

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Harston & Comberton Ward

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

District Councillors' Monthly Report – September 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.

Laurence Damary-Homan:	Laurence.damaryhoman@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 handyman 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: Fridays, 10am – 12pm

Caldecote Sports Pavillion, Furlong Way, Caldecote, Cambridge, CB23 7ZH

Opening times: Tuesdays, 11am – 4pm

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

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](#).

Grants & Consultations

Greater Cambridge Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation begins

The Proposed Submission Greater Cambridge Local Plan consultation is now open and will close on **Friday 25 September**. The consultation is the last opportunity for communities to comment on the Plan before it is submitted to Government and examined by an independent Planning Inspector. Unlike earlier consultations, this final stage is more narrowly focused on whether the Plan is "sound" and meets national planning requirements. Responses will therefore need to focus on whether the Plan is justified by the evidence, effective in achieving its objectives, deliverable and consistent with national planning policy.

Please help raise awareness of the consultation in your communities to encourage residents, businesses, and local groups to take part and share their views. There are plenty of social media posts being placed on our Greater Cambridge Shared Planning channels for you to share:

[Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Facebook](#) | [Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Instagram](#) | [Greater Cambridge Shared Planning LinkedIn](#) | [Greater Cambridge Shared Planning X](#)

There will also be a series of exhibitions taking place across South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge throughout September. These events provide an opportunity for residents to learn more about the Local Plan, view supporting information and speak directly with members of the Planning Policy team about the consultation. There is no need to register in advance, although Eventbrite registration is encouraged to help with event planning.

For details of all upcoming exhibition dates and venues, and to access consultation materials and submit comments, just visit [the Greater Cambridge Planning website](#). If you have any questions about the consultation process or the Local Plan, please contact the Planning Policy Team at localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org or on 01954 713694.

The Long-Term Health Condition Grant is now open

Applications for the Long-Term Health Condition Grant opened on 9 July 2026. It is a funding opportunity to create programmes and activities that support adults with long term health conditions to keep active, aiming to provide a wider range of activities and inclusive engagement opportunities across the district. An application can secure a maximum of £2,000 of funding, which can be used on e.g. venue hire, equipment purchases, staff training, or improving accessibility to engagement.

The following people/groups or businesses can apply:

- Small fitness businesses/entrepreneurs (must show public liability insurance, qualifications, and safeguarding if applicable)
- Community facilities (e.g. town/village halls)

- Voluntary sector organisations
- Specialist groups

Applications close **5pm** on **Friday 25 September 2026** and applicants will be notified of the outcome on Monday 9 November 2026. Please apply/find more information on our website: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/long-term-health-condition-grant>

Cool spaces across South Cambs

We've compiled a list of venues across the district that people can visit to stay cool, particularly on high temperature days. It also has tips to help keep homes cool. Visit www.scambs.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/staying-cool

South Cambridgeshire Clerks Conference

We are holding a Clerks Conference, all Clerks and Deputy Clerks in South Cambridgeshire are invited. The last of these, in March, attracted 30 attendees, representing 35 Town / Parish Councils, and we hope to expand on this. The Conference will be held on **Wednesday 30th September 2026, 9.30am - 2.30pm**. The location is **South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, CB23 6EA**. The agenda will be distributed very soon, and will include presentations on LGR and Housing, in addition to a catered lunch and networking opportunity.

A dietary requirements form is here: [South Cambridgeshire Parish Clerks Conference, 30th September 2026 - DIETARY REQUIREMENTS](#). A selection of supplementary presentations, as well as the ones covered at the event, will be sent out as soon as possible following.

Any prospective attendees can contact jack.bullimore@scambs.gov.uk to be added to the list of attendees. Please also contact Jack if there are any questions.

Community energy funding opportunity via Great British Energy

Great British Energy (GBE) are currently seeking expressions of interest from local and community energy groups across the UK. This first step is to help identify projects across the UK, helping build a clearer picture of projects and proposals to help inform the future design of GBE products and approaches to support local and community energy. By responding to the expression of interest this will also allow organisations to opt-in to receive updates on GBE local funding opportunities and initiatives. For more information see: [Express your interest | Great British Energy](#)

New Home Energy Guide for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough residents – Please share locally

The District Council is pleased to share a new Your Home Energy Upgrade Guide for residents across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The guide has been developed through the Cambridgeshire Energy Retrofit Partnership (CERP), working as Action on Energy, a partnership of local authorities across the region. The project has been funded by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA).

Designed specifically for homes in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, the guide provides trusted, practical information to help residents improve the comfort, energy efficiency of their homes. It includes advice tailored to different house types, information on insulation, heating systems and renewable technologies, guidance on when to seek professional support, and details of available grants and services.

