

Cambridgeshire County Council – Papworth and Swavesey Division  
South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caxton and Papworth Ward  
County and District Councillors' Monthly Report – March 2026

## Local Government Reorganisation

The Government's consultation on the options for local government reorganisation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is live until Friday 26 March.



Map of LGR option A



Map of LGR option B



The Government has chosen to consult on all four options submitted. These would replace the current county and district arrangements with new unitary authorities—a single council responsible

for delivering all local government services in an area, rather than services being split across different councils.

Cambridgeshire County Council has submitted Option A (Two Councils. One Fairer Future.), which joins East Cambridgeshire with Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, and enables local residents to share in decision-making over the places where we work, study, shop, receive health care, and spend leisure time. Find out more at:

<https://yourvoice.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/your-future-councils/>

Residents can view all the options and submit their views online. Free use of computers, Wi-Fi and internet access is available at Cambridgeshire libraries, along with printed versions of the consultation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-reorganisation-in-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough>

The Government is expected to announce its final choice of option in the summer.

## **News from the District Council**

### **Local Elections – 7<sup>th</sup> 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. 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 parish and town councils in South Cambridgeshire.

As many of you may know, local elections are preceded by a quiet period, sometimes referred to as "purdah". This year, the pre-election period starts on Monday 30 March and runs until the close of polls on Thursday 7 May. During this period, routine business-as-usual council activities will continue but anything which may be considered "political" will be postponed.

Anyone wishing to stand for election to the district or a parish 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). For copies of forms and more information, email the Elections Team at [elections@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:elections@scambs.gov.uk)

Now would be a good time for residents to apply for a postal or proxy vote if you need one. The Elections Team at South Cambs will be busy as election day approaches!

## **Full Council meeting: budgets and business plans**

SCDC's Full Council met recently and approved its business plan and budget for the coming financial year. SCDC continues to deliver high quality services in the face of sustained cuts by central government, including recent reductions to the amount of Business Rates that local authorities can retain. A £5.24 per year increase in Council Tax for the average Band D home was agreed, which is a below-inflation rise. It means the average Band D charge for South Cambridgeshire District Council will be £180.64 per year from 1 April. Even with this increase, the Council will remain one of the lowest charging district councils in the country (and lower than the precept of some parish councils).

## **What is a "DevCo"?**

The idea of a development corporation ("DevCo") for Greater Cambridge has been around for some time. That idea is now one step closer, as MHCLG (Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government) have just launched a consultation on the establishment of a 'Greater Cambridge Urban Development Corporation'.

The link to the consultation can be found here and you are welcome to respond if you have opinions:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/establishing-a-development-corporation-in-greater-cambridge>

In brief, the government has drawn a red line around Cambridge City and South Cambs, then proposed the development of all "large sites" would be managed by the DevCo. The definition of "large" is open for discussion apparently but the consultation paper mentions Bourn Airfield, Waterbeach and Northstowe as current examples. They will also be looking at North Cambourne. The Greater Cambridge Planning service will be allowed to take the current Local Plan to completion and that will be the basis of the DevCo's work.

We assume the DevCo board will be chaired by Peter Freeman, who is chair of the Cambridge Growth Company. He is also the former Chair of Homes England, which is charged with delivering the number of houses the government deems necessary across the country. The rest of the board will be drawn from leaders of the local councils, business and the university. Establishment of a DevCo will require an act of parliament.

The consultation does recognise the barriers to growth around Cambridge including water scarcity, congested traffic infrastructure and pending power shortages. The paper does suggest some ambitious ideas, including looking at "mass rapid transit" (which I assume does not mean busways!).

## **Mobile Warden schemes**

SCDC has pledged ongoing funding for Community/Mobile Warden Schemes, which provide crucial support for older, disabled and vulnerable residents - ensuring they can live safely and independently in their own homes. The schemes form part of the Council's work to promote healthy and supported communities.

## **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service has agreed to consult on a Community Infrastructure Levy ('CIL') for Greater Cambridge to help fund the infrastructure needed by new developments. The report can be found here: [CIL.pdf](https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s142080/CIL.pdf)  
(<https://scambs.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s142080/CIL.pdf>.)

Greater Cambridge on behalf of 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.

A CIL is a form of development tax calculated on the amount of floorspace that is built. The charging schedule appended to the report sets out the types of development that will pay CIL and how much. We estimate that each new CIL liable dwelling will pay around £4,000 to £6,000.

Whilst the Councils are proposing introducing CILs to help fund strategic transport infrastructure, Parish Councils will be entitled to 15% of the receipts rising to 25% where a Neighbourhood Plan is in place.

