

## **A View from the District**

The developers of the NIAB site/Darwin Green gave a presentation to the Parish Council with officers from SCDC which raised a number of concerns. I therefore arranged a meeting between myself and two councillors (the Vice-Chairman and Cllr Gordon) and the officers at Cambourne to look closely at the plans. Although they are not taking the land out of the Green Belt, they propose a 'Country Park' on the edge of the estate which will include the field in Girton adjacent to Wellbrook Way and Thornton Close. While this would permit access from Wellbrook Way to the park and thereby to the Thornton shops and onward to the Science Park, it raises big questions of the management of the park. There are several possible options: it could be managed by a new Parish, by Girton Parish Council, or by an external body. My concern is to ensure that this part of our parish should remain undeveloped in perpetuity as a green edge to the village. It is further complicated by the fact that the 'park' proposal includes playing fields for the proposed school and for the public, and other facilities such as allotments.

The design of the development itself is complicated by the fact that it will come forward as three separate sites (NIAB 1, 2 and 3) each of which has to be considered separately. This means that there should be a 'soft edge' to each of the sites even where they abut one another; that is, in the centre of the development as a whole. This in turn means fewer houses in total, which is why NIAB 3 has to be included in an attempt to reach the target housing figures. It will not be easy to secure a coherent design for the whole estate.

Governance will also be problematic. NIAB 2 and 3 could become a new parish, but the City does not approve of parishes so NIAB 1 is unlikely to be included. What will this do to community relations in the site as a whole? And is a community of 1000 viable, or will it simply become a City adjunct? Some of these same questions will also face us in the University site.

Our Council meeting on 26 July was enlivened by a large contingent of residents of Cambourne and Bourn to present a petition against the proposed Local Plan, since at a very late stage Bourn Airfield and West Cambourne were added to the list of development sites. There were rowdy scenes as some petitioners were prevented from attending our debate, and the Chairman utterly failed to maintain order. To loud applause their spokesman objected to so much development in the NW quadrant when the major communications hubs are to the south of the city. Above shouted objections the Portfolio Holder agreed to extra exhibitions before the consultation concludes.

In the Council meeting, one Councillor asked for details on complaints against the company which now handles our housing repairs and refurbishment. The question was not really answered; we were told that the company had received 40 complaints, but not how serious these were nor if the Council had received any above these. We are left still wondering how well the system is working: if you are a Council tenant or have concerns in this area please let me know.

On 7 August the Planning Committee considered an application for a new dwelling in the Green Belt at Trinity Farm. Green Belt development can only happen in 'very special circumstances', and the officers had recommended refusal. I attended to point out that the Village Plan indicated a strong desire on behalf of our residents not to lose any more Green Belt, and to oppose back garden development. The committee agreed entirely, questioning why this had ever been brought to the Committee. The application was soundly rejected in line with the officers' recommendation.

Please remember that the Local Plan consultation closes this month: there is an exhibition to explain the proposals at Histon and Impington Pavilion on 5 September from 2.30 to 7.30pm.

If you would like my fuller monthly report emailed to you please contact me at [scdc@de-lacey.org](mailto:scdc@de-lacey.org) and I shall add you to the list of recipients. If you have any District Council issues you would like to discuss please don't hesitate to ask me.

*District Councillor Douglas de Lacey*