

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

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

District Councillors' Monthly Report – February 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>

Council Cabinet sets out ambitious 2026/27 plan with major green investment and expanded community support

South Cambridgeshire District Council has published its proposed priorities for the year ahead - setting out a bold programme of environmental action and community support.

Plans for the next 12 months will see major progress on the Council's *Being Green to Our Core* priority, including the ongoing roll-out of [weekly food waste collections](#) and continued construction of [a solar energy park](#) to help power the Council's growing fleet of electric bin lorries.

The draft Corporate Action Plan for next year was agreed by Cabinet Members at their meeting on Tuesday 3rd February and goes forwards for discussion at the Full Council meeting on Tuesday 24th February.

Expanded funding for Service Support Grants

Alongside environmental action, the Council plans to significantly strengthen its support for the voluntary and community sector. [A total of £900,000 over three years](#) - £300,000 per year - has been made available through the Service Support Grants programme, offering long-term funding agreements for groups delivering community support and development services across the district.

An additional £49,650 is also available for the years ahead to support services that help prevent and relieve homelessness. This investment supports a wide range of activity including mental health and wellbeing services, advice provision, independent living support, cost-of-living assistance and community projects.

Continuing support for Mobile Warden schemes

The draft Corporate Action Plan outlines ongoing funding for Mobile Warden Schemes, which provide crucial support for older, disabled and vulnerable residents - ensuring they can live safely and independently in their own homes. These schemes form a core part of the Council's work to promote healthy and supported communities.

Boosting financial resilience and tackling the cost of living

With many residents still facing financial pressures, the Council plans to continue providing its comprehensive [cost-of-living support package](#). A budget of £449,000 is set aside to help residents through the next two 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.

The [Low-Income Family Tracker](#) will continue to proactively identify households at risk of financial hardship and ensure they are claiming the benefits they are entitled to, helping prevent crises before they escalate. In the last year alone, this scheme supported South Cambridgeshire residents with more than 1,000 successful benefit claims – worth an estimated £4 million over the lifetime of those claims.

Next steps for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan

The Council continues to work on the new [Greater Cambridge Local Plan](#) through its Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) service with Cambridge City Council. It will be the first joint Local Plan for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. This marks a major step in planning for the region's future - ensuring new homes, jobs and supporting facilities can come forwards sustainably while protecting the region's environment, character and quality of life.

Elsewhere, GCSP, which was recently crowned the [Royal Town Planning Institute's Local Planning Authority of the Year](#), will be supporting the Council's engagement with the Cambridge Growth Company and its response to the Government's ambition to establish a development corporation to take forward the national priorities for Greater Cambridge. This is all whilst continuing to process around 6,000 planning applications a year.

Delivering facilities for growing communities

The draft Action Plan continues the work to deliver new community facilities at Northstowe. This includes the new permanent community centre for phase one – [the Unity Centre](#) – which is scheduled for completion within the coming months, helping ensure Northstowe has new, state of the art spaces to support its growing and thriving community.

Balancing the budget

A £5.24 per year, below inflation, increase in Council Tax for the average band D home is due to be discussed by councillors at the Full Council meeting in February – to help protect essential frontline services in the face of continued rising costs.

It would mean the average band D home charge for South Cambridgeshire District Council would become £180.64 per year. It is expected that this would still maintain the Council's position among the lowest 25% of taxing District Councils in the country.

[This comes after the Government recently reduced](#) the amount of Business Rates which local authorities can retain. This means councils must find ways to cover the shortfall. For South Cambridgeshire, this has resulted in an overall loss of around £3 million in funding when considering changes in other grant arrangements too.

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 we have to agree 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 Plans

SCDC and Cambridge City Councils are currently considering proposals for the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Levy (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 local communities.

SCDC's cabinet agreed to proceed at their last meeting, and, if Cambridge City Council's cabinet also agree, there will be a 6-week consultation.

You can read more about the proposal at:

<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s142080/CIL.pdf>.

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](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/establishing-a-development-corporation-in-greater-cambridge). 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. 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, but the total size of the board and further membership is unclear.

The development corporation would build on the work of the Cambridge Growth Company (CGC), which is 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](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-proposals-for-local-government-reorganisation-in-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough). It consults on all four options for new unitary councils, with a standard list of 10 questions for each option.

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, but the public and stakeholders will be reminded that there are other options on the table.

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

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 is being rolled out in five stages throughout 2026 – collections for the first set of areas began Tuesday 27th January.

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.

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.

Consultation on reducing the prevalence of private estate management arrangements

On 18 December 2025, MHCLG launched [a consultation focusing on tackling the growing issue of unadopted amenities on privately managed housing estates in England](#), where roads, drainage systems, green spaces, and other communal infrastructure are maintained by private estate management companies rather than public authorities. The government aims to:

- Reduce reliance on private estate management and increase adoption of amenities by public authorities
- Implement common standards for adoptable amenities to improve quality and consistency
- Explore mandatory adoption for certain public amenities, while considering exceptions for premium or exclusive features
- Remove perverse incentives that make non-adoption attractive to developers
- Improve data transparency, homeowner protections, and dispute resolution mechanisms
- Consider prohibiting embedded management arrangements and promoting resident-controlled management
- Assess financial sustainability of estate management charges and introduce affordability safeguards
- Seek evidence on impacts for homeowners, developers, local authorities, and management companies

The consultation closes on 12th March. Consultation:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reducing-the-prevalence-of-private-estate-management-arrangements/reducing-the-prevalence-of-private-estate-management-arrangements>