The Parish Council must use the CIL receipts passed to it to support the development of the parish council's area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure, or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the area.

The Councils are inviting comments, via public consultation on the Draft Charging Schedule and accompanying documents. The consultation opens at 09:00 on Monday 16 February 2026 and closes at midnight on Sunday 29 March 2026.

The Councils will submit to the examiner copies of any representations made, a statement setting out the number of representations made, and a summary of the main issues raised.

### **How to view the consultation documents**

Online at: <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/cil>

By appointment at:

- Cambridge City Council's Customer Service Centre: Mandela House, 4 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1BY (phone 01223 457000)
- South Cambridgeshire District Council Reception: South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge, CB23 6EA (phone 01954 713000) during normal opening hours.

### **How to make comments**

You are encouraged to comment online  
at: <https://oc2.greatercambridgeplanning.org/document/1334>

Comments can also be submitted directly by email: [CIL@greatercambridgeplanning.org](mailto:CIL@greatercambridgeplanning.org)

Alternatively, you can make comments in writing. Written representations can be submitted via post to: CIL Consultation, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, South Cambridgeshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA.

Please include your name, and both your postal and email addresses with any comments so we can keep you informed on the progress of consultation process.

Persons making representation may request the right to be heard at the examination. Such a request must be made and received within the above specified period for making representations.

Representations may be accompanied by a request to be notified at a specified address of any of the following:

- (i) that the draft charging schedule has been submitted to the examiner in accordance with section 212 of PA 2008,
- (ii) the publication of the recommendations of the examiner and the reasons for those recommendations, and
- (iii) the approval of the charging schedule by the charging authority.

**Comments can be made on these documents between 9am on Monday 16 February 2026 and midnight on Sunday 29 March 2026.**

All comments received during the consultation period will be published. Please refer to our [privacy notice](#) for further details, which can be found on our website. During this consultation, we will be using artificial intelligence (AI) to summarise longer submissions, unless you request us not to use it. It is important to note that all submissions and representations processed by AI will be reviewed by Officers to ensure accuracy.

## **Saving Water for Tenants**

South Cambridgeshire District Council has partnered with Control Flow Technologies to help council tenants reduce water use and lower their bills, at no cost to tenants. For some households, this could mean savings of up to £360 a year. Using funding from MHCLG, SCDC is arranging free water audits for tenants with water meters and will be fitting water-saving devices where appropriate. The council is also exploring opportunities to use this funding for further water-saving measures in its offices, as well as projects in Cambridge City and across the county. The water audit involves three short visits:

- Visit 1: An engineer will take a meter reading, provide water-saving advice, and discuss current usage.
- Visit 2: The engineer will install a water-saving device on the incoming water mains (a 30–45 minute appointment). They will also check for hidden leaks in toilets, taps, or showers and carry out minor repairs where possible.
- Visit 3: To measure water usage.

Tenants will be contacted directly with information on how to book their water audit.

## **News from the County Council**

### **Council Business Plan and Budget**

The Full Council met on Tuesday 10 February, to vote on the budget and business plan for 2026/27 to 2028/29. The proposals for a ‘healthy, fair and sustainable Cambridgeshire’, approved by a majority of councillors, include record spending on roads, thousands of extra school places, and support for vulnerable residents.

The nearly £1.3 billion business plan and budget includes a number of investments aligned with the council’s three new ambitions.

#### **Supporting a green and sustainable county**

- an additional £20 million for highway maintenance.
- delivery of the council’s Climate Change and Environment Strategy.
- £11 million to upgrade Household Recycling Centres at Milton and March.

#### **Enabling full and healthy lives for all**

- £14.7 million of additional funding for adult social care providers to help them manage rising costs and ensure care workers are paid the Real Living Wage, improving stability and quality for those who depend on care workers for their support. Ensuring fairness and opportunity.
- continuing holiday meal vouchers until the end of summer 2026 for those children most in need, despite the Government withdrawing the Household Support Fund; the council will also use the new £5 million Crisis and Resilience Fund to provide a wider range of anti-poverty measures, offering practical support to households facing financial challenges.
- 3,500 new primary school places, and £72 million over five years to increase secondary school places.
- £780,000 a year to run a children’s residential home in South Cambridgeshire, along with continued funding for the Families First early intervention programme that helps keep more families together.
- more than £1.2 million will be invested in libraries and archives over the next two years.

Rising costs in social care and special educational needs are putting enormous pressure on council finances, and these statutory services for our most vulnerable residents now account for by far the largest part of our budget. Despite these national pressures we are still managing to invest in key priorities.

