

LONGSTANTON WARD DISTRICT COUNCELLOR REPORT JULY 2023

NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL (JULY 2023)

CLLR NATALIE WARREN-GREEN

Progress in Northstowe

- I would like to report to the Town Council that I am delighted to have been at the opening of the interim community centre on 17th July. The rooms are already being booked for use and it will be good to see how the use of the facility rolls out and to monitor with the Town Council and Northstowe Delivery Group the learning we gain from the interim facility to use in the development of the Permanent building.
- To support with the comms about delivery progress in Northstowe, FAQs on Northstowe are available on SCDC website which I would like the Town Council to feel free to direct residents to for answers to questions or concerns which arise about progress in Northstowe: <https://www.scams.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/northstowe/your-common-northstowe-questions-answered/>
- I am keen that we continue to work closely together on Northstowe Delivery, and please feel free to send your questions to me for this FAQ page so that SCDC can continue to develop this for residents who are concerned about the pace of progress or have queries about development of the various facets of the creation of Northstowe.

Four day week trial for SCDC officers

- Further to previous updates, Cabinet recently approved the extension of a trial for a four-day week at SCDC. It will be extended by 12 month and will include staff who work in the shared waste service.
- Please note, however, that, this is a fast-moving situation and whatever I write in this report will potentially be out of date by the time you read it.
- As you may have seen in the media, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Local Government and Building Safety, Lee Rowley has written to the council requesting that the trial is discontinued
- Suffice to say, the council does not feel that Mr Rowley is correct that the trial fails the 'value for money' test as he claims. During the initial 3-month trial the annual wage bill dropped by around £300,000. Evidence independently verified by the University of Cambridge shows that workplace productivity has been maintained and, in some cases, even improved. An independent "mystery shopper" exercise on the council's telephone service was also carried out and the results were very positive, showing that SCDC's level of service is significantly higher than its peers.
- The council has been clear that if performance drops or customer complaints increase the trial will stop but the evidence so far is that it is working as intended. 4-day week contracts are being increasingly adopted successfully in the private sector.
- As previously noted, as focused on recently in the press, the CEO is carrying out PhD studies on this subject. Just to reiterate, these studies are at her own expense and in her own time and there is no conflict of interest.

Proposed Waste Collection Round Changes

- The Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service is currently working on a review of its collection rounds. The rounds are normally reviewed every few years to make sure that they are still as efficient as they can be.
- The Shared Waste Service suffers from recruitment problems (especially for HCV drivers) just as the rest of the council does for desk-based staff. For this reason, the service is also seeing how a four-day week might work for this service with a trial planned similar to that already in operation for desk-based staff. Adopting the 4-day week for the waste service will not mean that the council has to buy extra vehicles; the council has a rolling replacement programme and the purchase of new vehicles is progressing as normal. What the council will do, however, is to retain one of the end-of-service vehicles for the period of the trial. If the trial is a success and if extra vehicles are required, the cost should be offset by the reduction of agency staff, which is a major cost in the Waste Service.

- At the time of writing, details have not been published on the changes to the collection calendar but I will let the PC know of the plans as soon as I can. When the new rounds are introduced, the council will inform residents with a series of adverts in the South Cambs magazine and on social media.

STZ proposals – comments on the consultation results

Reiterating last month's report, the results of the STZ consultation have been published and can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/mra44p8x>

