

## **District Councillor's Report for The Mordens Ward SCDC      February & March 2021**

### **Thakeham Housing proposal update**

There has not, at the time of writing this report, been any official submission by Thakeham to the District Council. Thakeham have claimed a delay in their submission time due to covid but that they will be submitting proposals in the call for sites for the next Local Plan. Many people such as myself have been looking at to what methods the developers have to pursue this project. My research has shown that Thakeham have no option but to go through the normal local planning process, I have made it clear also that this proposal should receive no special treatment. This has been supported by South Cambs Director of planning who has also stated that he is unaware of any mainstream mechanism, other than the local plan process, that would enable the delivery of these proposals. Chris Pincher, Minister for Housing, has confirmed in a response to a written question in parliament about Thakeham that "Should an application for planning permission come forward it will be dealt with in the usual way".

### **SCDC Budget**

At our last full council meeting the budget was agreed for 2021-2022. There were elements that I welcome for example the resources towards homelessness prevention and supporting businesses and communities through the Covid recovery. However, on balance, there were too many elements that I was uncomfortable with and therefore voted against the budget. Below are some of the reasons as to why I voted against:

- The accumulative borrowing figure on the four year forecast is nearly £420m – this is a 95% increase in the Council's debt over the four year forecast, a rate that I personally believe is unsustainable given the limit the council has set itself is £511m (though this can be exceeded in the short term).
- The main reason given for the borrowing is the Council's continued £340m investment strategy. Along with the £140m due to be invested in two development limited liability partnership, one with Hill Group, and one with Balfour Beatty.
- There is a budget gap of nearly £6m with over £4m intended to be filled with growth.
- The Budget pressure figures forecast were significantly lower than the actual figures that we were comparing it to, so am concerned this is not overly realistic.

### **Localised Council Tax Support Scheme**

I was pleased to support this as it provides support for those suffering financial difficulties at this time. If you are aware of anyone struggling please do encourage them to get in touch with either myself or the Council.

**Cllr Heather Williams**

**SCDC The Mordens Ward**

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