Thousands of people depend on our roads and paths every day and residents tell us repeatedly that highways are their top concern. We are continuing record levels of investment in maintenance, alongside additional support for overstretched social care, and continued funding for free school meal vouchers.

We will continue to challenge Government to recognise they are short-changing the communities of Cambridgeshire and to provide the right level of funding for services our residents deserve.

The plans include an increase of council tax by 4.99 per cent, the maximum permitted by Government for county councils, as is the case in nearly all councils across England, and the level assumed by Government in setting its grant allocations. This will generate around £21 million in additional funding and help the council continue providing the essential services people rely on.

## **Assets & Procurement**

### **Cambridge Biomedical Campus**

The County Council's Assets & Procurement Committee has agreed a partnership with developer Prologis to support the future expansion of Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

67 acres of land owned by the council is being put forward to allow the campus's next phase of growth. This will deliver space for life science research, development and innovation, co-working laboratories, learning spaces, a skills and training centre, key worker serviced apartments and offices for life science support companies.

Proposals include investment in transport infrastructure, green spaces and a community fund. The project will give the council a future commercial return, subject to planning permission, that will be used to help deliver our key services and support the council's ambitions.

## **Highways & Transport**

### **Potholes**

The council is continuing to do everything it can to address the large numbers of road defects that have appeared in the last two months. This is a national issue so road repair crews are in demand everywhere.

Wet weather has reduced productivity and increased the chances of repair failure. Road space availability for road closures is hard to come by in some parts of the county and internal resources are stretched and difficult to scale up. This has resulted in increased time required to respond to and mark up, reports of fresh defects, longer times to fix marked potholes and higher failure rates.

The highways service is responding as flexibly as it can and the council continues to increase its own investment where Government funding falls so far short.

## **Children & Young People**

### **Two new special schools for Cambridgeshire**

Cambridgeshire County Council has asked the Department for Education to continue with the delivery of two new special schools in Gamlingay and March. Greensands Academy Gamlingay and Lime Academy March had been approved for delivery by the DfE under the previous government, and are expected to provide 270 new special school places in Cambridgeshire.

## **Environment & Green Investment**

### **Safe disposal of batteries**

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership RECAP is urging residents to recycle batteries and battery-powered electricals safely, following an increase in fires caused by incorrectly

disposed lithium-ion batteries. Recent incidents include a fire at Thalia's Alconbury waste transfer station at New Year, as well as thirteen bin lorry fires across Cambridgeshire in the last twelve months.

In 2023, more than 1.6 billion batteries were thrown away in the UK, with over 1.1 billion hidden inside everyday household items such as phones, tablets, e-cigarettes, toothbrushes and power tools. When these items end up in general waste or mixed recycling, batteries can ignite or explode during collection, transport or sorting.

Across the UK, over 1,200 waste-related fires were recorded in the past year—a 71% rise since 2022, posing significant risks to crews, the public and waste-handling facilities. Lithium-ion batteries are especially dangerous when crushed in lorries, and even small button or toy batteries can spark fires once compacted.

To help prevent fires, residents are urged never to place batteries in the bin, to use designated recycling points, tape over damaged terminals and check for local collection schemes.

All types of batteries can be recycled free of charge at Household Recycling Centres, supermarkets and DIY stores. This includes loose household batteries, lithium-ion and rechargeable batteries, and batteries in small electrical items. Any shop that sells batteries must also accept used batteries for recycling.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/waste-and-recycling/battery-disposal>

## **Community Watercourse Maintenance Grants**

Cambridgeshire County Council is offering grants of up to £10,000 to support community-led maintenance of watercourses that help reduce local flood risk. These grants are aimed at areas where ownership is unclear or complex, making regular upkeep difficult. Eligible groups include parish councils and community flood groups with active plans to improve water flow and prevent flooding. Grant funding will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications will remain open until all available funds have been allocated, so the County Council encourages interested applicants to apply as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

[More information and how to apply:](#)

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/flood-and-water/residents-and-householders/community-flood-action-programme/watercourse-maintenance-grant>

## **News from the Combined Authority**

### **Bus franchising**

An independent review of bus franchising for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has issued a draft report to Combined Authority officers. Further detailed work will now be done, with an update to the Combined Authority's Transport Committee in June.

### **Electric vehicles**

The Combined Authority has been granted £361,780 from the Government's Electric Vehicle pavement channels grant fund and is working with the County Council and Peterborough on how this funding will be used.

### **Transport funding**

In December 2025 the Department of Transport issued a letter to the Combined Authority confirming a four-year package of local transport funding allocations. This settlement brings together a number of different funding streams into a single sum, and allows the Combined Authority to determine how these are allocated to the county council and Peterborough.

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09 March 2026

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