

## **Joint District Councillors' Report June 2021**

District councillors' monthly report for the communities of Histon & Impington, Orchard Park and King's Meadow.

Your Councillors are always ready to help. If you have any questions about these - or indeed any other - matters, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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## **Covid-19**

*The following paragraphs are courtesy of Cllr Bill Handley, the Lead Cabinet Member for Community Resilience, Health and Wellbeing.*

As you will be aware, the Government is going ahead on Monday 19 July with 'Step 4' of its roadmap out of lockdown. After this date, many of the measures that have been in place to prevent the spread of the virus will no longer be mandatory, but the Government is still saying that many of these measures are still recommended in many circumstances.

We know that cases are rising across the country (including in South Cambridgeshire where, up to 11 July, we had 330 new cases in the preceding seven days, across all age cohorts (30% 0-17yrs, 25% 18-24yrs, 26% 25-44yrs, 16% 45-64)). You may be interested to note that in Longstanton, Swavesey and Oakington, cases per 100,000 residents hit 674, which was the highest figure across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We are not yet out of the woods.

## **Signage**

Councils, businesses and community groups are encouraged to remove outdated signage. Even if an organisation is going to continue to encourage people to wear masks, the recommendation is to have new signage to communicate this. This is because signage that has been around for the past year will be ignored, as people will assume that after 19th July it will be out of date. Not only will this mean that the messaging won't 'cut-through', but it may also make it even more difficult in the autumn to clearly communicate any new measures that may need to be reintroduced. Any new signs that are displayed should also make it clear what the expectations are: the more explicit the signage, the less people will confront each other based on their own assumptions or interpretations of what is the 'right' or 'wrong' thing to do. If you

need some support to create signage, please contact [reopening@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:reopening@scambs.gov.uk), and we can help you to provide updated signage.

### Messaging and identity

The Government's behavioural scientists are recommending that it's better to focus on scenario-based decision making, rather than identity-based decision making. In other words, individuals should make balanced decisions based on the situation rather than sticking rigidly to a set of behaviours regardless of the circumstances.

For instance, people may choose to wear a mask when they're in a poorly ventilated public place and to keep a safe distance from strangers at the train station but they may choose not to wear a mask in a crowd when they need to be able to communicate with a child or an older person and they may choose not to keep a distance from friends and family from different households. Tolerance and understanding is going to be very important and we should try to avoid engrained attitudes along the lines of 'I wear a mask because I care about other people' or 'I don't wear a mask because I believe in freedom'.

If we are not very careful, it will be difficult to encourage everyone to adopt measures later that need to be introduced or re-introduced (for example) in the autumn. We all need to help to encourage scenario-based decision making, as well as tolerance and understanding.

### Government's timetable for summer and autumn

Below you can see the Government's timetable for the next couple of months:

- On 19<sup>th</sup> July, most legal restrictions will end, removing social distancing and social contact restrictions and enabling remaining businesses to reopen – [read what you can and cannot do](#)
- By the end of July, the government will publish an updated Covid-19 outbreak management framework for local areas
- On 16<sup>th</sup> August, the rules on self-isolating will change for people who are fully vaccinated and for the under 18s
- In September, the government will undertake a review to assess the country's preparedness for the autumn and winter; they will consider whether to continue the post-19<sup>th</sup> July rules or strengthen the public and business guidance.

### Government guidance for Step 4

The Government is promoting the following guidance while the prevalence of the virus remains high:

- whilst the government is no longer instructing people to work from home if they can, the Government is expecting and recommending a gradual return over the summer

- the Government expects and recommends that people wear face coverings in crowded areas such as public transport
- they are encouraging people to spend time outside or to let in fresh air
- they are recommending that people minimise the number, proximity and duration of social contacts
- they are encouraging and supporting businesses and large events to use the NHS COVID Pass in high-risk settings

#### Local Public Health recommendations for Step 4

- Meeting people outdoors or in well-ventilated places
- Keeping a polite distance from others
- Wearing a face mask in crowded places
- Washing your hands thoroughly and often.

#### Vulnerable people

Whilst the Government is moving away from legal restrictions, Government has published updated guidance on protecting people who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) to Covid-19 – see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

The guidance comes into effect on Monday (19<sup>th</sup> July). The guidance advises CEV people, as a minimum, to follow the same guidance as everyone else. However, it also notes that CEV people who are at a higher risk of serious illness if they were to catch Covid-19, may wish to think carefully about additional precautions. The Government guidance sets out a number of suggested measures for CEV people to consider, related to socialising, vaccinations, work and travel.

We know that many Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people are anxious about this next step, so it is worth highlighting a key [study on immunosuppressed and immunocompromised groups](#). Public Health England looked at more than a million people in at-risk groups and found that those that are immunosuppressed have significantly better protection from symptomatic infection following the second dose of a Covid-19 vaccine.

#### Councils' new housing policies to create mixed communities and provide more affordable homes

Following consultation in the spring of 2021, Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District councils have approved three new housing policies, affecting:

- the setting of Affordable Rents by Registered Housing Providers, for homes let to people on the councils' housing registers;
- the location and mix of Affordable Homes in new developments;
- and the councils' expectations of new homes that are built specifically to be rented out (Build to Rent).

