

South Cambridgeshire District Councillor's Monthly Report

Month of February 2012

1. Community Grants

1. The Community Chest makes grants of up to £1000 for small capital projects and for one-off revenue projects. The grants will continue to be given this year. For further information about the grants and for information about how to apply, please contact the Partnerships Officer, kathryn.hawkes@scams.gov.uk or call 01954 713290

2. I am pleased to confirm that I have given my full official support of the Toft application for a community grant for the Toft Village playground improvements. The application is going to the Leaders' meeting for a decision on 15th March 2012.

2. SCDC attains Member Development Charter Status

The official award of the Charter Status for Member Development was made at the full council meeting that took place on 23 February. SCDC will continue to take strides forward to improve on the training it provides to new and existing members. A recent workshop on the use of twitter saw two councillors from Braintree District Council come and share how they use twitter in their council to reach out and be more effective. One of them was the UK's youngest councillor.

3. SCDC Budget for 2012

The SCDC budget for 2012/13 has now been debated at full council. At the meeting, my question (Item 12e) asking the Leader whether due democratic process had been followed was brought forward to be asked before item 7 (the Corporate plan and budget). The Leader stated that the legal officers confirmed it was not in breach. However, he did not comment on the issue of respect for fellow elected members, by announcing budgets to public first, before informing them! Highlights as follows:

- General Fund (GF) Expenditure: £14,692,380
- Formula Grant (FG) £ 5,238,860
- Grant for freezing Council Tax: £ 347,430
- New Homes Bonus: £1,817,000
- Council Tax: £7,019,160

This leaves a hole in the books of £268,530, which the council will be looking to find savings for. This hole increases to £470,000 the following years. The authority currently has no idea where the savings will come from!!

Council tax element for SCDC is frozen for now. Band D properties paying £115.46. The County Council element of the council tax is going up by 2.5%.

SCDC will be taking on a loan (debt) of £205 million at the end of March into the Housing Revenue Account, to use to buy its way out of the noose of central government. It means we can keep all the rents that come from the council housing stock, and use that within South Cambs district as appropriate. The rents will help fund the loan repayments and ongoing maintenance costs of the housing stock, and in time, will have surplus that could be used for housebuilding.

The council is planning on spending £28million on new house building in the future. This is expected to start happening in about 5 years from now when there will be some headroom in the Housing Revenue Account funds, as the council expects to have paid off enough of the loan to enable it to do this.

4. Corporate Values

The Council has also ratified its core values, which have been reduced from the previous five to three. (1) Listening to and engaging with residents, parishes and businesses , (2) working with partners (3) making sure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer outstanding quality of life. The approaches, actions and performance measures have been spelled out. I would encourage everyone to take note of this aims and remind the council of the relevant ones if and when you have issues that you need to resolve. Residents can download this from this link below:
<http://scams.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s62301/Corporate%20Plan%20-%20app.pdf>

5. Northstowe

As you would have heard in the news, developers have now submitted the plans for the first phase of the new town of Northstowe. It's a major step, late, and for a much smaller tranche that was first envisaged, 1500 houses, primary school, sports hub, local centre, shops and employment opportunities. SCDC is now consulting and has asked residents to have their say and give their views, as the plans are put to the public this month in Longstanton and Oakington. You can also go online to www.scams.gov.uk/northstowe. The public consultation closes on 16 April.

6. Broadband Update

South Cambs Council has now decided that Broadband is one of its priority issues, and is looking to work with partners to bring faster broadband to the parts of the district that are not being reached in the normal BT rollout. There will be a survey sometime soon to find out what level of services are being provided currently, with a view to using this in the negotiations with partners. SCDC has also allocated £50,000 in the 2012/13 budget toward this project.

7. 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!

8. Dates for your diary

Tuesday 13 March	2pm-8pm	Northstowe event, Longstanton Pavilion, Over
Saturday 17 March	10am-4pm	
Thursday 15 March	2pm-7pm	Northstowe event, Oakington Methodist Church Chapel
Monday 19 March	2pm-8pm	
28 th March 2012 (Wednesday)	5.30pm	SCDC & Parishes- Roles, Responsibilities and Partnership Working

Tumi

Tumi Hawkins
1-Mar-12

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