

Council

Thursday, 26 November 2020

Decisions

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 26 November 2020. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Democratic Services.

Presentation

Community Governance Review of the parishes of Longstanton and Oakington and Westwick (Civic Affairs Committee 3 November 2020)

Council

Agreed

- A)** The creation of a new civil parish for Northstowe, as detailed in Option A of the report, with a variation to proposed boundaries:
 - i. The adjacent field boundary, marking the perimeter of the Northstowe Extension Land should be the parish boundary between Northstowe and Longstanton, not the Over Road.
- B)** That the new administrative body be called “Northstowe Town Council”.
- C)** Elections to “Northstowe Town Council” be held in 2021 with councillors serving for a single year. All councillors to stand for a full four year term in 2022.
- D)** “Northstowe Town Council” should have 15 councillors.
- E)** Elections to Longstanton Parish Council and Willingham Parish Council take place in 2021 with councillors serving for a five year term.
- F)** Officers to write to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to seek re-alignment of district and county boundaries where these are affected by any changes made by this review.
- G)** The creation of a new polling district with boundaries to match the new parish boundary for Northstowe; amendment of existing polling district boundaries to match the new reduced size boundaries for Longstanton Civil Parish and Oakington & Westwick Civil Parish; the creation of a new polling district for the area north of the guided busway, which is to be moved to Willingham Civil Parish.

Standing in the Name of Councillor Pippa Heylings

Council **agreed** the following motion:

We are living through an unprecedented crisis that disrupts and challenges in nearly every aspect of our residents’ lives, be it social, economic, in health or

environment. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of the availability of local, good quality food. Cambridgeshire and the Fens are home to more than 50% of UK's Grade 1, 2 and 3a Agricultural land. British farmers are proud to produce food to some of the highest standards of animal welfare, environmental protection and food safety in the world. More than a million people signed the recent food standards campaign petition. Yet, the Agriculture Act 2020 still risks putting our farmers in an untenable situation whereby they will have to compete with food imports that have been produced using methods and products that would be illegal on British farms, leading to the sale of substandard food.

The Back British Farming campaign sought to uphold and defend British food and farming standards through primary legislation but House of Lords amendments upholding this aim have been voted down by majorities in the House of Commons, including our own local MPs. As a far less robust concession to campaigners, the Government has placed the Trade and Agriculture Commission on a statutory footing, though without statutory powers. It is welcome news that MPs will have the chance to vote on the recommendation of the Commission in relation to any new trade deal but this alone does not give the strength of guarantee deserved of our farmers or our food security – and leaves British farming vulnerable to political convenience.

This Council

- believes that guarantees to uphold British food and farming standards should be written into primary legislation
- authorises the Leader to contact our local MPs to underline the importance of having food and farming standards written into primary legislation.

Standing in the Name of Councillor Geoff Harvey

Council **agreed** the following motion:

Launching the recently published Oxford-Cambridge Arc Economic Prospectus, Jeremy Long, Chair of the Arc Local Enterprise Partnerships Group, said:

“Our vision is for the Arc to be a global hub for innovation, and home to exemplary models of green development that will inspire communities around the world. The Arc’s place is at the forefront of the UK’s green recovery and this will be made possible through bold leadership that focuses on the big opportunities ...”.

The prospectus itself reveals the extraordinary breadth and level of ambition. Prominent within this vision for future sustainable prosperity are green and seamless transport infrastructure and research into green energy technology, including nuclear fusion and advanced battery storage. Yet from our own local experience, we know that local electricity infrastructure is at capacity, leading to schemes facing restrictions in relation to green energy or facing additional costs and delays to enable grid reinforcement to take place. Considerable work is therefore underway in the Greater Cambridge area to address this issue as part of our work on developing planning policy, as well as considering the role of the public sector in facilitating the delivery of additional infrastructure, working in partnership with the district network operator. This work is taking into account the electrification of transport and heat.

