

## South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

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

### District Councillors' Monthly Report – October 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:	<a href="mailto:Cllr.Atkins@scambs.gov.uk">Cllr.Atkins@scambs.gov.uk</a>	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>

#### Update on Postal Vote Re-applications

Postal votes are due to expire at the end of January 2026 for anyone who's had a postal vote for over 3 years and hasn't yet reapplied. The Elections Team at South Cambridgeshire District Council has been working hard to support these residents. At the start of the Summer there were more than 15,000 electors that needed to make a new application. That number is now down to just over 7,200. These residents have been contacted by either email or post, and there will also be an article in the next South Cambs magazine and a social media campaign to encourage those who want to retain their postal vote to reapply. Anyone who has not made a new application by the end of January will have their postal vote cancelled, which will be confirmed to them in writing.

You can reapply online at [www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote](https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote) (you need to enter your National Insurance Number and upload a photo of your signature) or you can request a paper form from SCDC either by calling 01954 713 000 or emailing [elections@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:elections@scambs.gov.uk).

## Planning

### **Greater Cambridge Local Plan consultation**

SCDC and Cambridge City Council have been working together on a combined Greater Cambridge Local Plan. This will set local planning policy and so it is important that everyone has a chance to provide their feedback. A public consultation on the proposals will take place between 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026. These times have been chosen to enable submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State by the end of 2026.

### **Consultation on how section 106 obligations are used to mitigate the impacts of new developments closes on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October**

If you would like to contribute to the consultation on how section 106 obligations are used to mitigate the impacts of new development, there are still a few days left till the consultation closes at 5 pm on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October.

Please visit [www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/supplementary-planning-documents/](http://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/supplementary-planning-documents/) to see the materials and how to comment.

Paper copies of the documents can also be viewed at the Customer Service desks at Mandela House, Cambridge and at South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne. There will also be copies at the Central Library, Cambridge and viewing materials at in-person events.

### **Cambourne to Cambridge Busway public inquiry**

The Cambourne to Cambridge busway scheme developed by the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) is intended to provide high quality public transport from Cambourne through the new Bourn Airfield development to Cambridge City. The busway is a requirement in the adopted Local Plan 2018 to deliver Bourn Airfield. However, there have been many concerns raised about the project, and they are being considered in the public inquiry where the Government planning inspector is hearing from all sides.

The public inquiry began on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at the Cambridge Belfry in Cambourne and is expected to conclude on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2025. You can watch the livestream and find the timetable and all the submissions on the enquiry website at:

<https://gateleyhamer-pi.com/en-gb/c-to-c/>

### **Fens Reservoir consultation – 15<sup>th</sup> October to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

The Phase 3 consultation for a new reservoir in the Fens will begin on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October and run until Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025. It will focus on the following areas:

- **Updates to the reservoir design** showing potential opportunities for leisure, areas for wildlife, and links to surrounding towns and villages.
- **Updated proposals for the raw water and treated water infrastructure** that are needed to transfer water from sources to the reservoir, treat it and supply it to Anglian Water and Cambridge Water customers – providing landowners and communities in these areas with more detail.
- **Information on how the project could be delivered** including early thinking on construction and transport options.
- **Information on the approach to the environment** including, assessment of potential impacts, learnings so far, and potential steps to manage any impacts during both construction and operation.
- **Early plans on providing power for the reservoir**, including the current proposals for powering the site using renewable technology.

Locally, proposed works relate to transfer of the water into the area, which involves a new service reservoir at Madingley along with a supply pipeline.

You can find out more about the plans, details of community events and access the consultation at <https://fensreservoir.co.uk/>.

## Environment

### ***Climate and Nature Strategy – consultation open until 5<sup>th</sup> November 2025***

South Cambridgeshire District Council is currently consulting on its new Climate and Nature Strategy and would like to hear as many views as possible on the vision and proposals.

You can access the strategy and the survey at <https://engage.scambbs.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/climate-and-nature-strategies> and the survey will be open until the end of Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November.

There is also the opportunity to join a workshop on the Climate and Nature Strategy at the Local Climate Action Conference on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

### ***SCDC Local Climate Action Conference 2025 – Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025***

South Cambridgeshire District Council will host its third climate conference in October, open to councillors, community groups, charities, and anyone interested in meeting the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Speakers at the event include Ian Walters talking about a biodiversity action plan for Duxford Parish and Josh Newman from Grantchester's HeatLink about the transition to renewable heating. The Council's charity of the year, the Wildlife Trust Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire, will talk about groundbreaking butterfly research with the University of Cambridge that's changing the way they manage their nature reserves. Exhibitors include the RSPB, Cambridge Conservation Volunteers, Cambridgeshire Regenerative Trust and The Liberation Cycle.

In addition, a workshop will give attendees a chance to share thoughts on the seven themes of the Council's Climate and Nature Strategy for 2025–2030 – which is currently out for consultation and sets out an ambitious roadmap to halve emissions by 2030 and enhance biodiversity across the district.

- When: Friday 17 October 2025, 12pm - 5pm
- Where: Storey's Field Centre, Eddington Ave, Cambridge CB3 1AA
- Onsite cycle parking, nearby buses, and nearby car parking at Madingley Road Park & Ride
- RSVP [here](#).

### ***6 Free Trees***

South Cambridgeshire District Council is again inviting parish and town councils to take part in its popular Six Free Trees scheme, which has already helped plant 758 trees in communities since its launch.

