

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.

Michael Atkins:	Cllr.Atkins@scambs.gov.uk	07968 264637
Ariel Cahn:	Cllr.CahnA@scambs.gov.uk	07455 128924
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.

'National Plan to End Homelessness' launched

On 11 December, MHCLG launched the ['National Plan to End Homelessness' – a cross-government Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The Strategy will drive long-term sustainable change to address the root causes of homelessness.](#) It sets out how the government will build more homes, ensure social homes go to people who need them, reform renters' rights, and tackle poverty. The Strategy also sets out how the government will move the system away from crisis response and towards prevention. It also outlines immediate action the government is taking to tackle the most unacceptable forms of homelessness now. The government will end the use of B&Bs for families other than in short-term emergencies by the end of this Parliament, and the strategy sets out a range of actions to improve the quality of temporary accommodation. The government will hold itself to account with national targets and reports on progress every two years and expects councils to hold themselves to account too. The Strategy calls on every council to critically assess their homelessness strategy and shift from reactive crisis responses to a culture rooted in prevention.

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](#).

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.

Please do share the survey with among your networks and via any local community pages or emails. 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 – and new planning reforms

Yesterday, 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.

Consultations

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.

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.

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

MHCLG has today (16 December) 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