

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

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

District Councillors' Monthly Report – January 2025

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: 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:

- 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

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

Help for people working with health problems

The District Council has worked in partnership with neighbouring councils to launch a new programme called WorkWell, offering help to anyone struggling to find or keep a job due to a health problem.

To find out more, visit <https://www.growthworkswithskills.com/employer-hub/workwell/>

Climate and environment

New Net Zero Village Grant – Applications open until 26th Jan 2025

SCDC has been awarded over £350,000 by the CPCA to support rural communities to deliver capital projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This includes upgrading, extending, or improving facilities or purchasing capital items for community use spaces and places. The three project categories are:

- Tackling energy use and/or supporting energy efficiency or generation retrofit to community buildings.
- Enabling access to public transport or access to local services through low carbon transport.
- Nature based solutions to tackle overheating of community buildings.

Potential projects might include:

- Adding insulation, LED lighting or other energy efficiency measures to a community building
- Renewable energy solutions such as solar PV installations or wind turbines
- Battery storage for proposed or existing renewable generation systems
- Low carbon public transport solutions, such as a community-led shuttle minibus
- Green roofs or walls or tree planting to create shade.

Grants of £20,000 to £100,000 are available and the application deadline is the end of Friday 26th January 2025. If you have any questions, or are thinking of applying, please get in touch with the team at climateandenvironment@scambs.gov.uk. Information on the grant is available at: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/climate-emergency-and-nature/grants-funding-and-community-support/climate-change-grants/net-zero-villages-grant>.

Council approved a motion to support the Climate and Nature bill

At the Full Council meeting on Thursday 28th November, Council voted for a motion to support the Climate and Nature bill. This bill was first introduced at parliament in 2020 by Caroline Lucas and has recently been reintroduced by Roz Savage as a Private Member's Bill.

If agreed by the House of Commons and House of Lords, the new bill would lead to several climate and nature goals being enshrined in law, including:

- Requiring the United Kingdom to achieve climate and nature targets.
- Giving the Secretary of State a duty to implement a strategy to achieve those targets.
- The establishment of a Climate and Nature Assembly to advise the Secretary of State in creating that strategy.
- Giving duties to the Committee on Climate Change and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee regarding the strategy and targets.

You can read the motion at: <https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=100941>, and learn more about the bill and the Zero Hour campaign supporting it at: <https://www.zerohour.uk/climate-and-nature-bill/>. You can also learn about who locally supports the bill at: <https://action.zerohour.uk/>.

Best Value Notice removed

SCDC received a 6-month Best Value Notice from the then Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in November 2023 for its 4-day week working arrangements., which was extended for another 6 months in May 2024.

On 8th November, the Government's Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) informed SCDC that the Notice will not be reissued. The letter states:

We recognise the Council's constructive engagement with the department throughout the period of the Notices, including your cooperation with the request for data about the impacts of the four-day working week trial. As the Deputy Prime Minister set out in her letter to local authority leaders on 16 July and reiterated on 24 October at the Local Government Association conference, this Government is committed to working as partners in power, with mutual respect underpinning our approach. This means an end to micromanaging local authorities.

Local Government Organisation – Devolution White Paper

The government published the devolution white paper on 16th December 2024: [English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](#).

There are many proposals for Combined Authorities and Mayors. One of the most significant proposals is the creation of unitary authorities where there are currently two-tier councils as in our region. It is expected that newly created unitary authorities would have populations exceeding 500,000 but there may be exceptions. In our area it is expected that proposals for unitary councils will need to be submitted to government by Autumn 2025.

The rationale for creating unitary authorities is expected efficiency savings and service improvements. The paper cites a PWC County Councils Network commissioned report. It emphasises maintaining community-level engagement despite the larger size of unitary authorities compared with our local district and city councils. A phased implementation approach is proposed.

The paper also discusses changes to the way that councils are funded including a review of the business rates retention system.

Public consultations

East West Rail – Non-statutory consultation from 14th November to 24th January 2025

Funding for EWR was confirmed in the recent budget announcement, and subsequently EWR Co. has announced the dates for a non-statutory consultation which began 14th November and closes 24th January 2025.

Upcoming local in-person events include:

- Comberton Village Hall, 10 January 2025, 2-7 pm
- The Clayton Hotel, Cambridge, 18 January 2025, 2-7 pm

Please take the time to provide your views on this project, either online (you can access the survey via <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024>) or on paper (printed information and feedback forms are available at the consultation events and some libraries including Great Shelford, Comberton, Cambourne, Barnwell Road, and Rock Road).

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning –3 draft development guidance documents

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP), a partnership between Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District councils, is consulting on three Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) from **28 November 2024 to 24 January 2025**.

The SPDs will provide further information and detailed guidance on policies in the councils' current adopted Local Plans, to provide developers and infrastructure providers with clearer expectations for their new schemes. They aim to streamline the planning process and lead to higher quality developments across Greater Cambridge.

The three draft documents that Greater Cambridge Shared Planning is consulting on are:

Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

This SPD focuses on planning obligations, also known as section 106 contributions, which are financial contributions from developers to mitigate the impact of new development for homes or businesses. Examples include new schools and roads, upgrading playgrounds, or providing additional waste collection vehicles. The draft SPD sets out the proposed approach and clarifies this process for both developers and residents, aiming to reduce delays in securing necessary infrastructure.

Health Impact Assessment Supplementary Planning Document

This SPD addresses the impact of development on health and wellbeing. It outlines how developers should promote healthy and sustainable living environments and consider factors like safety, access to green spaces, and climate change when designing projects.

Cambridge Biomedical Campus Supplementary Planning Document

This SPD sets development principles to enhance integration and quality on the Biomedical Campus, supporting patient care, research, and community benefit across its facilities. It aims to create a well-integrated campus that benefits those working and receiving care there, and surrounding communities.

To find out more information and comment on the draft SPDs, visit:

www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/spd. Anyone who would prefer to receive printed literature or alternative formats to help them have their say should email localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org or call [01223 457000](tel:01223457000) or [01954 713000](tel:01954713000)