

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

Report to Haslingfield Parish Council June 2020

Zero Carbon Strategy for South Cambridgeshire

At May's full council meeting, South Cambridgeshire District Council adopted its Zero Carbon Strategy for South Cambridgeshire with cross-party support, pledging to lead a green local economic recovery out of lockdown and to reduce the Council's carbon emissions by at least 75% by 2030.

The ambitious plan, agreed unanimously by the District Council, sets out how the authority will meet its climate change goals and support residents and businesses to do the same. Under the Zero Carbon Strategy, the Council will support the district to halve its carbon emissions in the next 10 years and reduce them completely by 2050. Alongside this, the Council aims to deliver a reduction of at least 45% of its own carbon emissions by 2025 and at least 75% by 2030.

CO₂ emissions in South Cambridgeshire totalled 1,255,000 tonnes in 2017, according to the most recent available Government data. Leading by example, the Council pledges to reduce its own carbon footprint by finding innovative and environmentally friendly ways to deliver its services. It will also work closely with local partners and use its wider circles of influence to encourage others to adopt its high ambitions at scale.

Measures highlighted in the Council's strategy include:

- Replacing its entire shared waste fleet of bin collection vehicles with electric or hydrogen trucks
- Carrying out a major review of its 5,300 council homes to plan the next steps in cutting emissions to zero over the next three decades
- Drafting a bold new joint Local Plan which will have the zero carbon and environmental targets as central to planning policy
- Supporting businesses to improve their energy efficiency and reduce costs by making it easier to access advice and funding, particularly for those hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis
- Working with developers to ensure new homes and their construction are as carbon-friendly as possible and supporting existing homeowners to make their properties more energy-efficient
- Carrying out green refits at Council premises, including a solar carport and a ground source heating system at its Cambourne headquarters
- Continuing its recycling focus, to include minimising waste in its own operations, working with eco-friendly partners to promote food waste, repair and refill schemes, and creating a resource toolkit for communities to use at their events.

Applications for up to £20,000 to fund projects supporting children and young people

South Cambs, along with other local councils, is urging community groups to apply now for up to £20,000 to fund projects supporting children and young people's wellbeing and access to education.

With less than a fortnight until the application deadline on Friday 19 June, groups are encouraged to apply as soon as possible for funding to help children and young people across South Cambridgeshire.

Eligible projects could focus on helping to keep children and young people safe in their communities, to access education, or to develop emotional health and wellbeing. Applicants will need to show how their projects would work towards achieving the following outcomes:

- Helping young people and their communities to develop their own initiatives and, by doing so, contribute to their own resilience and wellbeing and that of their community
- Being inclusive and offering a shared benefit to their communities

- Motivating and empowering other young people to take part and, by doing so, develop social cohesion
- Developing opportunities for children, young people and their families to engage in positive activity which is beneficial to their health and wellbeing

Avoiding crowded outdoor spaces and taking litter home

South Cambridgeshire residents are being urged to ensure they follow social distancing rules when meeting friends outdoors – and take their litter home.

This follows reports of large gatherings locally over recent weekends, including at Grantchester Meadows. The appeals also come after the death of a cow at Grantchester Meadows. The animal had eaten a plastic bag which had become lodged in its windpipe.

Current social distancing guidance from Government allows groups of up to 6 people to meet outdoors, if they remain apart. Public Health England recommends trying to keep two metres away from people as a precaution. The risk of infection of Coronavirus increases the closer you are to another person with the virus and the amount of time you spend in close contact with them.

It is an offence to drop litter on land or into water that is accessible to the public even if it is private land. This applies to private land that the public can access, for example a right of way. Offenders can be prosecuted in a magistrates' court and fined up to £2,500. Litter droppers can get a fixed penalty notice of £150.

New funding to aid small South Cambs businesses in COVID-19 recovery

Over £1.25m in grant funding is now available to help hundreds of small South Cambridgeshire businesses – who have not been eligible for Coronavirus support so far – to secure jobs and recover.

Eligible businesses such as charities, market traders, B&Bs and those in shared offices or flexible workspaces are invited to apply as soon as possible to the District Council for the new funding, and no later than midnight on 22 June.

The one-off payments under the Government's discretionary grants scheme range from £2,500 for small firms, £10,000 for charities and up to £10,000 for other businesses connected to the retail, hospitality and leisure industry. Firms that have already benefitted from previous Government grants do not qualify.

The Council has set up a special team to assess applications and distribute funding fairly and efficiently to eligible businesses that need support as the lockdown eases. This includes:

- Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces with a minimum rent of £250 per month
- Regular market traders who are based in the same physical location with fixed building costs and registered with the Council's Environmental Health / Licensing Service
- B&Bs that pay Council Tax and are registered with the Council's Environmental Health Service
- Charities that pay business rates to the Council and would meet the criteria to receive Small Business Rates Relief if they were an equivalent-sized business.

These businesses will be notified of the Council's decision as soon as possible.

The Council has introduced a fifth category for businesses not included in the above, which form part of the supply chain for the retail, hospitality and leisure industry and can demonstrate they have lost a minimum of 75% of their annual income as a result of COVID-19. With funding limited, the overriding factor for grant determination will be the number of people employed. These businesses will be advised of any decisions after 22 June.

Among the qualifying criteria, businesses must have been trading on 11 March 2020, have a turnover of no more than £10.2m and employ fewer than 50 people.

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