

South Cambridgeshire District Councillor's Monthly Report

August 2013

1. SCDC Local Development Plan – Extension of Consultation period

Big news is that the consultation period has been extended by two weeks. The end date is now 5 pm on Monday 14th October 2013. As a result of the work being done by StopBAD, SCDC was forced to admit that the data contained in one document from earlier assessments had not been updated, and so not included in the documents released for public consultation earlier in July. I have written about it on my blog at <http://bit.ly/LDPCon5>.

In summary, the area quoted in the draft plan for Bourn Airfield is 141.7 Hectares. To get the 3500 houses and associated services such as schools, surgeries, offices, landscaping etc., the site would have had to be developed at about 62 houses per hectare, nearly double the current density in Cambourne, higher density than in Cambridge city, and clearly not feasible.

SCDC released an updated SHLAA document on Monday 2nd September 2013, which shows that the overall development area called the Area Action Plan is now 282 Hectares, and that only 40% or 112 hectares of that will actually be built on. It then goes on to say that the average net density across the new settlement will be 40 dwellings per hectare, which means it expects that some areas will be built at a higher density!! I've summarised the content of the document in my blog at <http://bit.ly/LDPCon6>.

The exhibition at Caldecote Village Hall on Tuesday 3 September was well attended. It was good to be able to chat with many residents about the real implications of the plan, and not the official line. Further exhibition will be at Bourn Church on 6th September 2013 from 2.30pm – 7.30pm.

If you are concerned about the proposed development as I am, then please contact the StopBAD campaign team at info@stopbad.org.uk to assist with the campaign or get regular updates

2. Joint Transport Strategy for City and South Cambs

Cambridgeshire County Council has put forward proposals to keep the county traffic moving over the next 15 years. The strategy includes the proposals for the planned new developments of Bourn Airfield and West Cambourne (which is on Caxton land). There are **no plans to create additional roads or increase road capacity**. The focus is on creating a dedicated bus lane from Caxton Gibbet through the ribbon of development up to Childerley Roundabout, down St Neots Road, Madingley Rise and up to the junction of Queens Road in Cambridge. There may be a park and ride installed along the A428 corridor, though no indication of exactly where it may go. The focus of the strategy is to “force” people out of cars and onto buses and cycles, forcibly trying to change people’s travel habits. The whole strategy falls apart if indeed people refuse to change their travel habits.

The strategy is also out for consultation now, with closing date of 30 September 2013. The county says “it needs your views to help shape the final strategy”, and I would encourage everyone to send in their comments. You can read the summary of the proposals on my blog at <http://bit.ly/tsCSC13> which also has links to the main document on the county website.

The strategy for the A428 corridor is heavily dependent on funding from the City Deal, this being grant money from central government. If that fails, which it may do, then the County will be looking to the developers to provide funding, which means that the developments will be built first, then the bus lanes, cycle paths etc. will be provided, by which time, our local roads will be either have become rat-runs and/or be grid-locked. That is putting the cart before the horse and is not good for our quality of life.

3. Broadband – Connecting Cambridgeshire

Connecting Cambridgeshire are planning to release information about the delivery phases of the roll-out with the launch of a ‘My Area’ roll-over map and A-Z places list in September 2013 on the Connecting

Cambridgeshire website at www.connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk.

This will help people to find out how their parish/area fits in to the multiple phases of the broadband roll-out plan and will be updated regularly as the programme progresses.

4. Proposed Food Bank at South Cambs Hall

The Housing Strategy team are hoping to establish a **Food Bank collection point** at the Council's offices in Cambourne. The housing team regularly refer clients to the Cambridge Food Bank and feels it is important to support this very worthy cause. In addition, it also helps support the work council does on financial inclusion and welfare reform.

The council is keen to support any local food banks in the South Cambs area, and therefore if you are aware of any local banks that could do with some support (other than Cambridge City food bank and Huntingdon's Charity) please contact Emma George, Housing Strategy Officer on 01954 713099 or email: emma.george@scams.gov.uk. The food will be donated to all of the food banks in the district on a rota basis.

