

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

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

District Councillors' Monthly Report – December 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.

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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.

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. If this applies to you, you will have been contacted by the Elections Team at South Cambridgeshire District Council by either email or post. 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 (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.

Planning

Fens Reservoir consultation

The Phase 3 consultation for a new reservoir in the Fens begun on Wednesday 15th October and will run until **Wednesday 10th 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.
- **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 and potential steps to manage impacts in 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. Since the previous consultation, Anglian Water has extended the area identified for the service reservoir to include additional land that may be needed for an outfall pipeline connecting the reservoir to the Bin Brook stream.

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

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

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).

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

11 am-3 pm **Sunday 7th December** – attending South Cambridgeshire Christmas market (Cambourne Village College)

6 pm to 7:30 pm, **Wednesday 10th December** – online webinar on the development strategy and site allocations. Please register [here](#).

6 pm to 7:30 pm, **Wednesday 17th December** – online webinar on the key themes of the draft plan. Please register [here](#).

11 am to 2 pm, **Friday 19th December** – drop-in session at Clay Farm Community Centre (Trumpington)

10 am to 12:30 pm, **Sunday 21st December** – attending Hauxton Market (Hauxton Centre)

10 am to 12:30 pm, **Sunday 28th December** – attending Haslingfield Village Market (Haslingfield Village Hall)

- 6 pm to 7 pm, **Wednesday 7th January** – online webinar talking about the plan. Please register [here](#).

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.

New Planning website

The new Planning website is designed to give users a cleaner, more streamlined user journey, as content that was split across three sites is moved into one. You can enter your postcode to instantly view planning information relevant to your area, including conservation areas, live planning applications, tree preservation orders, listed buildings and flood zones.

You can view the website at: <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/>. It officially launched on the 2nd December.

Government proposals to increase the number of planning permissions granted

The government has announced that [housebuilding near well-connected train stations will receive a default “yes” in future if they meet certain rules](#). Housebuilders will be encouraged to build more homes near these transport links and there will be minimum housing density standards for these sites.

Councils in England will also be required to inform the government when they intend to reject new housing developments of 150 homes or more. The Housing Secretary would then be able to have the final say on whether they should go ahead.

These changes will be introduced with proposals to streamline the statutory consultee process.

Council campaign secures free school meals for 81 extra children in South Cambridgeshire

More than 80 extra children in South Cambridgeshire are now receiving free school meals, thanks to a pioneering initiative between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County council. The campaign combined an innovative IT system called the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT), designed to identify residents who may be eligible for benefits, and a data sharing agreement between the two councils to identify and contact families eligible for support but not currently claiming it.

The additional free school meals are expected to be worth more than £314,000 to the 66 families over the lifetime of their claims – if they claim from now until their children reach the end of year 11. For each of the 81 extra children now claiming free school meals, South Cambridgeshire schools will also receive extra funding called the pupil premium, aimed at improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The additional funding schools will receive is worth £116,555 in its first year alone and is expected to be worth more than £1 million (£1,020,560) should families claim from now until each child reaches year 11.

One young parent in Cambourne, now receiving free school meals after being contacted as part of the joint campaign, said: "It really will make all the difference. I've been going without things to try and pay for their meals. I've gone without things like clothing and haircuts - basic things most people don't think twice about - because there just wasn't enough money that month. It's not just the school meals, although these are absolutely massive - it helps with everything. I had to tell my son that he couldn't do Geography because I couldn't afford the school trip that went with it. My kids have always come first, and I'm so grateful that they'll be able to eat well without me having to make those sacrifices."

Since adopting the LIFT system 12 months ago, South Cambridgeshire District Council has helped secure nearly 1,000 additional claims for residents for a range of benefits they were previously unaware of. These claims are worth over £500,000 to residents in their first year alone, with a lifetime value of nearly £4 million based on average claim lengths. In addition to the families now claiming free school meals, this includes:

- 113 households now receiving [Pension Credit](#)
- 65 households now receiving [Healthy Start](#)
- 480 households receiving a payment from the Household Support Fund
- 69 households now on a reduced water tariff.

Updates from MHCLG

Men's Health Strategy for England published

The government has published [Men's Health Strategy for England](#) which aims to help tackle men's mental health challenges, improve physical health and reduce inequalities so men and boys get on and live longer, healthier lives. Men can be less likely to seek help and more likely to suffer in silence. This, combined with a higher propensity to smoke, drink, gamble and use drugs, means men's health is suffering, having a significant impact on families, workplaces and communities. The government is investing £3.6 million over the next three years in suicide prevention projects. The projects will break down barriers that middle-aged men face in seeking support, such as the stigma associated with seeking help and a lack of awareness of what is available and how to access it. The strategy puts men's health front and centre, addressing the challenges men face and designing solutions with men, for men. Councils are encouraged to share this information as appropriate.

Press release:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unveils-englands-first-ever-mens-health-strategy>

Reminder: Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for councils in England – government response

On 11th November, MHCLG published the [government's response to the consultation on strengthening the standards and conduct framework for councils in England](#). The reforms outlined in the government response aim to create a clearer, fairer and more consistent system for upholding standards in local government, strengthening accountability, transparency and public trust. This forms part of the government's wider commitment to greater devolution and a stronger local democracy.

Reminder: Police Governance Reform statement

On 14 November, the [government announced, through an oral statement, proposals to strengthen police governance by abolishing police and crime commissioners at the end of their current term in 2028](#). Police governance functions will be transferred either to Mayors of Strategic Authorities or, where this is not possible, to elected council leaders through new Police and Crime Boards. This is the first in a series of reforms that will be set out in the forthcoming Police Reform White Paper. Press release:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/police-and-crime-commissioners-to-be-scraped>

Report warns of widespread drought in 2026 without a wet winter

The Environment Agency has published its [Drought Prospects Report](#) examining the weather needed through the winter to ensure the country's current low water levels recover by spring 2026. Despite recent rainfall, the drought situation across the country is still precarious following a record dry spring and a continued run of heatwaves and dry weather throughout the summer. The new report analyses three different rainfall scenarios over winter and what each one would mean for water security across England's regions ahead of next year's traditionally drier months. Without average rainfall, most of England will experience a drought with widespread impacts felt by consumers, farmers, businesses, and nature. The Environment Agency is urging the public to continue to play their part and use water wisely through winter, in anticipation of another drought year.

Press release: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/report-warns-of-widespread-drought-in-2026-without-a-wet-winter>

Christmas market – Sunday 7th December at Cambourne Village College

Save the date for the annual indoor Christmas market in Cambourne. They'll be around 100 local businesses stalls offering a fantastic variety of gifts, crafts, festive treats, and hot food - there's something for everyone!