Both councils are committed to building homes that are affordable to live in, and ensuring that new Affordable Homes will be well-designed and located within new developments in such a way as to promote mixed, balanced and inclusive communities.

The two councils consulted jointly on these policies because they will add detail to the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023 (see <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/housing-and-related-strategies>) and are aimed at new housing developments across both Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. They will also help to inform the proposed joint Local Plan.

#### Affordable Rents policy

Through the new Affordable Rents policy the councils are asking for Affordable Rents for new homes let by Registered Housing Providers in Cambridge City to be set at 60% (or lower) of the average rent for the same size property in the City or the City fringe; and in South Cambridgeshire, 70% (or lower) of the average rent for the same size property in the district. The national policy for affordable rents sets a maximum limit of up to 80% of a market rent.

#### Clustering and distribution of Affordable Housing policy

The Clustering and Distribution of Affordable Housing policy sets out expectations on how Social Rent, Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership homes should be set out in new developments. A cluster should usually include a mix of different sized properties (such as 1, 2, 3, and 4-bedroom homes). Wherever possible, Affordable Homes should also be spread out across new developments, so that positive mixed communities are created.

#### Build to Rent

In a similar way to the considerations around clustering set out in the above policy, the Build to Rent policy makes clear an expectation for Build to Rent projects to include a mix of property sizes and, on larger developments, to be spread out across the development in small groups. In Build to Rent developments of 10 or more homes, a minimum of 20% will need to be available at Affordable Private Rent levels (which should be set with regard to the Affordable Rents policy), and preferably lower. The criteria for these homes will need to be agreed with the council, and tenancies of three-plus years offered. Communal space and amenities are also expected, including provision of work spaces.

For full details of the South Cambs policy visit <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/housing/our-strategies-and-policies/>

## South Cambridgeshire Hall car park closure

Work to improve the energy efficiency of South Cambridgeshire Hall is well under way as part of our efforts to be a green Council. Work is proceeding to drill boreholes beneath the main car park to generate renewable energy as part of a ground source heat pump system. Above this, a solar carport and twenty electric vehicle charge points will be installed. The full ground source heat pump solution looks to reduce our gas consumption by 79% annually, while the solar carport will offset over 20% of South Cambs Hall's peak electricity demand. To facilitate this work the main car park at South Cambs Hall will be closed from now until approximately January 2022. Please bear in mind that parking will be extremely limited, although some new spaces will be created around the "civic square" and at the marketing suite. Please try to avoid visiting the council offices in person unless it's impossible to do your business online or by telephone. If you have to drive to the Hall then please take notice of signage and parking attendants.

If you require any additional information or support please contact [Greening@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:Greening@scambs.gov.uk)

## Council tax collection

Government collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates in England show that South Cambridgeshire District Council collected 99.1% of the total amount of Council Tax it was due to receive during the 2020/21 financial year. This makes it the joint top performing Council in the country out of more than 300 tax-collecting authorities.

South Cambridgeshire District Council collects Council Tax from residents before passing on most of it to several frontline local services. These are Cambridgeshire Police, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, Cambridgeshire County Council and Parish / Town Councils. Only around 9% of your Council Tax bill goes towards the District Council's services.

The league tables show that the overwhelming majority of South Cambridgeshire residents played their part in supporting these vital frontline services financially during the past 12 months. By 31 March 2021, the District Council had collected £136,960,000 out of an estimated £138,215,000 that it was due to receive.

The District Council also collects Business Rates from local businesses and has scored highly in this field too – showing local businesses have also very much played their part in supporting local services.

The Government league tables show that £52,841,000 in Non Domestic Rates was collected, out of a possible £53,493,000. This is 98.8% of the amount expected to be collected and puts the Council in 23rd place nationally out of approximately 330 Councils.

Income from Non-Domestic rates is shared between Central Government, County Councils, District Councils and Fire Authorities, with the District Councils retaining 40%.

See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/collection-rates-for-council-tax-and-non-domestic-rates-in-england-2020-to-2021> for more details.

## Active Travel Schemes consultations

Cambridgeshire County Council is running a non-statutory consultation on a range of temporary and experimental active travel proposal. The consultation will run until 23 August 2021. Initial designs proposals can also be found in the documents section of the survey site here: <https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/cats>

The proposals, which originated with local community representatives, include changes to roads to make them more pedestrian and/or cycle friendly and include one-way systems, cycle lanes and modal filters. Modal filters prioritise those walking or cycling and in some cases taking the bus whilst preventing private motor vehicles travelling through certain points on local roads.

The proposals of most interest to us here are those of closing parts of Station Road Histon and Arbury Road to through motor traffic. Please take a look as give your comments via the survey on the website above.