The initiative offers each parish or town council the opportunity to claim either six small trees (whips) or one large pot-grown tree, with a choice of native species. Generally, free trees given out as part of the scheme can be planted on parish land or school grounds, and schools interested in participating are encouraged to contact their parish or town council to apply on their behalf.

The Six Free Trees Scheme has been run by South Cambridgeshire District Council since 2019, making this its fifth year in operation. As a result, some parish or town councils may find they have limited space for more trees. The District Council will therefore also consider providing free trees for other publicly accessible locations that are not on parish or town council or school land. This is subject to permission from the landowner and the District Council's approval.

Those wanting to claim free trees should complete the form at [www.scambbs.gov.uk/six-free-trees](http://www.scambbs.gov.uk/six-free-trees). Applications will close on 30 November – but the District Council encourages early applications to ensure timely delivery and planting during the optimal season.

## South Cambridgeshire residents invited to help shape Council priorities

South Cambridgeshire residents and businesses are being asked to outline their priorities for the District Council for the year ahead in a 6-week consultation. You can provide your thoughts on the priorities for the council at <https://engage.scambs.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/cap-26-27> up until the end of the day on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November. Responses will be used to help inform the council's action plan for 2026/2027.

The consultation is based on the [Council's Corporate Plan 2025-2030](#), which was agreed earlier this year (2025) and sets out a long-term vision for a **fairer, kinder, and greener South Cambridgeshire**. It focuses on five key priority areas:

- **Healthy and supported communities** - Supporting and engaging with our communities is key to tackling the challenges we face as a district. Our diversity is our strength and helping everyone live freely and independently is essential to promoting healthy and supported communities.
- **Sustainable homes and vibrant places** - A home is more than a roof over your head, it is the foundation on which people build their lives. An affordable home is essential for people to live happy, fulfilling lives. In light of the housing crisis, we are committed to strengthening our communities by delivering sustainable, affordable homes and vibrant places to live.
- **Being green to our core** - Being green is at the heart of everything we do. We're tackling the climate and ecological crises head-on, ensuring our district is ready for the challenges of climate change.
- **Helping businesses to thrive** - Already recognised as a nationally significant area for development, helping local businesses thrive is key to the development of our district - bringing new jobs and opportunities into people's communities.
- **Financially secure and fit for the future** - We have a duty to provide high quality cost-efficient services. Being open, transparent, and inclusive and letting evidence guide our decisions is critical to putting residents first.

## Have your say on the Local Council Tax Support scheme – closes 15<sup>th</sup> October

Every year SCDC considers whether it should change the Council Tax Support scheme for working age applicants in the district. This year, the council has put together some proposals on which it would welcome the input of residents and other stakeholders.

The changes, which would come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026, aim to streamline administration, improve efficiency, and align with other local authorities to prepare for future changes to local government. In brief the proposed changes are to:

- **Use of Universal Credit new claim notifications as application and award date** - this change aims to reduce the risk of residents missing out on support due to delays in submitting their Council Tax Support application or the application being received after their Universal Credit award is issued.
- **Revisions to backdating provisions** – extend the backdating period up to 12 months and allow claims to be backdated to the date the Council Tax liability has been notified.
- **Simplification of non-dependant deductions** – by introducing a flat-rate deduction.
- **Alignment of disability and carer premiums with Universal Credit** - align the value of disability and carer premiums in the Local Council Tax Support calculation with those used in Universal Credit so residents can better understand their entitlement.
- **Simplifying income bands and adjustment rules** - reduce the number of income bands and introduce rules to disregard minor income changes.
- **Enhancements to award notification processes** – by providing full award details via the online portal and include key information in Council Tax notifications.

The [public consultation](#) runs until the end of Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025. Paper copies of the consultation are available by emailing: [engage@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:engage@scambs.gov.uk).

## **Scam warning for SCDC council tenants**

Scammers have been calling residents claiming to be from the Housing Repairs service or similar, asking to discuss issues such as damp and mould. These calls may sound convincing, but they are not genuine. If you receive a call like this, please take steps to verify the caller. A simple way to check is to ask them to confirm your postcode. Genuine contractors working with the council will be able to provide this information.

Please be cautious and do not share personal details unless you are sure the caller is legitimate. If in doubt, hang up and contact your housing team directly on 01954 713 000.

## **Update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**

LGR is the government's plan to reorganise local authorities into unitary bodies which will replace the current district, county, and city councils. The changes will mean that residents will get all of their council services – for example, bin collections, housing support, roads maintenance or social care – through one organisation.

The seven councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have been working collaboratively since December 2024 to identify viable options for the new unitary authorities, and the results of a countywide engagement survey have just been published. The feedback from this survey will help to inform how councils are to be structured from April 2028, when the government's requirement for LGR is due to take effect.

The survey revealed overall support for reorganisation if it results in improved services. Respondents were clear that reorganisation must safeguard rural representation and identity as well as deliver tangible benefits, such as investing in services and being quicker to respond, and ensure councillors have local area knowledge.

To see more of the findings, the survey summary reports are available at:  
<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/about-your-council/local-government-reorganisation/joint-engagement-with-other-local-councils-and-three-options>.

The business cases now being developed by the councils must be submitted by the government's deadline of 28<sup>th</sup> November. The government will then consult further before it ultimately makes a final decision on which arrangements will be put into place.

In the meantime, some of the seven councils are conducting further engagement work on particular options, and SCDC is currently asking for resident's views on the possible Greater Cambridge unitary (combining the areas of SCDC and Cambridge City Council). A link to the survey can be found here: <https://engage.scambs.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/future-councils>. The survey runs until the end of Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> October.