- As a reminder, the aim of the proposals is to improve quality of life by reducing traffic congestion and pollution. The scheme also seeks to address the serious inequalities apparent in the Greater Cambridge area and to increase the benefits, both to people and the environment, which come from enabling residents to use a modern public transport system and active travel solutions in preference to private motor vehicles.
- The rapid economic growth in Greater Cambridge needs the infrastructure and housing to support it. As an example, the government is supporting the expansion of the life sciences industry offering huge sums of money to attract investment. It has also determined that the region should have a new railway. Doing nothing is not an option. This was the purpose of the government's City Deal funding which underpins the STZ proposals. In the consultation, respondents overwhelmingly supported better bus services but remained worried, especially during a cost-of-living crisis, about the burden of a Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ) charge. Even though the proposals give 3 or 4 years to improve public transport provision before any charging occurs, the public remain sceptical.
- The planned withdrawal of rural bus services by Stagecoach in recent months shows market failure; private bus companies will put their business needs ahead of unprofitable but vital community transport provision. Franchising is highly likely to go hand-in-hand with the public transport improvements and this will offer control over routes, fares, frequency and hours of operation and could be in place surprisingly quickly - within the next 18 months.
- People who cannot drive and/or afford a car, such as some young people and the less well-off are very supportive of improved bus services. Young people feel that their education and job choices are badly restricted if they do not own a car, and they welcome alternatives.
- As mentioned previously, there was clear concern about charging to access the Addenbrookes site, right from the first publication of the map of the STZ, and changes to it were always likely. We expect changes to be made such that trips will not incur a Zone charge. Tradespeople welcomed the prospect of easier city access that reduced congestion would bring but thought that a premium charge on commercial vehicles is unfair.
- Revised proposals are still being worked-up but it seems likely that there will be a reduction of the hours in which the charge will be imposed. The exclusion of the Addenbrookes Campus from the charging zone is also being considered.
- It is clear that residents throughout Cambridgeshire support Active Travel. One of the least contentious areas of feedback is the work of the Greenways Project and other active travel schemes. A large number of people said that they want to be able to cycle or walk easily and safely to more places, something that is currently restricted to the villages closest to Cambridge.
- It remains the case that the final decision on the scheme will be taken by Cambridgeshire County Council later in the year.

Mobile Food Hub

- You may have seen the press release on 22 June about the Mobile Food Hub: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/mobile-food-hub-delivering-food-to-south-cambridgeshire/>
- SCDC is providing funding to help Hope CIC to set up a mobile food hub in different locations in the district. They will provide fresh fruit and veg and supermarket items with a short shelf life at a low price or free of charge.

Continued support for residents during the cost-of-living crisis

- The Communities Team at SCDC has created a new leaflet advising residents of support the available during the cost-of-living crisis. The council is trying to encourage more people to apply for Council Tax support since many people who are eligible for this scheme are unaware that it exists. Printed and electronic leaflets can be obtained by emailing chris.riches@scambs.gov.uk.

COUNCILS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND KEY GOVERNMENT FUNDED ORGANISATIONS

If you have a problem or concern do not worry too much about who can solve it just ask the question and we will endeavour to signpost to the right person. The organisational structure of Cambridgeshire is complex, but it is important to identify where responsibility lies.

<p>County Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Education, Transport, Highways, Heritage, Social care, Libraries, Trading standards, - Waste management, Maintaining their estate.</p> <p>Some of these services are shared between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council but any concerns should be directed to the county council.</p>
<p>District Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Council tax payments and benefits, Household bin collections, Housing and housing benefits, Council leisure facilities, Environmental health, Residential planning.</p>
<p>Parish/ Town Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Looking after community buildings, Open spaces, Allotments, Play Areas, Bus shelters.</p>
<p>Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)</p> <p>'The local delivery body for a City Deal with central Government worth up to £500 million over 15 years, to vital improvements in infrastructure (decarbonising transport), supporting and accelerating the creation of 44,000 new jobs, 33,500 new homes and 420 additional apprenticeships.'</p> <p>Partnership between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, University of Cambridge.</p>
<p>The Combined Authority, Cambridge and Peterborough, our elected Mayor</p> <p>'A combined authority (CA) is a legal body set up using national legislation that enables a group of two or more councils to collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries.'</p> <p>What our mayor does – Business support, skills, housing, transport, environment, international, digital connectivity, resilience, research, and strategy. New homes.</p>
<p>Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridge and Peterborough</p> <p>To support and challenge the Chief Constable to provide effective and efficient policing services for the area.</p>
<p>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority</p> <p>The Fire Authority is the governing body responsible for delivering a fire and rescue service to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is made up of Cambridgeshire County Councillors and Peterborough City Councillors.</p>

CONTACT DETAILS

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the above, or any other matters.

Cllr Natalie Warren-Green for Longstanton Ward including Longstanton, Northstowe, and Oakington & Westwick

Email: cldr.warrengreen@scambs.gov.uk

For those on social media we have a highly active Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/> - Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe