

## **South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward**

### **Report to South Trumpington Parish Meeting April 2021**

#### **Covid Update**

Cases in South Cambridgeshire remain well below the national average at the time of writing. An important change with regards to testing is that anyone who records a positive lateral flow test will now require a follow-up PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test as an additional check.

Just over 79,000 people had been vaccinated in South Cambridgeshire by the end of March, of just over 141,000 people over the age of 16.

Planned easements in restrictions went ahead on 12<sup>th</sup> April. This included the reopening of outdoor hospitality, gyms, non-essential retail, hairdressers and salons and outdoor attractions. The number of care home visitors has increased to two per resident, all children are able to attend any indoor children's activity, parent and child groups of up to 15 people can restart indoors and weddings are able to take place with up to 15 attendees.

However, outdoor gatherings must still be limited to six people or two households, and people must not socialise indoors with anyone they do not live with or have not formed a support bubble with. People should continue to work from home and minimise domestic travel where they can.

#### **Self-isolation support scheme extended**

Financial help for people to self-isolate has been extended until the end of June and expanded to include parents who need to have time off work to look after a child who is self-isolating. The scheme was due to expire at the end of February, but the Government has announced that it has been extended to allow Councils to continue supporting everyone who needs assistance to self-isolate. People who need to self-isolate can make a bid for funding from The Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme which is administered by each of the district and city councils across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Those who don't meet the criteria are also able to apply for a discretionary payment of £500.

Full details of the scheme – along with eligibility criteria – can be found on the website:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/coronavirus/financial-support-to-help-you-in-self-isolation/>

#### **5 Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS)**

Good news that, as from 1st April 2021, South Cambs and City jointly have 6.1 years of housing land supply for the period 2021-2026. This figure will now not change again until April 2022 unless there is a planning appeal or a challenge where a planning inspector rules otherwise. Maintaining the 5YHLS vital in fending off speculative developments and applying local plan policies on affordable housing.

#### **Combined Authority Affordable Housing funding**

Bad news last month as the Minister for Regional and Local Growth, Luke Hall MP, wrote to the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority regarding the remaining ~£45 million funding for affordable housing, which will now not be forthcoming. The ministry had been reviewing progress on the £100m Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Affordable Housing Programme and have unfortunately concluded that the programme has made insufficient delivery progress and that the value for money being achieved is below expectations.

## **Changes to permitted development rights**

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick announced at the end of last month a package of measures including:

- New planning law enabling unused commercial buildings to be changed into homes.
- New planning rules allowing for the speedy extension of public buildings.

For the first of these, homes can be delivered through the simpler ‘prior approval’ process instead of a full planning application. The legislation aims to bring this right forward from 1<sup>st</sup> August and there will be a requirement that the building has been vacant for 3 months.

The second change will allow for the extension, erection or alteration of school, college, university, hospital, and prison buildings by up to 25% of the existing footprint of the buildings on the site (or 250m<sup>2</sup>, whichever is larger). The height restriction is also being increased from 5m to 6m.

## **East West Rail (EWR)**

EWR has now launched its latest route consultation: <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation>

We now have much more clarity about EWR’s intentions, and a big job trying to understand all of the impacts: on the environment, on the landscape, on noise pollution, on connections, and generally on the quality of life in South Cambridgeshire.

We’re very disappointed that there has never been an opportunity for the public to be consulted on alternative approaches to Cambridge from Cambourne. A more extensive comparison between an approach into Cambridge North and EWR's preferred route has been published with this consultation to justify that decision, and will come under close scrutiny by residents. We will continue to raise questions on their behalf. We also understand that campaign group Cambridge Approaches are taking legal advice on a judicial review of the consultation to challenge the failure to fully develop and include a northern approach as an option. We think this is the right next step for the campaign to challenge what is ultimately a government decision.

There will be some very big impacts on villages, especially Haslingfield and Harston, which face the prospect of a deep cutting and large flyover adjacent to them. Residents of South Trumpington may also be particularly interested in the possibility of grade separation (one line of the railway going over the other) at Shepreth Branch Junction (north of Great Shelford) and the ‘four tracking’ of the line from there into Cambridge Station, which will include an upgrade to the bridge over the railway on Long Road.

We do urge residents to include details of the specific issues of EWR’s preferred route and how it affects them. Should a judicial review fail to force EWR and the government to reconsider the northern route, that input into this consultation will be important as the final route alignment and design is developed.

The consultation closes on 9<sup>th</sup> June.

## **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>

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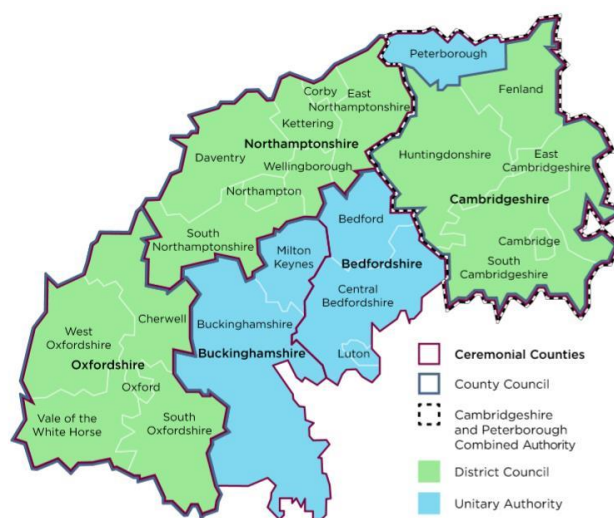
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## OxCam Arc Spatial Framework: (points taken from MHCLG policy paper)

### 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.”*