

Report of District Councillors Claire Daunton and John Williams to Quy Parish Council, September 2020

This report contains factual information which we hope will be of use and of interest to parish councillors and to the parish more widely. For queries please contact us at

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There is an amount of detail on planning in this report (point 2 below), concerning new or proposed changes.. It will take time to read through but we thought you would appreciate having some of the detail to hand. This report also covers : Consultations on WTP and NEC, Finance, Transport, Police Issues. Covid-related issues

1. WTP and NEC

We have attended a **significant number** of meetings concerning the proposed move of the water treatment plant (WTP) and contributed to discussions across the Ward. We have also been involved in discussions and briefings on the North East Cambridge (NEC) project on which we have reported in the past. This is a key area for development, a major brownfield site which aims to provide the benefits of accessible, sustainable, green development. We note the emphasis in the government's Planning White Paper (see below) on the need to develop brownfield sites. Participation in the consultation process is encouraged. We obtained an extension of the deadline for consultation to 14th September.

Both the move of the WTP and the associated NEC are major projects, forming part of the local plan approved in 2018. Funding for the current stages comes from central government. The projects involve a number of local government bodies including : the Combined Authority, the County Council, the City Council and South Cambs. **The deadline for responses on the NEC is 5th October. Please do consider responding both as a parish council and as individuals.**

2. Cycling

(i)Greenways. At its meeting of 10th September the Greater Cambridge Partnership approved for moving to the next stage of detailed design, the Swaffham and Bottisham Greenways. Details of these routes are in the pages in the appendix to this report. The next stage will be detailed consultation with all stakeholders and with residents. There was some

discussion on how best to engage people in this consultation given the Covid restrictions in place. The Greenways team will be in otuch with the parish council in the near future.

(ii) GCP Cycling Quick Wins . The GCP has its own list of ‘quick wins’ cycling projects, mainly to improve cycling access within and to the city. to improve road safety, reduce congestion and enhance the city region’s cycling network. Most of these improvements are small-scale projects located within highways boundaries, as a result improvements can be delivered quickly. The ‘quick wins’ expected to be delivered by the end of 2020 include resurfacing, junction safety upgrades, new crossing points and more cycle storage at Babraham Road Park & Ride.

3. Covid-related Matters

Data

For those interested in following up to date information concerning number of cases and spread of cases across the country, the Local Government Association ‘Covid cases data viewer’ may be of interest. It provides analysis on South Cambs data at the click of the mouse, it also offers data download to anyone:

https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/view/lga-research/covid-19-case-tracker-area-quick-view-1?mod-area=E07000012&mod-group=AllDistrictInRegion_East&mod-type=namedComparisonGroup

Disposal of PPE: important reminder

We are asking residents to make sure disposable face coverings and masks are put in their black wheelie bins at home, to help control the spread of Coronavirus. Our Shared Waste Service is expecting a rise in disposable face coverings in waste collections now they are mandatory in shops. The service has already seen disposable PPE such as face coverings, masks and gloves in the blue recycling bins, despite none of these items being recyclable. Disposable PPE can be put in litter bins outside of shops, but if there isn’t one nearby, they need to be taken home and put in the black bin.

3a. Planning Regulations from 1 September

Under the ‘Build, Build, Build’ initiative of the government, announced in May, a number of regulations concerning minor or medium-sized building works have been relaxed. These changes are of direct relevance to parish councils.

South Cambs Planning is producing a note for Parish Councils and Members but in advance of that here are some of the main points.

Essentially there are three sets of changes that are now in force. These are to the use classes, to householder developments and to the provision of dwellings:

The key thing to consider is that many 'use classes' have been amalgamated such that the following all now fall within the same use class: Shops; financial and professional services; cafes and restaurants; offices; research and development; light industrial; clinics, health centres, creches, day nurseries, day centres; gyms, indoor recreation (not motorised vehicles).

What is worth noting is that moving between uses within the same use class is **not development** and therefore any changes between the uses listed above cannot now be controlled by the Local Planning Authority. There are a number of other implications which will be detailed in the note to Parish Councils and Members.

In relation to new householder permitted development rights: in summary, there is a new permitted development right to add up to two additional storeys to an existing dwelling of two or more storeys, or to add one additional storey to a single storey dwelling, immediately above the topmost storey of the dwelling, together with any engineering works reasonably necessary. There are, however, a number of detailed restrictions where such development would not be permitted. In summary, the permitted development rights do not apply where:

There are also a number of conditions which include that the roof pitch must be the same as the original, materials shall be similar to the original, restrictions on the placing of windows in side elevations and that after the development the dwelling must be used as a C3 dwelling only. Another key condition is that the developer must apply to the Local Planning Authority for prior approval. Matters that the LPA can take into account are:

- amenity of neighbouring residents
- external appearance
- air traffic and defence asset impacts
- impact on protected views identified in the Directions Relating to Protected Vistas dated 15th March 2012

Further requirements are that the developer must provide the LPA with a report for the management of the construction of the development, which sets out the proposed development hours of operation and how any adverse impact of noise, dust, vibration and traffic on adjoining owners or occupiers will be mitigated. The development must also be completed within 3 years and the developer must notify the LPA in writing of the completion date.

