

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

Report to Barton Parish Council February 2021

Cambourne to Cambridge

The terms of reference and process have been agreed for the independent review. The review, being led by Phil Swann, will provide an opportunity for stakeholder groups to submit evidence and challenge the basis for previous decisions made on the project, in particular the discarding of alternatives early in the process. Mr Swann is a director of Shared Intelligence and was previously a director of the Tavistock Institute and Director of Strategy and Communications at the Local Government Association. The first stage of the review will comprise the production of a statement of the assumptions and constraints, due mid-March. Representative groups will then be invited to submit written representations on the assumptions and constraints and their application throughout the process. The review is due to be completed in May.

East West Rail

Disappointing news in January as Transport Secretary Grant Schapps said that EWR will initially run diesel trains and only gave a vague commitment on green alternatives to run on the line in future. There continues to be no word on exactly when the consultation on specific route alignment will take place, though it is still expected to begin before the end of March. We continue to encourage all residents to sign up to EWR's community hub: <https://communityhub.eastwestrail.co.uk/>

Rapid testing centre open in Cambourne

A rapid testing centre is now available at The Hub, High Street, Cambourne, between 8am and 8pm, Monday to Saturday. Key workers and people who are unable to work from home, who are showing no symptoms, will be able to book free rapid testing twice a week. The tests are strictly for people who have no symptoms of Covid-19. To make the testing as worthwhile as possible, people need to take a test twice a week. Residents can book their rapid test via the Cambridgeshire County Council website: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/rapidtesting

Vaccination Update

At the time of writing, more than 90% of residents aged 70 and above in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have received their first dose.

Anyone aged 65 and over, or Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (previously on the shielding list), who hasn't yet had their first dose should make an appointment at www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination or by phoning 119.

Carers are included in cohort 6 for vaccination if they fit the definition of "adult carers", which is defined as "Those who are eligible for a carer's allowance, or those who are the sole or primary carer of an elderly or disabled person who is at increased risk of COVID-19 mortality and therefore clinically vulnerable." Eligible adult carers will be contacted via the National Booking System (NBS) to receive an invitation to book vaccination through Vaccination Centres, Community Pharmacies or Hospital Hubs, once a list of these individuals has been produced.

If an individual has been added to the Shielded Patient List as part of the new QCovid model, the NHS will contact them to offer them the vaccine as soon as appointments become available. The NHS may contact patients via text message, letter or a phone call to offer an appointment.

If residents need Transport to vaccination sites, there is a central, County-approved booking point. Phone 0345 045 5219

Winter Support Payments

Small one-off payments to help South Cambridgeshire individuals and families in acute need can now be made by some of our officers and other partner organisations such as Citizens Advice and Age UK. These will be in the form of direct payments of up to £25 for an individual, and up to £50 payment for a couple or family, under the Winter Support Family Fund. The payments can go towards food and fuel for those who need financial assistance as a direct result of Coronavirus. The scheme ends at the end of March when funding for Winter Support is expected to end.

Residents can apply by emailing duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk and an officer will be in touch with the resident to understand their situation, offer further advice, and make the award if needed. If you know of residents who may benefit from this small grant, please ask them to get in touch.

Community Support

Officers have been looking back at the outstanding work done by volunteer groups throughout the Covid period across the District. Many volunteer groups have expressed a wish to harness their experiences and expertise and to build on these and South Cambs is embarking on research to consider how best to take forward and develop this in order to build community resilience networks across the District. This may start with some focus groups to discuss initial ideas and then determine how best to continue community groups beyond the immediate Covid crisis. The intention would be that these groups would work alongside parish councils. It is early days yet and there will be due consultation with existing volunteer groups, with parish councils and with elected members as the work progresses.

Green Issues

As part of the new Local Plan drafting process, a huge body of evidence has been commissioned, some for the first time, on the net zero carbon, biodiversity and water management implications of the different spatial options that were consulted on in the First Conversation on the Local Plan.

Work on chalk streams and more general attention to water management is at the heart of work on the new local plan. The Planning Service is very concerned about maintenance of chalk streams as part of overall water management across the District and is working with local conservation organisations as well as with local and national government agencies. This is particularly important in relation to new developments where sustainability is key. Further evidence on the water cycle and integrated water management has been commissioned to guide the new Local Plan design.

On biodiversity, the council has contracted a nature conservation specialist in the Built and Natural Environment Planning department. They will be leading the drafting of a new and updated Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document which is expected to go out to consultation in the middle of the year and we would hope to have approved by the end of 2021. This will bring our guidance and standards on biodiversity up to date with the latest government changes. The Cabinet has also approved the final draft of the new Doubling Nature Strategy, which will be a sister document to our Zero Carbon Strategy.

