

South Cambridgeshire District Councillor's Monthly Report

Month of June 2012

1. Street Lighting – County Council Briefing

The County is embarking on a project to replace all the street lights in the county. On the 1st July 2011, CCC, in partnership with Balfour Beatty, started a 25 year street lighting Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract together with £100m from central government. The contract covers planned and reactive maintenance of all the County's street lights, illuminated signs and bollards.

The upgrade period takes place over the first 5 years, during which time 32,500 lighting columns will be replaced and 17,000 lanterns upgraded to white light across the county, and approximately 5,500 columns mainly on residential roads will be removed and not replaced. All in a drive to save money!

This is because it is judged that these street lights have gone past their sell-by dates, in poor condition and needing replacement. The new equipment will be based on white light which gives better colour recognition and night time visibility. The columns are taller and therefore light up a wider area which could lead to a potential reduction of 10%-30% of the number of units in some areas.

The plan is to consult with District and Parish councils prior to the work beginning in various villages- although some of that work has already started, for example in Caldecote without any consultation . However the promise is to learn from any mistakes, improve on their process as they go along. Consultation will start about 6 months before the change is due, and residents will be sent leaflets 2-3 months before and again 2-4 weeks prior to installation.

Villages can chose to upgrade with decorative lighting (£1000) or adopt specific lights (£42 per year) or want specific lights removed, so give your feedback during the consultation period.

2. Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation

On Thursday 28th, Councillors met in Full council to consider the 196 page issues and options documentation which set out the potential development plans that the council is considering. It was a very intensive session, as councillors considered all the 120+ questions that are to be put to the wider public in the forthcoming consultation. In summary, it seems that new local plan is being driven by the business growth in South Cambridgeshire and is projected to continue at a rate of 1200 per year from 2016 to 2031. Therefore, the council is aiming to plan for Sustainable Development, providing infrastructure and homes needed to cater for the jobs growth. The current development plan will carry forward some of the planned homes, but the council will need to build additional 7400 homes. It aims to concentrate these in large settlements on the edge of Cambridge, and then in the villages that are classed as Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres.

It is proposed to reclassify Comberton as Minor Rural Centre, which may have an impact on Toft. Bourn airfield, one of three potential large sites (including Waterbeach and Northstowe) is being considered to take up to 3,500 of the proposed homes, which will affect Caldecote and Childerley.

The full document can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/SClpio> , the spatial strategy being proposed is at <http://bit.ly/LPIO4> and the actual sites being considered for development can be found at <http://bit.ly/LPIO5>.

The document to be put to public consultation was finalised and approved by the Planning Policy and Localism Portfolio holder. Parish councils are being invited to a series of workshops next week (9th – 16th) to learn more about the issues and options going to public consultation, but more importantly, to explore how the plan can help parishes deliver local aspirations. Caldecote Ward villages are scheduled to attend on Tuesday 10th July from 5pm to 8pm at South Cambs Hall.

The formal public consultation will take place from Friday 13 July to Friday 28 September 2012. Please make sure you send in your views when the time comes.

3. New Code of Conduct for Councillors

On 1st July 2012, a new code of conduct was introduced by central government for all tiers of local government. This new code, in line with the agenda of Big Society and Localism, is aimed at making it easier for Local Councillors to represent the residents of their parishes. Personal and prejudicial interests has been replaced by disclosable pecuniary interests, which includes interests held by a member's spouse, civil partner or similar.

Councillors must register disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days of election, and in the first instance within 28 days of the 1st July. In addition, the register must be published on the parish council website. Councils are also required to have a complaints procedure in place, if not already, and it should be compliant.

4. Broadband – Connecting Cambridgeshire

This is to remind residents of Toft and Kingston, as well as Old Caldecote to get online and register their demand for broadband services at www.ConnectingCambridgeshire.co.uk. This is the next opportunity to get the Comberton exchange to which these communities are connected, upgraded for broadband in the upgrade project being done by the County.

People who do not have access to the internet can register online or on paper forms in libraries, council offices and other public places. They can also call me on 01954 210840 and I can help as I have registered as a Digital Champion for both villages and looking for volunteers in the villages to assist in the campaign to get all the premises registered. Please contact me as soon as possible, so we can get the ball rolling.

