

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

Report to Barton Parish Council January 2019

Budget and Council Tax

The Plan and Budget recommendations will be reviewed at the Council meeting on February 21. The proposed increase in SCDC tax will be £5, taking the charge for a Band D property in the District to £145.31. The feedback from the Business Plan consultation particularly highlighted the issues around transportation and affordable housing. Copies of the Business Plan are available via the following link:

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s109820/Appendix%20A%20-%20Draft%20Business%20Plan%202019-24%20for%20Cabinet%20meeting.pdf>

Proposals will be discussed at the forthcoming Cabinet meeting to increase the premium for empty properties that remain unoccupied for extended periods of time. This is to encourage owners to bring properties back into use and to ensure that such properties do not attract vandals and/or become a magnet for anti-social behaviour.

Cambourne to Cambridge: Phase 2 Consultation

The consultation on Phase 2, Cambourne to Madingley Mulch and the P&R for the route is now live and can be accessed here: <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/transport/transport-projects/cambourne-to-cambridge/cambourne-to-cambridge-phase-2/>

There are several consultation events – see the website for details. The consultation closes on 31st March.

While that is going on the technical group of the Local Liaison Forum for Phase 1 has 5 further meetings scheduled with officers and consultants to go through detailed issues, including the Northern / Girton route.

East West Rail Consultation

Proposals on the Cambridge/Bedford section of the East West Rail Route between Cambridge and Oxford have been published for public consultation. The consultation runs from 28th January to 11th March. Information about the options being considered can be found on: <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/haveyoursay> (you may have also had a leaflet through your door). Again there are several consultation events, the nearest probably Cambridge (The University Centre, Friday 22 February, 3:30pm -7:30pm) and Orwell (Village Hall, Tuesday 26th February, 2pm – 6:00pm).

This is just a start and there will be more opportunities for people to comment as proposals evolve. CamBedRailRoad's proposal for a northern route from Cambridge North Station and linking to the Guided Busway through Histon has not been included. The Northern option was rejected due to higher costs and operational complications particularly for freight movements. Of the 5 proposals being consulted on, 2 have the potential to pass through the Harston & Comberton ward, going from Cambourne to join the existing line south of Cambridge, so we'll be taking a close look.

Strategic Bus Review by the Combined Authority

The Strategic Bus Review report, commissioned by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, was published on 23rd January. The options being considered will be outlined in a business case. These could include franchising and enhanced partnerships, but the timescale is depressingly long. Some improvements in bus networks could be introduced sooner but the report is rather disappointing given the time it has taken to produce. The report can be found on: <http://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/assets/Uploads/Strategic-Bus-Review.pdf>. We will endeavour to make sure that the interests of residents living in the villages around Cambridge will be served as these proposals progress.

The total annual subsidy cost of buses is about £2 million. The County Council has been providing that subsidy on behalf of the Mayor but contingency funds for 2019-20 have not been identified.

“My South Cambs” Customer Portal

Councillors attended a demonstration of a new South Cambs Council customer portal that went live on 21st January. Users will be able to sign in using e-mail, facebook, Microsoft and Google. The system allows customers to submit questions, contact the Council about planning, benefits, waste collections etc as well as to report problems. The system is evolving and will enable customers to track the progress of their complaint or enquiry. As the system is web based, it will free up officer time to carry out their work – we welcome any feedback. The new portal can be accessed from the S Cambs Council homepage or on <https://mysouthcambs.scams.gov.uk>.

Strawberries and Creem Festival

As we mentioned verbally last time, the organisers are applying for a separate license for the event and the period for representations closes this week. We are told that because representations have been made it will automatically go to a hearing of a sub-committee of the Licensing Committee, where those that have submitted representations will have the opportunity to speak (as will the applicant). The date has not been set yet, but we will keep the Parish Council informed.

South Cambs Liberal Democrats select general election candidate

Not usually relevant to a parish council report, but as the candidate is Ian, we thought it best to share! Ian's still fully committed to representing the ward at the District Council, but you may see him popping up campaigning and commenting on constituency wide and national issues more in future.

Ian Sollom

Philip Allen

Tony Mason