

Report for June 2020 - Cllrs Henry Batchelor and Geoff Harvey

Planning Update

The new town at Northstowe is about to enter its second phase and is on schedule to eventually deliver around 10,000 homes. Outline planning permission has been given for the next big project, a further 11,000 houses at Waterbeach. Other projects in the pipeline include a further expansion of Cambourne and development of a new town at Bourn, on the old airfield.

This seems a lot of houses so it might be a surprise to learn that South Cambs is having difficulty meeting the government minimum house building requirements. This is known as a 'five-year land supply' and is an analysis of how many houses will be built over the period. One issue is that large projects take a long time to get underway. Northstowe, for example, took 8 years before building commenced. Builders will only build what they can sell.

Another issue is that major development companies are mounting legal challenges to the District Council's five-year land supply figures. If there is a downturn in the market, inevitable given the Coronavirus issue, or a large project is late starting, then we could fall below the land supply requirement. We are not alone in facing this problem; 112 other local planning authorities are under threat. As a group we are lobbying government to be more flexible in their approach and are awaiting a response.

After a break of a couple of months we have now re-started meetings of the Planning Committee working remotely. There is a backlog of applications that need processing so the committee will be meeting every two weeks from now on. The 'Delegation Meeting', dealing with requests for applications to go to committee, has also started up again.

Initial Feedback from the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Consultation

A report has been published detailing initial findings from the 'First Conversation' consultation on the evolving Greater Cambridge Local Plan. Summarising some of the main findings: in terms of where new development should go, densification of existing urban areas and building along existing transport corridors were the favoured options. The theme that drew most comments by far was infrastructure, including transport, health and education and more - but transport the topic most commented upon. The next most popular theme for comment was Homes followed by Climate Change. Next milestones are the publication of evidence from external experts in Oct 2020 and then a call for public input (the Preferred Options stage) which should happen in summer 2021. The full report is at:-

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s116475/Appendix%201%20Consultation%20Feedback.pdf>

Zero Carbon Strategy

The first ever Zero Carbon Strategy for South Cambridgeshire has been agreed by SCDC and pledges to lead a green local economic recovery out of lockdown and reduce carbon emissions. The Council will support the district to halve its carbon emissions in the next 10 years and reduce them completely by 2050.

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Alongside this, the Council aims to deliver a reduction of at least 45% of its own carbon emissions by 2025 and at least 75% by 2030.

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Emergency support for Milton Country Park

Milton Country Park is being provided with up to 50,000 by the District Council, to ensure residents can keep enjoying the green spaces and paths. The grant will include a 25,000 payment now and the option of the second half from September. It is being made available to the Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust charity, which runs the 95-acre Park on South Cambridgeshire District Council's behalf. The Park's main sources of income are normally the café and water sports activities, both of which have been out of action during lock-down.

Funding for provision of hot meals

SDCD has successfully applied for funding provided by Countryside to provide a limited number of hot meals to homes as part of the Covid-19 response. It is hoped that this can be organised in conjunction with community groups. SDCD would like to hear from any furloughed chefs who might be able to help.

A1307

There was a meeting of the A1307 Local Liaison Forum on 1st June. The next scheduled works are due to start this month: the east-bound busway between Babraham the A11 roundabout and a signalised crossing at the Babraham research park roundabout. Average speed cameras for the Linton to Haverhill section are due to be installed on September.

Cambridgeshire County Council Communities Capital Fund

A new £5m fund aimed at creating opportunities and improving lives and skills across Cambridgeshire has been launched by Cambridgeshire County Council (7 April 2020). The Communities Capital Fund will support projects that will make positive changes in the community, bringing people together and meeting the priorities that matter most to local people. Grants of up to £500,000 are available to support community-led projects which improve the health, wellbeing, social and economic opportunities and outcomes in communities.

Park & Ride

Most of the Park&Ride sites reopened on 31st May. Milton P&R remains closed.