

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

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

District Councillors' Monthly Report – January 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.

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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>

A £449,000 package of support over two years to tackle cost-of-living challenges

A budget of £449,000 has been [approved](#) to help South Cambridgeshire residents through the next two years of cost-of-living financial pressures. The plan focuses on supporting vulnerable households by expanding access to emergency food and energy support, building financial resilience by delivering workshops on budgeting and debt advice, and continuing community partnerships to provide coordinated support.

Each year the key measures will include:

- £28,000 for laptops and digital training for young and older people to reduce digital exclusion.
- £50,000 for [Community Hubs](#) - warm places run by trained volunteers that serve the local community's needs.
- £18,000 to continue to provide emergency food parcels to those in need to the door.
- £30,000 for an essential white good and furniture scheme for vulnerable people moving into homes to address furniture poverty.
- £50,000 to continue the mobile food hub which provides affordable healthy food in rural communities – with the potential to expand reach.
- £20,000 for dehumidifier and /or air drier provision to help relieve damp and mould for low income and vulnerable households
- £5,000 for grants to set up village pantries to increase access to affordable food in rural communities.

Planning

Greater Cambridge Local Plan consultation – 1st Dec 2025 to 31st Jan 2026

- Updated dates of events

SCDC and Cambridge City Council have been working together on a combined Greater Cambridge Local Plan. This sets out where new homes and workplaces could be built to meet the area's growing economic and housing needs, alongside the utilities, services, green spaces and community facilities to support them. Once adopted, it will become the official development plan for the area – guiding decisions on planning applications.

You can find out about the proposals and have your say at:

<http://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan>

A good place to start is with the [story map](#) which sets the context for the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan, shows the proposed areas for development, and explains the key themes of the plan (climate change, biodiversity and green spaces, great places, wellbeing and social inclusion, homes, jobs, and infrastructure). For example, the proposals aim to limit carbon emissions associated with new development by siting the majority of development in Cambridge or surrounding new towns where there are more facilities and public transport to reduce car dependence, and by requiring the highest achievable standards for energy and water use.

Another useful link is to the [draft policies map](#) which shows areas affected by the proposed policies.

The councils are holding in-person and online events where residents can find out more and speak to planners. You can see a full list [here](#), which includes:

- 5 - 7pm, Monday 12th January – drop-in session at Storey's Field Centre, Eddington, CB3 1AA
- 5 - 7pm, Thursday 15th January – presentation and Q&A on Cambridge Biomedical Campus, 1000 Discovery Drive, CB2 0AX
- 4:45 - 6:45pm, Friday 16th January – drop-in session at the Nightingale Pavillion Community Room, off Nightingale Avenue, CB1 8SG

Paper copies of the draft plan are available to view at the council offices and Cambridge Central Library.

If you have difficulty commenting online, please either call 01954 713694 or email localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org for help commenting in other ways.

Weekly food waste collections – phased roll out in 2026

Councils are required under national legislation to begin separate food waste collections, with the aim of boosting recycling rates and reducing the amount of food sent to landfill and consequent methane emissions. The service will be rolled out in five stages throughout 2026.

Everyone will be contacted directly with an introductory pack 6 weeks before their start date and will receive a small indoor caddy with bin liners and an outside bin. More information is available at www.greatercambridgewaste.org/foodwaste and the bin calendar page (<https://www.greatercambridgewaste.org/find-your-household-bin-collection-day>) will allow you to see your start date for food waste collections.

SCDC supports local organisations through 3-year Service Support Grants

SCDC has committed to Service Support Grant funding of £300,000 a year to local groups. This will underpin the delivery of services to support people with their mental health, independent living, advice services, and to help residents through the cost-of-living crisis. SCDC's Service Support Grant funding has almost doubled compared to the previous budget, made possible by prudent management of the council's finances and a recognition of the acute need for these services.

