

District Councillors Report – for Milton, Landbeach and Waterbeach PC, January 2020

Cllrs Hazel Smith, Judith Rippeth and Anna Bradnam:

Climate Change and Environment

South Cambs is making good progress towards tackling the Climate Emergency: the Council formally adopted the 2050 target for net zero carbon across South Cambridgeshire in November, and agreed an action plan will be adopted within 6 months. A lot has already been done, and our Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document will ensure good practice in the construction industries once we can get it adopted (this month). Embodied carbon in the building of houses is typically 20% of the lifetime energy load of that house, so this is important, and the new Local Plan (consultation starts Jan 13th till 24th Feb) can set higher standards still. We have commissioned work to tell us how to get our council house stock into better shape for Net Zero 2050: the insulation and heating quick wins are mostly done now, and there will be hard decisions as some houses will not be economic to retrofit.

There is a recognised method of accounting for greenhouse gas emissions from our estate and operations, and this will form part of our planning and accounting in the future, so we can measure our progress.

We are also encouraging taxi drivers to invest in less fossil fuel dependent technologies when they replace their cars. The new Taxi Licensing Policy is now going through another round of consultation ending on January 31st. Some significant changes are proposed that will make taxis safer for the general public. Uber has caused some upset to the status quo and the changes redress the balance again.

Street lights maintained by SCDC

There are some 1800 so-called 'footway lights' that SCDC owns, for which the parishes pay the electricity bills, spread across the area. These are mostly on footpaths where the County did not adopt them. There will be a significant program of replacing these with LED lanterns that will be set to dim in the middle of the night as the County ones do.

Council investment properties

As Rate Support Grant from central government is dwindling to nothing (and possibly set to become negative in the future!) the council has had to look at ways of generating money from all its operations. In addition it can borrow money and invest in buildings to generate an income from rents which supports the services it delivers. If in addition we can improve the energy efficiency of the buildings and provide space for small businesses this also helps meet our other objectives. We have one building on the Science Park already and more premises are being considered all the time.

Council Audits

Ernst & Young have finally finished the audit of Council accounts to March 2018 (yes, 2018). When the Lib Dems took over in 2018 there was a serious lack of staff in our accounts department, coupled with an attempt to share our accounts service with Cambridge City – this was clearly not working as their accounts were signed off, but ours got further and further behind. The accounts are very healthy – in fact the auditors found £3.5m in additional Non-domestic Rates which had not been carried forward, among other errors. The 2018-19 accounts are expected to be completed in the next couple of months.

Planning

Following the good news last month that the Greater Cambridge Planning Service (GCPS) is now up to date with registering planning applications, GCPS continues to meet the performance targets that the government has set for determining applications. The new service is also working on creating more efficient & streamlined processes

Greater Cambridge Local Plan

We are doing things differently with this new local plan. For a start, there are four key themes that have already emerged (1) Climate change (2) Biodiversity and green spaces (3) Wellbeing and social inclusion (4) Creation of great places.

These will help us shape the local plan in a way that creates a better outcome of where homes and jobs and supporting infrastructure should be built. A new website is being created to help people get involved more easily. This will also mean people can find and comment more easily on the issues that they are

more concerned about. The consultation will start on 13 January 2020 and run until 24 February 2020. This will be an opportunity for everyone who is interested in the Greater Cambridge area to have their say in shaping the future of this area. Please watch and share this video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9p3BZ8oS3M&t=161s> 2.3

Call for Sites in February and March 2019, GCPS carried out a 'call for sites', allowing people to suggest potential sites or broad locations for development. This is an early step in the process of the development of the new Greater Cambridge Joint Local Plan. We received a wide range of housing and employment site suggestions ranging from small sites in villages to new communities. Some are on brownfield (previously built on) land, some on greenfield (countryside but not built on before) land, and some in the greenbelt (30% of South Cambs is green belt land) The service received over 500 site suggestions (not planning applications) and has now almost completed the registration of these sites. Then the sites will be "mapped" onto the map of the district making it easy to see where they are at a glance. Please note that none of these sites have been selected for anything. There is no status to them whatsoever, other than that the owners "hope" that their sites will be selected. All of these sites will need to be assessed for their planning merit in 2020, and none of them have any planning status in respect of the new Local Plan.

The forthcoming issues and options consultation in January 2020 will also ask for any further sites as part of the call for sites process. We expect that all the sites will be publicly available to view in early 2020 following the issues and options consultation.

Housing

We recognise that the cost of keeping warm in winter months can be quite high, especially for those that use oil for heating. SCDC can provide funding towards making homes more energy efficient. You can use the funds to replace or repair an existing system, improve home insulation, replace draughty doors and windows etc. To qualify for a grant, householders will need to have owned and lived in their home for at least two years and be in receipt of one of the following means tested benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance or Income Based Employment Support Alliance
- Working Tax Credit with gross income less than £18,000
- Council Tax support
- Guaranteed Pension Credit
- Or child tax credit with a relevant income less than £18,000

The improvement work is carried out by the Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency. Please see home improvement grants for more information, email at HIA@CambsHIA.org or call 01954 713 330.

Environmental Health

The Head of the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service, Trevor Nicoll, has been nominated and inaugurated as the 104th President of the Chartered Institute of Wastes Management (CIWM) Mr Nicoll joined the service in September 2017 and has helped transform the waste service to become more efficient. He has also helped residents across South Cambs and Cambridge City to increase recycling rates. We wish him every good luck in this role as he shares his knowledge and expertise nationwide.

Community Chest Grant

The South Cambs District Council's Community Chest fund is still open and funding increased to £49,070. Community and voluntary groups, and small parish councils can currently bid for funds up to £1,000 for use on local projects that could help to (1) Promote active and healthy lifestyles (2) Build inclusive communities and (3) Enhance the natural environment This second half of the fund is open for applications till March 2020 – or when the funds run out. Find out how to apply at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-development/grants/community-chest-grants/> or email ellen.bridges@scambs.gov.uk

A Happy New Year to all our parish councillors and clerks – and many thanks for all you do for our villages all year round.