It is therefore concerning to note that the Prospectus does not explicitly mention

energy infrastructure, which will be key to the Net-Zero ambition. The ambition for energy infrastructure should be equal at least to the ambition for transport infrastructure; the two are very much intertwined. Furthermore, a central government national infrastructure project of this scale offers unique opportunities to demand multi-agency cooperation; opportunities that may be grasped only once, or lost forever. For example, the electrified East-West Rail project could and should be under consideration as the first building block in a coherent energy infrastructure plan. For example, east-west HVDC (High Voltage Direct Current) energy connectivity and storage might be installed along the track-side sufficient not only to power trains but also as a smart-grid or green energy spine to link together the many green energy assets envisioned for the Arc in years to come; whilst development of specialist switchgear, solid state transformers, smartgrid management software and LVDC (low voltage direct current) distribution are all technology areas with export potential that can be part of a green recovery.

In short, we need not only an Ox-Cam Arc but also an Ox-Cam Spark.

This Council

- urges that green energy infrastructure, enabled by multi-agency cooperation, is considered at the earliest possible juncture in the Ox-Cam Arc national infrastructure project.
- requests the Leader and Chief Executive to raise the matter of timely consideration of energy infrastructure for the Ox-Cam Arc, within its political and governmental structures, as they deem appropriate.

Standing in the Name of Councillor Heather Williams

Council **agreed** the following motion:

The Council records its thanks to officers involved in developing the next Local Plan and recognises the work being undertaken by officers to support the selection of sites for the Preferred Option for the Local Plan, which will be published for full public consultation in 2021.

In light of the large number of sites put forward in the Call for Sites which affect almost every village/ town and community in our District, this Council confirms that Parish and Town Councils will be offered the opportunity to feedback information and comment on sites put forward for their area and that this input will be taken into consideration as part of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment which will inform the site selection for the Preferred Option stage.

Standing in the Name of Councillor Ian Sollom

Council **agreed** the following motion:

The Council notes:

- That numbers of pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) are rising fast. Nationally, the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has increased across all schools from 13.6% in 2018, to 15.4% in 2019 and 17.3% at the beginning of 2020. In South Cambridgeshire District, over 2,400 pupils were eligible and claiming FSM at the beginning of September, up by over 25% from January 2019, and numbers continue to rise due to the impact of the pandemic.
- That every child who is entitled to Free School Meals is a sign of a family under significant financial pressure.
- That this picture of increasing child poverty is supported by the rapid rise in

the number of families dependent on food banks. The Trussell Trust have reported the period of April to September to be the busiest half-year period for food banks in the network since the charity opened, and more than a third of their three-day emergency food parcels went to children. The Cambridge City Foodbank has reported a 23% increase in the number of people fed between March and July compared to last year, included a 28% increase in the number of children fed.

- That children who are hungry are less able to learn and thrive at school.
- That the extension of the school meals voucher scheme campaigned for by Marcus Rashford to cover the period of the summer holiday was incredibly important and valuable to families in food poverty.
- That the second lockdown and the continuing rise in unemployment are likely to lead to further increases in child poverty in the short term.
- That the economic consequences of the pandemic risks further increases in child poverty in the longer term.
- That moves by the government to extend support over the Christmas holiday period and throughout 2021 are a welcome start in addressing the problems of food poverty, but that more will need to be done to ensure no child in the UK goes hungry.

This Council therefore supports the calls by the Child Food Poverty Task Force, supported by Marcus Rashford and many leading food suppliers and producers, which calls for:

- The expansion of free school meals provision to every child whose family is in receipt of Universal Credit or equivalent, or with a low-income and no recourse to public funds.
- That provision be made for food and activities during school holidays and periods of lockdown to support all families in receipt of Universal Credit or equivalent, or with low-income and no recourse to public funds.
- That Healthy Start vouchers should be increased in value to £4.25 and expanded to be made available to all those in receipt of Universal Credit or with a low-income and no recourse to public funds.

This Council therefore resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the MPs representing the District in Parliament to call for additional government funding for:

1. The extension of eligibility for free school meals to every pupil whose parents or guardians are in receipt of Universal Credit.
2. Equivalent food support to be made available for every one of those pupils in every school holiday and during any period of lockdown.
3. The extension of eligibility for free school meals to pupils from low-income families whose parents or guardians have no recourse to public funds and destitute asylum seekers as defined in the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Chair's Engagements

Council **agreed** that its next meeting will be held on Tuesday 23 February 2020 at 2pm, instead of Thursday 11 February 2020 at 2pm.