

Report from District Councillor for Parish Council, December 2020

The Government, as you know, came under sustained criticism from all quarters for its proposed planning reforms, which would have seen an increase of 75% in anticipated and planned house building in Northamptonshire. There has been a rethink, but we still await details. Because of our position on/adjacent to the Oxford/Cambridge ARC, we may still see a substantial increase in housing targets. Development seems currently to be one of the potential threats to this area as we know it, with solar farms, automotive dismantling, and Rugby's radio mast site SUE, and DIRFT 3 still to be built out. I am not intending to be a harbinger of doom, but simply to raise the importance of vigilance. On the question of the relocation of the automotive dismantling company from Daventry, DDC has been assisting in looking for alternative sites from that at Heythog Farm, as the applicant will have to demonstrate with any planning application that all possible alternative sites have been explored, and are either not suitable or not available, which may be small comfort to Crick.

Business continues as usual otherwise at DDC, including work on its ongoing Treasury and budget functions. The Government has allocated £428,000 to DDC for Disabled Facilities Grants, £28,000 more than the Council had originally budgeted, so this is welcome news. Staff at DDC continue to work at home, and a number have also had to work on service integration plans for the new Unitary. Tomorrow I am attending a (zoom) briefing on the West Northamptonshire budget for 2021-22, and I will update you in due course. The West Northamptonshire Council goes "live" on 1 April (a good day?), but we know even now that not all the necessary work can be completed by then, and the aim, therefore, is to try to ensure that what does happen then is at least "safe and legal". Cllr Goodger will be reporting on the Junction 18 meeting, at which County Councillor Irving-Swift told us that the priorities for the new Council will be Adult Social Services and Children's Services.

We are currently teetering on the brink of Tier 3, Covid-wise, so I wish you all a safe and healthy Christmas to end this awful year, and very best wishes for a much more settled and successful 2021.

Catherine