

Report of District Councillors Claire Daunton and John Williams to Great Wilbraham Parish Council

September 2019

This report contains factual information which we hope will be of interest and of use to the parish council and the wider village community. Please contact us at cllr.daunton@scambs.gov.uk or john.williams@cambridgeshire.gov.uk if you have any queries or need further information.

Current Issues

1. Ice Rink. The ice rink opened for skating on Monday 26th August. The official opening, being organised by the University's Alumni Office, will take place on Saturday 28th September. Various preview tours of the building and use of facilities have been arranged. We are pleased that the agreement of an additional loan from SCDC has enabled the rink to be completed. It should prove to be significant addition to leisure and sporting facilities in this Ward and across the area.
2. Bus Services. We have been working with the Stagecoach and CABU (Cambridge Area Bus Users) to improve bus services between Fulbourn, Teversham and the city. At present our focus is on: a) improving the timetable for the No. 3 which runs once a day between Stetchworth – Wilbrahams-Teversham-Fulbourn-Cambridge, and return. Alterations to the timetable over the last two years have made the service even more impractical for workers and sixth-formers than before; b) working to see if Stagecoach could run a trial minibus service between Fulbourn-Teversham-Coldham's Lane, and return.
3. Zero Carbon Grants Scheme. We have attended two presentations concerning this scheme, launched in early August with a closing date of 31st October. This is a new grants scheme to encourage communities to bid for funding of between £1,000 and £15,000 per grant to enable local improvements modifications that contribute to making communities more sustainable and environmentally friendly. Schemes could include: cycle racks at bus stops; more energy-efficient lighting or heating; electric vehicle charging points; small-scale energy-generation schemes. Details of the scheme are given here.
<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-development/grants/zero-carbon-communities-grant/>
4. Police Issues Current priorities for the police include: tackling knife crime amongst young people and dealing with a rise in domestic violence and sexual abuse within close-knit communities, and particularly isolated rural communities. There are special initiatives in both these areas. The 'Kickstart' initiative which helps fight knife crime through football for

14-16 year olds, is being trialled in various villages across the wider area, including two in South Cambs. Details can be found on the web. This might be of general interest to the Youth Group and we will send a message to them.

Major Housing Developments

1. North East Fringe Development (NEFD).

A meeting took place on 29th August. This was the second of a series of meetings with local Members (City and South Cambs) concerning this major development of 160 hectares. The area is the subject of an Area Action Plan (AAP) since it cuts across two local authorities. An AAP is, in effect, a mini local plan and has a similar status. It is subject to an independent inspection and the inspector then makes a recommendation to the Secretary of State. Given its proximity to Fen Ditton and the consequent relocation of the Water Treatment Plant as part of this development, we follow matters related to this development closely for our parish councils.

The meeting on 29th August concentrated on consideration of density per hectare (dph) and typologies of dwelling and space usage. Some figures for comparison: in Romsey for example, with a suburban landscape the density is 80-90 dph; at Cambridge central station area, with a highly urbanised landscape, the dph is 350. For the NEFD planners are examining different dph levels. The higher dph levels would require buildings of up to 13 storeys; the lower dph levels would require buildings of between 2 and 7 storeys. The sensitive fringes of the development, ie those close to existing buildings would be of a lower height whilst in the centre of the development close to the hotel and major office buildings, some dwellings might rise to 13 storeys. All of this is very much at the discussion and consultation stage. Also considered at the meeting were visualisation exercise, namely looking at proposals for height and type of buildings from different viewpoints in different landscapes. Those considered so far were mostly from the city side. We will follow this up with regard to visualisation from villages on the neighbouring northern edges.

2. Wing Development

There follows a report from a meeting held on Wednesday, 21st August, at which planning permission was given for the first phase of the Wing development. It should be noted that the commercial name of this development is now Marleigh ('Mar' for Marshall's who own the land, 'leigh', or hill, for the rise in the ground on which the development stands)

The Joint Development Control Committee (JDCC) of South Cambs and the City, which determines major planning applications in the city fringe, has approved the reserved matters application for phase 1a of what has been known as the Wing development which lies to the north of Newmarket Road opposite Cambridge Airport. Councillor John Williams who is the lead member for South Cambs on the Committee and Councillor Anna Bradnam who is a Cambridgeshire Council representative agreed the detailed access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for 239 new homes, including 77 affordable homes, plus non-residential floor space including a community centre, retail units and nursery, a Market Square public realm, internal roads and landscaping in accordance with previous outline permission S/2682/13/OL. Councillor Daunton was also present and was able to question officers regarding the percentage of affordable housing (now at 30% over the whole scheme but with some phases at 25%), and the effective start date for the building of houses in the first phase. The reduction in affordable housing was agreed at an earlier stage in the project on grounds of viability since the developers were expected to provide a replacement engine testing shed of a much higher acoustic standard than that in place at present. In answer to the question concerning build timetable, members were informed that the first houses will first be visible in early 2021. The new primary school will not open until September 2021.

