

## South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

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

### District Councillors' Monthly Report – March 2026

#### 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:	<a href="mailto:Cllr.Atkins@scambs.gov.uk">Cllr.Atkins@scambs.gov.uk</a>	07968 264637
Ariel Cahn:	<a href="mailto:Cllr.CahnA@scambs.gov.uk">Cllr.CahnA@scambs.gov.uk</a>	07455 128924
Lisa Redrup:	<a href="mailto:Cllr.Redrup@scambs.gov.uk">Cllr.Redrup@scambs.gov.uk</a>	07855 324580

#### Cost-of-living information

Visit <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support/> for information on: 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 handyperson 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 and how to stay healthy and well.

Local Community Hubs include:

- Grantchester Communal Hall, Tabrum Close, Grantchester, Cambridge, CB3 9NW  
Opens: Friday, 10am – 12pm
- Toft Community Hub – Toft Methodist Chapel, High Street, Toft, Cambridge, CB23 2RL  
Opens: Monday, 10am – 12pm.

Find out more at: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support/community-hubs>

#### SCDC Corporate Action Plan and Budget

At the [February Full Council meeting](#), councillors approved the Corporate Action Plan for the next year. It focuses on environmental action, stronger community support and protecting frontline services.

#### Environmental action

Plans for the next 12 months will see major progress on the Council's *Being Green to Our Core* priority, including the ongoing roll-out of [weekly food waste collections](#) and continued construction of [a solar energy park](#) to help power the Council's growing fleet of electric bin lorries.

#### Expanded funding for Service Support Grants

Alongside environmental action, the Council will significantly strengthen its support for the voluntary and community sector. [A total of £900,000 over three years](#) - £300,000 per year - has been made available through the Service Support Grants programme, offering long-term funding agreements for groups delivering community support and development services across the district.

An additional £49,650 is also available for the years ahead to support services that help prevent and relieve homelessness. This investment supports a wide range of activity including mental health and wellbeing services, advice provision, independent living support, cost-of-living assistance and community projects.

### ***Continuing support for Mobile Warden schemes***

The Corporate Action Plan outlines ongoing funding for Mobile Warden Schemes, which provide crucial support for older, disabled and vulnerable residents - ensuring they can live safely and independently in their own homes. These schemes form a core part of the Council's work to promote healthy and supported communities.

### ***Boosting financial resilience and tackling the cost of living***

With many residents still facing financial pressures, the Council plans to continue providing its comprehensive [cost-of-living support package](#). A budget of £449,000 is set aside to help residents through the next two years through schemes such as emergency food and energy support, workshops, budgeting and debt advice, white goods and furniture for vulnerable people and laptops with digital training.

The [Low-Income Family Tracker](#) will continue to proactively identify households at risk of financial hardship and ensure they are claiming the benefits they are entitled to, helping prevent crises before they escalate. In the last year alone, this scheme supported South Cambridgeshire residents with more than 1,000 successful benefit claims – worth an estimated £4 million over the lifetime of those claims.

### ***Next steps for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan***

The Council continues to work on the new [Greater Cambridge Local Plan](#) through its Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) service with Cambridge City Council. It will be the first joint Local Plan for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

Elsewhere, GCSP, which was recently crowned the [Royal Town Planning Institute's Local Planning Authority of the Year](#), will be supporting the Council's engagement with the Cambridge Growth Company and its response to the Government's ambition to establish a development corporation to take forward the national priorities for Greater Cambridge. This is all whilst continuing to process around 6,000 planning applications a year.

### ***Delivering facilities for growing communities***

The Action Plan continues the work to deliver new community facilities at Northstowe. This includes the new permanent community centre for phase one – [the Unity Centre](#) – which is scheduled for completion within the coming months, helping ensure Northstowe has new, state of the art spaces to support its growing and thriving community.

### ***Balancing the budget***

A £5.24 per year, below inflation, increase in Council Tax for the average band D home was agreed at the Full Council meeting in February – to help protect essential frontline services in the face of continued rising costs.

