

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:	Cllr.Atkins@scambs.gov.uk	07968 264637
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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.

Key commitments include continued progress on the Council's *Being Green to Our Core* priority with the roll-out of weekly food waste collections and continued construction of a solar energy park to power electric bin lorries. Major investment is also planned for communities, including completion of Northstowe's new Unity Centre. Support for residents remains central. The council will provide £900,000 over 3 years in Service Support Grants for voluntary and community groups, alongside extra funding to prevent homelessness. Cost-of-living support will continue, backed by £449,000 over 2 years to provide emergency food and energy support, budgeting and debt advice, white goods and furniture for vulnerable people, and laptops with digital training and work using the Low-Income Family Tracker will continue to proactively identify households at risk of financial hardship to ensure they are claiming the benefits they are entitled to, and help prevent crises.

To help balance the budget amid a £3 million funding shortfall from reduced Business Rates retention, councillors agreed a £5.24 annual Council Tax increase for a Band D home. This below inflation increase means that the charge for South Cambridgeshire District Council's part of Council Tax will be £180.64 for the year. It is expected that this would still maintain the Council's position among the lowest 25% of taxing District Councils in the country.

SCDC breaks record for new council houses

SCDC has confirmed the completion of 113 new council homes since 1st 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 the council agreed 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

Planning

Local Plan update – Growth in South Cambs

South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City are high growth areas with large increases in employment predicted over the next 15 years which results in an increase in demand for housing. The South Cambridgeshire 2018 Local Plan is proving to be successful in ensuring that the new growth happens in the right places and that new housing is built close to employment rather than in rural areas where public transport is very limited. In the past 12 months over 9,000 new homes have been given planning permission mainly in three sites: Waterbeach New Town East (4,500 dwellings), Darwin Green Phase 2/3 (1,000 dwellings) and Bourn Airfield New Village (3,500 dwellings). In the same period, 1,735 homes were completed in South Cambridgeshire and 424 (24%) of these were affordable homes.

A new County Wildlife Site was also designated during 2024-2025 and includes part of Lark Rise Farm near Barton and Comberton. The new status highlights the areas ecological importance within the county.

If you'd like to read the Authority Monitoring report for Greater Cambridge 2024-2025, it is available at: <https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s142089/AMR.pdf>.

Community Infrastructure Levy Consultation – reply by 29th 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 at:

<https://oc2.greatercambridgeplanning.org/document/1334>.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service awarded £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 drive down demand for water in the area and offset new development by installing water saving devices in existing Council-owned buildings through a programme of retrofit work across partner councils.

The councils are investigating opportunities to install water saving devices and identify leaks in Council homes in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, as well as properties maintained by the councils such as Cambridge's swimming pools and South Cambridgeshire's headquarters in Cambourne.

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>.

MHCLG consultation on establishing a Development Corporation for Greater Cambridge – submit your comments by 1st 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 1st 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. Is this the right way to unlock the region's potential? Where should it have powers and what should those powers be? How do we ensure local people have a say?

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, so elected representatives would make up 4 out of 9 Board places.

The development corporation would build on the work of the Cambridge Growth Company (CGC), which is currently 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 17th March to discuss SCDC's response to the consultation. The response will then be approved by Cabinet at their meeting on the 24th March.

Local Government Reorganisation consultation – submit your comments by 26th 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 26th 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. The government will make a final decision on which local government structures are put in place this summer with the new unitary councils operating in a shadow capacity from May 2027 and full implementation expected in April 2028.

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

SCDC Zero Carbon Communities Grants -Pre-launch workshops 20th May

Ahead of the next round of [Zero Carbon Communities Grants](#), there will be two pre-launch workshops on Wednesday 20th 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 25th May to the 24th 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.

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 – a vital frontline service for residents.

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. Put another way, the energy generated could power the equivalent of 250 UK family homes for 30 years, underlining the scale of the scheme's environmental impact.

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 12th March 2026. If you'd like to attend, please register by emailing 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>