Whether residents are homeowners, landlords or tenants, the guide is intended to help them understand their options and take steps towards warmer, healthier and more energy-efficient homes. The Council would like to encourage promoting the guide within local communities by sharing it on social media, through parish newsletters, and with local community groups and residents.

Read the guide here: www.actiononenergycambs.org/guidance-and-installation
Thank you for helping us raise awareness of this valuable resource and support residents in making informed decisions about improving their homes.

Free to Feed breastfeeding campaign celebrates four years and more than 170 venues

South Cambridgeshire District Council, working alongside NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Infant Feeding Team and local partners, is celebrating the ongoing success of the #FreeToFeed campaign, which helps create welcoming spaces for families. Since launching in 2022, the campaign has encouraged 174 businesses, community venues and public organisations to sign the [FreeToFeed](#) pledge demonstrating their support for families who breastfeed and / or express milk while out and about.

The initiative aims to help families feel confident feeding their babies whenever and wherever they need to, while increasing understanding among businesses, staff and the wider public. Every venue signed up to the campaign agrees to adopt a breastfeeding welcome policy and ensure staff understand how to support families in a positive and inclusive way. Local businesses that have signed the pledge often report positive experiences, helping them demonstrate their commitment to being family-friendly while welcoming a broader customer base.

South Cambridgeshire District Council is encouraging any businesses, cafés, community venues, leisure facilities or organisations that have not yet joined the campaign to sign the pledge and become officially FreeToFeed friendly. For more information and how to get involved, visit the District Council [website](#) or email Duty.Communities@scambs.gov.uk

Weekly food waste collections update

The roll out of weekly food waste collections is continuing across the district. Collections in Comberton, Coton and South Trimpington began in the week commencing 24th August, and collections for Barton, Harlton, and Haslingfield are due to begin in the week commencing 12th October. All homes will receive information on food waste collections and a small indoor food waste caddy, a starter roll of caddy liners and a larger outdoor food waste caddy for kerbside collections ahead of the start of the service.

The Government's Simpler Recycling legislation makes weekly collection of household food waste mandatory for all local authorities. Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service began rolling out the service in January 2026 and by the end of August will be collecting food waste from more than 60,500 homes. Since its launch, the service has collected more than 2,800 tonnes of food waste which is being used to generate power and create biofertilizer.

You can find out more about food waste collections at:

<http://www.greatercambridgewaste.org/foodwaste> and if you already have food waste collections, please use the link to give your feedback on the service.

East West Rail update: Commencement of door-to-door visits for outstanding Land Interest Questionnaires

As part of their ongoing work to update records of land ownership and occupation along and adjacent to the proposed railway route, East West Rail have written to landowners requesting completion of a Land Interest Questionnaire (LIQ). It is important that East West Rail hold correct information to ensure that they contact everyone with an interest in land directly impacted by their proposals and that they have an opportunity to have their say on the proposals and participate in the planning process.

Where a completed LIQ has not been returned, members of the East West Rail Land Team may visit properties in person. The purpose of these visits is to confirm that the LIQ has been received, answer any questions landowners may have and provide support with completing and returning the questionnaire. If no one is available when they call, a calling card will be left with details of how to contact the team.

Should you be approached by a landowner with questions about this activity, please direct them to the contact details provided in their correspondence or to the relevant LIQ webpage: [East West Rail | Land Interest Questionnaires \(LIQs\)](#).

Rewiring the State

Over the summer, the government published a statement setting out how they intend to re-shape how the public sector functions and empower local leaders to drive growth in their areas. This is certainly the most radical change public service delivery for a generation.

There is a summary of the document, by way of the CPCA report to their Audit and Governance committee, which has just been published: [Rewiring the State and opportunities for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.pdf](#). The Council strongly recommends a read of this helpful summary – you will note that **significant powers are being devolved** to mayors and mayoral authorities.

Full council motion on sewage in our rivers

In July, SCDC councillors supported a motion condemning the scale of sewage dumping by water companies, both nationally and in local rivers which are rare chalk stream habitats. The motion urged the UK government to replace Ofwat with a stronger regulator, boost funding for environmental enforcement, and ensure residents don't bear the cost of infrastructure upgrades while water companies profit. The Council resolved to write to both the Secretary of State for Environment and Anglian Water demanding tougher action and progress updates on reducing local sewage outflows.

You can view the motion (and the minutes of the debate once published) at <https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=410&MId=10464&Ver=4> or you can watch the meeting at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzjYkASQEc> (approx. 2 hours 31 mins).