The Committee noted that the developer Hill Marshall LLP would be installing a slow charge electric vehicle charging point in homes with a parking space and provide one for every eight parking spaces for the flats, plus an on-street visitor charging point. There is currently no mandate to install EV charging points and the new Local Plan makes no provision for them. However, this will be rectified by the emerging joint City/South Cambs Local Plan. (Government legislation is also moving in the direction of our intentions in the new Local Plan, as indicated in this briefing paper where details are given concerning a move to electric charging points being made compulsory in new buildings. <https://www.lgiu.org.uk/briefing/charge-latest-planning-shake-up-to-see-electric-car-changepoints-become-compulsory-in-new-buildings/>).

The Committee was also concerned that Hill Marshall LP intended to only install fire sprinklers in the private dwellings because the affordable dwellings come under the policy of the registered provider chosen by Marshall Hill for the development London & Quadrant. Currently this is not a requirement of Building Regulations but officers agreed to ask Housing colleagues to approach L&Q to copy Hill Marshall LLP. We are also writing to L&Q to urge them to adopt the same policy.

It was also disappointing to learn that the section 106 agreed for the outline consent made no provision for supporting a public transport link to the Cambridge Bio-med Campus from the opening of phase 1a. That this matter is in the hands of the Combined Authority. Councillors were also

concerned that the bus service, once it commenced should also act as a local service for stops in between the development and the Biomedical Campus.

Planning

1. Shared Planning Service

The final stages of bringing together the planning service for the City and South Cambs are now in place. The Shared Service agreement was first entered into in 2016. This coming-together has been a complex and time-consuming process, going on at a time of unprecedented levels of work for all those involved at all staffing levels. Like most planning services throughout the UK, but particularly those in areas of high growth, there are significant shortages of qualified and experienced planners. There have been complaints concerning delays in processing applications both from residents and developers. In order to deal with the levels of work and the shortage of qualified staff, the Director of Planning and his senior staff took an operational decision to bring in – on a four-month contract – Terraquest Consultants to take on the early, administrative stages of planning applications, leaving the later, professional stages to qualified planners. At the same time the Director wrote to all agents and developers to request that no applications be submitted without all checks first being made that the application is fully compliant with regulations. Many applications have to go backwards and forwards to planners several times because at the first, or even second submission the application is wanting in some way or other. The Director of Planning made a presentation to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee concerning the temporary role of the consultants and of other actions being taken with regard to planning. Members emphasised the need for proper monitoring and management of the contract to ensure that it provided an appropriate level of service. The Scrutiny Committee will be receiving a further report on the planning service in November giving members additional opportunity to review this and other aspects of the service

2. Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

South Cambs has been consulting on the contents of this document which provides guidance to developers relating to sustainability. Even though the contents are closely related to the work of developers, the guidance does have a close bearing on what we will want to see in relation to the sustainability of all our major developments. Aspects of sustainability include: water and electricity usage and availability; recycling facilities; storage facilities; parking areas; walking and cycling facilities; impaired mobility facilities; drainage arrangements; transport arrangements; internal and external lighting of buildings; light pollution; traffic volumes and flow. Parish Councils and individuals

are being an opportunity to comment on the document, with a closing date of 23rd September.

Details can be found at

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-and-neighbourhood-planning/sustainable-design-and-construction-consultation-spd/>

Transport

1. Local Transport Plan

The Devolution Deal of 2017 handed the role of Local Transport Authority (LTA) to the Combined Authority. The Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the area including the whole of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough aims to improve journey times, use new technology, deliver growth, reduce carbon emissions, enable biodiversity gain and continue to enable economic growth. It also has to be delivered with appropriate and adequate financing sources and be in line with the outcome of public consultation.

Funding of any approved schemes will come from a range of sources, including the City Deal which is funding the schemes for Greater Cambridge under the auspices of the GPC. Sources apart from the City Deal include: the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund, the Growth Deal, Business rates, direct contributions from private companies and/or developers, the Mayoral Community Levy, Land Value Capture, Council Tax precept, and others.

