

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caldecote Ward

(comprises the Parishes of Caldecote, Childerley, Kingston, Bourn, Longstowe & Little Gransden)

Councillor's Monthly Report – May 2023

This report of previous month events is for all the Ward, so please be aware that some of the content may not be relevant to your particular Parish.

General

Please contact me with comments, questions, problems, reports, suggestions or complaints to do with SCDC services. These are housing need, housing repairs for council tenants, planning, benefits, council tax, bin collection, environmental health issues etc. Don't fight on your own. I am available to help you to get the best outcome possible for your situation.

Check out articles on my facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/itsCouncillorTumi> and my blog <http://www.TumiHawkins.org.uk>. What I post on there is my view and not LibDem or South Cambs official policy unless I state that it is.

Reminders

Parish/Cabinet Liaison Meeting

The next Parish Councils / SCDC Cabinet Liaison meeting is scheduled for 5th June 2023. Please put this date in your diary. Select a parish Councillor to attend on your behalf and RSVP if not done already.

Luton Airport Flight Path and Airspace Deployment (AD6) change

Many already affected are noticing the level of noise is increasing, and flight coming across even after midnight! The Post Implementation Review (PIR) period has been extended to end of September so more time to collect data and report real effects on our area.

This is to remind us all that those being affected by the airplane noise should continue to report it to Luton. Send an email to noise@ltn.aero or noise.enquiries@ltn.aero, stating your name and address, the date and time of the flight and effect it had on you. Where possible make a video or audio recording on your phone of the flight event that caused the disturbance as part of your record keeping. Copy the MP in and the RELAS team info@relas.uk for the record. There is still a chance to make a change by reporting the impact AD6 is having on everyday life of everyday people. RELAS group is at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/relas.ad6>.

Luton Airport has submitted a [Development Consent Order \(DCO\) application](#) to the Planning Inspectorate planning permission for the expansion from its current permitted capacity of 18 million passengers to 32 million passengers per year. That DCO has been accepted for consideration. This will mean more planes over this formerly quiet area, with many more being affected by the noise if the consent is given and AD6 gets the final consent.

Fuel Payment for Oil Users

The Alternative Fuel Payments scheme is intended to deliver a one-off payment of £200 to UK households who are not on the mains gas grid and therefore use alternative fuels, such as heating oil, to heat their homes. The scheme not through the Councils but is now open via GOV.uk website at <https://www.gov.uk/get-help-energy-bills/alternative-fuels>. Applications open till end of May 2023, so don't delay.

Housing

Right To Buy (RTB)

Further to my report last month that we delivered 88 new council houses the municipal year 2022/23, looks like we may be able to deliver more in the next year.

Those who live in Council houses have long had the ‘right to buy’ their home at a discount. What has been frustrating for councils who own the houses is that Government takes most of the money from these discounted sales. This makes it really difficult to replace those sold homes with new ones because what is left is pitiful compared to the cost of replacement. The discount is 35% for tenants in residence for 3-5 years for houses and up to 50% for flats. Then goes up by 1% for every extra year the person has been a tenant (or 2% for flats). Good news is that Government has announced that Councils can keep their RTB receipts but only for 2 years. In South Cambs, we sell about 30 properties a year, so this means that we will borrow less for building new houses and it will be easier to replace those homes sold.

Short Term and Holiday Lets

As we know, our area and Cambridge City are popular tourist destinations, the City especially. Many rental properties are being turned into AirBnB and holiday lets in tourist hotspots and Cambridge is no exception. Government is now consulting on a proposal to introduce planning permission for turning an existing home into a short-term let, to ensure local people are supported in areas where large numbers of holiday homes are preventing them from finding affordable housing. Anyone thinking of turning their property into holiday lets should be aware.

Planning

Housing Trajectory and Five Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS)

This are figures we have to report to Government every year, and the new figures are good. The calculations show that for Greater Cambridge, the two Councils jointly have **6.2 years** of housing land supply for the 2023-2028 five-year period. This is robust and shows we have been able to keep this number above 5 years government minimum threshold consistently.

In terms of house delivery, it is worth remembering that Cambridge local plan 2018 sets 14,000 homes to be delivered between 2011 and 2031. The South Cambs Local Plan 2018 sets its target as 19,500 for the same period. The calculations show that 14,199 are expected to be delivered in Cambridge City and 23,516 in South Cambridgeshire giving a total of 37,715 in Greater Cambridge. The South Cambs figures includes the additional homes granted permission during the period 2014-2018 when the Council did not have a 5YHLS. So overall in Greater Cambridge, we are delivering more than the requirements in both plans.

Resources

Four Day Week Trial

All local authorities across the country are facing huge problems in recruiting and retaining staff, which affects services provided to communities. It is impossible to compete with the private sector especially for planning and environmental officers and so councils have to offer something other than money. Also, the cost of having to use agency staff to fill unfilled posts is currently running at £2mil per year - which is a lot of money for a District Council. For this reason South Cambs District Council has been running a trial for the past months of the Four Day Week. This means that staff have to work very differently, efficiently and more intensely in order to do 100% of the work in 80% of the time to receive 100% of the pay. I have also written about this in my blog at <https://tumiawkins.org.uk/four-day-week-trial-success-at-south-cambridgeshire-district-council/> The report of this trial has now been published and is very encouraging showing that performance has been maintained or improved, and staff who were thinking of leaving are now likely to stay.