5. Under-occupation policy adopted by Housing Portfolio holder

From April 2013 Welfare Reform changes have taken place which means Housing Benefit is potentially reduced for households deemed to be under-occupying a property.

There is no definition of a minimum bedroom size set out in legislation. The Department of Work and Pensions HB/CTB Circular A4/2012 – Adjudication and Operations circular states:- 'We will not be defining what we mean by a bedroom and in legislation there is no definition of a minimum bedroom size set out in regulations. It will be up to the landlord to accurately describe the property in line with the actual rent charged.'

The reduction will be a fixed percentage of the housing benefit eligible rent for the property. The Government has set this at 14% for one extra bedroom and 25% for two or more extra bedrooms.

Any shortfall in rent following a reduction in housing benefit will need to be paid by the tenant to the Council. If a tenant falls into arrears because of non payment of the shortfall, then the normal procedure for collection of rent arrears will be followed, including legal action where no attempt is made to clear the arrears.

Options: downsizing, taking a lodger, approved lodger scheme with KsHS, financial/benefits advice, help with finding work. In some circumstances, DHP is available.

<http://scams.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s71530/Appendix%20A%20-%20Under-occupation%20policy.pdf>

<http://www.scams.gov.uk/content/under-occupation-faqs>

6. TKA Tallent – new planning application to redevelop site S/1020/13/FL

In May, TKA Tallent submitted a new planning application to redevelop their site on Bourn Airfield. The proposal is to knock down the existing building, which some will recall was the subject of noise problems for several years until the company relocated, and build a brand new one. The company and its agent have been trying to convince the parish and district council that this new building will be acoustically sound and the old problems will not recur. However, needless to say that is being met with a lot of scepticism.

Caldecote and Bourn parish councils have asked SCDC to include in the noise conditions that can be monitored and enforced in the planning conditions to be attached to the development. In order to do that, TKA's agents were asked to provide the acoustic data upon which such conditions can be based. This data

has now been received and SCDC Environmental health dept have put together a set of draft conditions, which can now be discussed with Caldecote planning committee at its next meeting. We expect that the application will go to the SCDC Planning committee meeting on 2nd October, if both Caldecote and Bourn parish councils are happy with the conditions that have been put together by SCDC.

7. 101A West Drive – Close boarded fence and new location of house

This is one saga that is going round in excruciating circles. The developer started work on the site without discharging an important pre-commencement condition to agree the boundary treatment to include reduction in height and/or replacement of the existing close boarded fence. I reported to the council that work had started and that the footings were in the wrong place as it was too close to the fence.

After much pressure from me, SCDC got the developer to stop work, but only after the foundations had been completed. It then transpires that the house was indeed in the wrong place! The developer has put in a subsequent application to vary the conditions of the planning permission – so that the house can remain in its “wrong” position. In the meantime, he has not provided the information regarding the fencing. These two issues are also now being seen as “separate”, even though they are linked. If the variation is allowed, the fence cannot be moved back. I will continue to put pressure on planning to ensure that this long standing problem is resolved once and for all.

8. 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!

9. Councillor Drop-in surgery

This normally takes first Thursdays of every month, 7pm – 8pm at the small meeting room in the Caldecote Village Hall. The next surgery is on 3rd October 2013. Drop in to talk about any issues that you feel that I may be able to help you with.

10. Dates for your diary

6 September 2013	2.30 – 7.30pm	SCDC Local Plan Exhibition at Bourn Church
7 September 2013	2pm – 5pm	Response Form Help Session, Toft Methodist Chapel by StopBAD to help residents complete the local plan consultation response form
10 September 2013	5pm – 8pm	Response Form Help Session, Caldecote Village Hall As above by StopBAD
26 September 2013	2pm	SCDC Full Council meeting
30 September 2013	5pm	Consultation ends – Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire
2 October 2013	10am	SCDC Planning Committee Meeting
3 October 2013	7pm-8pm	Councillor Surgery Caldecote Village Hall
14 October 2013	5pm	Consultation ends – SCDC Draft Local Development Plan

Tumi

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5-September-13

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