

Councillor Peter McDonald Duxford Division & Ward:  
District Councillor for Parishes of Duxford, Hinxton, Ickleton, Babraham, Pampisford.  
County Councillor also for Foxton, Fowlmere, Shepreth, Thriplow, Heydon, Chishills, Whittlesford

## **Parish Council Report Feb 2024**

### **South Cambs District Council**

#### **Axis Land Partnerships proposal**

On 29 January, the development company Axis Land Partnerships published proposals for a large housing development to the West of the A10 at Foxton Station. The outline proposals included 1500 houses, a country park, education and employment facilities and a bypass for the A10/railway crossing. It is too early to comment in any detail but I would emphasize that no planning application has been submitted and the site in question is not included in the sites permitted for development in the emerging Local Plan.

#### **Action on Energy**

The District Council is urging residents to make use of energy-saving support that they are entitled to, after the recent rise in the energy price cap. In January, energy bills for a typical household using gas and electricity rose by £94 a year. The next price cap will be announced on 23 February. The Council is part of the Action on Energy partnership which provides advice, guidance, and support on reducing carbon emissions and increasing home energy efficiency. The scheme offers advice on Home Upgrade, Boiler Upgrade, ECO4 and Great British Insulation grants.

#### **Electrical appliances recycling bin**

In December, the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service team launched a new initiative to make recycling small electrical appliances easier. We now have a roaming pink bin which will visit suitable temporary locations so that you can have a clear-out or purge your cupboards of old cables you have been meaning to recycle. The pink bin was initially deployed in Cottenham, in the village hall car park, and then in Girton, in both cases for several weeks. If you would like it to visit your village, please contact [vicky.lacey@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:vicky.lacey@scambs.gov.uk). The location needs to have: • A concrete area to stand the bin on, • A drop-kerb onto the road, • A safe, sheltered spot by a fence, wall or railing where it won't be in the way, • Someone to keep an eye on it and whom we can contact. Someone who can let the village know the bin is there and what can be put in it (e.g. post supplied posts on social media & put up posters).

#### **Ermine Street Housing**

The Council is proposing to make a further investment in its wholly-owned company Ermine Street Housing of up to £20 million. Ermine Street Housing owns and rents out approximately 530 properties in and around Cambridgeshire and leases around 190 properties from the Ministry of Defence. It provides the Council with a regular income stream that helps to reduce its dependence on government funding and Council Tax. It also helps to maintain the stock of quality rented accommodation in the district. One of the aims of the additional investment would be to provide market rental housing to reduce the Council's reliance on expensive Bed & Breakfast accommodation when fulfilling its responsibilities in housing people who are homeless. Last year, Ermine Street Housing provided the Council with an income of £3.6 million. Forecasts suggest the income for this year will be £4.25 million. The proposal was discussed by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee in January and will be debated in a Full Council meeting in February

## **County Council Report**

Contact Details: E mail: [cllr.mcdonald@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.mcdonald@scambs.gov.uk) or [peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
Telephone 07912 669092

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### **Bus Lane Enforcement**

Residents are being invited to have their say about two proposed applications for civil powers to enforce bus lane and bus gate restrictions in South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

Currently, bus lane and bus gate restrictions can only be enforced by the police with fixed penalty notices resulting in fines or endorsement points. As part of the proposed changes, Cambridgeshire County Council is applying to the Department for Transport (DfT) to transfer enforcement responsibilities from the police to the local authority regarding bus lane and bus gate regulations in the districts of South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

If the applications were successful, offences would be treated as a civil matter and a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) would be issued. It would also give the county council the ability to, where required, use Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology to identify drivers who breach restrictions.

Similar measures were introduced in Cambridge City several years ago.

The aim of enforcing bus lane regulations is to keep bus journeys reliable, encourage more sustainable ways of travelling and help keep traffic moving on the roads.

If successful, it is expected that the council would start enforcement in winter 2024.

Cambridgeshire County Council is inviting residents to have their say on the proposed changes by completing an online survey on the council website, where they will also find more information, maps, and frequently asked questions. The engagement survey opened on 29 January and closes on 11 March.

