

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

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

District Councillors' Annual Report – April 2026

District Councillors

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

Committee positions

Over the past year Cllr Atkins has served as Chair of the Audit and Corporate Governance committee, Cllr Cahn has served on Planning committee and Climate and Environment Advisory committee, and Cllr Redrup has served as Chair of the Climate and Environment Advisory committee and on Audit and Corporate Governance committee, Licensing committee, and Planning committee.

Governance

South Cambridgeshire District Council is in Liberal Democrat administration. Statutory services provided are: waste collection & recycling, planning, housing, environmental health, licensing, council tax collection, benefits, business development & support, and community services.

Council priorities

Sustainable homes and vibrant places

The Council owns and maintains nearly 6,000 council homes and has been working to increase the number by building or acquiring more than are sold through right to buy. It is expected that, in the 2025/2026 financial year, 139 new council homes will have been delivered. Work has also begun, in a partnership with the Hill Group, to deliver 256 new low-carbon homes in Cambourne, including 72 for affordable rent (built to Passivhaus principles) and 30 for shared ownership.

The council is continuing to upgrade the thermal efficiency of existing council homes using grant funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF), resulting in reduced energy costs for tenants. SHDF wave 2.1 is just coming to an end and has brought 237 more council homes up to EPC Band C, and wave 3 is expected to upgrade over 600 properties over 4 years.

For private homes, the council is part of a partnership which has secured government funding that can be used for upgrades (where eligibility criteria are met), most recently via the Warm Homes Local Grant. Please search for Action on energy Cambridgeshire to find out more.

Work is much advanced on the joint local plan with Cambridge City that should determine how our district is developed over the period 2025-2045 (Development Corporation permitting). The recently concluded consultation showed strong community engagement with over 4,500 responses gained from over 80 events online and offline. The comments are being analysed and there will be a final public consultation in the summer.

Helping businesses to thrive in South Cambridgeshire

The Business Support & Development Team continues to support local businesses including through the Visit South Cambs website and their local market work. There are now 17 markets running regularly throughout the year as well as the council's annual Christmas market. The team has also provided office space for start-ups and small businesses at South Cambridgeshire Hall in Cambourne and allocates government grants to support local businesses and communities, including the Improving the High Street grant which closes at the end of April.

Healthy and supported communities

Support for residents remains central. With many residents facing financial pressures, the council has continued its comprehensive cost-of-living support package. A budget of £449,000 is set aside to help residents over the next 2 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.

In addition, the council has made the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) scheme permanent. The software uses the council's databases to identify residents who are missing out on benefits they are entitled to claim. So far, it has helped over 1,000 residents secure more than £4 million in benefits for local households.

The council continues to support mobile warden schemes, which offer support and assistance for older, disabled and vulnerable residents, helping them to continue to live independently at home via regular calls and visits. The council has set out a funding programme which will enable mobile warden schemes to become more financially independent, hopefully securing their long-term viability across the district.

Being green to our core

The council has recently adopted a new unified Climate and Nature Strategy bringing together its climate change and nature recovery work (please have a look on the website). It again ran a successful Local Climate Action Conference, this time in Eddington, where attendees heard about local projects and provided feedback on the Climate and Nature Strategy.

The popular Zero Carbon Communities grant provided over £160,000 to 14 diverse projects that included improving the energy efficiency of community buildings, refurbishing and donating bikes, providing storage for a pre-loved school uniform shop, repair cafes, tours of retrofitted homes, food waste reduction, tree planting, and community events. Applications will be open again between May 25th and July 24th, with the maximum level of funding per project now £19,500.

Greater Cambridge Shared Waste started rolling out weekly collections of food waste in January 2026, and the whole of the district will be included by the end of the year. All households will receive a pack with full details and their new indoor and outdoor caddies a few weeks before their collections begin.

Efforts have continued to reduce the council's emissions from waste collection, with construction work now in progress for a solar panel array at Waterbeach depot to power the growing fleet of electric bin lorries. The array is expected to pay for itself within 15 years, and the site will also provide over 40% biodiversity net gain through wildflower and hedgerow planting.

Financially secure and fit for the future

At the council's budget meeting, members approved its business plan and budget for the coming financial year. This included a £5.24 increase (to £180.64) for an average Band D property. This works out to be 10p a week and is below inflation. The council remains in the lowest 25% of district councils for council tax and continues to offer up to 100% relief from council tax for those residents in the most need.

Government changes to local authorities

Our area currently has both a district and a county council, but over the next few years they will be replaced by a unitary authority – one council that provides the services of both district and county councils. The government is expected to announce the geography of our new council in the summer.

The government is also proposing a “centrally led urban development corporation” covering the area of Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council to turbocharge local growth. The proposals include taking away planning powers from the local planning service – for plan making (deciding where new developments should be) and for determining planning applications over a certain size. The development corporation would operate for at least 25 years, and the majority of board members would be professionals appointed by the government, reducing democratic accountability. The council has objected and instead asked for government support to address the local needs for improved infrastructure, facilities and services.