

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

Comprising Barton, Coton, Comberton, Grantchester, Harlton,
Harston, Haslingfield, Hauxton, and South Trumpington

District Councillors' Monthly Report – September 2024

District Councillor contact details

If you have any questions or concerns relating to SCDC services, please contact us using the details below. These are housing need, housing repairs for council tenants, planning, benefits, council tax, bin collection, environmental health issues etc.

Michael Atkins:	Cllr.Atkins@scambs.gov.uk	07968 264637
Ariel Cahn:	Cllr.CahnA@scambs.gov.uk	07455 128924
Lisa Redrup:	Cllr.Redrup@scambs.gov.uk	07855 324580

Cost-of-living information

Visit <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support/> for information on: where to turn for advice; benefits, money and debt advice; help with energy and water bills; help for parents and families; help with food and health costs; help with phone bills; help with making your home warmer; Age UK handy person service and; support if you are in distress.

Community Hubs

Community Hubs offer residents somewhere to socialise, take part in new activities and to receive information on cost-of-living support such as how to reduce bills and access financial support, as well as how to stay healthy and well.

Local Community Hubs include:

- Comberton Baptist Church, Green End, Comberton, Cambridge, CB23 7DY.
Opening times: Monday, 3pm – 5 pm
- Grantchester Communal Hall, Tabrum Close, Grantchester, Cambridge, CB3 9NW
Opening time: Friday, 10am – 12pm

A full list of Community Hubs can be found at:

<https://www.cambsacre.org.uk/projects/cambridgeshire-community-hubs-network/>

£1 bus fares for under 25s with the new Tiger pass

Under 25s can apply for a free Tiger bus pass at: <https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/onepoundbusfare/>. The pass can then be shown to the bus driver when boarding to receive the reduced £1 fare. This initiative is part of the Combined Authority's efforts to revamp public transport in the region.

Winter Fuel Payments and Pension Credit

The new rules now mean that only those in receipt of Pension Credit can receive the extra annual payment. Pension Credit is worth, on average, £3,900 per year and unlocks additional support including the Winter Fuel Payment, help with Council Tax, NHS dental care and a free TV licence for those over 75. Pension Credit backdating rules mean it is possible for individuals to apply for it and have the claim backdated by up to three months if they were entitled to claim at that time. This means that the latest date to apply and still qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment is 21 December 2024.

We are aware that there are probably quite a few people who are eligible to receive pension tax credits but are not claiming. SCDC is therefore working to identify those who are missing out on both sources of income. If you think you might be one of these people you can find out more at: <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit/how-to-claim>.

Communities

Exercise4Fun programme at local leisure centres

Exercise4Fun is a 12-week, free active lifestyle programme taking place at Sawston, Melbourn, Histon and Impington, Cambourne and Linton leisure centres. It is for adults (age 18 and over) with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 25 or above (in ethnic minority groups it is lower at 23.5 or above), and inactive. If you're interested in participating, please complete the registration form at: [Exercise4Fun - South Cambs District Council \(scambs.gov.uk\)](https://www.scambs.gov.uk/exercise4fun). New programmes are beginning in September 2024 and January 2025, with more to be confirmed.

You can learn how the programme helped Mike lose nearly 4 stone at:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/south-cambridgeshire-resident-loses-four-stone-in-12-weeks-through-exercise-programme/>

Mobile Food Hub goes electric

The Mobile Food Hub that visits villages across South Cambridgeshire has launched a new electric vehicle following a £15,000 funding from South Cambridgeshire District Council's [Zero Carbon Communities Grant](#). Hope CIC raised an additional £26,880 through fundraising which was helped with match funding from the Aviva Community Fund, and Crowdfunder Cost of Living Fund. It is estimated that the van will travel over 20,000 miles a year, saving around 4,800kg of carbon when compared to running a diesel van.

The Mobile Food Hub is co-ordinated by Hope CIC, a not-for-profit organisation based in Cambourne. Hope CIC successfully bid for £20,000 of seed funding from the District Council to begin the project last summer. The Mobile Food Hub aims to reach communities hit hardest by the rise in the cost of living, providing access to affordable food and essential items. In the last year, it received over 1,500 visits, with weekly visits continuing to rise.

The Mobile Food Hub currently visits eight locations across South Cambridgeshire every week: Duxford, Fowlmere, Fulbourn, Linton, Northstowe, Orchard Park, Papworth and Willingham. Fowlmere and Northstowe are funded by their respective Parish and Town Council. The other villages were selected from the Council's deprivation data mapped against locations of other foodbanks in the district, to bridge gaps in existing provision.

