District Councillor's Report for The Mordens Ward SCDC

Standing up for open and accurate debate

At this month's Full Council meeting, I challenged proposed changes to the Council's Constitution, particularly the removal of the 'Point of Information' procedure, which allows councillors to clarify or correct information during debates.

I put forward an alternative 'Point of Accuracy', which would have given councillors just 30 seconds, with the Chair's permission, to correct factual inaccuracies. Unfortunately, the administration voted against my amendment.

I believe it is important that councillors can challenge incorrect information, regardless of political party. We may not always agree, but council debates should be based on accurate information, particularly when decisions are being made on behalf of residents. Unfortunately raising factual inaccuracies has been made harder and this will not only reduce the quality of debate in my view, it could also lead to poor decisions being made on inaccurate information.

Roads and Highways – keeping up the pressure

Following my meeting with Cambridgeshire Highways last month, I have continued following up on outstanding repairs and raising further concerns across the ward. These include potholes, damaged road signs, faded white lines and other highway defects that residents have brought to my attention. While some progress has been made, there are still areas needing attention, and I will continue chasing officers for updates.

I would also encourage residents to keep reporting problems directly to the County Council. Even where an issue has already been reported, further information can help highlight the extent of the problem. And the more evidence Highways receives, the stronger the case for repairs. Faults can be reported here: Report a highways fault | Cambridgeshire County Council

A505 – meeting with Hertfordshire Highways

After months of correspondence and requests for action, I have now met with Hertfordshire County Council's Highways to discuss the ongoing safety concerns along the A505.

It was an opportunity to raise issues directly with officers, particularly around dangerous junctions and the need for improvements to make this busy road safer, and I am pleased that these discussions have taken place. However, given the serious accidents and tragic fatalities along this route, there is still a great deal more to do.

Planning enforcement – more action needed

Planning enforcement continues to be an issue that residents contact me about, particularly where concerns have been raised over potential breaches of planning permission.

There are currently a few sites within the ward where I believe more needs to be done, and I have been pressing the Council for further action and updates. I appreciate that enforcement cases are not always straightforward, but residents should have confidence that concerns are properly investigated and dealt with in a reasonable timeframe. I am seriously concerned that the current administration at the council is not adequately resourcing the Planning Enforcement team. I have previously shown how additional resources for planning enforcement could be achieved as part of my budget amendment last February. I will continue following up on these cases and pressing for action.

Planning and local democracy

This month I've made my views clear at the council about the changes to the planning process. I think it's disgraceful how little regard is being given to local democracy, particularly the knowledge and views of our parish councils and elected councillors.

We are not the problem when it comes to delivering new homes. Our communities deserve a proper say in the decisions that affect them.

I've signed a letter to the Secretary of State calling for change and would encourage others to do the same.

New council homes

The Council's New Build Housing Team are actively reviewing land in the council's ownership alongside seeking new opportunities to deliver new council houses on land not currently in the authority's ownership. To maximise the opportunities presented by accessing Homes England's Social and Affordable Homes Programme Funding, the council want to ensure that their council house delivery looks beyond the large strategic sites in the district and also delivers appropriately scaled rural housing schemes. Where possible the council will seek to do this on land the council already owns, but also keen to explore the delivery of Rural Exception Sites in supportive communities. Parish councils hold a huge amount of knowledge about their areas, and they welcome approaches from parishes who have identified areas within their communities that could be (re)developed to deliver 4+ council homes. These might be old council garage sites, or small parcels of land that a landowner might be willing to sell to the council for this purpose. If parish councils would like to discuss opportunities with the team, please do get in touch with me.

Water shortages and the Development Corporation

At this month's Full Council meeting, we put forward a motion raising concerns about water shortages and the proposed Greater Cambridge Development Corporation. With so much development planned across our district, we need to be confident that there will be enough water to support both existing communities and new homes. The motion called for clear and credible plans to tackle water shortages to be brought forward and properly scrutinised before any planning powers are handed over to the Development Corporation. I'm pleased the administration at the council supported the motion, but we now need to see some action. We cannot keep planning for thousands of new homes without making sure the infrastructure is there to support them.

Taxi Policy Consultation – have your say

Following my update last month about proposed changes to the Council's taxi and private hire licensing policy, the consultation is now open. This is an opportunity for residents and the taxi trade to share their views on the proposed changes, and I would encourage anyone with an interest to take part. You can view the consultation and have your say here: https://engage.scambs.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/taxi-2026

Community grants and funding

There are a number of funding opportunities available for local groups, organisations and parish councils. These grants can support a wide range of community projects - from improving local facilities to running events or environmental initiatives.

I would strongly encourage any local group with an idea or project to explore what funding may be available. More information can be found on the council's website: https://www.scambs.gov.uk/grants-and-funding

Thank you again for taking the time to read this update. If you have any concerns, ideas, or issues you would like to raise, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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