In relation to the new dwelling permitted development rights:

There is now a new right to demolish buildings and construct new dwellings in their place. The buildings this applies to for demolition are single purpose built blocks of flats, single detached buildings used for offices, research and development or light industrial and all must be existing before 12 March 2020. The new buildings can be either a block of flats or a detached dwelling. Again, there are a number of detailed restrictions and conditions which we will explain in the note to Parish Councils and Members. Like the new householder rights, new dwellings permitted development is subject to a prior approval process. There are 13 matters the LPA can consider and again, these will be detailed in the note.

There are a number of other dwelling permitted development rights, again each with restrictions, conditions and the requirement for prior approvals and which will be detailed in the note. These are as follows:

- new dwellings on detached blocks of flats (amended PD right)
- new dwellings on detached buildings in commercial or mixed use
- new dwellings on terrace buildings in commercial or mixed use
- new dwellings on terrace buildings in use as dwellings
- new dwellings on detached buildings in use as dwellings

3b. White Paper on Reform of the Planning System : 'Planning for the Future'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907647/MHCLG-Planning-Consultation.pdf

Towards the end of July the government gave notice of its intention to consult on a major reform of the planning system. The proposals of the resultant White Paper, if passed into law, will have significant impact on both District and Parish councils.

Here below is a summary of the proposals, under headings used in the document:

1. Local Plans

- a) Simplify the role of Local Plans to focus on identifying land under three categories :
growth areas for substantial development where outline approval would be secured automatically ;
renewal areas suitable for some development such as gentle densification ;
protected areas, such as the green belt, where, as the name suggests, development would be subject to restriction.
- b) Local Plans should set clear rules rather than general policies ; should work alongside locally-produced design codes ; should be significantly shorter in length.
- c) They should engage more with the local community
- d) be subject to a single statutory 'sustainable development' test. The current system of, as stated 'unnecessary assessments and requirements', should be abolished.
- e) Local plans should be produced visually, using the latest technology and be supported by a standard template.
- d) should meet a statutory timetable of 30 months to produce. The examination process should be speeded up.
- e) Neighbourhood Plans to be retained as impt for community input ;

2. Digital Approach

- a) support local authorities to use digital tools for new civic engagement for local plans and decision-making

- b) insist that local plans are built on standardised, digitally- consumable rules and data
- c) work with tech companies and local authorities to modernise the software used for making and case-managing planning applications

3. Design and Sustainability

- a) Ensure the planning system supports efforts to combat climate change and maximises environmental benefits ;
- b) facilitates improvements in energy efficiency ;
- c) ask for 'beauty' in building and be more ambitious for the places we create ;
- d) introduce a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities ;
- e) expect design codes and guidance to be based on genuine community involvement ;
- f) ensure that codes have real 'bite' by making them more binding on planning decisions ;
- g) establish a new body to support the delivery of design codes ;
- h) protect our historic buildings and areas while ensuring the consent framework is fit for the 21st century.

4. Delivery and Development Management

- a) decision-making should be faster and more certain, within firm deadlines, and should make greater use of digital technology
- b) there should be a reduction in the amount of key information required with planning applications ;
- c) should be greater standardisation of technical information ;
- d) potential for automatic refund of fees if planning applications are not decided within the statutory time ;
- e) more use of Consent Orders or Development Corporation's Extensions of Planning in Principle for major developments ;
- f) for a temporary period extend the affordable housing requirement threshold ;
- g) planning fees to at least cover the cost of processing the application; pre-application charging to be regulated to ensure that it is fair and proportionate.

5. Housing Infrastructure Delivery

- a) the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL, S.106) to be reformed, as a nationally-set, value-based, flat-rate charge
- b) greater ambition for affordable housing provided through planning gain ;
- c) greater powers for local authorities to decide how developer contributions are used ;
- d) extend the scope of the infrastructure levy and remove exemptions from it, to capture changes of use through permitted development rights so additional homes can be built.
- e) a new nationally-determined housing requirement that local planning authorities would have to deliver through their Local Plans.
- f) proposal that this would factor in land constraints including the Green Belt and would be consistent with our aspirations of creating a housing market that can deliver 300,000 homes annually.
- g) speed up development, allowing a variety of development types from different builders on one site to allow more phases to come forward together ;
- h) consult on options for improving the data held on contractual arrangements used to control land.

