

## **County Councillor's Notes – June 2006**

### **Children's Centre for Cambourne**

I am pleased to be able to tell you that I have secured one of the 22 Children's Centres to be built in Cambridgeshire for Cambourne. These Centres are part of the Government's "Sure Start" programme to ensure that all children get a good start in life and so their pre-school education is not limited by low incomes. I will be able to report on the details of when it will open, and how many places there will be, in a later set of "Notes". I'm sure you will all agree that this will be a splendid addition to the Village.

### **Cambourne in future?**

Countryside Properties are considering the possibility of submitting a large change to the Master Plan for Cambourne. The designed size of the original village is 3,000 homes with a 10% reserve, i.e. 3,300. Homes are being finished at an average of 300 a year to make the whole development complete in 2010. The latest Local Development Framework (LDF) suggests that another 700 homes can be built within the existing Master Plan. Note that this means a higher housing density with more parking problems and less open space. It also means that the time after which you cannot find a parking place at Royston or St. Neots stations, will change from 8.00am to 7.30am on a weekday or earlier – even if there are no other changes.

Countryside Properties want to expand Cambourne to 8,000 homes by building another 3,000 on Bourn Airfield and expanding the present footprint of Cambourne for the rest. Completion would be in 2021. Their proposals are still in the pipeline and we do not know when they will be submitted or even what they look like.

As the Education Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council would want to build three new Primary Schools and a new 6 – form entry Secondary School on Bourn Airfield, if this development goes ahead. This school might also have a 6<sup>th</sup>. Form. We already have 2 Primary Schools in the Village and we send 230 pupils to Comberton Village College (already an 8-form entry school). In turn the money secured from Cambourne's developers has paid for major expansion in facilities at Comberton. However, the County Council would not accept bussing all the pupils created by a huge settlement of 8,000 homes to Comberton. It would make the school too big and add significantly to traffic on the roads. The Village College is a flagship school for Cambridgeshire and already over-subscribed by pupils from outside its catchment area.

Turning Cambourne into a settlement of 8,000 homes would make it the same size as the new town of Northstowe. When complete the town will be 1½ times the size of Ely. The Countryside Properties' vision for Cambourne seeks to turn the village into a third Ely. I don't need to remind you that the formula of Cambourne' Master Plan was a carefully balanced mix of housing, flats, amenities, shops and open space. All this would have to be duplicated on any new development to avoid spoiling what attracted people to live here in the first place. You can be sure that I will oppose this expansion of Cambourne.

Apart from the advantage of having a new Secondary School on the spot, I have heard no voices in support of doubling the size of the village.

I am not in favour of the Government's determination to build many thousands of new homes in South-East England. (For example, I remain opposed to turning Marshall's Airport into a massive housing estate.) Yes, they may soften the message with promises to develop brown-field land before farmland, and talk of increasing housing densities to save more land that way but without a major expansion of the road network, rail access and community facilities, there will be overcrowding and diminished quality of life. We also live in one of the driest parts of northern Europe where water supplies will definitely not match future demand. It's not all gloom yet though – people living in South Cambridgeshire have the highest life-expectancy in the UK.

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Bourn Division  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
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