

Report for Great Shelford Parish Council:

South Cambridgeshire District Council – July 2019

Your Councillors are always ready to help. If you have any questions about these - or indeed any other - matters, please do not hesitate to contact Nick Sample cllr.sample@scambs.gov.uk or Peter Fane cllr.fane@scambs.gov.uk

Local plan

The first workshops were held last week in preparation for the 2020 joint-Local Plan between South Cambs District Council and Cambridge City. Nick took part in a workshop in the Guildhall, where councillors from across both authorities discussed the long-term challenges and opportunities facing our districts, as well as views on the last Local Plan process.

Consultations with groups including parish councils, developers, utility companies and businesses will proceed over the coming months.

New CEO at South Cambs District Council

On July 4th the full council ratified the appointment to the vacant role of Chief Executive Officer of Liz Watts, who has more than 20 years' experience of achieving results in the public and not-for-profit sectors.

Ms Watts, who has successfully delivered positive organisational change in her last three Council positions, is expected to start her new role in September. The salary that she will be paid is £129,930.

Most recently, as the Chief Executive of East Herts Council – a position held for almost four years – Ms Watts transformed the authority's leadership team, putting it in a strong position to deliver on an ambitious four-year strategic plan put in place by Councillors. Under her guidance, the East Herts leadership team was shortlisted by the 2019 Municipal Journal Achievement Awards in their Senior Leadership Team of The Year category. She also changed the way new communities in East Herts are shaped by involving local people in the overall planning of large, strategic sites and has developed strong partnerships with neighbouring local authorities.

The Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cllr Bridget Smith, said: "It has been a pleasure to meet Liz during the recruitment process, and we're thrilled that she will be joining us in South Cambridgeshire. She shares the values of our ambitious Business Plan and places a great deal of importance, like we do, on being green to our core. We feel we've found someone with the skills to develop strong relationships in a complex political environment to deliver the very best for our residents."

Waste Services Campaigns

The shared waste service is launching campaigns to increase public awareness on fly tipping and recycling contamination.

The fly tipping campaign aims to educate residents about the problem and how it can be prevented, highlighting legal ways of disposing of waste and how to report fly tipping. The SCRAP action check list (Suspect, Check, Refuse, Ask, Paperwork) will be a key message.

The recycling campaign's aim is to reduce the amount of non-recyclable material put into blue bins. The contract for recycling has a threshold of 7% contamination so it is important that the council maintains levels below this. Textiles, sanitary products, black bags and food/liquids are the main items that are being found to be contaminating blue recycling bins, and the campaign will lead on these.

Money matters

The national tables showing Council Tax & Business Rates collection have just been published and South Cambs has retained its place as 3rd best in the country at collecting Council Tax. From total Council Tax due of £114.2m, we had just £716k outstanding at the end of the financial year. For Business Rates, we've improved on our position of 26th in the previous year, to achieve a placement at 16th nationally. Business Rates collection rate was 99.5%, compared to 99.4% for Council Tax, with just £404k outstanding at the end of the financial year from a total charge of nearly £88.4m.

Housing News

South Cambs is top nationally for SAP ratings in the Housemark tables (energy efficiency in council houses) and second for rent collection. The new administration pledged to double the number of new council houses it builds from the inherited target of 35 per year to 70 per year and this work is well on track and the target is likely to be exceeded this year.

Huawei

Local people are being encouraged to comment on plans by information and communications firm Huawei to build a new research and development facility on the former Spicers site. It is notable that Huawei are proposing more public access to areas of the site, as encouraged by local councillors in recent meetings.

The technology company has submitted a comprehensive planning application to South Cambridgeshire District Council. The plans propose space for 360 people working across the building, along with a 'clean room' laboratory, offices, workstations, meeting rooms, training rooms, stores, a canteen and reception area. Parking facilities would be provided via a 422-space underground car park. Cycle parking facilities are also included in the plans. This is intended to be the first phase of a larger development. The application states that new routes will be provided for pedestrians, cyclists and cars.

To comment on the plans, visit the planning application section of our website and use the planning reference S/2122/19/FL: <http://bit.ly/32dONRL>. Local people have until 24 July to have their say.

Procurement

The new administration at South Cambs have been insistent that the council improves the experience of smaller companies wishing to bid for the Council's own contracts. Over the year it has been obvious that the hoops a potential supplier has to jump through are just as onerous regardless of the size of the contract they are bidding for and that some of the requirements for multi-million pound insurance policies can make it impossible for any but the largest firms to stand a chance of success. A new procurement process is hopefully going to make the requirements proportional to the size of the contract which should be of particular help to small and medium size businesses. If you have good or bad experience of this, please do let us know.