

District Report

Cllr Richard Williams

Development Corporation

The Government has announced that it intended to press ahead with establishing a Development Corporation for South Cambridgeshire and to strip planning powers from the District Council for any development over 250 homes. The Development Corporation would last for “at least” 25 years.

This is not surprising as it has been clear for a while that the Government has been determined to take control of planning in our area. However, I am very concerned about the impact that this could have on the village. A Development Corporation will mean that significant planning decisions will be made by unelected bureaucrats rather than councillors, so our ability to influence what happens to the village will be much reduced. Combined with the Government plan to effectively remove Green Belt protection from land around train stations, the likelihood of significant development coming forward in the village is therefore likely to increase.

In terms of the Development Corporation generally, it is being presented by the Government as the answer to Cambridge’s housing and infrastructure challenges. No one disputes that Cambridge and south Cambs face real challenges with infrastructure falling behind housebuilding. We face severe constraints around water supply, sewage treatment, transport congestion and energy infrastructure. These are the factors currently limiting growth. Yet the Government has offered no real detail about how a Development Corporation would solve these problems. There has been no package of specific infrastructure funding announced alongside the announcement of Development Corporation, and many questions remain unanswered about how the Corporation would operate in practice. So all we have at the moment is a decision to remove local control and accountability from planning, but no strategy or funding to solve the real problems we face.

I am encouraging the District Council to do everything it can, including exploring a legal challenge, to resist the Government taking direct control of planning on our area. If the development corporation goes through, we would become the only Districts in England that aren’t allowed to control decision making in planning across their whole area – which is not acceptable.

Zero Carbon Community Grants

In more positive news, the District Council has launched a new round of Zero Carbon Communities Grant. The Council has committed £152,000 to support projects that reduce carbon emissions, improve nature recovery and strengthen community engagement. The maximum grant available is £19,500 per project.

Applications are open until 24 July 2026 and further information can be found on the South Cambs website (or just search “South Cambs Zero Carbon Grants”) :

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/climate-and-environment/zero-carbon-communities/zero-carbon-communities-grant>

Other Village Matters.

I am dealing with a number of issues in the village related to the use of the old Scrap Yard on Station Road West, the Midsummer Energy site on Mill Lane and the Aerodrome Service Station near Burma and Ledo Roads.

As ever, please don't hesitate to get in touch about any local issue whether mentioned in my report or not, and I will do my best to help.

With best wishes

Richard

cllr.richardwilliams@gmail.com/07584037016