MHCLG updates

Planning guidance: letters to chief planning officers

On 22 July, MHCLG issued [a planning update newsletter to chief planning officers of local planning authorities in England](#). It contains details about the latest announcements relating to planning practices and policy. The newsletter draws attention to the final regulations on the national scheme of delegation and size of planning committees which Ministers made on 15 July 2026 following parliamentary debates, as part of the government's reforms to modernise planning committees. The government has also published [statutory guidance to support local planning authorities in applying the national scheme of delegation: Planning Committees and the National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions](#). These regulations will come into force on 31 October 2026.

In addition, this edition also draws attention to forthcoming changes to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Defra Ministers laid regulations on 13 July which will introduce the first set of changes arising from the BNG consultation held last year (as set out in the government response published in April).

Finally, it also includes information on regulations laid by the government on 16 July to increase planning application fees and published its response to the consultation on planning fees and local fee setting.

Subject to Parliamentary approval, the new fees will apply from 8 December 2026. The new fees are expected to achieve around 90% cost recovery nationally, providing a substantial uplift in funding for planning services.

Government updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

A new version of the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) was published by the government on 17th August 2026. It replaces the December 2024 NPPF with immediate effect for making decisions on planning applications. The new NPPF is a comprehensive rewrite of the previous version of the Framework. Although the Local plan remains the statutory starting point when considering planning applications, any policy that is materially inconsistent with a policy in the new NPPF should be given very limited weight, so has, in effect, been superseded by the new NPPF.

Key changes include:

1. A More Rules-Based, Nationally Consistent System

- The NPPF is now structured to distinguish clearly between plan-making and decision-making policies.
- The Government aim is to make development management policies more consistent nationwide – replacing “local” planning requirements with national policies.
- The reforms are also intended to avoid/prevent duplication in national and local policy and reduce departures from national policy in local level plans.

2. Stronger Presumption in Favour of Development

- The new NPPF introduces a revised and strengthened approach to the “presumption in favour of sustainable development.”
- Development within settlements “should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects.”
- Outside of settlements, a more limited range of development forms still applies but there is now more active support for those development forms (including agricultural and farm diversification, sport and recreation developments) being approved.
- Where the Councils are not meeting identified housing need, appropriate new housing development outside of but adjoining settlement boundaries is supported.
- Presumption on Councils making a decision on planning applications promptly – and refusal not normally justified on the basis that a statutory consultee has not responded in time.

3. Development Around Stations

- The Government has expanded its 'default yes' approach for appropriate forms of development within reasonable walking distance of "well-connected" railway and tram stations including where that development lies in the green belt.
- The policy applies to the top 80 Travel to Work Areas by GVA.
- Greater Cambridge and all of the railway stations in Greater Cambridge fall into this definition.

4. Increased Density Expectations

- Greater support for intensification in existing urban areas, including associated adjustments to design policies to allow this to happen.
- More scope for development within residential gardens.
- Support focused on increasing floorspace for existing homes – including by extending upwards
- An expectation of higher density around transport hubs.

5. Strategic and Medium sized sites recognised with different and proportionate information requirements for applications

- The framework introduces a new distinct category of strategic sites (generally comprising developments of around 1500 homes or more).
- Objective is to reduce the burdens of providing supporting information to smaller scale planning applicants
- A new category of Medium development (up to 49 homes or 2.5 hectares) with less onerous application and infrastructure expectations has been created.

6. Telecommunications and Infrastructure Support

- Even stronger support given to delivery and upgrade of telecommunications infrastructure.
- Particular emphasis placed on improving connectivity, including along rail corridors.

7. Regeneration and Brownfield Redevelopment

- Continued strong support for Brownfield Development
- Greater flexibility proposed in the application of parking standards, particularly for large retail and similar redevelopment schemes, to facilitate regeneration and redevelopment opportunities.

8. Community Facilities Protection

- National policies protecting community facilities have been strengthened replacing many local plan policies.
- Particular protection to avoid unnecessary loss of facilities such as public houses.

9. Local Standards

- Limits the use of locally specific quantitative standards unless local justification can be demonstrated.
- Retains the ability of the LPA to set local water consumption requirements where justified and site specific BNG requirements above 10% national standard but not as a blanket policy.

10. Meeting the challenge of climate change

- Focus on spatial development patterns to reduce demand and enhance resilience including identifying opportunities for green infrastructure provision and nature-based solutions which can safeguard and improve carbon storage, support nature recovery and resilience. Supports sustainable patterns of movement including public transport infrastructure, walking, cycling, wheeling.
- Further support for roll out of car charging infrastructure
- Support for decentralised energy networks
- Substantial weight given to the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings (solar panels, heat pumps etc) where not already permitted development
- Considering how access to good facilities can reduce the need to travel and how density can improve catchment populations to create more sustainable service delivery models.