Grant recipients include:

- Cambridge and District Citizens Advice – £105,000 per year to provide free, confidential advice services to residents.
- Disability Huntingdonshire – £12,998 per year to support people with disabilities to live independently.
- Royston and District Community Transport (RDCT) – £7,000 per year to maintain accessible transport for those who need it most.
- Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre – £10,000 per year to deliver specialist support for survivors of sexual violence.
- Over Day Care – £30,000 per year to provide a transport and hospital discharge support service for older residents.
- Support Cambridgeshire (CCVS) – £20,000 per year to strengthen the voluntary and community sector in the district.
- Hope Against Poverty CIC – £14,400 per year to provide a Wellbeing Programme for people experiencing anxiety, bereavement, or social isolation.

More information, including the full list of grant recipients can be found here:

<https://southcambsweb.azurewebsites.net/news/grants-totalling-900000-for-local-organisations-that-support-residents-of-all-ages>

Local Government Reorganisation

The government has confirmed that the public consultation on Local Government Reorganisation for our area will start in early February, and last for seven weeks. There will be statutory consultees (yet to be confirmed) and the public will be invited to respond.

The four proposals put forward to government by different councils were:

- Option A – Peterborough, Huntingdonshire and Fenland; Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire
- Option B – Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire; East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Fenland and Peterborough
- Option D – Greater Peterborough and West Huntingdonshire; Fenland, East Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire; Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire
- Option E – Huntingdonshire; Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire; Peterborough, Fenland, East Cambridgeshire.

Option B was submitted by SCDC and information on this is available at:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/news/three-councils-back-case-for-two-new-unitaries-greater-cambridge-with-north-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough> and
<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=410&MId=10374&Ver=4>.

Local Authority Elections May 2026

As a consequence of the Local Government Reorganisation, just before Christmas the government wrote to all local authorities about May's elections. Because of the short time between the 2026 elections and those for the shadow Unitary Councils planned for 2027, they have invited local authorities in England to request the cancellation of their May 2026 elections. This has divided opinion, with some people thinking that a postponement would be undemocratic, and at the other end of the spectrum, there are concerns that the voting public might be turned off by having two local elections within 12 months of each other, especially since only around 30% of the electorate tends to turn out for local elections.

The query from government focussed on whether councils would have the capacity to run elections while preparing for reorganisation. Since SCDC has planned for the elections and does have capacity, the leader of the council will not be requesting postponement and so we expect the elections to be held in May 2026.

Have your say on police funding for 2026-2027

Cambridgeshire's Police and Crime Commissioner Darryl Preston has launched a short survey asking residents to tell him their views as he sets the budget for policing for the coming year.

The link to the survey information is here: <https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/news/2025/residents-asked-for-their-views-on-police-funding/>

Should anyone prefer to submit a response via telephone they can do so by calling 0300 333 3456. The survey is open until midnight on Sunday 11 January 2026.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – new planning reforms

The government has launched a consultation on its proposals for reform of the NPPF that will run until 10th March. The consultation can be found [here](#).

The Government has announced a range of new policies through the new NPPF, including:

- Permanent presumption in favour of suitably located development, which seeks to make development of suitable land in urban areas acceptable by default.
- "Default yes" for homes around stations for suitable proposals that develop land around rail stations within existing settlements, and around 'well connected' train stations outside settlements, including on Green Belt land. The Government are proposing a minimum density of 40 dwellings per hectare around all stations and 50 dwellings per hectare around 'well connected' stations.
- Driving urban and suburban densification, including through the redevelopment of corner and other low-density plots, upward extensions and infill development – including within residential 'curtilages'.
- Supporting small and medium sites with a category of 'medium development' for sites between 10 to 49 homes so SMEs have "proportionate rules and costs for their site size", including a possible exemption from the Building Safety Levy.
- Exempting smaller developments up to 0.2 hectares from Biodiversity Net Gain and introducing a suite of other simplified requirements to improve the implementation of BNG on small and medium sites that are not exempted. Defra will also consult on an additional targeted exemption for brownfield residential development, testing the definition of land to which it should apply and a range of site sizes up to 2.5 hectares.
- £8 million new funding for local planning authorities to accelerate planning applications for major residential schemes at the post-outline stage. This funding "will be targeted at those authorities with high volumes of deliverable applications in this Parliament and those with strong economic growth potential". £3m of this fund will go to London.