5. A Guide for Businesses

The Council has woken up to the need to support businesses in their growth rather than obstruct them, and has prepared a new planning guide that businesses can use to navigate their way through the complex planning system. The guide is based on the most popular and frequently asked questions by businesses. It is available in paper format which residents can request by calling the Duty officer on 0345 045 5215 or by downloading from the website at <http://bit.ly/BizG>.

6. A Guide for Householders

The Council is also looking to help householders navigate their way through the planning system when it comes to time to extend existing homes or build new ones. As such, it is making available a document called the Householder Design Guide, which provides information on how to apply for planning permission, what factors to consider when designing new homes and extensions. This guide is available in paper format which residents can request by calling the Duty officer on 0345 045 5215 or by downloading from the website at <http://bit.ly/ResiG>.

7. Village Pride and Hero Awards

Reminder that deadline for nominations for The Community Pride award (for a group of people that has made a difference to the community) and The Village Hero award, (pay tribute to residents who go over and above to make a difference for others) is 31 July 2012. This year, SCDC would like to see young heroes and community groups and clubs nominated for the community pride award. To place a nominations contact Linda Browne linda.browne@scams.gov.uk or go to www.scams.gov.uk/awards.

8. Youth Council

Nominations still open for the Youth Council. The deadline of 1st August is fast approaching, and there are still places up for grabs. It is not yet known if an election will be held, but anyone interested should get their nominations in now before its too late.

For more information, or nomination papers, please call Tracy Mann on 01954 713342 or email tracy.mann@Scams.gov.uk. Follow <http://www.facebook.com/SCYouthCouncil>

9. Touring Caravan Park

The land owner Mr O'Connor has given an undertaking to stop all works on the site for now and is in discussion with SCDC Planning officers regarding discharging the pre-commencement conditions as well as an alternative approach to the developing the site.

Meanwhile, the issue of which SCDC department is responsible for setting the seasonal opening times on a caravan site, rumbles on. I have written to Cllr Wright Portfolio Holder for Planning, Business Development and Tourism, Cllr Ellington Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Mrs Jean Hunter, the CEO asking for an answer and to inform me of the specific policy that SCDC uses in determining applications for this type of developments.

The answer I received was disappointing to say the least, and includes this statement "A caravan site licence issued by South Cambridgeshire DC could possibly include "seasonal" restrictions. However, the key limitation of the caravan licensing regime is that it cannot be used to vary or override the planning permission. As a result, any conditions included in a licence must be based on non-planning reasons and must not seek to overturn any decision made by planning committee." Needless to say, I keep pressing. Any residents who have referred the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman should let me know asap.

10. Caldecote Pumping Station

This is another local issue that keeps rumbling on. After much prodding, through the auspices of Environmental Health services, and stated that I felt the pumping station was no longer fit for purpose, I finally received some information in June from the Anglian Water Customer Liason Manager for the area. He confirmed that the older of two pumps in the station is not performing to its full capacity. Also that one of the non-return valves on the pump is not sealing so that when the opposite pump was operating, some of the "liquor" was recirculating back into the wet well and not discharging up the rising main.

So this pumping station will only run one pump at a time due to the condition of the rising main.

AW claims to have ordered a new pump, but cannot give a timescale as to its delivery or installation. In the meantime, the faulty valve is to be replaced. In addition, AW is applying for funding (but no idea from where) to carry out an infiltration survey of the sewers in the area to try and identify the sources of ground water entering the system, which they reckon causes the pump to overload during high flows.

AW have also asked that residents should please not dispose of non-degradable material such as baby wipes down the toilet as this clogs up the pumps.

11.Casework

, Your Councillor is here to help you. Please do feel free to contact me with comments, questions, problems, reports, suggestions or complaints. I can be contacted by phone, email or via my website. I hope I can help but even if I can't, then it's highly likely that I know someone who can!

12.Dates for your diary

4 July 2012	10am	Planning Committee meeting
7 July 2012		Caldecote Feast
10 July 2012	5-8pm	Local Plan Issues and Options Workshops for Parish Councils
13 July – 28 Sep 2012		Local Plan Public Consultation
28 July 2012		Deadline for registration of councillors' pecuniary interests
31 July 2012		Closing of Nominations for Village Pride and Hero Awards
1 st August 2012	5pm	Close of Nominations for Youth Council

Tumi

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2-July-12

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