

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

JULY 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.scams.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS

One of the Councils main roles continues to be in providing support for local businesses. For the most up to date information on the support available to businesses or the self-employed, we recommend checking the Council webpages <https://www.scams.gov.uk/business/coronavirus-information-for-businesses/> or visiting the governments business information pages: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>

Additional business grants for small businesses

Council officers have been chasing relevant businesses who have not applied for grants they may be eligible for, for our ward this has only been Humpty Dumpty pre-school and the linked Connections Bus which Oakington use.

Community Governance Review for Longstanton Oakington and Northstowe

After agreement from the Civic Affairs committee the deadline for the consultation has now been extended to September 2020 to take into account delays due to Covid. The new timelines and all information are on the website below. New engagement dates need to be confirmed

Timetable for Community Governance Review of the parishes of Longstanton, Oakington and Westwick	
Terms of Reference are published	11 November 2019
Local briefings and meetings	November/December 2019
Initial submissions are invited	11 Nov 2019 to 15 Jan 2020
Consideration of submissions received, draft recommendations prepared for Civic Affairs Committee	Draft recommendations published 3 March 2020
Consultation on the draft recommendations	From 15 March to 15 June 2020
Consideration of submissions received and final recommendations prepared for Civic Affairs Committee (date TBC)	July/August 2020
Final recommendations are published, concluding the review	September 2020
Council can make a Reorganisation Order	October 2020

It is still possible to view and comment on the three options being proposed as part of the second phase of the CGR consultation. Full details and maps can be found here <https://www.scams.gov.uk/cgr-lown>

NORTHSTOWE PHASE 3 CONSULTATION EXTENSION

The deadline for the consultation period on both phase 3A and 3B of Northstowe Town have been extended to 14 July 2020.

To find out how to comment on plans for both phase 3A and 3B at <https://bit.ly/3gdjs8W>

The government has made it clear that the planning process should continue even during the current crisis and so plans for Northstowe Phases 3A and B have now gone out to consultation.

The outline plans for 3A reference 20/02171/OUT (the phase closest to Oakington, on the south of the site) include 4000 homes, 2 new primary schools, a local centre, including shops, offices and research and development space, open spaces and lakes and community and sports facilities.

Phase 3B reference 20/02142/OUT (the phase west of the B1050 in Longstanton) includes plans for an additional 1000 homes, a primary school, local centre and orchard and allotments.

We are encouraging residents to submit their comments via the formal consultation process and the easiest way to this is online via <https://applications.greatercambridgeplanning.org/online-applications/> You can search for the plans using the above reference numbers or using keywords 'Northstowe Phase 3A' and 'Northstowe Phase 3B'.

Homes England have also produced some short videos explaining the plans which you can access here: www.northstowe.com/phase3

If residents have any questions or comments, they can contact the planning department via planningcomments@greatercambridgeplanning.org or as ever, please feel free to contact us.

EXTENSION OF WORKING HOURS FOR CONSTRUCTION SITES

Following the decision by the Government's announcement to allow temporarily extending working hours until 9pm, 6 days per week on construction sites to try to ensure social distancing and allow safe working on site. You can read the full ministerial statement and find more details via <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-construction-update-qa>

While we understand the need to ensure the safety of construction workers as work gets started again, we are concerned that they have not fully considered the impact these extended working hours will have on the quality of life of the residents living on or near sites like Northstowe.

The developers will have to agree any changes to their working hours with SCDC. Unfortunately, the government have made it clear that planning authorities will be expected to approve requests and that these will need to be processed within 10 days, which allows little time for effective consultation with Parish Councils or residents, which is extremely disappointing.

For Phase 2 - Homes England Sisk have requested to extend working hours to cover almost the entire weekend for 2 weekends in June. We refused this as District Councillors and are pleased that the council also refused. Our reasons are below:

- Residents are already impacted by work in the week and on half of the day on Saturday. To take away the "break" in this work would make it almost insufferable for residents.
- Sisk and Homes England have shown no concrete action, despite repeated requests from ourselves on dust and noise mitigation - this shows a lack of goodwill. Unless we see that there is some definitive steps taken to mitigate noise and dust, as specified in the planning conditions, we do not feel additional working hours should be considered.
- It was not clear in the request from the developers how social distancing had impacted project timelines to the extent they needed to put in a request for additional weekend work - it was not clear that they were not merely taking advantage of the government's extension of this work

For Phase 1 – Bovis Homes have requested additional weekend work and we have submitted our comments as per below. We await the council's decision

- 1 - Residents of Northstowe have spent the last 2 years living on a permanent building site. Covid has exacerbated this with many residents having to stay at home, having to live and work next to constant construction noise. To extend these and allow them barely any respite for every day of the week and most waking hours except Sunday is not acceptable.
- 2 - We have vulnerable residents, some with special needs/asthma who are already impacted by living in enclosed conditions in a noisy and dusty environment and it is not to their benefit to have additional hours adding to their issues.