The findings will help inform any decision made by the county council regarding which sites may be considered for camera enforcement as part of its application to the DfT. Bus Lane Enforcement.

### **Old Shire Hall**

Bids are invited for the lease or sale of part of the Shire Hall site in Cambridge, after the previous preferred bidder was unable to continue their interest.

In a city-centre location, Shire Hall had been the Cambridgeshire County Council's headquarters since the 1930s, but the site itself was the seat of Government in Cambridge for over 1,000 years.

Previously the site of two medieval castles, the current building was the county council's administrative centre from its completion in 1933 until 2022, when the council relocated to Alconbury as part of its planned savings programme.

The property is being marketed by BNP Paribas Real Estate from 29 January 2024 and comprises the original Shire Hall, the Octagon the Old Police Station, Castle Lodge and public car parking.

Contact Details: E mail: [cllr.mcdonald@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.mcdonald@scambs.gov.uk) or [peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
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Offers will be considered by councillors on the Assets & Procurement Committee at their June 2024 meeting. Councillors will review not only the financial bid made but whether the offer delivers environmental and social benefits.

The council expects strong interest from commercial bidders, with the building's prime position in Cambridge making it highly suitable for different uses. Due to the historic importance of the site all proposals will require full planning, Listed Building consents to ensure protection of the assets on site.

The council has applied to give part of the lawn between the front of Shire Hall and the Mound the legal protection of 'Town Green' status, and has also invested in new interpretation boards at the site and increased litter bins and maintenance to improve the visitor experience although these areas are not included in the disposal.

Anyone interested in finding out more information should contact Max Marston at BNP Paribas Real Estate ([Max.marston@realestate.bnpparibas](mailto:Max.marston@realestate.bnpparibas)).

<https://propertylink.estatesgazette.com/property-details/6943307-shire-hall-site-castle-street-cb3>

### **Adults & Learning Support**

Continued investment in helping adults with learning and physical difficulties and mental health issues – and older people - was central to budget proposals supported by the county council's Adults and Health Committee.

Proposed measures include helping adults with learning difficulties, physical difficulties and mental health issues – along with older people – to enjoy healthy, safe and independent lives.

This would mean allocating £35 million to meet the pressures of inflation and demand.

Next year the council is also proposing to invest £18.8 million in the adult social care external provider market to reflect increases in the National Living Wage, Real Living Wage and Consumer Price Index.

This would include a specific investment of £500,000 to help providers pay their staff the Real Living Wage, in line with the increase to £12 per hour for 2024/25.

Further investment is also proposed in the Care Together programme, which would be extended across more communities within the county, offering greater choice and control to more people.

Care Together supports the creation and growth of voluntary, community and social enterprises to help people live independently and for longer in their communities.

Proposed investment by Public Health includes preventing poor health or enabling people to manage their health issues. For example, Tobacco Control Services not only help prevent people smoking but also treat those who smoke, thus minimising their risks of poor health.

In 2024/25 the Council will receive additional funding to address smoking - around £900,000 per year for five years - funding that will focus upon addressing smokers in population

Contact Details: E mail: [cllr.mcdonald@scams.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.mcdonald@scams.gov.uk) or [peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)  
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groups where smoking rates are higher and people are not accessing services, such as the homeless and people with learning disabilities.

Demand for services in Adults, Health and Commissioning is expected to be £38.9 million in 2024/25. The main reasons for this include an increase in demographic demand and the cost of care and support, for all people who use services.

This has already seen an increase in numbers of people and the cost of meeting care needs (£12.1 million), alongside pay inflation, including provider increases, and general inflation.

Demand for Public Health services is forecast to be £563,000 in 2024/25 – the main reasons again being pay inflation, including provider inflation.

Beyond 2024/25, the council will be reviewing its in-house services with a focus on identifying further growth and diversification, as well as considering other efficiencies and improving the effectiveness of its in-house services.

For more information on the council's proposals for the coming year see: [Consultation begins on Cambridgeshire budget proposals ahead of 'toughest year' for local councils - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Peter McDonald Feb 3rd 2024