

District Councillor's Report - Cllr Tom Bygott

Local Plans found to be sound

In March 2014, Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council submitted their Local Plans to the Government Inspectors. These plans, which govern development and planning permission in our local area, propose 44,000 new jobs and 33,500 new homes by 2031.

The development strategy for the Greater Cambridge area was given approval by independently appointed Government Planning Inspectors after they reviewed the two Local Plans. The Inspectors have written to the two Councils with their final reports following examinations that have taken over four years. The examinations, much of which were undertaken jointly, included reviewing evidence supplied by the two Councils, representations of objection and support made during public consultations, site visits and a series of hearings.

The Plans are not adopted by the Councils until they are debated and confirmed at respective Full Council meetings being held at the end of September and mid-October. However, the Councils receiving the Inspectors' reports means significant weight can be attributed to the Local Plans in decision making. This will help to alleviate the risk that unsuitable and unwanted developments can succeed on appeal after having been rejected in our local planning processes.

For Dry Drayton, the main developments of concern in the plan are the major new developments planned at Bourn Airfield and Cambourne:

- A new village at Bourn Airfield – approximately 3,500 homes
- An expansion to Cambourne to the west – since the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan was submitted planning permission has been granted for 2,350 homes

One of the concerns that the Inspectors had during the first few years of their enquiry was the need for a sustainable public transport solution along the Cambourne-Cambridge corridor. Now that the Mayor's new Metro is planned to serve this route, the threats of a Park and Ride at Scotland Farm or another white elephant Guided Busway are hopefully starting to recede.

The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan will be presented to a Cabinet meeting in late September before a final decision on adoption is made at a Council meeting on Thursday 27 September. The Cambridge Local Plan will be discussed at a Policy and Transport Scrutiny Committee meeting on Tuesday 2 October before a final decision on adoption is made at a Council meeting on Thursday 18 October.

Given how slow and cumbersome the approval of these plans has been, there is provision for the process to start over again straight away with a commitment to an early review of the Local Plans. This was already a commitment of both Councils as part of signing up to the City Deal agreement. The review would commence in 2019 with submission for examination in 2022.

The Inspectors' full report, along with details of the Local Plan examinations, can be found at:

<https://tinyurl.com/scdclocplanexam>

South Cambridgeshire bin collections during the hot weather

I would like to thank the refuse collection team who have worked incredibly hard throughout this summer's heatwave period. There are more than 150 frontline bin collection staff with each crew emptying up to 1,300 bins each day. On average each refuse collector will walk around 12 miles per shift. If you combine this with often moving heavy bins from kerbside to refuse truck the job really does make for hard work, especially during a heatwave. The District Council provided staff with sunscreen and bottled water to keep staff hydrated and protected from the sun.

As the weather starts to become more autumnal and we brace ourselves for the next eight months of wind, cold and rain, spare a thought for our refuse collectors who work so hard for us without complaining. Try to place your bins where they can be accessed easily and safely, and check their surroundings for anything that might cause accidents.

SCDC in the top three for council tax collections

I would also like to thank residents, businesses and revenues staff after the authority secured another top table position in the Council Tax collection league. For the last financial year, the authority came third out of 326 Councils for collecting Council Tax on-time. It collected 99.3% of the expected funds in the last 12 months, an almost identical figure to the previous year.

Overall, £107 million in Council Tax was due to be collected by the Council on behalf of itself, Cambridgeshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner's office, Fire Authority and parish councils. The data also shows that Business Rate collection in South Cambridgeshire achieved a high-scoring position, with the Council coming 25th in this category out of the 326 authorities. This was for collecting 99.4% of Business Rates on-time – again, a very similar figure to last year. Councillors are thanking residents and businesses for paying their bills on time and encouraging anyone having difficulties making payments to contact the Council early for support and advice before debts begin to accumulate.

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