

Parish Council & Residents Associations Bulletin

June 2020

We have prepared this bulletin as a way to share with you information on the Shared Planning Service and matters surrounding the work of the team in Greater Cambridgeshire that we hope will be of interest. I hope therefore that you find the contents of this Bulletin interesting. If however, there is anything you would like to see information on in future issues then please do not hesitate to contact me our engagement officer (william.smeeton@greatercambridgeplanning.org).

Greater Cambridge Local Plan

Following the 'First Conversation' consultation earlier this year through which we received around 7,000 comments SCDC's Cabinet meeting on 29th is to receive a report on the [Initial Feedback from the Consultation](#) including some high level views on:

- **Where to build**, those who responded appeared to offer the most support for densification of existing urban areas, along with development along public transport corridors. Views on development around villages were, meanwhile varied and, on green belt development; it appears there is some support for locations which are sustainable in transport terms, to reduce car travel from locations further away.
- Most people agree that the right **seven themes** have been identified for the Plan, but there were a range of views about which themes should take priority.
- **Infrastructure** – was the theme that attracted the most interest, with transport being the most commented upon topic.
- The theme that attracted the next highest level of interest was **homes**, followed by **climate change**, which prompted a wide range of views – from those who felt it was a high priority, to those who felt that other issues should take precedence.
- Many of the responses said that continuing **economic growth** was important, although many also raised questions around whether growth was desirable. Some meanwhile offered a view that wellbeing should be prioritised over growth, while



others expressed the view that economic growth was the means to raise quality of life.

The consultation also included a 'Call for Sites', where people could identify sites that should be considered for development or for green spaces to be created. The full list of sites put forward, including those submitted in 2019, **will be published later in the summer** once the new sites received have been captured on the Council database and categorised.

Later this year, we expect to talk with Parishes about the publication of the full list of submitted sites – some 700 in all - to explain how we will use the submissions in the plan making process and to offer re-assurance that they have no “planning status” for decision making. Asking for site suggestions is a normal part of plan making, we have to follow – and whilst some sites may eventually be allocated in the Local Plan, decisions on those allocations will not conclude until later in the plan making process.

That process looking forwards will also be reviewed by the SCDC Cabinet on 29th when they consider an [update to the Local Development Scheme](#). This shows the proposed timeline for the next stages of the Local Plan process, including an additional stage being introduced to provide for greater consultation and engagement to take place before the Councils settle on their “draft plan.” which takes into account the comments received and our wish to continue to work actively with our communities and stakeholders during the plan-making process.

The report to SCDC's Cabinet includes proposals to:

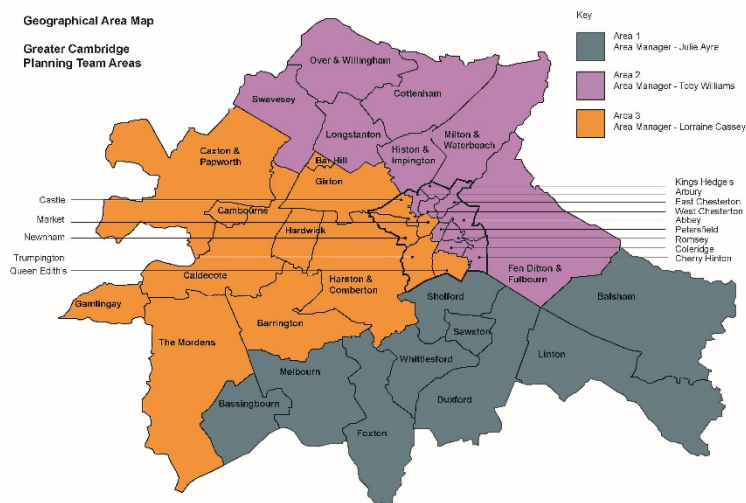
- **Publishing emerging evidence** from commissioned external consultants in **October 2020**, followed by themed workshops, including relevant partners and stakeholder/community representatives, in November/December.
- A '**Preferred Option**' **consultation in summer 2021**, this will set out suggested levels of development for jobs and homes; and a proposed spatial strategy, including the sites that form a part of that strategy as well as specific policies covering the commitments to climate change and wellbeing, and approaches to development.