The Mobile Food Hub is stocked with fresh fruit and vegetables; essential items such as canned foods, pasta, rice, cereal, and long-life milk; personal hygiene, sanitary, and infant products; plus household cleaning items such as laundry detergent. Items are sold at below retail price, with some offered for free to help people with the rising grocery prices. Fresh fruit and vegetables are sourced from a local farm and collected from supermarkets as part of the FareShare scheme where surplus/end-of-life products are donated.

The Mobile Food Hub is different to a typical foodbank as there are no vouchers or referrals. Any resident struggling with increasing costs, including those who live outside of these villages, can access it by turning up on the day and completing a short registration form.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/successful-mobile-food-hub-goes-electric/>.

Service Support Grants awarded to support the voluntary and community sector

Art for mental health, domestic abuse support and a community transport charity are among groups sharing a grant funding pot of more than £180,000 from South Cambridgeshire District Council. The Service Support Grants are being awarded for advice services, independent living, mental health and wellbeing and to provide support to the wider voluntary and community sector.

Eleven non-profit groups will share a total of £167,400. They are:

- Arts and Minds - providing a range of arts to support the positive mental health of communities across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise (COPE) - representing people over 50.
- Citizens Advice - providing advice, education and support on a wide range of financial and other matters.
- Cambridge Dial-a-Ride - providing local transport services that are safe, affordable, and accessible to people who have difficulty accessing public transport.
- Disability Huntingdon (DISH) – offering benefits advice, guidance and support for disabled people and their carers.
- REACH Community Projects – giving debt advice, benefits help, housing, emergency food, utility assistance and more.
- Royston and District Community Transport (RDCT) - offering door-to-door transport seven days a week for people who can't use conventional public transport due to age, frailty, impaired mobility or lack of public transport.
- The Voluntary Network - providing community transport and a befriending service across West Suffolk and neighbouring Cambridgeshire.
- Home Start Royston - supporting local families with children aged 9 and under who are struggling with post-natal depression, isolation, physical and mental health problems, relationship problems, bereavement and many other issues.
- Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service (CCVS) - championing and supporting community and voluntary groups and promoting volunteering.
- Care Network Cambridgeshire – supporting and advocating for community car schemes and their clients, and campaigning for volunteer drivers.
- Additionally, £14,250 has been allocated to three organisations:
- Cambridge Cyrenians - supporting people in Cambridge experiencing or at risk of homelessness, through short and long stay flats and shared houses.
- Cambridge Reuse - helping people on low income or benefits buy furniture, white goods and other household items.
- Cambridge Women's Aid - providing dedicated and specialist services to women and children affected by domestic abuse including a safe refuge in Cambridge, community outreach, advice for professionals supporting women and [Live Chat](#) support.

Rural communities given help to thrive in South Cambridgeshire thanks to a new grant programme

Local life across South Cambridgeshire is being supported thanks to £900,000 of grants for a wide range of community and business projects. The grants are part of the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), aimed at supporting rural communities and businesses in building long-term resilience and fostering economic growth throughout the region. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) is the lead authority for the Fund, while South Cambridgeshire District Council is responsible for scheme delivery and allocation.

So far, 19 projects have been selected to receive a share of the funding. The projects reflect the council's commitment to fostering innovation, community spirit, and sustainable development in rural areas. The grants will help improve local infrastructure, support small businesses, and enhance community facilities.

Community projects receiving funding:

- Dry Drayton School & Village Association - £10,000 for Dry Drayton Marquee Community Enterprise.
- Harston Village Hall - £10,000 for a kitchen refurbishment.
- Duxford Parish Council - £10,230 for the cemetery hedges and green space trees project.
- Weston Colville Reading Room and Recreational Ground Charity - £20,348 for the playground renovation.
- Bourn Parish Council - £23,000 for the Pavilion refurbishment project.
- Fen Drayton Parish Council - £25,000 for the pump track project.
- The George Long Charity for Swavesey Memorial Hall - £25,000 for the solar panels project.
- National Trust (Wimpole Estate Home Farm) - £26,801 for access improvements.
- Over Parish Council - £100,000 for the skate park project.

