

Cambourne Town Council

South Cambridgeshire District Council report: Tuesday 1st November 2022

Councillor Stephen Drew
Councillor Helene Leeming

Contact details for Cllrs Drew and Leeming:

Cllr Drew
cllr.drew@scambs.gov.uk
07445380811

Cllr Leeming
cllr.leeming@scambs.gov.uk
07974219202

This is our fifth report to the town council since being elected as district councillors in May 2022. We have continued to work on various matters raised to us either by residents or by local groups, and have reported any new information that we have to the council in this report.

1) Cambourne High Street development plans

At this point in time there is nothing specific to report regarding timescales. We still await the developer choosing to submit their application to the planning authority.

2) Cambourne bus services and Stagecoach's decision to cancel or amend routes

Cllr Leeming has worked constantly on matters relating to the decision by Stagecoach to cancel or amend bus routes for Cambourne during October. She has been communicating with various residents about specific circumstances relating to travel to Cambridge focussing primarily on residents' issues related to work and education as these are the key things being raised.

In order to do this, Cllr Leeming has engaged with residents through the town's Facebook groups, and both Cllrs Drew and Leeming have communicated with residents via emails.

Specific areas where Cllr Leeming is focussing at present relate to bus transport for young people studying at CRC and transport for those working at the science parks to the north of the city. Communications are ongoing with officers of the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority, as well as with Mayor Nik Johnson directly.

- The possibility of getting the 905 to divert into Cambourne as far as the roundabout near the Belfry Hotel and business park is being discussed, rather than the bus simply going directly from Cambridge to St Neots on the A428
- Investigations into the level of use that the 905 receives from residents in Cambourne are ongoing. The data that is being used by Stagecoach to justify the removal of this service is being challenged due to the time period in which it was gathered and the fact it does not match up with the numerous descriptions of the number of passengers using the bus service from Cambourne.
- Cllr Leeming is working with CRC staff to evaluate the number of students from Cambourne who travel to the college and how their timetables operate in order to see how this can be linked to the plans for the future of the 905. In addition to this the viability of the CRC provided bus service for families is being challenged as a solution promoted by the CPCA in their role of seeking to manage the impact of Stagecoach's actions.

Although the CPCA has been able to temporarily save almost all of the services that Stagecoach have axed across the county through their timely action of issuing emergency tenders, this does not resolve the cuts to continuing services that are going to affect Cambourne.

3) The Greater Cambridge Partnership City Access Scheme

Cllr Drew has promoted the City Access consultation to residents via social media, and also encouraged residents to attend the public event held at The Hub on Wednesday 27th October. It is essential that residents take part in this consultation to make their views heard and influence the plans so they can deliver the best overall package for Cambourne.

<https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/making-connections-2022>

It is unfortunate that the plans for improved public transport to Cambridge under the City Access Scheme have been launched right at the point where Stagecoach have taken their decision to withdraw from providing so many of the bus services that already exist. This damages public trust in the potential that the City Access Scheme can deliver the radical improvements in bus transport that are needed by Cambourne's residents. However, the principle of the paradigm shift in access to fast, reliable and cheap public transport that the GCP is seeking to deliver remains of potentially huge value to the residents of our town. The C2C busway and associated cycleway will be a great benefit to our town. By engaging with the consultation, whatever people's individual views are on all of the aspects of the proposals, Cambourne can ensure the maximum benefit for our community.

The consultation runs online until 23rd December 2023.

4) The SCIP Development and road access to the village college and primary school site in West Cambourne

Following on from the presentation of the leader and officers of South Cambridgeshire District Council at the October meeting of the town council, Cllrs Drew and Leeming have continued to strongly argue the view of the town council and residents in relation to the wish to see the road through the business park opened up to West Cambourne as part of the SCIP (South Cambridgeshire Investment Partnership) development on land next to South Cambs Hall.

On Saturday 8th October Cllrs Drew and Leeming presented the concerns of Cambourne regarding the lack of plans for road access as part of the SCIP to all of our colleagues, including the leadership of the council, in the ruling Liberal Democrat group as part of a specific item that we placed on the agenda of a group meeting. Following this meeting we have agreed with County Councillor Peter McDonald that we will meet with transport committee representatives and officers from the county to evaluate the current and future plans for access to the schools in West Cambourne. It is clear that there is an appreciation from colleagues that the situation as it stands, and is going to remain in the coming year, is not acceptable and needs resolution.

On Friday 14th October we met with Stephen Kelly: Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development for South Cambs District Council, and Anne Ainsworth: Chief Operating Officer for SCDC for two hours to specifically discuss the SCIP development and school access in West Cambourne.

On Wednesday 27th October we had a three hour meeting with Cllr Bill Handley, Cabinet Member for Communities. Cllr Handley has the specific brief for new towns in South Cambridgeshire. We took Cllr Handley on a walking tour of Cambourne from South Cambs Hall through the business park, along Sheepfold Lane, through the village college site, along Swansley Lane, up Crow Hill and then back through Lower Cambourne to the High Street. We then finished off by walking to Upper Cambourne before returning to South Cambs Hall.

This model of meeting is something we use with councillor colleagues and senior officers in order to help them to understand the realities of life in our town and the problems that we face. In our meeting with Cllr Handley we discussed a wide range of matters including the SCIP Development and road access.

1. Post Office facilities
2. The development of the High Street
3. Pedestrian crossing at Uplands Place
4. The business park road
5. Access to doctors
6. Chemist services
7. Access to dentists
8. C2C
9. Anti-social behaviour
10. Road safety and speeding
11. The Vice School and safe access
12. Developer failures
13. Unadopted roads
14. Traffic enforcement
15. Land transfers to the town council
16. Community buildings

Cllr Handley will produce a report on those issues which are relevant to the district council and his communities brief in order to seek officer and council engagement in resolutions.

It is our hope that by engaging with as wide a range as possible of senior councillors and senior officers of SCDC that we can help them to significantly improve their understanding of our town and how they have the capacity to improve the lives of residents. Whilst it is clear that the issue of the business park road is one that remains very difficult to make progress on in line with the hopes of residents, we will not stop seeking to find ways to get improvements to the plans as they stand.

5) Access to medical services for new residents in West Cambourne

Cllr Drew has been engaging with residents in West Cambourne who have been finding it very hard to register with a doctor in the local area. Cllrs Drew and Leeming attended a briefing in July regarding the West Cambourne development that included information from NHS commissioners. Using contacts made there we have been able to link up residents with the correct person at the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) so that they can get registered with a doctor.

At present residents in West Cambourne will be shared out between the medical practices in Papworth, Cambourne and Bourne as directed by the CCG. In addition we have got the CCG to instruct Monkfield Medical Practice to remove their blanket rejection letter for West Cambourne residents from their website: <https://www.monkfieldpractice.co.uk/new-patients-2>. Although the registration page does still seek to put new residents of West Cambourne off from attempting to register with Cambourne's doctors, the impression is less unwelcoming than it was previously. We are aware that like all NHS GP services Monkfield Medical Practice faces almost impossible pressures in terms of funding, space and staffing, and are clear that the resolution to this problem lies with better central government support. However, Monkfield Medical Practice are the doctors for Cambourne residents and we are glad that the CCG is working with them to enable access for West Cambourne residents.