The Programme covers both the Joint Local Plan and the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (below) and explains the important factors that will impact upon both projects.

Responding to Covid 19 In Development Management

Having faced the challenge of rapidly re-deploying our planning officers to work from home, the Development Management teams that continued to process planning applications throughout the lockdown period are now able to concentrate on the next steps of the service wide improvement programme.

The establishment and operation of bi-weekly planning committees in both SCDC and the City following work to revise and agree new protocols for virtual meetings is now underway and despite the technology challenge, has proven to be an effective and inclusive means to make planning decisions on significant schemes and proposals (see below). Following the revisions to the scheme of delegation in May, the process for considering Parish Council call in requests has re-started with the results of each meeting published on the service web site, [here](#) – in addition to the response being sent to each Parish Council. You will also shortly be receiving a short questionnaire seeking feedback on the new online consultation process - and your views on what more the service can do to assist you in planning matters.



The three new area based planning teams that we wrote to you about recently are now bedding down and the officers within those teams have, since 8th June been returning to undertake site visits in line with an appropriate protocol aimed at keeping officers and our communities safe. Having had to put our planned engagement and “introductions” on hold earlier in the year we are also looking forward to returning to our planned introductions to the new teams - with the first of these taking place next week. Invitations to all three initial events have gone out earlier this week but we note that some parishes have sought clarification on how many Parish Councillors may attend. For the first meetings, we would propose a maximum of two from each parish – though as we explore how we can work together with you, and have a better

feel for levels of interest, we may be able to revisit this number for subsequent events.

Whilst we continue to make progress with our planned improvement programme many of you will nevertheless also be aware of the challenges experienced by the planning application service in recent months which have unfortunately been amplified by the effects of the rapid “lock down” and needs for home working/isolation. This left the service with reduced capacity and a backlog of applications to validate and determine. With the recent adaptations to our operating practices now beginning to establish new patterns of working and the efforts of the team the service has begun to make solid progress in reducing the backlog in both the technical support team and with regard to planning decision making. A number of applications that had been “on hold” following “call in requests have also either been determined at Committee or reviewed in line with our updated scheme of delegation. We recognise that this has caused frustration to all of our users – but the whole team are working hard to seek to address the backlog created.

Construction Site Working Hours

Following the Ministerial Statement about construction sites and hours of operation, the service developed and adopted a protocol setting out how it will address requests for short term extensions to working hours in Cambridge City. This includes provision for engagement with City Ward Councillors prior to a decision. For SCDC, following a request that we consider how alongside Local Councillors, Parish Councils might be engaged, we wrote to all Parish Councils seeking to understand their capacity and delegation arrangements in order to help us develop a process for the SCDC area. Thank you for the 20 Parishes who responded. We are currently considering the range of responses provided - and we expect to write back to you shortly on our proposed approach to deliver the 10-day turnaround to such request that are expected.

North East Cambridge Area Action Plan

For those Parishes situated close to the Northern side of the City, the existing Cambridge Water treatment plant will be well known. Following consultation last year on “issues and options”, and confirmation of the £200m+ government grant to support the relocation of the water treatment works the “preferred option” draft of the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan is currently being considered by elected members, ahead of a major public consultation later this summer.

[The Area Action Plan](#) is an ambitious planning framework for over 180 hectares of brownfield land, including the current Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant and the Cambridge Science Park.

The plan sets out a vision is for an “*inclusive, walkable, low-carbon new city district with a lively mix of homes, workplaces, services, and social spaces, fully integrated with surrounding neighbourhoods.*” and Parish Councils alongside Communities in the City will be asked their thoughts on the project which potentially provides for some **8,000 new homes plus business space to support around 20,000 new jobs** along with shops, restaurants, and community and cultural facilities.



The preferred option plan has been developed following years of work with communities and partners led by the Shared Planning Service which included full public consultations in 2014 and 2019 and ongoing and detailed studies on everything from biodiversity to noise and transport.

The publishing of the draft Area Action Plan marks the first stage of review of that work, by councillors. The draft Area Action Plan will be reviewed by [South Cambridgeshire Cabinet \(29 June\)](#), and Cambridge [Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee \(30 June\)](#) before being published for public consultation starting late in July for 10 weeks.

