

Report for Great Shelford Parish Council:

South Cambridgeshire District Council – February 2020

Planning

From 18th February, planning applications began to be listed on a new site shared with Cambridge City, using their existing well-tried planning software (Uniform-Idox).

Greater Cambridge Local Plan

Work is underway on a new joint Local Plan that will affect the future of Greater Cambridge over the next 20 years.

The Councils are consulting on the **Greater Cambridge Local Plan – The First Conversation**. This is intended to start the conversation about the kind of place we want Greater Cambridge to be in the future. It will explore the ‘big themes’ – climate change, biodiversity, social inclusion and great places - that will influence how homes, jobs and infrastructure are planned, and where growth might go.

The consultation began in January and will run until **5pm Monday 24 February 2020**. There is further information and the opportunity to provide views on any of the topics covered at www.greatercambridgeplanning.org . People can also post online using #GCLocalPlan.

The consultation included last night’s ‘**Big Debate**’ at the Corn Exchange, where local groups were invited to share their ideas about what should be in the Local Plan.

A video introducing the local plan can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9p3BZ8oS3M&t=161s> 2.3

(Alternatively, to find the video, search for ‘local plan cambridge’ on youtube.)

Community Chest Grant

The latest round of Community Chest Grants were announced recently, and we were pleased that Cambridge, Past, Present & Future were awarded £996 to buy plants and pond dipping equipment for the Wandlebury Pond project. Each year over 2,000 school children learn about their local environment and heritage through CPPF’s science, history and orienteering programmes. The grant will go towards supporting such programmes by providing equipment such as nets, trays and collecting jars.

Cambridge Police station move consultation

In February, Cambridgeshire Constabulary will be consulting the public on a proposal to “replace our outdated facilities at Parkside with both a new city centre police station and a police hub on the outskirts of Cambridge.” The consultation site claims that “together these [changes] will meet the county’s growth and respond to the challenges of modern-day policing.” The proposed location for the new police hub is not revealed, but is likely to be in Milton.

The consultation will last to Saturday 29th February 2020. Information leaflets have been placed in libraries and police stations across the county. The proposals include keeping a police station (though not custody cells) in the City.

The consultation website can be found at www.cambspoliceconsultation.co.uk and includes a video, FAQs and more information about why they're making this proposal.

There is a public drop-in event at Lion Yard shooping centre on 22nd February (10am to 2pm).

Zero Carbon Community Grants

Over £120,000 was handed out by South Cambs District Council in the end. The grant pot was increased because the council wanted to support all the brilliant ideas that met their criteria. Waterbeach Cycling Campaign, for example, received a grant of £1,200 for cycle stands. Other villages went for electric bikes, tree planting, Eco-Eats festival, repair cafe and other ideas – the full list is available on <https://scams.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=11231> , including those that did not receive funding this time.

It would be great to see a grant application from Stapleford or the Shelfords next year, and we'd be happy to support any organisation thinking of applying.

South Cambs District Council budget setting

As in recent years, the Council Tax will go up in April by £5 for each Band D property (the amount that the Government has set as a cap for authorities with a low current council tax). There are expected to be difficult decisions to be made next year, when SCDC will get less from the increase in Business Rates, due to the expected 'Fair Funding Review' which has been delayed by a few years.

Energy Efficiency Grant

A survey of all houses across the district has been carried out to look at properties which are energy inefficient. Letters have been sent to 250 dwellings across South Cambs with an Energy Performance Certificate rating of G - the lowest band. Last year, the rules on the allocation of this grant were extended so that homes which were poorly insulated or indeed with inefficient heating systems could be upgraded.

There has been an underspend of the budget for disability access at South Cambs over the past few years, meaning that once key repairs and housing adaptations - such as fitting a wet room - had been carried out almost £200,000 has been carried over to date.

The grant is means tested and there is a cap of £10,000 per household so the Council will wait to see what the uptake is and may then extend it to properties rated as an F on an energy performance certificate.

Alongside this, the council is also putting out to tender a service to provide energy efficiency advice. Owner occupiers and tenants in council or privately rented properties will all be able to have a free assessment and receive advice on how to obtain grants or receive discounts towards energy saving improvements. More information to follow once a company has been selected.

New complaints process and Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service Inbox

From 30th January 2020 all complaints regarding the District Council need to be made through the Open Process portal.

To access the portal follow this link and select the option 'Online Complaints Form':
<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/your-council-and-democracy/feedback/compliments-complaints-and-suggestions>

Individuals who have problems using or signing up to the service for any reason can call our Customer Feedback Team on 03450 450 500 who will assist them. All complaint responses to users who have difficulties accessing online services will continue to be sent via post or phone.

In addition to the online portal GCSPS have set up a Shared Complaints Mailbox (Complaints&Compliments@greatercambridgeplanning.org). Any complaint queries or updates should be placed through the portal as this will be the quickest way to establish contact with their investigator. There may be instances where you want an update on a specific case and you can request this via email to the shared mailbox. Currently, emails are being sent directly to individuals across planning which has delayed our awareness of some complaints. This change addresses this issue and will allow queries to be answered much quicker.

The planning team will be closely monitoring the complaints process over the coming months to ensure that new system is running smoothly. If you experience any problems or delays in the complaint process, please email the shared mailbox above.

Please contact District Councillors Nick Sample or Peter Fane if we can help with local council matters.

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