

**A Happy New Year**

Firstly, may I wish you all a happy new year and all the best for the New Decade. A personal campaign of mine has been to encourage people to use the full year '2020' when signing and dating official documents. This is because the abbreviation e.g. 01/04/20 could easily be modified to e.g. 01/04/2008. I hope you will join me in promoting this to residents.

**Planning**

There has recently been further concerns raised against the processes of the planning department's scheme of delegation at SCDC. Currently the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the planning committee meet with officers and decide what applications to be escalated to committee and which can be dealt with under officer delegated powers. This practise has been challenged as the Chairman of the planning committee is not an executive member (i.e. a member of the cabinet). The proposed change is for the Joint Director of Planning & Economic Development to make the decision in consultation with the chairman of planning. I understand that Parish Councils have been contacted by the Leader of the Council which describes the current process and makes recommendations that if the Chairman and the Director disagree then it would automatically be referred to committee. However, there is nothing in the proposed text so far shown to councillors that supports this. I and others are deeply concerned of these proposed changes, and that good will is relied on, if this automatic process is to happen, it should be embedded in the constitution to give true reassurance. However, I believe that it ought to be an elected member who has the final decision, we are democratically elected and can be held to account by the public. I am pursuing the possibility of requesting one of the cabinet members being given this role and will be taking legal advice as to if this is possible or not shortly.

**Consultations**

Currently the consultation for the next local plan issues and options stage is now live, the link below will take you to the dedicated local plan website. I would like to encourage as many people as possible to take part in this consultation, the outcomes of this will form part of the building blocks for the next local plan which will affect every resident in South Cambridgeshire. The consultation closes on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/greater-cambridge-local-plan/>

Another consultation that I believe is of interest to residents is the National Rail consultation on a railway station at Addenbrookes, Cambridge South.

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/anglia/cambridge-south-station/>

The County Council are currently running a consultation on their Climate Change and Environment Strategy Consultation.

<https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/climate-strategy>

### **Three Free Trees**

SCDC are offering parish councils/meetings who own land a £60 voucher to plant 3 small trees or 1 large tree. As a council we have unanimously committed to encouraging tree planting and I do hope that those who are in a position to accept this offer will do so.

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