It would mean the average band D home charge for South Cambridgeshire District Council would become £180.64 per year. It is expected that this would still maintain the Council's position among the lowest 25% of taxing District Councils in the country.

[This comes after the Government recently reduced](#) the amount of Business Rates which local authorities can retain. This means councils must find ways to cover the shortfall. For South Cambridgeshire, this has resulted in an overall loss of around £3 million in funding when considering changes in other grant arrangements too.

## **SCDC breaks record for new council houses**

SCDC has confirmed the completion of 113 new council homes since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 – the highest annual number achieved, surpassing the previous year's record of 91 homes with over two months of the financial year still to go. 31 of these new homes are nearby in Barrington. This is beyond what is achieved in many other areas but is vital due to high house prices and rents. In order to maintain council house building at this rate we have to agree to the government's recommendation to increase council house rents by 1% above inflation which amounts to 4.8%. However, this will be fully covered by housing benefit for those people on the lowest incomes.

You can read more about the locations and energy efficiency features of the new council homes at: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/news/south-cambridgeshire-district-council-smashes-record-for-new-council-houses>.

The new Council homes across South Cambridgeshire are a range of tenures. To express an interest in any Council home in South Cambridgeshire, you need to be registered with [Home-Link](#). For enquiries about the shared ownership properties, you can contact William H Brown by email at [SCDC@williamhbrown.co.uk](mailto:SCDC@williamhbrown.co.uk)

## **Planning**

### **£5 million to install water saving measures in council buildings**

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service has received Government funding of over £5 million to deliver part of the Greater Cambridge Water Efficiency Programme and help address water scarcity locally. South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council will use this funding to install water saving devices in existing council-owned buildings through a programme of retrofit work.

As part of this work, SCDC has partnered with Control Flow Technologies to help council tenants reduce their water use and lower their bills, at no cost to tenants. For some households, this could mean savings of up to £360 a year. To do this, there will be free water audits for council tenants with water meters and water-saving devices will be fitted where appropriate. The water audit involves three short visits:

- Visit 1: An engineer will take a meter reading, provide water-saving advice, and discuss current usage.
- Visit 2: The engineer will install a water-saving device on the incoming water mains (a 30–45 minute appointment). They will also check for hidden leaks in toilets, taps, or showers and carry out minor repairs where possible.
- Visit 3: To measure water usage

### **Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service YES team wins award**

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service's Youth Engagement Service (YES) has won a national award – the Thornton Education Trust (TET) Inspire Future Generations Award for Best Local Authority in Youth Engagement.

It was awarded for helping children and young people have a say in how their communities are designed. The award celebrates organisations that listen to young people and include their ideas when planning new places. YES was praised for making sure children's voices really matter.

Since 2017, YES has worked with over 2,000 young people through projects like *Have Your Say* and *Our Public Art*. The team also ran school workshops and gave young people the chance to try out jobs in planning.

This award shows how important it is to listen to young people and involve them in shaping the future. You can read more about it on the website at:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/news/greater-cambridge-yes-team-wins-national-award-for-excellence-in-youth-engagement>.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy Plans – reply by 29<sup>th</sup> March**

Section 106 is the statutory structure that the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service uses to get benefits out of new development for local communities. S106 is a tailor-made agreement for each application to mitigate the direct impact of that specific site and can only be applied to developments over a certain size.

A Community Infrastructure Levy, or CIL, is a standardized charge based on the size (in square meters) of the new building. The council usually sets a “charging schedule” and everyone pays the same rate. SCDC and Cambridge City Councils are currently consulting on a CIL strategy for securing contributions from developers for improvements to transport and other infrastructure to accommodate growth. A CIL would also see a proportion of the funds collected – up to 25% where a Neighbourhood Plan is in place – being made available to Parish Councils. S106 would still be available where needed to mitigate specific impacts.

The consultation is open until the 29th March 2026 and you can find the relevant documents, including the proposed charging schedule, and provide your feedback [here](#).

