

CIIs Lorna Dupré and Mark Inskip

MONTHLY REPORT JULY 2021

Planning matters

Garden Close Sutton

An update on a rather confusing situation. Abbey Homes have two outline planning consents on this site.

- Outline application 17/01445/OUM was allowed on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate. Abbey have submitted two reserved matters applications to complete this permission. The Council refused the first reserved matters application. The Council also refused the second—Abbey have appealed the second refusal, and we are currently awaiting the start of the appeal. If the Planning Inspectorate allows Abbey's appeal, Abbey will still have planning permission. If the Planning Inspectorate dismisses the appeal, Abbey will be left with the other outline application.
- Outline application 18/01053/OUM was permitted by the Council, but is currently waiting for the S106 agreement to be completed. Negotiations between the Council and the applicant have dragged on for some time, and the most recent extension of time expired on 2 July. The applicants have now agreed a further extension of time to 30 July for negotiations to continue. In the event of failure to agree, the application would be referred back to the Planning Committee.

65 High Street Sutton

The application for change of use to hot food takeaway at the former Deli has been withdrawn.

Hiams Farm Mepal

Lorna addressed the July meeting of the Planning Committee in respect of an application for an annexe at Hiams Farm, which officers were recommending for refusal. The Committee decided not to follow the officer recommendations, and approved the application by five votes to two, with appropriate legal and planning conditions.

Bus, Cycle, Walk

The Council's Bus, Cycle, Walk Working Group has drafted a response to the County Council's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan. It has also drafted a letter to parish councils listing walking and cycling routes in their parishes that residents identified last year as being in disrepair, obstructed by street clutter, or insufficiently lit, and asking for an update on their condition.

Elean Business Park anti-social driving

We have continued to pursue action on this with the police and the Council. Lorna met onsite recently with the new Inspector for East Cambs Neighbourhood Policing Team Shane Fasey, sergeant Mark Rabel, and the district council's Lewis Bage, and will be following up the outcomes of that meeting.

Coop signing and lighting

Lorna has taken up a resident's query about whether the lane sign on the A142 on the approach to the Elean roundabout from the Ely direction could be installed further away from the junction and made more prominent as vehicles were still often not in the correct lane. This has been forwarded to the engineer now dealing with the sign off of the Stage 3 Road Safety Audit so she can raise this with the Co-op engineers and designers, who are at present still responsible for maintenance and safety infrastructure.

The engineers are also looking at the cycleway link at the gates on the *cul de sac* spur, the concrete block, and the need for this to be removed and replaced by bollards.

COVID Additional Restrictions Grant

Like other councils, East Cambridgeshire District Council was granted a sum of money by Government to be used to support local businesses whose trade had been adversely affected by the COVID pandemic.

The most recent figures published by Government showed the council in the lowest quarter of authorities in the country for dispensing these funds. The council itself acknowledges that while it received £2,594,853 from the Government, only £2,115,500 (82 per cent) had been paid or allocated to local businesses, leaving £479,353 unspent.

The Government announced in March that a further top-up of this grant will be made available for councils which have spent or attempted to spend 100 per cent of their allocations by 30 July. (For East Cambridgeshire, the top-up allocation will be £707,466.) However, councils which spent the whole amount by 8 July will receive the top-up funding earlier, enabling funding to reach local businesses sooner.

The Council therefore spent all the remaining £479,353 on one day in the first week of July in order to receive the top-up funding sooner. We are concerned at some of the funding decisions the Council has made—for example one hair salon in the district received no ARG grant, and then at the start of this month

received the equivalent of 71p per staff member per day to cover medical grade PPE, as well as the cost of social distancing and staff self-isolation.

Climate Change and Environment Plans

The Operational Services Committee last month approved the Council's second Environment Plan and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. This updated plan brought forward the target date for the district council to achieve carbon 'net zero' from 2050 to 2040. However, the Combined Authority's Independent Commission on Climate Change has recommended all local authorities in Cambridgeshire should target 2030 for the 'net zero' goal.

The committee welcomed the publication of the first interim report of the Combined Authority's Climate Change Commission, and agree to work with partners to help take forward those recommendations but with caveats regarding practicality and viability of doing so. Mark and his colleagues on the committee welcomed improvement to 2040 but emphasised the need to go further towards achieving the 2030 target, for example by replacing the council's vehicle fleet with zero emission vehicles earlier than 2030 and by massively expanding the number of electric vehicle charging points. There are currently just two in council owned car parks in the district.

At the meeting of the Combined Authority Board at the end of June, the Leader of the Council proposed an amendment to water down the Combined Authority's response to the Commission's recommendations, and abstained on the vote in support of the Combined Authority's response when this amendment was defeated.

Corporate Plan

The Council leadership's Corporate Plan has been updated for Full Council on 15 July. We agree with some of its content, but will not be supporting it, for many reasons not least its continued intention to press ahead with replacing the Mepal Outdoor Centre with a crematorium.

(There is at the time of writing still no planning application for the crematorium, which was promised by Christmas 2020.)

Email outage

The Council's email system was out of action from Wednesday 7 to Friday 9 July—the second multi-day outage this year. Mark is once again asking searching questions of the Council about this.

Meet your councillors

We will be holding our virtual surgery via Zoom from 6:30 to 7:30PM on

- Tuesday 10 August 2021
- Tuesday 14 September 2021

Please contact Mark at mark@markinskip.org.uk to book your timeslot.

Cllr Lorna Dupré

Cllr Mark Inskip

District Councillors for the Sutton ward