3 - We do not see evidence that Bovis parcels and houses lack so much space that they cannot social distance work within them to the extent that they need to extend these hours. Three parcels and multiple houses should provide Bovis the flexibility to work around this.

4 - There is no evidence given that there is pent up demand for these houses to be occupied and no evidence that this decision is motivated by demands of future residents to occupy these houses to the extent that their needs are greater than those of existing residents the majority of whom do not wish to see extended hours granted.

RAMPTON DRIFT NORTHSTOWE BRIEFING

The Community Governance Review sessions with Rampton Drift brought up a lot of Northstowe residents questions that were not related to the CGR, so we arranged for a Rampton Drift specific session with Homes England and Urban Splash the first Phase 2 housebuilders. Unfortunately due to Covid this was delayed but has now been reinstated to July 15th. It will be hosted on the Facebook page Northstowe Community as the Northstowe Community Forum was last week.

UP TO FOUR BLUE BINS AVAILABLE

Residents spending more time at home might find they have more recycling than usual so as a reminder, up to 4 bins can be requested free of charge from the Council using this link:

https://www.scambs.gov.uk/bins/report-or-request/request-a-bin/?fbclid=IwAR3_C2Wr8BJotxv7WqngoELnhQAjfmZefccAyxNQjeciwJoJVuyaj78RN8

OTHER DISTRICT WIDE UPDATES

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Local Outbreak Control Plan was published (June 30th), following public discussion at Monday's Health and Wellbeing Committee. You can find the information and the plan itself here:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-trace>

PLANNING CHANGES

The Prime Minister announced significant reforms to the planning system yesterday. Under the new rules, existing commercial properties, including newly vacant shops, can be converted into residential housing more easily. The changes, which are planned to come into effect by September through changes to the law, include:

More types of commercial premises having total flexibility to be repurposed through reform of the Use Classes Order. A building used for retail, for instance, would be able to be permanently used as a café or office without requiring a planning application and local authority approval. Pubs, libraries, village shops and other types of uses essential to the lifeblood of communities will not be covered by these flexibilities.

A wider range of commercial buildings will be allowed to change to residential use without the need for a planning application.

Builders will no longer need a normal planning application to demolish and rebuild vacant and redundant residential and commercial buildings if they are rebuilt as homes.

Property owners will be able to build additional space above their properties via a fast track approval process, subject to neighbour consultation.

SAFE USE OF MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Yesterday MHCLG published guidance for those managing community centres, village halls and other community facilities on safely re-opening multi-purpose buildings. The government will allow community centres and other multi-use community facilities to open on 4 July. Managers of community facilities will have discretion over when they consider it safe to open for any activity permitted by legislation and may decide to remain closed if they are not able to safely follow the advice in the relevant guidance to make the space coronavirus secure. The guidance covers some key considerations for safely reopening community facilities, such as:

- Social distancing and capacity
- Cleaning
- Hygiene and face coverings
- Vulnerable people
- Toilets
- Noise
- Track and trace
- Travel and parking

Advice is also provided on the permitted activities in multi-use community facilities, with links to relevant guidance for each use. The guidance also provides information on enforcement.

Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities>

PHASED RETURN OF SPORT AND RECREATION

The guidance for the public, providers of outdoor sport facilities, elite athletes, personal trainers and coaches on the phased return of sport and recreation was updated yesterday to include new guidance from 4 July 2020. From 4 July outdoor gyms and playgrounds can open, as can food or drink facilities inside a clubhouse. Indoor facilities, such as changing rooms, should be kept closed, apart from toilets and throughways. Outdoor and indoor swimming pools will also remain closed to the public. Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation>

PEOPLE WHO ARE SHIELDING – UPDATE FROM LGA

The Office for National Statistics has published new data based on research of those who are shielding in line with the advice for people defined as clinically extremely vulnerable. This was carried out between 9 and 18 June 2020. This aims to provide an insight into how this group of 2.2 million people have seen changes in their physical and mental health, whether they and their household are following the guidance and what support is helping, or is needed, to help them shield. Of those contacted, 63 per cent were completely following the shielding guidance. A range of different support mechanisms had been utilised by the proportion of the shielded group (43 per cent) who had not left home since they were advised to shield. 74 per cent had found video or telephone calls with family and friends helpful, 59 per cent had appreciated support with prescription deliveries and 56 per cent with food deliveries or boxes.

The majority (60 per cent) of people had not experienced a worsening of their mental health, but more than two thirds of those who are currently receiving treatment for their mental health reported that it had become 'slightly or more worse' since receiving shielding advice. Women were more likely to report a worsening in their mental health than men, irrespective of age group.

Councils may find these findings of interest in developing local outbreak plans and considering what support may still be needed locally to address the ongoing impacts on wellbeing and mental health. We will be continuing to work with the Strategic Engagement Forum and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as the restrictions for the shielded group are gradually removed and we have a range of publications with key national partners on the mental health challenges emerging within communities.

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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