Business projects receiving funding:

- Sweetie Factory - £12,836 for business expansion.
- The Farmland Museum & Denny Abbey - £18,500 for website development.
- Novahub Ltd - £22,861 for digital connectivity for temporary events spaces and communities.
- Lord Conrads Brewery - £23,200 for micro canning and solar generation.
- Hope Against Poverty CIC - £24,770 for the community farm project.
- Bartlow Estate - £25,000 for the community firewood scheme.
- The Linton Kitchen - £25,000 for bakery expansion.
- Maggie's Farm, Barton - £25,000 for Topfield Farm yard improvements.
- Fired Up Pizza - £25,000 for the 2024 expansion.
- Horningsea Community Interest Company - £40,000 for hospitality facilities improvements at the Plough and Fleece.

Support for local climate action in South Cambridgeshire continues with sixth round of Zero Carbon Communities grants

The sixth round of South Cambridgeshire's Zero Carbon Community (ZCC) grants have been announced, distributing £125,000 across 11 projects. The ZCC grants are open to parish councils and community groups across the district and provide financial support for schemes that demonstrate a sustainable impact. Projects receiving funding this time are:

- **Solar Power for Community Buildings:** Five grants were awarded to install solar panels on community buildings at Balsham Village Hall, Caxton Village Hall, Kingston Village Hall, Over Day Centre, and the Spicers Pavilion in Sawston.
- **Energy Efficiency Improvements:** Cambridge and District Citizens Advice received a grant to install energy-efficient LEDs, and Cottenham Community Centre will renovate and repurpose an underused space into an energy-efficient activities hall.
- **Community Engagement Initiatives:** Cambridge Carbon Footprint will expand their repair café network, promoting a culture of waste reduction and repair. Let's Cook Project will continue their work in educating communities on reducing avoidable food waste, while Climate Change Gardening will establish a kit for events to encourage gardeners to adopt climate-friendly practices.

The ZCC grant scheme is funded through the Council's renewables reserve (business rates from renewable energy projects) and builds on a long-standing commitment to supporting community-level action on sustainable energy. The program will continue through 2025/26 and 2026/27, with two more rounds of funding planned before its conclusion.

For more information, including how to get involved in future rounds, visit the South Cambridgeshire District Council [ZCC webpage](#), or email zcc@scambs.gov.uk.

Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029

The Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029 sets out aims and priorities for new and existing homes - including building the right homes in the right places that people can afford to live in, and improving existing homes.

SCDC and Cambridge City Council have drawn up a comprehensive plan on how both councils can address housing needs until 2029. SCDC's priorities include:

- Increasing the supply of new homes, including affordable housing
- Promoting affordable homes for local people through the Council's rural exception sites policy
- Enabling the housing market to meet a wide range of local housing needs and support sustainable growth
- Mitigating and adapting to climate change in new and existing homes
- Tackling the 'Affordability' Challenge
- Promoting health and wellbeing, tackling poverty, and promoting equality
- Improving housing conditions, management, and safety of homes, and making best use of existing homes
- Preventing homelessness.

Following a public consultation the Strategy was approved by both Councils. More information is available at: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/housing/housing-policies-and-strategies/greater-cambridgeshire-housing-strategy-2024-to-2029/>

APSE Public Sector Awards 2024

Greater Cambridge Shared Waste (SCDC and Cambridge City Council) won an award for Best service team: Waste, Recycling and Streetscene at the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) award ceremony on 12 September. SCDC was also shortlisted in 3 other categories:

- Best building and housing initiative (two nominations – one individually as SCDC from the Housing service and another with Cambridge City Council as part of Greater Cambridge Shared Planning)
- Best efficiency and transformation initiative (with Cambridge City Council as part of Greater Cambridge Shared Waste)
- Best community and neighbourhood initiative (for the Mobile Food Hub initiative with Hope CIC).

Planning

Government funding for 'Planning Supersquad' awarded to Greater Cambridge Shared Planning

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) has been allocated up to £650,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to help make the whole planning process more efficient.

The planning service already performs at above target for the speed in which it determines planning applications. This funding is intended to support the service to develop new approaches that will enable performance to be improved further, to help raise standards and benefit planning authorities across the country.

One objective is to implement a virtual 'development team' approach in a partnership between GCSP and key partners. This initiative is designed to create additional capacity to further speed-up the determination and issuing of planning decisions. By streamlining processes and using digital tools, the planning service aims to set a new standard in efficient service delivery.

As part of several new projects, the funds will go towards a comprehensive evaluation of all areas within the planning service to look at where processes can be faster or more efficient. The culmination of this effort will be the development of an accelerator model, which will be reported back to central government as a blueprint for potential wider implementation.

