

District and County Councillor's Report – February 2024

Civil Parking Enforcement

As previously reported the local authorities in South Cambridgeshire have spent the last few years preparing and applying to the Secretary of State to take parking enforcement powers away from the Police and manage locally. The new traffic wardens are now active, out on the street, and issuing parking fines. There were certainly some unhappy people at Whittlesford Station first week of Feb.

The County Council have a list of problem areas in each of our villages, supplied by Henry with support from Parish Councils, but if anyone feels that there are specific areas where parking is really an issue, do let him know directly.

On a related note – the Councils are now also going through the formal process to take bus lane enforcement away from the Police and manage this in-house as well.

Home Energy Support

The District Council is in a partnership with 6 other local authorities in Cambridgeshire, called Action on Energy. This partnership is aimed to help people create more energy efficient homes, therefore making them cheaper to run. There are various grants available which many people aren't aware they may be entitled to. Full information, and links, can be seen here -

<https://www.scamb.gov.uk/home-energy-support-for-south-cambridgeshire-residents/>

Housing Strategy Consultation

The Housing Department at the District Council launched a public consultation last month, January, asking for people's views on how the Council should approach the types of housing it asks for and the issues that people come up against – these comments will help shape the new Strategy before its adoption. Link here -

<https://www.scamb.gov.uk/housing/the-greater-cambridge-housing-strategy-2024-2029>

Air Quality Strategy

Similar to the item above, the District Council are currently running a public consultation on their draft air quality strategy. Please do comment -

<https://engage.cambridge.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/air-quality-strategy>

Cambridge 2040

For those of you wanting to keep abreast of this – there is currently a proposal from the Minister for Levelling Up and Housing, Michael Gove, to build circa 150,000 houses (it was originally 250,000) in Cambridge to support the growing tech and life science sector in the region. This has hit some stumbling blocks. Namely the lack of water in Cambridgeshire with no concrete plans to improve this before 2030, as well as the fact that South Cambridgeshire has a lot of land called 'Green Belt' which is a protected area that can't be developed on, usually at the edge of cities. In spite of these issues, the plans remain on the table and the local authorities - South Cambs District Council, Cambridge City Council & Cambridgeshire County Council - are fighting to stay at the table to maintain some influence on the proposals, if and when they come to fruition. Lots more to come on this.

Budgets

February is always the time when local authorities set their budgets for the forthcoming municipal year. The County Council needs to find around £20m worth of savings whilst maintaining the services they provide, not an easy task. The District Council is in a much healthier financial position and won't need to make savings this coming year.

Anaerobic Digestion Plant Proposals

The two planning applications for biodigesters in our area, Acorn in Haverhill and Streetly End Farm in West Wickham, are edging closer to a decision. If you'd still like to comment upon either, email the planning officers directly:

1. Acorn, Haverhill – andrew.rutter@suffolk.gov.uk

<http://suffolk.planning-register.co.uk/Planning/Display?applicationNumber=SCC%2F0045%2F23SE&fbclid=IwAR0aj4d4JMd9Yr3cP-Etp9rxdr4kKDwvzX0wMyHkfOomG45fCq0khXRbyrE>

2. Streetly Hall Farm, Streetly End, West Wickham - helen.wass@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

<https://planning.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S0BB1JDYKNQ00>

Weed Killing Policy

Some may recall that last year the County Council altered its weed killing policy to move away from using chemicals to kill weeds in every situation. This policy has been reviewed after a year of being in effect and is likely to be altered, although the Council will be asking for people's views on this via a public consultation on the change to policy. Keep an eye on our reports for the link to this in coming months.

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