

**Supplementary Report of Councillor Carla Hofman
and Councillor John Williams to
Parish Councils for March 2026.**

*This report contains factual information which we hope will be of use and of interest
to the parish council and to the wider community of the parish.*

*For queries please email us at cllr.williamsjg@scambs.gov.uk or
cllr.hofman@scambs.gov.uk*

*Also, look out for the Parish Clerks e-Bulletin from South Cambridgeshire District
Council*

Council sets a £180 Council tax for the average household for 2026-7

For £2.80 a week the average (band D) household in the district pays one of the lowest Council Tax rates in the country for South Cambs services, and for it gets an award winning council which pays all its staff including apprentices above the Real Living Wage, builds hundreds of council homes (139 in this financial year) and recognised by its peers as one of the most financially secure and well run. And not forgetting – a four-day week which has brought increased productivity and staff retention saving hundreds of thousands of pounds, attracted talented people and greatly improved staff wellbeing.

South Cambridgeshire Corporate Plan for 2026-7

South Cambridgeshire District Council has confirmed a bold programme for the year ahead – built around strengthening communities, backing local businesses and more progress towards a cleaner, greener future.

Plans for the next 12 months will see major progress on the Council's Being Green to Our Core priority, including the ongoing rollout of the weekly food waste collections to help reduce the amount of food waste being sent to landfill. There will also be the continued construction of a solar energy park to help power the Council's growing fleet of electric bin lorries.

Alongside environmental action, the Council will 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.

The approved 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.

With many residents still facing financial pressures, the Council will 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.

The Council continues to develop 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 – and more than 4,500 comments were received during a recent eight-week consultation. 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 at the end of 2025 was crowned the Royal Town Planning Institute's Local Planning Authority of the Year, will be supporting the Council's ongoing 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 support neighbourhood planning and process over 6,000 planning applications a year.

Elsewhere, the Council also intends to provide rental space for businesses, including via its commercial premises and space for start-ups and small businesses at its South Cambs Hall office building. Through the Visit South Cambs website, there will also be continued promotion of the district's high streets, events and businesses.

Local sports, community spaces and a loneliness initiative given Community Chest Grants

A grassroots cricket club, a village hall, and a café supporting older residents to tackle loneliness are among the groups set to benefit from the latest round of Community Chest grants from South Cambridgeshire District Council. The Council's Community Chest fund has given more than £632,000 in grants in the last decade to support a wide range of local projects that improve life for people living in the district.

Councils unveil plans to crackdown on antisocial driving at Babraham Road Park and Ride

South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City councils are asking for views on introducing a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) at Babraham Road Park and Ride, following ongoing issues with dangerous and disruptive driving. It comes after the District Council introduced a similar order at the Milton Park and Ride last year.

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 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”.
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- **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.

The council will obviously be responding to the consultation.

Greater Cambridge Development Corporation

The Government has published its plans for a Development Corporation covering the whole of South Cambridgeshire and the City. This body will determine the planning policies and decide on the major planning applications. The Government’s plan excludes local democracy giving the local planning authority an advisory role only, giving the Government appointed board members the decision on our future. The Government says this will deliver the infrastructure needed to deliver its plan for 150,000 homes.

The council is holding an ex-ordinary meeting later this month to decide in its response.

Carla & John