

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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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 handy person 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:

Toft Community Hub, High Street, Toft, CB23 2RL.

Opening times: Mondays, 10:30am – 12:30pm

Grantchester Communal Hall, Tabrum Close, Grantchester, Cambridge, CB3 9NW

Opening times: Friday, 10am – 12pm

Find out more at: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-and-people/community-hubs>

Tackling period poverty with environmentally friendly menstrual products

South Cambridgeshire District Council is once again providing free environmentally friendly menstrual products for hundreds more residents to help tackle period poverty. Councillors agreed to champion the cause, to ensure dignity for all. A funding pot of almost £10,000 has been agreed for the project, which will offer South Cambridgeshire residents a choice of one of three period product packs - either washable pads, period pants or reusable period cups.

Hey Girls, a UK-wide social enterprise, will be distributing the packs, and [residents can now apply online](#). The scheme will run on a 'first come, first served' basis.

LGA guide to disinformation for local councillors

The Local Government Association has developed [a guide on approaching and countering disinformation in response to interest from councillors seeking support in this area](#). The guide sets out key tangible actions councillors can take to respond effectively themselves while working closely with officers. Further information is available on the LGA's website and you can also find [a similar guide which was produced for officers earlier this year in LGA's Comms Hub](#).

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.

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>.

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.

Consultations

MHCLG consultation on establishing a Development Corporation for Greater Cambridge

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.

Community Infrastructure Levy Consultation

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council intends to submit a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule for examination under Section 212 of the Planning Act 2008.

CIL is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool local authorities use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area. The Councils propose adopting CIL to help pay for the strategic transport infrastructure required in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire.

Before submitting a draft charging schedule for examination the Council must make a copy of the draft charging schedule, the relevant evidence and a statement of the representations procedure available for inspection.

The consultation closes at midnight on **Sunday 29 March 2026**.

Supporting documents can be read here:

<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-and-neighbourhood-planning/community-infrastructure-levy-consultation>

Responses can be submitted online

(<https://oc2.greatercambridgeplanning.org/document/1334>) or e-mailed directly to CIL@greatercambridgeplanning.org

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>

Local Government Reorganisation consultation ends this month

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](#).

Reminder - Consultation on a new set of planning reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework

MHCLG has launched [a consultation seeking views on a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#). A [draft NPPF](#) has been published alongside this consultation and both documents should be read together. MHCLG is also seeking views on:

- data centres and onsite energy generation
- standardised inputs in viability assessments
- reforming site thresholds

The consultation closes on **10 March**

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-proposed-reforms-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system>). If you have any questions, please contact: PlanningPolicyConsultation@communities.gov.uk

Reminder - National Planning Policy Framework – and new planning reforms

The Government launched a consultation on a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and a suite of planning reforms. The Written Ministerial Statement can be read [here](#) and the Oral Statement the Minister gave to Parliament can be watched [here](#). The Government press release is [here](#).

The full consultation is [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-proposed-reforms-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system) (https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-proposed-reforms-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system). The deadline for responses is **10th March**. Key announcements:

- The Government has taken the decision not to proceed with statutory National Development Management Policies (NDMPs) at this stage. Instead, it has adopted national policy changes through the NPPF “while leaving open the possibility of a future transition to statutory NDMPs should it be required”.
- The NPPF has been significantly restructured. Its format and shape looks different to previous NPPF versions.
- 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.

Reminder - 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 proposals relate to England, but MHCLG is inviting perspectives from across the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). The consultation closes on **12 March**. For any enquiries, please contact:

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

Reminder - Domestic solid fuel burning consultation

On 22 January, the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs Defra, working with the devolved governments, launched a [UK-wide public consultation on domestic solid fuel burning](#), seeking views on further measures to reduce fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and smoke emissions from wood and other solid fuels. The consultation covers proposals on:

- New emission limits for solid fuel appliances, including wood-burning stoves
- New mandatory labelling for solid fuel appliances and fuels, including health impact information
- Stronger enforcement and higher penalties for non-compliance with domestic solid fuels regulations

Councils have a key role in air quality management and enforcement, and views are particularly welcomed from councils, public bodies and trading standards services. The consultation closes on **19 March**. More information, including the consultation document and how to respond, is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Parish and Town Council Elections: 7 May 2026

The government wrote to the South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) in December asking whether the Council would like to request postponement of the district council elections scheduled for May. We can confirm that the Council did not ask the government to postpone May's district council elections. The government made the final decision and SCDC elections will take place on Thursday 7 May, alongside elections for all parish and town councils in South Cambridgeshire.

Anyone wishing to stand for election to a parish or town council will need to submit a nomination paper. **The period to submit nomination papers opens on 30 March, and closes on 9 April at 4pm.** Completed nomination papers must be hand delivered with wet ink signatures to the elections team at South Cambridgeshire Hall between 9.00am and 5.00pm during the nomination period (except on the last day, where the deadline is 4pm). We will not accept nomination papers at weekends or on Easter bank holidays. Nomination papers may not be submitted by post. Please do not post nomination papers as we will have to return them to you.

Where a group of people are all submitting nomination papers together we would encourage you to have one trusted person bring in multiple nomination papers – this will help to make the process smoother for everyone. This person does not need to be a candidate – indeed many parish clerks have previously taken on this responsibility for sitting councillors seeking re-election (we understand that this will not be possible in all circumstances). We would also encourage you to email elections@scambs.gov.uk to book an appointment for the submission of nomination papers. We will accept walk-ins but you may have to wait to be seen. Please be aware that before we formally accept any nomination papers we will undertake an informal check of the paper to identify any issues with it.

At the close of nominations we will publish on our website a statement of the people standing nominated in each area. You will see from this notice which candidates are elected unopposed, and where there will be contested polls.

Over the course of the election period a number of notices will need to be published in each parish council area. We will issue these notices (by email, to clerks) periodically, with instructions on their display. You can find further information and download nomination papers on our [Elections 2026 webpage](#). Do not hesitate to contact the elections team if you have any questions.

Civil Parking Enforcement Survey

The authority to enforce some on-street parking offences (mainly where there are yellow line or restrictions) were transferred from the Police to Cambridgeshire County Council at the end of 2023.

We continue to work in partnership with the County Council to ensure the scheme is helping to reduce illegal parking. To help us understand the impact of the scheme and plan for the future, we are urging parishes to complete a short survey. Your feedback will be shared with Cambridgeshire County Council colleagues.

Complete the short survey: [Civil Parking Enforcement Survey - February and March 2026](#). The survey closes on the **31st March**.

Related information of interest:

- When Civil Parking Enforcement launched, we reminded parishes about the County Council's Local Highway Improvement scheme. Up to £25,000 could be available for projects, including to deal with parking matters. You can find out more on the County Council's [website](#).
- If any parishes have ongoing frustrations with illegal parking such as on single yellow lines, double yellow lines or dropped kerbs with tactile pavements (Civil Parking Enforcement Officers cannot enforce other matters such as parking close to a junction), you can raise a request via the County Council's [reporting website](#) at any time.

Community Chest Funding Still Available

The Community Chest fund is still open until the **31 March 2026**. Smaller Parish Councils or Parish Meetings (with fewer than 200 electors) are welcome to apply.

You can check the full eligibility criteria on our [website](#).

Examples of what we can fund:

- Small improvements to community buildings
- Equipment for local groups or venues
- Start-up costs for new community initiatives
- Activities that support wellbeing or help bring people together

Support Cambridgeshire have produced some [tips for making a good funding application](#).

If you have any questions, please email community.chest@scambs.gov.uk

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 of £2,000-£15,000 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](#).