

SCDC Report to Parish Councils / Community Council – June 2011

Full Council

A meeting of Full Council took place on 26 May 2011. Being the annual meeting, membership of committees is announced and voting takes place for the roles of chairs and vice-chairs of those committees. Unfortunately several political games were played as the administration demonstrated its strength removing existing chairs, reducing committee sizes etc. Committees do very valuable work and the chairmanship is crucial in driving that work forward. The divisiveness that was created may be a drain on the energy of the council at a time when we should be pulling in the same direction.

Scrutiny and Overview

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2010/11 is now available and can be viewed via the South Cambs website. James Hockney (Chairman) and Bridget Smith (Vice Chairman) report back on the two large projects completed last year reviewing value for money in the housing service and the Council's use of performance management. Both reports were accepted in full by the Cabinet and "are now leading to service improvements". Going forward, two projects are ongoing looking at planning services and customer contact services.

In terms of your local councillor team, in the coming year Edd will be monitoring the Deputy Leader (Finance and Staffing) Simon Edwards and Housing Portfolio Holder Mark Howell. Mike will be monitoring Environmental Services Portfolio Holder Sue Ellington.

Standards

As you may already be aware, the local Standards Committee has established a working party on the future of standards in South Cambridgeshire. It includes representatives from each of the council political groups, Parish Councils and the Chief Executive Jean Hunter. Terms of reference were agreed on 16 May 2011 proposing to make recommendations on whether to adopt a local code of conduct, the wording for such a code, the future of the Standards Committee itself and whether the district council should continue to have responsibility for parish council matters.

Finance

The end of year performance report highlighted the excellent performance of the Revenues & Benefits team at South Cambs with 99.3% of Council Tax collected and 99.6% of Business Rates. This latter is not just a testament to the commitment of the team at SCDC but is also a reflection on South Cambridgeshire's economic position. The Treasury Management Team's performance has continued at a high level although financing arrangements for the £205.6m debt which the Housing Revenue Account will have to meet will provide a huge challenge. SCDC is also looking at ways in which it can provide investment strategy support to parish councils who may be holding considerable sums in reserves or in preparation for specific projects.

Police Matters

South Cambs Councillors were offered the opportunity to meet Simon Parr, the new Chief Constable for Cambridgeshire. He gave a very polished presentation in which he talked about engaging with communities. 'Policing' he said 'isn't something that should be done to communities' and believes that policing objectives/priorities should be set appropriately for different communities. Collaboration with other counties would be on such things as HR, Procurement and other central services which would save money so that, he said, we would see no loss of constables or PCSO's.

Citi 8

We continue to receive comments about ongoing problems with the local citi8 bus service and these have all been passed to Andy Campbell. It is most unfortunate that a couple of constructive comments on bus stop location and capacity have just been dismissed. We will continue to keep up the pressure.

Flooding

Cambridge City Council has obtained a grant from The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) of £100,000 to undertake a Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) for Cambridge and Milton. It will provide an evidence base for developing policies in the Local Development Framework (LDF) and will also be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The SWMP is going before Cambridge City Council's Environment Scrutiny Committee on 21 June 11 and to the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder in the next three months.

Recycling

There is a Recycling Open Day at the Waste Management Park in Waterbeach (off the A10) on Saturday 18 June 2011.

Travellers

A consultation has been launched (closes 06 July 11) on a draft Planning Policy Statement entitled 'Planning for Traveller sites'. A report will be taken to the New Communities Portfolio Holder Meeting on 23 June 11 seeking to agree the SCDC response to the consultation. The consultation document can be viewed at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/travellersitesconsultation>

And finally.....

I am now South Cambs representative on the Friends of Milton Country Park and also IMPACT at IVC.

Casework

Your councillors are here to help you. Please do feel free to contact us with comments, questions, problems or complaints.

Jonathan Chatfield
13 June 2011