What this means for our communities is improvement in services and savings for the functions that your council tax is used for. The recommendation is to extend the trail for a further year.

Councillors are also to be asked to include the refuse collection services in the 4 Day Week trail as of this summer. As I wrote in another blog post at <https://tumihawkins.org.uk/future-of-waste-collections-in-south-cambridgeshire/> we expect this to provide significant improvement in bin collection as the routes are being optimized due to increase number of homes built. But also collecting only Tuesdays to Fridays to avoid disruptions caused by bank holidays. There are many councils already doing this and we will learn from them.

Transport

GCP “Making Connections”

As I reported previously, the 24,000+ consultation responses are being analysed by the GCP. The Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ) being the most controversial aspect.

It is important to remember why it is considered necessary to do something to address congestion problems in Cambridge and South Cambs (Greater Cambridge):

Greater Cambs has 35,000 more residents in 2021 than 2011, there will be 44,000 more jobs by 2031 and 33,500 more houses as in the adopted Local Plans 2018 for both Councils, traffic levels need to decrease by 15% of 2011 levels to be able to run better public transport, 35% of carbon emissions are from transport.

In addition, we should consider what could a better bus transport service look like:

Cheap fares, increased number of routes, increased frequency of buses, faster and more direct services, simple through ticketing, increased bus infrastructure, significant increase in rural services. For the A428 corridor, proposed improvements are increase from 3 to 6 buses/hour for Cambourne to Cambridge, for Cambourne to Addenbrookes, from 1 to 2 buses/hour and Cambourne to Huntingdon from 1 to 3 buses per hour. A new service is proposed to run from Cambourne to Potton and Biggleswade. I wrote about that in my blog at <https://tumihawkins.org.uk/making-connections-proposed-transport-network-improvements/>. This and proposals for other routes is estimated to cost £50million per year. The initial cost to get the service improvements is from GCP funding as in the City Deal agreement, as well as funding from other sources such as S106 and grants. The STZ charging is proposed to keep the new connections and services going from 2027 onwards.

This project has been a long time in discussion and in the making, since the mid noughties 2007 if not earlier. I have also written a blog article <https://tumihawkins.org.uk/proposals-for-bus-service-improvements-supported-by-road-charging/> outlining the history of these proposals.

The GCP is now close to finishing analysing the responses which will be used to revise the proposals to address the concerns people. The final report will outline the results, proposals and next steps, to the GCP Board in June 2023. The final decision will be made by the Cambridgeshire County Council.

Community and Wellbeing

Community Group Funding

Community groups in South Cambridgeshire have been given a funding boost thanks to grants from the District Council. Supporting local people with their mental health, helping families with young children, supporting the elderly, tackling poverty and disability transport are among the community

groups to share more than £148,000 in grants. A total of 11 voluntary sector groups have received funding for the coming financial year as part of the Council's Grants to the Voluntary Sector scheme.

- Home Start Royston & South Cambridgeshire £13,711
- Cambridge Dial-a-Ride £5,000
- Care Network Cambridgeshire £8,000
- Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service £11,400
- Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise £2,000 - a voluntary organisation comprising residents aged 50+
- Arts and Minds £4,000 -
- The Voluntary Network £5,000
- REACH Community £5,000
- Disability Huntingdon £6,289
- Royston & District Community Transport £7,000
- Citizens Advice £100,000

The grants are given at the start of each new financial year and the Council makes a pledge to continue that support for the next three years, subject to satisfactory progress reports.

Action for Happiness

The Action for Happiness theme for this month at <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/calendar>. is **Meaningful May**. This month's focus is "Let's find ways to be part of something bigger"

Local Issues

Caldecote:

Linden Homes has lost its appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, asking to vary the condition to build a cycleway linking the estate to St Neots Road, and bridleways. This were conditions set when the original outline application to build 140 houses was approved by the Planning Inspector at appeal. Linden claimed there was not enough space to build the cycleway, but the Inspector did not agree, saying they knew about that condition when they bought the land from Gladmans!

Casework

Please do feel free to contact me with comments, questions, problems, reports, suggestions or complaints to do with SCDC services. I will help as best I can

You will find the current and past reports on my blog at <https://tumihawkins.org.uk/caldecote-ward/reports/monthly-reports/2022-23-monthly-reports/>. Feel free to read, share and/or download.

Tumi

Tumi Hawkins
8 May 2023

Email me @:	tumi@tumihawkins.org.uk
Read my blog at:	http://www.TumiHawkins.org.uk
Twitter:	@CouncillorTumi
Facebook	@itsCouncillorTumi
LinkedIn	TumiHawkins
Call me on:	07802 323269