## Have your say on the Police and Crime Plan for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 2021-2024

Staying with surveys, you also have the opportunity to have your say about policing priorities. The new Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough would like your views. Visit the survey here: <https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/>

## SCIP Launches Extensive Community Consultation for Cambourne Business Park

The South Cambridgeshire Investment Partnership (SCIP), a 50:50 partnership between South Cambridgeshire District Council the housebuilder Hill Group, has launched an in-depth public consultation, inviting the local community to discuss plans for its maiden land acquisition in Cambourne Business Park.

The 19.2 acres of brownfield residential land on the southern edge of Cambourne Business Park, purchased by SCIP in May, has the potential to deliver a new neighbourhood comprising 275 high-quality environmentally friendly homes, 40% of which will be affordable housing. The proposed homes range in size from one bedroom apartments to five bedroom family homes,

catering for the full spectrum of potential residents. Alongside the much needed new affordable housing, the plans include new green open spaces rich in biodiversity, a children's play area, café and walking, cycling and public transport links, as well as an enhanced public square on land South of the Business Park.

The development will be entirely gas-free, with air source heat pumps fitted in every home, alongside highly water-efficient technology to reduce water consumption. 50% of the homes will have electric vehicle charging points, with the remaining 50% benefiting from the ductwork installed for easy future connection. Externally, the landscaping plans include new trees, hedges, wildflowers and a wetland, with the existing woodland site retained. The affordable properties will be targeting to achieve fully a net zero carbon standard.

The consultation runs until 6<sup>th</sup> August and can be accessed here:

<https://yoursay.online/cambourne>

## Recovery grant awarded to Impington Sports Centre

We were pleased to see the approval of Impington Sports Centre's application for a share of a £50,000 pot allocated by SCDC to help post-Covid recovery of dual-use leisure centres. The centre was awarded the sum of £8,589.63. The funding will be used to purchase equipment that can be used for the GP referral scheme and also bolster the current offering to gym members and users, and will include a variety of gym equipment.

For more information see <https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?Id=11649>

## New fund launched for growing businesses in South Cambridgeshire

A new grant scheme has launched for South Cambridgeshire based micro and small to medium sized businesses looking to scale and grow.

The Growth Fund scheme, using funding provided by Government, is designed to support businesses' growth and expansion plans in the district. Eligible applicants for the scheme can be South Cambridgeshire based start-ups who are looking to scale and grow quickly, or they can be established South Cambridgeshire based companies who can clearly demonstrate ambitious growth plans in the District. Businesses in any sectors can apply, including sole traders and partnerships. One-off grants of between £1,000 and £50,000 may be awarded to successful applicants.

The scheme will prioritise helping businesses that were ineligible for the rate paying schemes such as the Local Restrictions Support Grant and Restart Grant. Businesses with strong green credentials are particularly encouraged to apply, to kickstart a green pandemic recovery in South Cambridgeshire.

All grants require an online application form to be completed. Full details and eligibility criteria on the Growth Fund Scheme, along with information about how to apply, can be found here: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/business/business-support-and-advice/growth-fund-grant-scheme>

A handy 'How to Apply' guide is also available on the website. The scheme will end when all funds have been allocated.

## Free toolkit to keep caring for your community

The South Cambs Community Safety Partnership has launched a free toolkit to help local people keep caring for their community as the pressures of the pandemic ease.

Over the past 15 months volunteers all across the country have stepped up to help out their neighbours – dropping off shopping, collecting prescriptions, walking people's dogs, making sure people weren't feeling isolated, setting up meal schemes, and much more. But, as we approach the final stage of restrictions easing, many volunteers are thinking about putting in place longer-term structures to build community cohesion, and to tackle some of the other concerns that residents have.

The Community Safety Partnership – a partnership between South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridgeshire County councils; the Police, Fire and Rescue Services; the Probation Service; and the NHS – has created a toolkit that provides guidance, training and other tools to support residents' activities, covering these areas:

- Combating loneliness and isolation
- Reaching your community
- Making the local environment safer and greener
- Crime prevention in your community
- Preventing antisocial behaviour
- Tackling road-related concerns

The toolkit is funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), which awarded the funding to the South Cambs Community Safety Partnership – of which South Cambridgeshire District Council is a partner

"Microgrants" are available to support community efforts. Microgrants are grants of between £50 and £500 available to local voluntary and community sector groups, charities and parish councils wishing to improve community safety in their local area of South Cambridgeshire, in line with the CSP's objectives. The next application deadline is 1<sup>st</sup> August and applications received by that date will be determined by 1<sup>st</sup> September. For details visit [www.scambs.gov.uk/CSP](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/CSP)



## Meetings in July

8 <sup>th</sup>	Domestic Abuse Briefing	Pippa, Martin, Steve
9 <sup>th</sup>	Future Parks Accelerator	Martin
13 <sup>th</sup>	Climate & Environment	Pippa, Martin
14 <sup>th</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup>	Planning Ctee	Martin, Pippa
19 <sup>th</sup>	HIPC	Martin, Pippa, Steve
20 <sup>th</sup>	Scrutiny & Overview Ctee	Martin, Steve
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Full Council	Martin, Pippa
23 <sup>rd</sup>	JDCC	Steve

## Meetings in August

11 <sup>th</sup>	Planning Ctee	Pippa, Martin
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