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/government-funding-for-planning-supersquad-awarded-to-greater-cambridge-shared-planning/>

Significant progress made in meeting local demand for lab and office space

A new report from the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service highlights recent progress in meeting demand for new lab and office space across Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

The report was commissioned to inform the councils' response to the large number of proposals for laboratory and office space, and to inform the emerging joint Greater Cambridge Local Plan. Its findings respond to previous government concerns about whether there was sufficient supply of new space in Greater Cambridge.

Work to produce the report drew on extensive engagement with sector leaders, science parks, developers and business, looking at the specific requirements for the fast growth life science and ICT sectors, to draw conclusions about the supply now available.

Following the granting of several planning permissions over the last year by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service, which is a partnership between Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils, the report concludes:

- The supply for life science laboratory space for testing of drugs, chemicals or biological matter (known as “wet labs”) from 2025 to 2030 is now substantial and sufficient to meet the expected needs, although beyond 2030 further space will be required for the emerging joint Local Plan to meet anticipated needs to 2040 and beyond.
- Whilst the quantum of new wet lab space is sufficient, there may remain a shortfall in the critical smaller space for life science “start-up” businesses of up to five people and “scale-up” businesses of six to 10 people required to support new companies looking to grow on the back of research funding.
- The future supply for general office space, and for laboratory space involving dry materials or computer analysis (known as “dry labs”), which meets the needs of the burgeoning digital/ICT sector, appears relatively healthy looking ahead, however there are likely to be additional requirements later in the 2030s which the emerging joint Local Plan, which the two councils are working on together, will need to plan for.

The report also highlights the pivotal role Greater Cambridge plays on the national and international stage in life science and tech evolution but makes clear that the area will need to continue to explore ways to enhance what it offers to support existing industries locally. This includes:

- Prioritising ‘place based’ business destinations for life science and ICT that offer high quality, modern, best-in-class workspaces.
- Seeking to ensure that the full range of premises in terms of size and format are offered, ensuring in particular that smaller start-up and scale-up businesses are able to grow within the ecosystem.
- The need for continued collaboration across Greater Cambridge institutions and agencies to ensure that the area can continue to provide a globally competitive best-in-class offer, recognising the importance that the quality of Cambridge and the surrounding South Cambridgeshire will play in the future, and the need for appropriate infrastructure solutions that improve transport and connectivity, as well as new housing that is affordable and accessible.

The report has been published on the [Greater Cambridge Shared Planning website](#).

Cambridge 2050

There has been speculation and concern in relation to the previous government’s Cambridge 2050 proposals for up to 150,000 new homes in the Greater Cambridge region.

The Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Matthew Pennycook, wrote to local authorities about ‘Realising the full potential of Greater Cambridge’ on 23 August 2024. The full letter is available at: [Housing Minister letter on Greater Cambridge \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) and some excerpts are shown below:

We believe that the recent focus on Cambridge and its untapped economic potential are entirely warranted.

The Deputy Prime Minister and I are determined to help remove [barriers to realising the area’s full potential] and overcome the issues that have held up planned development for essential housing and laboratory space.

However, we realise that many crucial decisions remain to be made about the precise form that ambitious and high-quality sustainable growth takes in the area. I am determined that we take a collaborative approach to them...

More recently, local leaders met Matthew Pennycook on 12 September. Here is a Joint Statement on behalf of Dr Nik Johnson, Mayor, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority; Councillor Mike Davey, Leader of Cambridge City Council; Councillor

Lucy Nethsingha, Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council; Councillor Elisa Meschini, Chair of the Greater Cambridge Partnership; and Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council:

We're grateful to Housing and Planning Minister, Matthew Pennycook MP, for yesterday's discussion on our partnership efforts to ensure sustainable growth around Greater Cambridge.

We know how important Cambridge is for the wider UK economy and want to ensure ambitions for much-needed growth also benefit and involve local people. We emphasised how our area's substantial economic success also creates significant pressures on local services and infrastructure and were encouraged by the Minister's understanding and appreciation.

As he stressed, this is only the start of a process where we work with central government to deliver for local residents, communities and businesses, now and the years ahead.

Public consultations

What are your priorities for South Cambridgeshire District Council?

Residents and businesses are being asked to help shape South Cambridgeshire District Council's plans for the years ahead. The Council has identified five key priorities and councillors are now asking for the views of local people to help influence the production of a full Corporate Plan for 2025 and beyond. This Plan, when finalised, will set out the actions, initiatives and strategies the Council will work through to meet its targets.