OxCam Arc Spatial Framework

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government have launched the process of developing a spatial framework for the development of the Oxford Cambridge Arc. We've included a bullet point summary of some of the key points below this report, and the full policy paper is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-for-sustainable-growth-in-the-oxford-cambridge-arc-spatial-framework/planning-for-sustainable-growth-in-the-oxford-cambridge-arc-an-introduction-to-the-spatial-framework>

Ian Sollom cllr.sollom@scambs.gov.uk

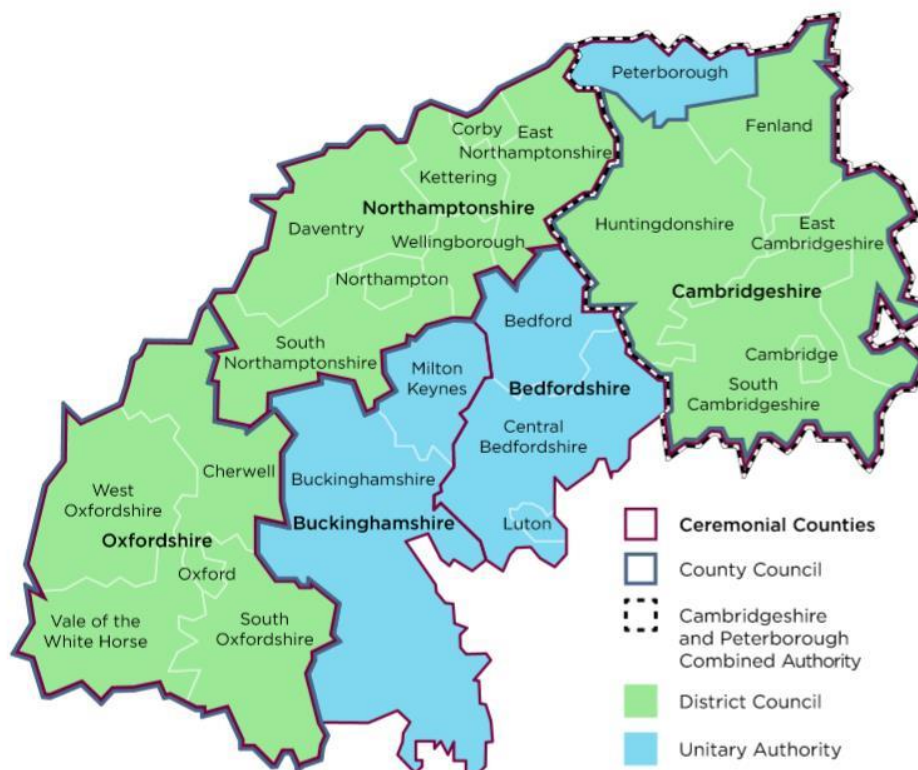
Tony Mason cllr.mason@scambs.gov.uk

OxCam Arc Spatial Framework: (points taken from MHCLG policy paper)

Purpose of the framework:

1. Support long-run sustainable economic growth across the area.
2. Help to make the area a brilliant place to live, work and travel in – for existing residents and future communities alike.
3. Support lasting improvements to the environment, green infrastructure and biodiversity.

“...focusing on the strategic opportunities for growth and environmental improvement that cross local administrative boundaries and require more joined-up thinking across the area...”



The Economy

The spatial framework will:

- provide an assessment of existing employment land, planned growth and anticipated future need.
- set policies to support local planning authorities in allocating these as Strategic Business Zones or Strategic Industrial Locations, as appropriate.
- set policies to support different land uses for different sectors and sizes of business.

The Environment

Set policy to:

- support retention of, and investment in, key existing and potential new habitats, and improve access to nature and accessible green space.
- set high standards for new development, including on carbon emissions, water management, green space, integrated and functional green infrastructure, e.g. for active travel and biodiversity net gain.
- support an integrated water management approach, taking into account sustainable water abstraction and drought resilience, water quality, reducing risk and resilience to flooding and how and where new infrastructure should be developed.
- support clean air outcomes, with clear links to housing and transport policies.
- embed the enhancement of natural capital across the Arc.

Includes objective to identify Environment “Opportunity Areas”.

Transport and Infrastructure

“...taking an infrastructure-first approach to growth – identifying and delivering strategic infrastructure priorities as development happens...”

Includes:

- Mapping existing health, education, accessible green spaces, social and community infrastructure, utilities, green and blue infrastructure and other infrastructure requirements at an Arc-wide scale.
- Identifying future need and gaps in provision, creating an infrastructure plan to facilitate future growth. Proactively setting strategic policies for local transport authorities and local planning authorities to enable this.
- Targeted climate resilience and air quality policies based on air quality modelling.
- Wider strategic policies to facilitate utilities investment in line with key development opportunities, including digital infrastructure.

Housing and Planning in the Arc

“...We will plan for the right level of growth in the Arc... to do this the spatial framework will identify:”

- Opportunity Areas, to support local planning authorities to plan for this growth.
- The infrastructure needed to support sustainable growth in those locations, and the key locations for strategic infrastructure to support sustainable growth.
- Locations for environmental enhancement to achieve greater environmental benefits that can allow development to take place elsewhere.
- Spatial Framework policies to enable:
 - New settlements to come forward at the scale and speed needed.
 - New development to support habitat recovery, delivery of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, and provision of good-quality green space within schemes.
 - Brownfield redevelopment and densification, and expansion of existing settlements, in sustainable locations or locations that can be made more sustainable by enhanced access to sustainable transport modes.
 - Housing needs to be met in full, including delivery of much-needed affordable housing

“It will indicate locations but will not include site allocations, and it will not include detailed policies set elsewhere in national policy or better left to local plans.”