### **SCDC Zero Carbon Communities Grants -Pre-launch workshops 20<sup>th</sup> May**

Ahead of the next round of [Zero Carbon Communities Grants](#), there will be two pre-launch workshops on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May. The daytime one is 12.30-1.30pm and the evening one is 6-7pm. The workshops will provide information and guidance to help you with your application.

Following the workshops, the application window will run from the 25<sup>th</sup> May to the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2026. Funding is available to voluntary and community sector groups, charities and parish councils to support communities in South Cambridgeshire to take action on climate change. There may be some adjustments to the grant in the forthcoming round, so even if you are familiar with it or have applied before, we recommend you check for updates and save the date for our pre-launch workshops. If you have any questions about the workshops or the grant, please contact [ZCC@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:ZCC@scambs.gov.uk).

### **Electric bin lorries powered by solar energy**

Construction has begun on a pioneering renewable energy solar park to power electric bin lorries for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. The £6.1 million scheme is jointly funded by Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority - which agreed its contribution in December 2022.

It will see the installation of a one-megawatt solar system paired with a battery that can store enough energy to keep operations running smoothly. This will feed into 36 electric vehicle charging points for use by electric bin lorries and other vehicles at the councils' Waterbeach Depot. The aim is to help future-proof waste and recycling collections locally.

The Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network will enable the councils to significantly reduce carbon emissions from their waste fleets. These carbon emissions are currently among the highest contributors to the councils' overall emissions. By 2027, the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste service between the two councils will have 18 electric bin lorries in operation, supported by clean, renewable energy generated on-site. There are currently four electric bin lorries in use but there is not enough capacity in the local electrical grid to power more without this work.

As well as powering electric bin lorries, the project is expected to supply 59% of the depot's total energy needs from renewable sources and achieve over 40% biodiversity net gain through measures such as wildflower planting and new hedgerows to create a haven for local wildlife.

The scheme is due for completion in late 2026, with the costs expected to be paid back through clean energy within 15 years. The energy generated could power the equivalent of 250 UK family homes for 30 years, showing the scale of the scheme's environmental impact.

## **MHCLG consultation on establishing a Development Corporation for Greater Cambridge – submit your comments by 1<sup>st</sup> April**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has launched a consultation on the establishment of a 'Greater Cambridge Development Corporation'. It runs until the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 and can be accessed at [Establishing a Development Corporation in Greater Cambridge - GOV.UK](#). Please take the time to look at the proposals and submit your comments.

It proposes establishing a **government-led urban development corporation in Greater Cambridge**, so would cover both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire district, to help tackle a range of challenges including infrastructure deficiencies, commercial accessibility and housing affordability. The Ministerial foreword states: "Our aim is to facilitate high-quality sustainable growth in Cambridge and its environs. We want to deliver new homes and neighbourhoods that are attractive, well-connected, and nature-rich. We also want to build places that last and that set the standard for how our cities, towns, and villages can adapt to the future."

The consultation asks about whether there should be a development corporation, the objectives of a development corporation, the area of operation, powers, and integration of democratic representation. It is proposed that:

- Development of the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan would proceed, but that the development corporation would take over plan-making powers either after adoption of the new local plan or before, if the draft local plan is not considered to deliver development at the necessary scale and pace.
- The development corporation would determine planning applications on sites of strategic importance.
- The development corporation would operate for at least 25 years.
- The leaders of Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will be invited to join the Board, but the total size of the board and further membership is unclear.

The development corporation would build on the work of the Cambridge Growth Company (CGC), which is led by Peter Freeman. SCDC's Scrutiny and Overview Committee recently had a meeting with Peter Freeman and the staff of the Cambridge Growth Company. The recording of the meeting is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/1gLOh0HvzWI> (approx. 3 hours long). It begins with a presentation from Peter Freeman and other senior figures in the Cambridge Growth Company covering how they see the role of the Cambridge Growth Company and potentially a development corporation which would allow the government to take control of elements of growth and development. Peter Freeman expressed a preference for the development corporation area including the whole of Cambridge City and South Cambs District, but said that only a small proportion would be expected to be affected. They said that having a large area, rather than several specific sites, would provide freedom to provide infrastructure projects. They also stated their support for the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan and that they would aim to help address issues at key sites, such as landowner issues at the East Cambridge airport site and at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. They also said that growth in South Cambs is likely to be near large business/science parks and stations.

