to present and discuss the preferred spatial options. Until then, none of these sites has any planning status. Lots of background and information here:

<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/greater-cambridge-local-plan/first-conversation-consultation-and-call-for-sites/>

DIFFICULTIES WITH WATER BILLS?

Are you or do you know someone struggling to pay their water bills because of COVID-19? Contact Cambridge Water via the website, by Facebook or Twitter or give call 0800 587 7701. More information can be found online at <https://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/covid-help>. They can offer tailored support including the Assure social tariff (for customers whose household income is less than £16,380 a year); the Assure Covid-19 tariff, which is available for a 12-week period for customers whose household income has been impacted by the Coronavirus outbreak and is temporarily less than £16,380 a year as well as a number of other plans.

EAST-WEST RAIL

You may be aware of the rail route proposed and campaigned for by CamBedRailRoad. This is along the A428, and now seems to be the preferred route for the East-West Rail from Bedford to Cambourne. There are differences of opinion regarding the best entry point into Cambridge. A new pressure group, Cambridge Approaches, has some ideas regarding the railway's approach to Cambridge.

If you wish to follow the work of Cambridge Approaches, there is a facility to sign up for news updates etc. via their website. <https://cambridgeapproaches.org/>

If you would like to see what CamBed Railroad has achieved and continues to work towards, their website is <http://www.cambedrailroad.org/>.

PLANS FOR NORTH EAST CAMBRIDGE

The joint planning services of City and South Cambs Councils have consulted on their proposal for a new high-density urban centre in the north east of the city, which would accommodate 5,000 new homes, 5,000 new jobs and 3 new primary schools as well as some green space. To enable this new urban centre to be built, the Cambridge Sewage works will need to be relocated and the government is providing £227m to pay for this. Anglian Water is proposing three possible locations, all of which are in green belt countryside to the north of the A14.

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 (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/>

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

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