

District and County Councillor's Annual Report 2023

County Council

A1307

The upgrades to the A1307 have continued to be implemented over the last year. The 'Greenway' (a path suitable for pedestrians, cyclists and horses), that will ultimately link Linton and the new Park & Ride site that is proposed to be on the outskirts of Babraham, has been steadily moving forward with the construction of the section between Linton and Abington progressing, as well as the new pedestrianised crossing at the Hildersham junction being finished and very much in use.

There was some good (we hope) progress made on the decision of where to route the Abington leg of the Greenway should go. The original plan was to direct the route along Linton Road, through the middle of the village and then out along Bourne Bridge Road. This option was met with some robust challenge locally, from residents, your councillors and the parish council. The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) then went away and have decided to only look at the option that runs along the side of Pampisford Road. The downside of this is that it will take longer to construct, as there are compulsory land purchases required, which involve lawyers, and always take time.

The next, and final, phase of the scheme to upgrade the A1307 will be starting in May this year. This is to construct a roundabout at the end of Bartlow Road, Linton and also to remodel the highly dangerous Dean Road junction on the A1307. The work will run for just under a year, which will very likely mean some disruption to traffic, but the plan is to build a temporary road around the area that the roundabout is being constructed in to avoid any closures to the A1307. Some concerns that rat running will increase during this time has been responded to by the GCP with the reassurance that sufficient signage will be put up to inform people of the temporary road and to deter them to take more rural detours.

Full detail can be seen at - <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/sustainable-transport-programme/public-transport-schemes/cambridge-south-east-transport>

Greater Cambridge Partnership

The other big news that came from the GCP this year was that Cambridgeshire are being offered a large sum of money (many many millions) by central government to help improve the local public transport network in and around the city. The reason for this isn't random - Cambridge scores very poorly on congestion and pollution metrics – some saying it is the 3rd worst city for congestion in England and that it emits over 25% more pollution than the national average.

A solution to this, that the government are looking to support financially, is get a very reliable and cost-effective public transport system, as we have seen works in other cities. This would eventually have to be self-funded however and a proposed way to do this would be to charge for road usage, a congestion charge, or what is being labelled as a Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ).

The GCP published an initial proposal back at the start of 2022 which outlined which areas of the city could be affected by a STZ. This stretched to most of the city limits and also included Addenbrookes hospital. The GCP then ran one of the largest public consultations in Cambridgeshire's history on the topic, to garner the thoughts of the public on this important decision. Some 24,000 responses were received, which equates to roughly 15% of all adults in South Cambridgeshire, an enormous

response. The full results of this are currently being collated and will be available for viewing in the summer.

Personally, we aren't against the principle of congestion charging as a medium to help fund a much-improved public transport system, however, the plans as they currently are need some improving before they can be in a supportable state.

This issue has, and will continue to, get a lot of media attention so you won't have to look very far to get an update on this. We do always encourage people, when formulating a view, to look at the facts, as there is a lot of opinion out there which doesn't always represent the full picture.

New HQ

The County Council's brand-new purpose-built HQ, in Alconbury, was formally opened in July last year. This replaces the previous location in central Cambridge. Our view is still that it is in the wrong location, given the non-existent public transport links and the fact it is an 80ish mile round trip for us living in the south east of the county.

Waste issues

Back in the Autumn last year the governments various departments, DEFRA and the Environment Agency, informed local authorities that they would be bringing into force legislation that means some wholesale changes to the way that the County Council has to dispose of various things.

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) – these are essentially upholstered items such as sofas, chairs etc. The new legislation dictates that they can no longer be put into landfill and have to be incinerated. This causes a problem for the County Council as their contact with the waste disposal company doesn't stretch to incineration, so this led to a week where the Council couldn't accept these items at their recycling centres whilst they looked for a solution. They now have one and have been accepting the POPs at their recycling centres since January. The District Council also has a bulky item collection service, that is chargeable, if transportation is an issue.

Food waste – again, an announced change in legislation by DEFRA is meaning that, in a few years time, all food waste will have to be collected and disposed of separately to all other green household waste. Some of us have been taking part in a, District Council arranged, food waste collection trial for the last 3 years in preparation for this change. The issue the County Council has is, again, contractual as they will now have to renegotiate their current contract with their waste contractor, or find a new one, that has the capability to dispose of food in the appropriate way, which is different to regular green waste. This is ongoing to watch this space

District Council

Local Plan

The District Council has been going through the process of looking at the next Local Plan – which is a blueprint for where development, both residential and commercial, will be happening over the next 30 years. This plan needs to be updated every 5-10 years as the local picture is constantly changing.

Currently the District Council have a very healthy '5 year land supply' which means they have allocated, and approved planning permission for, enough houses to accommodate the growth of the

area over the next 5 year period. This means that we only have controlled development and the Council don't have to relax their planning rules to allow uncontrolled, unsustainable development – as they had to in 2014-18 and we ended up with a lot of unplanned and unsuitable developments, such as Horseheath Road and Bartlow Road in Linton, Linton Road in Balsham and Bartlow Road in Castle Camps.

The District Council are currently going through the process of allocating the sites for the next Local Plan, which we were all consulted on last year. Their current principle is to concentrate development into existing towns and larger settlements, such as Cambourne, Northstowe, Waterbeach New Town, Bourne Airfield etc and they will leave the villages as rural villages. We hope they continue with this principle and we know a lot of parishes wrote in supporting this concept.

This will be an ever evolving process, that we will keep you as updated on as possible, so please do watch this space.

Ukrainian Guests

More than 800 Ukrainian guests have been welcomed to South Cambs since the war started last year. This is the highest number of any District Council in the country. This is a great achievement and says much for the humanity of those who have opened their homes to these people in need. More hosts are needed as Ukrainians continue to arrive or move on from their current accommodation. If you can help just contact the team on: HFULiason@Scambs.gov.uk

Coronation Celebrations

If you are planning something or thinking about it, you might like to take a look at 'The Big Lunch'.

There is lots information and materials to help you on their website: www.thebiglunch.com/

Or for parish councils try www.edenprojectcommunities.com/biglunch/councils

There are also grants available from South Cambs District Council, just check out their website.

Elections May 2022

The District Council Election saw the Liberal Democrats increase their majority. The current distribution of seats is as follows: Lib Dems 35, Conservative 9 and Independent 1. Thank you to everyone for voting to re-elect us both, we're very privileged to continue to do this job.

We now only have elections every 4 years so the next District election will be in 2026.

The County Council is due to hold elections in 2025.

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