

## **South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward**

### **Report to Haslingfield Parish Council December 2020**

#### **Local contact tracing scheme reaching more than 80% of cases**

The locally enhanced contact tracing service which launched countywide last month is successfully tracing more than 80 per cent of the cases passed to it by the national team. The Peterborough contact tracing service launched in August and was extended to cover the whole county on 19 November. Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council and the five district (including us) and city councils in Cambridgeshire, are all working closely with NHS Test and Trace to contact people who have tested positive for Covid-19, giving them help, advice and support to self-isolate. Environmental Health and Housing have been great in stepping up to this challenge and it's good to see their efforts paying off.

#### **Printable tier posters**

The Government has published printable versions of a series of posters which can be used to communicate locally about the various tiers of restrictions (medium, high and very high) which will apply in England from 2 December. As you are no doubt aware by now, the whole of the East of England is in tier 2 (high). Materials here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tier-posters-medium-high-and-very-high>

#### **Guidance for the Christmas period**

On 29 November, the Government published guidance for the Christmas period in England. From 2 December to 23 December, local restrictions in the tier in which you are staying should be followed. From 23 December to 27 December, you may choose to form a Christmas bubble which allows you to spend time together in private homes, to attend places of worship, or meet in a public outdoor place. From 28 December, you must follow the guidance for the tier in your area and Christmas bubbles will no longer apply. More details here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-the-christmas-period>

#### **Business Directory**

The Council has created a local business directory to help residents find out more about what local businesses are offering. Included in the listings will be details of Covid-secure measures that businesses have put in place and information about current opening arrangements/online ordering/click and collect facilities. Businesses are able to add their details to the directory via the link above, and we will be promoting the directory from Wednesday onwards to help residents support local business in the run up to the festive period and beyond.

#### **Business Grants**

Businesses that were forced to close their doors during last month's national lockdown can now apply for new Government grants that are being distributed by the District Council. The grants are the Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSB) and the Additional Restrictions Support Grant (ARSB). Any businesses who believe they are eligible can find information on how to apply, along with eligibility criteria, via the Council's website.

## **Cambourne to Cambridge**

The Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board met last week with Cambourne to Cambridge back on the agenda following the Mayor's failure to get the agreement of the Combined Authority Transport Committee to a proposed alternative route (mainly due to a lack of clarity about the process for bringing it forward within the existing planning process). The significant recommendation now adopted by the board is that there should be an independent review of the assumptions and constraints that excluded other alternatives early in the process – recognising that some of the context for this project may have changed. We welcome this in principle as a pathway for bringing alternatives back on the table, but it will obviously be crucial to see a genuinely independent process and adequate scope, so will be keeping a close eye on this. We certainly hope to see a process in which the independent reviewer engages directly with stakeholders such as the Local Liaison Forum and Parish Councils.

## **South West Cambridge**

Disappointing news last week that Thakeham, the property developer, have announced proposals for a large new settlement they are calling South West Cambridge - but outside of the local plan process (it was not in the call for sites and hasn't been made as a late submission). It seems they have been engaging directly with central government on this, though it has been reported that this the vehicle for the Cambridge Development Company announced in the Budget earlier this year. The proposal for 25,000 homes covers a huge area: the parishes of Shepreth, Melbourn, Meldreth, Whaddon, Bassingbourn, Wimpole, Orwell, Barrington and Foxton are directly affected, but much more of South Cambs will obviously be impacted. With poor transport links, the town will fail to meet the government's own climate change targets. It will also be impossible to mitigate the ecological damage to the Cam valley and its chalk streams. It's really not the solution to housing in South Cambs.

## **Greater Cambridge Local Plan**

Back in the Local Plan process, the findings of initial expert assessments of a range of broad spatial locations and growth level options have now been published. These are interim findings which will be developed further as the Plan is progressed and a range of other studies are also being developed. No decisions have been made yet about what the eventual strategy will be and the council is taking the opportunity to engage widely on the evidence so far – hopefully you have had a chance to attend a workshop on what's been published. Further details and the documentation linked to this stage of developing the plan are here: <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/greater-cambridge-local-plan/where-to-build-and-how-much/>

Some of the initial findings we thought were worth highlighting:

- Under the standard method set by national government, the minimum number of new homes that would need to be built in the area is around 1,900 per year. This is about 180 more homes per year than we currently have in our development pipeline.
- Taking into account forecasts for jobs growth in the area, there may be a case for planning for between 2,200-3,000 homes per year, to help reduce pressure on house prices and commuting into the area. This would mean finding sites for up to 1,250 extra homes per year.
- The evidence suggests there could be real challenges in achieving very high levels of house-building due to market forces, but that the minimum level set by the government's standard

method will not support the current forecast growth in jobs in the area, potentially leading to higher house prices and more commuting into the area.

- New modelling suggests that the carbon emissions associated with each new home in Greater Cambridge would be between 6-13 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, depending on the type and location of the home. If ambitious zero carbon policies are implemented, this could reduce emissions to around 2-9 tonnes per home.
- Also if those ambitious zero carbon policies are brought in, almost no CO<sub>2</sub> would be produced by a building's energy use itself and less than 1 tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> per home would be generated by the carbon needed to build the home in the first place (this is calculated by spreading the upfront carbon emissions of the construction over the anticipated lifespan of the building). The rest of the carbon emissions are created by the travel patterns of the residents, which is why new homes in villages are likely to create over three times as much carbon as new homes in denser urban areas.
- Water supply analysis shows that the minimum required level of growth could be plausibly achieved through adjustments to current water resource management plans, such as greater water efficiency, reducing leakages and shifting to more sustainable water sources. Medium or high growth levels would need new regional scale infrastructure, such as reservoirs and transfer schemes and this will inform plans currently being developed by the water industry. Under normal means of provision, these will take time to implement, and this could be a 'deal breaker' that means high growth levels cannot be achieved within the period of the new Plan.
- From a water management perspective, the best place to build new homes would be in new settlements, or to build large developments on the edge of Cambridge. This is because they can be designed from the outset for efficient and integrated water management, rather than having to 'bolt on' to existing infrastructure in the city or existing villages where there may be existing flood risk, wastewater and water quality constraints
- About 19% of Greater Cambridge's land area is green or blue infrastructure, which means the network of natural and semi-natural spaces, including water bodies. This compares to farmland, which accounts for 74% of the land in Greater Cambridge. This figure has been developed through a very detailed analysis which included asking community representatives to complete surveys about green spaces in their area.
- There are many opportunities to improve and expand the green and blue infrastructure network, but the river corridors in particular would create the most benefits for biodiversity as well as communities.
- Initial viability testing suggests that market-led development in Greater Cambridge should be able to pay for 40% affordable housing as part of the mix in each major development, but there is further work being developed to look at the costs of infrastructure and potential policies such as zero carbon measures.

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