The five priority areas the Council has put forward are:

- **Healthy and flourishing communities** – which could include supporting communities to tackle local issues, support for arts and culture projects, providing cost-of-living support and working with partners to combat crime and anti-social behaviour.
- **Sustainable homes and vibrant places** – such as continuing to deliver new, high quality Council homes, bringing empty homes back into use, making new towns vibrant and attractive places to live and supporting improved access to green spaces.
- **Being green to our core** – including reducing local carbon emissions, protecting air quality and working with others to tackle water scarcity and other environmental issues.
- **Helping businesses to thrive in South Cambridgeshire** – through methods such as promotion of local businesses, renting out space, supporting new markets and events and providing business support resources.
- **Financially secure and fit for the future** – which could mean completing reviews of services to make sure processes are efficient, exploring new ways of generating income, acting to reduce fraud and making it easier for residents to access services online.

The Council is keen to hear from as many people as possible – especially those who live, own businesses or work in South Cambridgeshire, as well as regular visitors to the area.

To find out more please visit: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/what-are-your-priorities-for-south-cambridgeshire-district-council/>. From here you can access information about the district and the priority survey, which will be open for responses until Tuesday 29th October.

Anyone who completes the survey will have the chance to be entered into a prize draw to win one of two £50 One4All vouchers. To complete the survey via an alternative format, such as using a printed copy or in an alternative language, please contact equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk or call 01954 713 000.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) bus franchising

The Transport Act 1985 removed the public sector's role in fare-setting, routes and bus frequencies. Bus services are generally run by commercial providers; where a commercial provider does not step forward the local transport authority may step in with a publicly subsidized 'contracted service' – and this is the case for our local bus services.

The Mayoral Combined Authority (which is our Local Transport Authority) has launched a consultation proposing a new framework of public control for bus services. The consultation will run for 14 weeks (ending Wednesday 20th November) and will compare a Franchising solution with an Enhanced Partnership approach.

'Under a franchised network, the Combined Authority would contract bus operators to run services on its behalf but have control over the routes, frequency, fares and overall standards of the region's buses. An alternative Enhanced Partnership solution, while producing benefits over the current bus service, provides less control over the routes, frequency and overall delivery of the services.' [Combined Authority announces launch date for bus franchising consultation - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority \(cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk\)](https://cpcacambbridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk)

You can find out more about the proposals and provide your views at: <https://cpcayourvoice.co.uk/bus-franchising-consultation/>.

National Planning Policy Framework – proposed reforms

There has been much speculation on changes to planning policy by central government following the General Election. A government consultation is open for responses until 24th September 2024.

The proposals and information on how to respond are available at: [Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

The proposals include:

- Mandatory minimum housing targets to distribute required 370,000 homes per year across the country. The proposed standard method for calculating housing targets is based on increasing existing stock by 0.8% per year, applying an affordability multiplier that increases housing required in areas with a large difference between incomes and housing costs, removal of the 40% affordability uplift cap, and removal of urban uplift to distribute homes more widely. Under this method the target for Greater Cambridge would be 2,224 homes per year, and 46,704 homes between 2020 and 2041. This is slightly lower than the emerging Greater Cambridge local plan proposals.
- Increased density of housing in urban areas
- More rigorous requirements of the 5 Year Housing Land Supply. As more areas would likely be unable to demonstrate the more rigorous 5 Year Housing Land Supply, new clauses are being considered to the presumption in favour of sustainable development to try to ensure homes coming forward outside of a local plan are high quality.
- Proposal for development on Previously Developed Land to be 'acceptable in principle' in settlements and to be more flexible in the Green Belt as long as it wouldn't cause 'unacceptable harm to openness'.
- Local Plans must review Green Belt if targets can't be met without it, and use Previously Developed Land first, then grey belt (Previously Developed Land and other areas of Green Belt that make a limited contribution to Green Belt purposes), then other land, subject to sustainability considerations.
- Green Belt development could be considered not inappropriate if there is a lack of land supply, or a project of local/regional/national importance.

- Golden Rules for Green Belt release: 50% affordable housing, infrastructure, and green spaces. Controls over land values in viability assessments are proposed to try to make the Golden Rules achievable.
- Plans should consider the particular needs of those who require Social Rent.
- More support for labs and data centres etc and possibly including them in the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) regime.
- A raised threshold of renewables included within NSIP regime.
- Not introducing the previously proposed Infrastructure Levy scheme.
- Increasing planning fees to cover the cost to process the application and considering whether fees should be set nationally or locally.
- Mayoral Authorities to prepare Spatial Development Strategies.