

## South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caxton and Papworth Ward

### District Councillor's Monthly Report – February 2024

#### **Finances and Council Tax**

The council budget for 2024-2025 will come to Full Council for approval at its meeting on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February. If approved, the district council precept will increase by £5 a year on a Band D property, or slightly more than 3%. Reserves will be topped up where prudent and, unlike many other councils, no cuts to services are proposed. Additional funding will be allocated to combating fly tipping, including prosecuting offenders where they can be identified. Net zero projects will also see an uplift in funding. Most of you will be aware that South Cambs collects taxes on behalf of other organisations too such as central government, the County Council, parishes and the Combined Authority. Consequently, the overall increase in monthly payments will be significantly more than 50p.

The Combined Authority (the mayor's office) is proposing to triple its Band D precept from £12 a year to £36. The additional funds are intended for improved services, two of which will be of interest in our ward. One is "engagement with the incumbent operator of the X2 and X3 to assess options for improvements". The other is a trial of Demand Response Transport in South Cambridgeshire – we've occasionally seen Ting buses in our villages, but those were part of the Huntingdonshire trial.

#### **Civil Parking Enforcement -How to Report Violations**

Civil Parking Enforcement has been live in South Cambs since late December, but from 1 February tickets, with fines attached, will begin to be issued by the Civil Parking Enforcement Officers. Officers can only enforce existing legal restrictions, such as parking on a single or double yellow lines. Other parking matters, such as causing an obstruction by parking on the pavement, remain Police matters. As there are only two enforcement officers dedicated to South Cambs, their time will be prioritised according to need while minimising travel time across the large rural area they will cover.

To report parking violations, send an email to [parkingcontrol@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:parkingcontrol@cambridgeshire.gov.uk), including the following information: Restriction (what restriction is being contravened?), Time (what time does the contravention usually occur?), Day (what day does the contravention usually occur?) and Occurrence (how often is the contravention observed?).

For information on Civil Parking Enforcement, visit [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CPE](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CPE).

#### **Have Your Say on the Future of Local Housing**

Residents are asked to help shape the future of housing across Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire by responding to a consultation on the Housing Strategy for Greater Cambridge. This strategy sets out a vision for the next five years which promotes healthy, safe, affordable and sustainable homes where people of all walks of life want to live. The consultation runs until 3 March 2024, and the strategy will be finalised in the summer. It stands alongside the council's Local Plan, existing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategies, and a number of other local strategies and plans.

South Cambs District Council is pledged to delivering at least 375 new council homes during the next five years. It will undertake a stock condition survey of all existing council homes to produce a 15-year plan for improved energy efficiency. It will continue to deliver a cost-of-living support programme, including increased money advice support.

To comment on the draft Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy, visit <https://www.scams.gov.uk/Housing/The-Greater-Cambridge-Housing-Strategy-2024-2029>

## **Community Chest Grant Eligibility Widened**

At its January meeting, the Grants Advisory committee voted to extend the eligibility for access to the main Community Chest Grant “pot” to parishes with electorates of 200, with a discretionary increase of 10% on top of that number. Previously, only parishes with 150 electors plus 10% were eligible. As a result, Graveley and Boxworth are now eligible for grants from the main “pot”; Papworth St Agnes, Knapwell, Conington and Croxton were previously eligible and remain eligible. The remaining parishes in the ward are eligible for ring-fenced grants, such as those for cost-of-living mitigation and EV chargers, but not to the main pot. I should apologise if I have made misleading statements regarding eligibility at parish meetings, as I was not aware of the electorate cut-off until recently. If any parish or community group would like assistance in completing an application, they can email [community.chest@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:community.chest@scambs.gov.uk)

## **Cambridge 2040**

Cambridge 2040 is the code name for the government’s proposal to build a significant number of additional houses in the Greater Cambridge area. A few days before Christmas, DLHUC minister Michael Gove held a press conference in which he indicated the number of additional houses proposed is 150,000, rather than the 250,000 rumoured in the media. This new figure includes the 50,000 additional homes included in our draft Local Plan. As there is insufficient space in Cambridge City for that many homes, we anticipate most will be in South Cambs and East Cambs. The exact locations aren’t confirmed yet, but one of my fellow councillors is talking about the fields between Trumpington P&R and the M11, and filling in the green belt between Addenbrookes and the Shelfords.

The project will be managed by a “DevCo” (Development Corporation), staffed by civil servants and supported by a “flying squad” of planners. It is not yet clear what influence, if any, local councils will have on the project. Local leaders have met with the minister and his staff, and asked about the necessary water, infrastructure and amenities to support this development. When they receive answers, I will share them with residents.

## **50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Council**

2024 is the 50th anniversary of the creation of South Cambridgeshire District Council, as the result of the merger of Chesterton Rural District and South Cambridgeshire Rural District on 1st April 1974. Since its formation, the council has occupied two offices in Cambridge before settling in its current headquarters in Cambourne in 2004. To celebrate its birthday, the council will be holding a civic reception for parish chairs and other dignitaries on Wednesday 20th March at 6:00PM. Look out for an invitation in your email in the next few days.

## **Ermine Street Housing**

South Cambs DC is extending a line of credit to Ermine St Housing (a wholly owned subsidiary of the council) of a further £20 million. Much of this money is to buy single occupancy homes on the open market for newly homeless people. The properties will be run by Shire Homes, which manages the council’s social housing. This proposal is described as “investing to save” – currently those who become homeless at short notice are placed in expensive bed-and-breakfast accommodation. Having its own pool of properties will permit the council to reduce the spend on such accommodation. The council is aiming to acquire about 100 units across South Cambridgeshire.

## **Four Day Week Data**

When the government issued a Best Value Notice in response to South Cambs District Council’s Four Day Working Week trial, it requested five years of historical data on nearly 200 data points, with weekly updates. In the interests of transparency, this information is now published on the South Cambs public web site here:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/your-council-and-democracy/four-day-working-week-trial>

(There's a lot of spreadsheet type data to plough through!)

## **Fly Tipping**

A reminder you can report fly tipping online here:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/recycling-and-bins/keeping-your-community-clean/fly-tipping>

South Cambs will clear illegally dumped waste, and will also prosecute offenders where they can be identified.

## **Air Quality Strategy Consultation**

Another consultation if you have time – this one is on the air quality strategy:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/greater-cambridge-air-quality-strategy-consultation/>

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2 February 2024

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