

Report of Councillor Carla Hofman and Councillor John Williams to Parish Councils for August 2023.

This report contains factual information which we hope will be of use and of interest to the parish council and to the wider community of the parish.

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Secretary of State asked to provide details about Government plan for Greater Cambridge

South Cambridgeshire District Council has called on the Government to provide far more information and detail, and work closely with local councils and communities, after they announced plans to rapidly increase housing and commercial growth in and around Cambridge.

In a speech by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove, he outlined plans to deliver 1 million new homes nationally, focusing on towns and cities and starting with Cambridge.

The Government's announcement did not include the specific number of houses they expect to be delivered in and around Cambridge. However, this follows a story in The Sunday Times recently – which the Council had no prior knowledge of – reporting on Government plans to turn Cambridge into Britain's Silicon Valley by boosting building and adding as many as 250,000 new homes.

The Council has said it is vital there is clarity over how many homes the Government is planning for and where they believe they should go. Council leaders will be contacting the Government urgently to make sure local people have this information.

When the emerging Local Plan for Greater Cambridge was published earlier this year – a process that considers how growth is managed into the future – the Council said that those plans could only be delivered if serious concerns over water supply could be addressed.

The Council's own evidence already suggests the need to provide for 50,000 new homes in the City and South Cambridgeshire to support 66,000 new jobs anticipated in the area over the next 18 years. This figure includes over 37,000 in the current Local Plan adopted in 2018. Some of these homes have already been built and others are being built. The Council has recently shown that it has a five year housing land supply to support the Local Plan.

South Cambs Supports Rural Housing Week

The Council supported Rural Housing Week to raise awareness of how it can help local people either rent or get onto the property ladder with affordable housing solutions.

One way it does this, is through the Rural Exception Site policy, which has enabled registered providers to build 458 affordable homes across South Cambridgeshire since 2009.

More than 30 new homes are due to be completed on rural exception sites in the district in the next two years, This is in addition to the Council's own new build council housing numbers in our villages, which now exceed those sold under Right to Buy. A total of 321 Council homes have been built for rent and shared ownership since 2018, enabling local people to stay living in their local communities. The number of council houses is now back to where it was in 2010.

ISO 9001 Certification for Greater Cambridge Shared Planning

Our shared planning service is the first local council planning department in the country to be given the International Organisation for Standardisation certification for its Quality Management System (QMS). The QMS reviews the processes to deal with planning applications, breaches of planning control and how formal and informal complaints are dealt with. It also examines, amongst other things, training and use of technology.

Home Improvement Agency delivers over £3m of home adaptations

The Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency is a not for profit shared service supported by South Cambridgeshire District Council and other local councils in the County with support from Government, which provides support for elderly residents with disabilities living in their own property or rented or housing association accommodation with regard to adapting their home to retain their independence. Some £3.25m was spent by the Agency last year, the highest since 2019/20.

Mobile Food Hub opens in Fulbourn

South Cambs has opened a mobile food hub in Fulbourn village. Funded by the Council a run by Hope CIC it is at the Fulbourn Health Centre Haggis Gap CB21 5HD every Tuesday from 10.30am to 11.30am. It is open to all residents and will bring fresh produce and essential affordable items to those struggling to make ends meet. For more information go to:
www.scambs.gov.uk/mobile-food-hub-delivering-food-to-south-cambridgeshire

Carla & John