Summary of Specific Proposals for Consulting on :

1. The role of land use plans should be simplified ;
2. Development management plans established nationally ;
3. Local Plans to be subject to a single sustainability test ;
4. Standard method to establish housing requirement nos.
5. Three area types : growth, renewal, restricted ;
6. Decision-making to be faster and more certain ;
7. Local Plans should be visual and map-based ;
8. Statutory timetable for Local Plans Inspection completion ;
9. Neighbourhood Plans to be retained as imp't means of community input ;
10. Stronger emphasis on build-out through planning ;
11. Make design expectations more visible and predictable ;
12. Transition to a planning system that is more visual and rooted locally.
13. Delivery of 'beautiful places', using national leadership guidance.

14. Fast-track for 'beauty' through changes to national policy and legislation.
15. Amend national planning policy framework to play a more effective role in mitigating and adapting to climate change ;
16. Quicker simpler system for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities ;
17. Conserving and enhancing historic buildings for 21st century ;
18. Ambitious improvements in energy efficiency standards;
19. CIL/S.106 to be reformed as nationally-set charge ;
20. Scope of infrastructure levy to be extended to capture changes through permitted development rights ;
21. Reformed infrastructure levy to deliver affordable housing ;
22. More freedom for local authorities over how they spend the infrastructure levy ;
23. Develop resources and skills strategy for the planning sector ;
24. Strengthen powers of enforcement and sanction.

3. South Cambs District Finance

At the end of March, this being the end of the 2019/20 financial year and the first budget of the new administration, provisionally South Cambs' General Fund reserve stood at around £16.5 million having spent a net £22.5 million on running the Council. We also spent £42.3 million on capital projects out of a budget of £44.2 million. Our net revenue cost was £2.2 million higher than budget due to additional pension costs; however being an accountancy adjustment these additional pensions costs should not affect the General Fund balance. In the capital budget we underspent £1.1 million on purchasing commercial assets and half a million pounds less was advanced to Ermine Street Housing.

As to income, we received over half a million pounds more from commercial investments achieving £3.5 million and Council Tax amounted to over £9 million. However, Business Rates received from the Government at £6.2 million were nearly £0.6 million less than expected. Overall excluding commercial income which is offset against the operating cost of the council total income from taxation and Government grants amounted to nearly £24

million and we were able to transfer £4.7million to reserves. This shows the Council to be in good financial health going forward.

4. Transport

We attended a briefing from GCP officers on the latest developments concerning plans for transport corridors to the east of Cambridge. The main points arising were:

- (i) potential move of the Newmarket Road ParkandRide to a site closer to the Quy roundabout. Questions were asked about the relationship of this to any potential development for Cambridge United FC and its carparking needs;
- (ii) related points were made concerning the need to extend the project's plan area beyond the Quy roundabout. Traffic can already be at a standstill before it reaches there. It was recognised however that the remit of the GCP does not extend far beyond the city boundaries.
- (iii) More extensive traffic management along Newmarket Road into the city;
- (iv) better cycle routes along Newmarket Road and connecting roads;
- (iv) No plans for intervention at Ditton Meadows, leaving green area'
- (v) Completion of Chisholm Trail
- (vi) exploring better connections to Cambridge North and Cambridge Central stations
- (vii) more information needed on the sites for the proposed Fulbourn rail station. Cherry Hinton not feasible. Teversham Road being looked at; Station Road Fulbourn also suggested. Which one is likely to happen?
- (viii) Dualling of Rail link to Ipswich: East'West Rail project studies being done. Link to possible housing developments at Six Mile Bottom was mentioned.
- (ix) possible **cycle routes** along or close to rail line – important for Wilbrahams.
- (x) the overall goal is not to encourage car transport but to make rail, bus, walking and cycling more possible and appealing

At its meeting of 10th September the GCP Assembly agreed to recommend to its Executive Board that detailed consultation now begin on bringing forward the proposed improvements/

5. Police Matters

We attended a short briefing session with the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner and senior colleagues. The main points raised were : **police numbers, scams and speeding**

(i) In response to a question concerning **police visibility** in local communities we were told that there had been an increase of 67 officers across the county in the last 12 months ; and there had been no significant loss in numbers over the past 10 years. There were 2 PCs and 2 sergeants for South Cambs east ; with 2 new PCs coming into post soon. The issue of non-response to emails from PCSOs was raised. We are to take this up with the sergeant.

(ii) The problem of **scams** – in person and through the post – continues to be an issue. The County has devoted resources to this with officers working closely with the police, the post office and local community organisations to keep a watch on vulnerable individuals and to track those pushing the scam material and visits. There have been some recent successes. The link with the post office has been particularly useful in combatting scams. There are ca. 25 serious incidents of these each monthj.

(iii) On **speeding**, not all the questions could be answered, but it was recognised that there has been an increase in speeding since lockdown and the police are moving to address the issue There is a taks force and a sergeant dedicated to this. Villages are being encouraged to match up Speedwatch work with MVAS data. There is new equipment for village speedwatch operations and the training is readily available. We were pleased to note that the police have also begun a project to monitor speeding of HGVs
MVAS data can be sent to the JPS data analysis office. But there was no answer to the question what does or could happen to that data to improve speeding locally. Something we will take up with the relevant officer.