The strategy for the Greater Cambridge Area includes the following schemes:

Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro: first phase through Cambridge tunnelling and city fringes

Milton and Histon Road improvements

Additional Park and Ride sites

Rural Travel Hubs

Cambridge South Station

Relocation of Waterbeach Station

Greenways with segregated walking and cycling spaces

Cycling improvements in Cambridge City

Current public transport networks improvements

Girton Interchange Study

In addition other schemes such as the East-West Rail initiative, A428 improvement at Caxton and M11 Smart Motorway scheme are also to be supported. Further there is a scheme to improve road connections between Cambridge, March and Wisbech to enable greater investment in the north of the county. Public consultation on the LTP has been going on for some time and will end on 27th September. The two Councils in this part of the County – City and South Cambs – have been considering a joint response. Since there are many common response points, particularly with regard to concerns over reduction on carbon emissions, biodiversity gain and the modal shift to a range of public transport offerings (bus, train) and to autonomous vehicles and other technology-driven shifts. A draft response has been prepared and will be discussed at a meeting of South Cambs Cabinet on Wednesday 4th September. The details of the draft response can be found at <https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s112702/Appendix%201%20Draft%20LTP%20Response.pdf>

2. A14 Upgrade

Members of the A14-upgrade management team made a presentation to District councillors on 10th September. We learned that the scheme is divided into 6 sections with each having a different focus and deadline. Some of these sections, including major areas of new road and adjacent slip roads, are complete and have been opened, even if only partially. The most complex sections – 5 and 6 – are those closest to the City and those closest to our villages. These are not due for completion until late next year. We will, however, see some benefits of the whole scheme in the near future. In answer to questions concerning signage, lighting, redirection, night-time working and slip-road closures, the management team were constructive in seeking more information and being willing to respond to concerns. There are teams patrolling the length of the widening area throughout each day. The team currently hold consultations and information events regularly and in different places. We were also told about the extent of the archaeological and nature conservancy work, and in relation to the latter the

A14 scheme has won an award. They encouraged feedback from parish councils and individual residents across the District.

3. GPC Assembly: Transport update

The GPC Assembly (60 residents chosen randomly, through sortition procedure, to consider proposals from the GCP on congestion and public transport) has met once and is due to meet again in two weeks' time. It is considering how best to deal with traffic congestion and air pollution in and around greater Cambridge; how best to utilise current and potential future modes of public transport; and offer views on prioritising.

We all want an end to congestion across the area; most of us give a very high priority to better public transport – buses and a third station at Cambridge South in the short term, with something like a CAM metro, if not that exactly, in the longer term, as well as other rail links – and most of us agree that more public money should be put into improving services and lowering pollution levels, with some kind of charging regime to help make these possible.

Plans to take most elements of these suggestions forward are advanced, including plans for a Cambridge South station. Also advanced is the Cambridge Greenways project with the cycle and pedestrian trails in Fulbourn and Fen Ditton/Chesterton coming into use during 2020.

It is hoped that the GCP will be successful in its bid for the follow-up funding and this should allow for further Greenways projects and for the realisation of the elements mentioned in the second paragraph. It is hoped then that there might be residual funding for smaller greenways schemes, to connect up smaller communities to the main cycling/pedestrian corridors.

Economic Strategy

1. Value for Money Strategy

At its meeting of 20th August South Cambs Scrutiny and Overview Committee undertook pre-scrutiny of a proposed Value for Money (VFM) Strategy to be discussed by Cabinet on Wednesday 4th September. There had not previously been a VFM strategy. The establishment of a VFM approach complies with the Council's duty to deliver best value in provision of its functions and services. A VFM can be achieved in different ways: reducing costs by better procurement and commissioning; reducing inputs for the same outputs; achieving greater outputs with improved quality. VFM is not a new concept but gained emphasis initially as a result of the Local Government Act of 1999, and has

been the subject of further legislation since then. External auditors will examine arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

South Cambs proposes the adoption of a VFM strategy to reflect the following key commitments: Achieving value for money with the commitments made in the Business Plan 2019-2024; continuing its commitment to renew and improve local services, recognising the need to involve communities in helping to shape local services that are more responsive and offer additional social value.

2. Economic Development Policy

SCDC is working on an Economic Development policy, to complement and inform its work on the next Local Plan. It is doing this alongside work going in in the Greater Cambridge Partnership and the Combined Authority. Central to, and consequent upon, the housing and infrastructure developments about which we hear so much, is a strategy to ensure that businesses flourish so that jobs and the general economic prosperity of the area is maintained and increased. The preparation of the Economic Development Plan brings into focus such questions as: how much and what kind of development is sustainable both in terms of space and natural resources; what kind of jobs should we be attracting; where and how will we train individuals for those jobs; what is communication channels are there between businesses and councils to ensure appropriate services in appropriate places; how do we best serve small businesses; how do we keep small business communities within our villages; should funds be put into special start-up or retention schemes; how we work best with our world-leading higher education and health institutions both to enable and to benefit from the fruits of research and experimentation. These are just some of the many issues that we have started to examine and will be doing so as the South Cambs, the City, the GCP and Combined Authority work on developing organisation-specific but overlapping and interactive economic development plans.