

District Councillors Report – for Waterbeach PC, August 2019

from Cllr Hazel Smith:

Work starting on the next local plan

This will be a long process to 2024, and it started last year with the Housing Strategy, and “call for sites” that happened this spring. There are a lot of stages and several consultations to come. This week it was a “blue sky thinking” workshop for elected members to suggest the important issues. The many hundreds of sites put forward by their owners for inclusion in the local plan, mostly not yet in the public domain, all have to be assessed to see if they are acceptable to register, then later the criteria for assessing them will be decided. The number of jobs and houses required in the area by 2040 or so will be ‘objectively’ assessed and given to the council, and based on the numbers and criteria the plan is created, together with a raft of new and revised policies.

Exception Sites and Rural Housing Week

At the start of July in Rural Housing Week, there was the annual Cambridgeshire ACRE tour of exception sites, for parish councillors. At SCDC we had a morning of training for district councillors, explaining what exception sites are and how useful they can be in ensuring villages get the housing needed for people in that village. These fairly small sites have to be right on the edge of the village, and are areas not identified for development in local plans. The developments have to be either completely or predominantly affordable homes, and the mix of sizes and types of homes is set by the balance of need in that village (usually assessed by Cambs ACRE who do the Housing Needs Assessments), which is not usually true of the affordable homes delivered by larger developments in the normal way.

When a developer wants to put a site forward, usually there is a list of possible sites which will be looked at, often with the parish council, and the developer has to justify their preferred option, before a housing association is assigned, which is usually done by South Cambs’s Housing Enablement Officers.

Energy efficient homes for the future – and the pledge to reach zero carbon by 2050

Hazel attended a day-long conference in London on “Tackling Climate Change in Housing” which was very inspiring. There were a lot of learning points about the technology that is now available to make houses more comfortable and fuel-efficient – but one of the simpler things we should do is to ensure that new tenants or house-owners are shown how to use the various pieces of equipment in the home - not always obvious. They again stated that 80% of the houses we’ll be living in in 2050 have already been built, and the importance of improving them so they are cooler in the summer and warmer in winter. New homes built today are less fuel efficient on average than 6 years ago, which is shocking. We certainly need a lead from Government on this, increasing the standards in Building Regulations to bring the green technology into the volume market and reduce its price.

The Council’s new Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (251 pages), currently out for consultation until 23/9/19 on the website (see below), will go some way towards pushing South Cambs developers in the right direction.

Tenant matters

As Lead Cabinet Member for Housing I attended both the South Cambs Tenant Participation Group (TPG), at Denson Close Communal Room, and the Sheltered Housing Forum (in Sawston) during this month. Those tenants that attend these groups and the Leaseholders Forum can get quite involved with scrutinising how the council runs its housing function. There have been some incisive Scrutiny reviews, on the use of the Communal Rooms, the text of letters sent out by the Council, and the organisation of the Housing Officers’ patches, just to mention some recent ones that they chose to look at. The Communal Rooms work has led to a more in-depth consultation in the larger villages’ sheltered housing complexes, and a couple of them that are the wrong type of provision or in the wrong place are now proposed for closure, which will save those tenants paying for their upkeep. We, or their parish council, can find better uses for the buildings when they are underused. I have also visited new affordable housing in Melbourn, and Gibson Close, which should be ready for handing over to SCDC in September. In Gibson Close there are 3 2-bedroom shared-ownership houses and 6 for affordable rent, 4 1-bedroom flats and 2 2-bedroom houses. The allocation is

first to people on the waiting list with a local connection to Waterbeach, then Landbeach, then Milton and Horningsea, then SCDC area.

from Cllr Judith Rippeth:

Platform extensions at the railway station

I have received an email from the permit officer at County Highways regarding the closure of the footpath at the railway station (TTRO) whilst Network Rail carry out the platform extensions. The works are due to start on 2nd September and finish on 31st January 2020. I have replied welcoming the news but have also asked for more details about any disruption to rail services and whether Network Rail plans to close the station on any dates. I have also asked that those living in the nearby vicinity are informed in good time of any closures.

Urban and Civic Jobs and Skills Programme:

I attended the second meeting of this initiative bringing together local businesses, Cambridge Regional College, local charities who work with the long term unemployed and officers from South Cambs and from the City of Cambridge. The meeting focused on how we can best advertise the upcoming opportunities at Waterbeach for jobs in Construction and the earlier phases of the development. The discussion focused on school and community engagement and a construction related programme of development. Clearly many of the jobs will be in construction but also in retail, community cohesion and sports and leisure in the early life of the new town.

Discussion and aims centred around the following:

Working with schools and young people – how to target schools/cohorts and examples of best practice.

Early engagement and going to speak to young people about the range of jobs available and how to attain those skills is essential.

Construction career paths, specifically apprenticeships and retraining schools.

Target Communities – long term unemployed, youth homelessness, former military personnel and providing local opportunities for the surrounding villages.

I will continue to keep abreast of developments and believe the best way of getting people involved and aware of the opportunities is to go and talk to them in the first instance and direct them accordingly.

from Cllr Anna Bradnam:

draft - Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

This SPD will help applicants comply with SCDC policies on climate change, protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and promoting successful communities. SCDC started a public consultation on 15 July. The statutory consultation period is six weeks but because this is over the summer holiday, the period has been extended until 23 September to give everyone an opportunity to respond.

You can see it here: <https://www.scams.gov.uk/sustainable-design-and-construction-consultation/>

Greater Cambridge Partnership – Local Transport Plan

The GCP aims to support the growth which was identified in the Cambridge and South Cambs Local Plans and in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER). These Plans identified goals to deliver economic growth, provide an accessible transport system, protect our environment and tackle climate change. The aim is to provide a transport network that will support increased growth and prosperity and to help reduce congestion. To inform this, the GCP is setting up a **Citizens' Assembly**. A representative selection of households have been invited to join a Citizens' Assembly which will consider ways of reducing congestion, improving air quality and providing better transport. The Assembly will meet on set days and will be supported by an Advisory Group to prepare a paper and recommendations to be submitted to the Combined Authority in October 2019.

You can see details here <https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/about-us/programmes/transport/ltp/>

Many dates have already passed but the remaining public exhibition events are at:

- Peterborough, Sat 07 Sep, 10am-3pm, Peterborough Town Hall

- Chatteris, Wed 11 Sep, 3pm-8pm, Chatteris Council Chambers
- Cambridge, Sat 14 Sep, 10am-3pm, Cambridge Central Library, Lion Yard

Anyone can comment on the Combined Authority Local Transport Plan here:

<https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/news/events-announced-across-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-for-public-to-have-say-on-areas-transport-future/>

The current **public consultation** closes on **27 September 2019**

Straw on the A10

Since straw bales have been stored on the disused runways at Waterbeach, we have seen an increase in straw blown from trailers building up on the A10, on the cycle path (which we had worked so hard to get sided-back in Spring 2019) and in the driveways and gardens of properties along the A10. As harvest gets under way, I have been working with both the District Council Waste Services – to get the cyclepath swept and with County Highways to get the build-up of straw on the A10 removed. I am asking the haulier to sheet or net all trailers taking straw to the site.