Strategic Sites Update

Despite impacts of Covid 19, 2020 is expected to see significant progress on several of the area's strategic sites. For Northstowe, we have recently received the planning applications for phase 3 whilst at the Joint Development Control Committee on 27th May the Land North of Cherry Hinton cross boundary application was approved, subject to the completion of an S106 Agreement. Following good progress on the S106 agreement we expect to be able to issue the decision notice within the next couple of months. The application outlines the addition of 1200 dwellings, a primary and secondary school, open green spaces, and additional infrastructure (roads and drainage).

Meanwhile, north of the City, officers continue to progress the RLW application for development at Waterbeach in parallel with the ongoing engagement with Urban and Civic following the approval on 10th June of the Waterbeach New Town phase 1

design code (See image). Briefings for the planning committee on the application at Bourn Airfield will also begin shortly in anticipation of that application being considered by SCDC Planning Committee later in the year. In the more immediate future, the revised full planning application for a new major R&D facility for Huawei, on the former Spicers site in Sawston and proposals for the completion of the CB1 Development at Cambridge Station are due to be considered by each Council's respective Committee later this month.



Planning Enforcement

Many of you will have heard of the sad passing of Cambourne based enforcement officer William Trotter after a short illness last month. Bill was an important and valued member of the enforcement team and will be missed by those colleagues that worked alongside him and across the Council. Our thoughts and best wishes meanwhile are with Williams family and friends.

We are making arrangements in the short term to add capacity to the enforcement team to help with their ongoing investigations with an expectation of filling the vacant post permanently later in the year. Officers in the enforcement service have nevertheless been continuing to investigate breaches of control through the lockdown. Whilst the mothballing of some sites and projects has meant that the number of complaints are currently down on this time last year, the team have used this time to resolve outstanding investigations with some 400+ investigations across the SPS area able to be closed since the start of the year.



Planning Advisory Service - Sharon Brown

The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) review of Planning Committees project which was due to move forward earlier this year was put on hold by PAS when the social distancing restrictions were put in place. Communications with PAS this month have indicated that they hope to be able to re-start the committed review in July with initial survey and engagement work amongst members and the community. This process is now likely to comprise two phases, with the first phase including some virtual sessions with stakeholders including Parish Councils and Residents Groups. Once we have confirmation of the projects start date, we will write to you all again seeking your participation and input to this important project.

Conservation Area Appraisals - Jane Green

The Built and Natural Environment Team are currently establishing a rolling programme for **Conservation Area appraisals and management plans** for both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. The first phases will focus initially on 'conservation areas at risk' and some of our older designations, as well as building on the work carried out by Cambridge Past Present and Future (CPPF) volunteers in Cambridge. The initial programme will be discussed with the Lead Cabinet and Executive Councillors in June/July, with more detail to follow in Aug 2020.

GCSPS also look after **three closed churchyards** in South Cambridgeshire (in Willingham, Horseheath and Great Shelford). The team are working closely with churchwardens to put in place management plans for each of these, and to obtain the necessary Faculty permissions from the Diocese of Ely to carry out repairs to monuments and walls. <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/planning/natural-historic-and-built-environment/closed-churchyards/>

Useful Contacts

Website – www.greatercambridgeplanning.org

Paul Frainer – Assistant Director – Strategy and Economy
Paul.frainer@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Sharon Brown – Assistant Director Delivery
Sharon.brown@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Nigel Blazeby - Head of Development Management
Nigel.blazeby@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Chris Carter – Delivery Manager Strategic Sites
Chris.carter@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Steven Winsor - Business Support Team Manager
Steven.winsor@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Charlene Harper - Planning Application Support Team Manager
Charlene.harper@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Heather Jones – Strategic Lead 3C Building Control
Heather.jones@cambridge.gov.uk

Planning Applications Area Team Managers

Area 1 – Julie.ayre@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Area 2 – Toby.williams@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Area 3 – Lorraine.casey@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Planning Enforcement – planning.enforcement@cambridge.gov.uk

Local Plans Team – Localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Built and Natural Environment Team – BNE.consultancy@scams.go.uk

Comments/Complaints mailbox – complaints.compliments@greatercambridgeplanning.org