As this development corporation would have far-reaching impacts for the area and the council, there will be an extraordinary Full Council meeting on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March to discuss SCDC's response to the consultation. The response will then be approved by Cabinet at their meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> March.

## **Local Government Reorganisation consultation – submit your comments by 26<sup>th</sup> March**

The government continues to press ahead with its policy of abolishing county and district councils and combining their functions within larger unitary authorities. A seven-week public consultation has been launched and closes on the 26<sup>th</sup> March. You can access the consultation at: [Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Citizen Space](#). It consults on all four options for new unitary councils, with a standard list of 10 questions for each option.

Ahead of the consultation, South Cambs District, Cambridge City and East Cambs District Councils published a video and a news release which sets out the position of the three councils which is to support option B (or 1 in the consultation), i.e. two unitary councils, one for North Cambs/Peterborough and another for Cambridge City/South Cambs. The intention of this content is to engage local people with information about why the three councils believe this is the best option for the area, but the public and stakeholders will be reminded that there are other options on the table.

You can watch the video and read the news release [here](#), and also access SCDC's website section on [Local Government Reorganization](#).

### **Letting the police know of any issues**

The police run a continuous online Community Policing Survey to help the neighbourhood policing team build up a picture of what is happening in your area and what is concerning you most. This feeds into the policing priorities set each quarter for the district. The survey is available at: [Community Policing Survey](#)

There are also quarterly community policing meetings, where you can hear about recent police activities, ask questions and raise concerns. The next one is online on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2026. If you'd like to attend, please register by emailing [communitymeeting@cambs.police.uk](mailto:communitymeeting@cambs.police.uk) and quoting 'South Cambs'. You will then receive the link to join the meeting.

### **Businesses Against Abuse training**

The Community Safety Partnership is hosting Businesses Against Abuse training at South Cambs Hall on Wednesday 25 March. This is a free training scheme aimed at businesses and other employers whose staff or volunteers interact with the public, to address and prevent violence against woman and girls (VAWG). There are two sessions to choose from:

- 9:30am to 12pm [Businesses Against Abuse training 25/03/26 - AM](#)
- 1pm to 3.30pm [Businesses Against Abuse training 25/03/26 - PM](#).

### **Consultation on Local Transport Authorities and the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles**

The Department for Transport has launched [a consultation seeking views on the potential benefits and challenges of making all local transport authorities \(LTAs\) in England responsible for taxi and private hire vehicle \(PHV\) licensing](#). The consultation focuses on the impact this would have on:

- Councils
- Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) businesses
- Passengers.

This consultation follows publication of the [English Devolution White Paper](#) by MHCLG in December 2024. The white paper sets out the government's proposal to change the administrative level of licensing for taxis and PHVs to facilitate better and safer transport services for the public. The consultation closes on 1 April. Press release:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-proposals-set-out-to-reduce-out-of-area-working-for-taxis-and-boost-passenger-safety>

### **Funding to cover almost half the cost of installing EV chargers for households and businesses announced**

The Department for Transport has announced that renters, flat owners, homeowners without driveways and businesses will be able to save up to £500 when installing electric vehicle (EV) charge points, thanks to an over 40% increase in charge point government grant funding. The uplift will cover almost half the cost of a typical charge point installation until March 2027, helping more drivers access cheaper domestic electricity rates at home or work. The following updates will be introduced from 1 April:

- People living in rented accommodation, flat owners, residential landlords, households with on-street parking and businesses will all be able to receive higher grants of up to £500 per charge point, rising from the previous discount of £350.
- Schools will be eligible for grants of up to £2,000 per socket, building on 3,700 sockets installed to date.

[Read more about the grant changes on GOV.UK.](#)