

## **Joint CCC & SCDC Report: June 26**

### **Cambridgeshire County Council**

#### **Reaction to the Greater Cambridge Development Corporation**

Cambridgeshire County Council has issued a statement in response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's announcement of a new Greater Cambridge Development Corporation, with the intention of accelerating growth.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/reaction-to-the-greater-cambridge-development-corporation>

#### **Summer HAF Programme**

Children eligible for benefits-related free school meals can access 64 funded hours at a HAF holiday scheme where a daily meal, physical exercise and enriching experiences are offered. Families experiencing financial hardship also qualify.

Operating 21 July to 28 August.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living/holiday-activities-and-food-programme>

#### **Growing woodlands in Cambridgeshire survey**

Cambridgeshire County Council is inviting communities, landowners and farmers to come forward if they have land suitable for new woodland, hedgerow creation, and nature recovery, as part of a campaign to rebuild the county's depleted tree cover.

The Council is now inviting expressions of interest from community and parish groups, landowners and farmers with land of 0.5 hectares or more that may be suitable for tree planting, woodland creation, hedgerow improvement or wider nature recovery initiatives.

Cambridgeshire is one of the most tree-depleted counties in England, with intensive agriculture and the loss of traditional hedgerows leaving habitats fragmented and wildlife increasingly isolated.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/council-urges-communities-to-help-grow-woodlands-in-cambridgeshire>

#### **Quality of Life survey launches to gather resident views across Cambridgeshire**

Cambridgeshire County Council's annual Quality of Life survey is an online and telephone survey that will capture the views of around 5,500 residents and is being delivered in partnership with Cambridge Ahead and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

The 20-minute telephone survey is being carried out by independent market research company Thinks Insight, which aims to speak to a representative sample of approximately 1,100 residents aged 18 and over in each of Cambridgeshire's five districts, ensuring a broad and balanced range of perspectives.

Residents will be asked about a range of topics, including life and community, transport, health and wellbeing, children and young people, and perceptions of the council and its services.

The survey supports the council's vision of a healthy, fair and sustainable Cambridgeshire, where everyone can thrive now and in the future. Previous survey findings have highlighted areas where residents would like to see improvement, such as road and pavement maintenance, the cost of living, and mental health and loneliness.

Alongside the random sample, all residents are encouraged to take part via the council's website at: [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/quality-of-life-survey](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/quality-of-life-survey)

The survey will close on 5 August 2026.

### **Successful Healthy Child Programme extended**

The Healthy Child Programme (HCP) partnership has been extended for two years to provide the best start in life for Cambridgeshire residents and reduce inequality. The HCP, funded via the Public Health grant, is a national public health programme which aims to achieve good outcomes for all children from pregnancy through to 19 years of age. It includes both Health Visiting (aged 0-5 years) and School Nursing (aged 5-19 years) services.

Identifying developmental needs as early as possible allows for more timely interventions, working across early years services, that aim to improve children's school readiness. Since the HCP programme began in April 2025, health visiting performance has steadily improved.

The percentage of Cambridgeshire children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the reception year at school, has also seen recent improvements, particularly for children with free school meal status.

Over the last year the School Nursing aspect of the HCP has seen new oral health sessions delivered in primary schools, the development of parent/carers webinars to support primary to secondary transition and the creation of new resources for SEND young people.

### **£1.38 million grant scheme approved to help boost water resilience**

The Environment & Green Investment Committee has unanimously approved plans for a new £1.38 million grant scheme to help farmers and growers across Cambridgeshire use water more efficiently and reduce pressure on the county's chalk streams and precious water resources.

The UK Government-funded Water Resilience Grant Scheme will be delivered by Water Resources East (WRE), and will support practical measures such as rainwater harvesting, on-farm water storage and more efficient irrigation. These improvements will help farms become more resilient and access alternative water sources, helping to manage the overall water demand across homes, businesses, and the environment.

More information will be published on Cambridgeshire County Council and WRE's websites, once details are confirmed.

### **South Cambridgeshire District Council**

Both Jose and I feel relieved and honoured to have been re-elected by the residents of our 4 villages in last month's election and will continue to represent their views at South Cambridgeshire District Council.. We will also continue to provide our joint report to Parish Councils with Adam Bostanci, our County Councillor and newly elected District Councillor for Bassingbourn and Litlington 😊

### **Annual Meeting of South Cambridgeshire District Council**

All 3 of us attended the first full council meeting of the new session on Thursday 21st May 2026. This was largely a procedural meeting where a Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council were appointed, Peter Sandford and Eileen Wilson, as well as the leader of the council, Bridget Smith. Importantly council member nominations were confirmed and approved for various committees and external bodies.

Jose will continue as Chair of Grants Advisory Committee and Sally Ann was elected to Chair Employment and Staffing Committee. Sally Ann is also Vice Chair of the Community Safety Partnership and both are members of Licensing Committee.

### **Zero Carbon Communities Grant**

SCDCs Zero Carbon Communities Grant is now open, and all Parish Councils or local community groups may be interested to know if they are eligible to apply.

Grants of between £2,000 and £19,500 are available, with £152,000 to be awarded in total, so if there is a project that could reduce carbon emissions or encourage more sustainable living, this could be the funding to make it happen. Eligible projects might include improving energy efficiency of a community building through insulation, heat pumps, solar panels or LED lighting, supporting low-carbon travel such as cycling infrastructure, or community-led initiatives around waste reduction, nature, or sustainable lifestyles.

For full details visit the Zero Carbon Communities Grant page on the South Cambs website, or feel free to contact myself or Aisha at [cllr.hutchcraft@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.hutchcraft@scambs.gov.uk) or

cllr.rashid@scambs.gov.uk. The deadline for applications is 5pm on Friday 24 July 2025.

### **Local Government Reorganisation: Where Are We Now?**

The process of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is moving forward at pace, with a number of significant milestones ahead. Following the MHCLG consultation earlier this year, a decision announcement is expected in July 2026. If confirmed, a Structural Changes Order (SCO) would follow in late 2026, with the legislation needing to pass through Parliament. The SCO will formally establish the new unitary authority, setting out names, boundaries, electoral arrangements, and the vesting day for new councils as well as the abolition date for existing ones, which would cut current councillors' terms short by two years.

Elections to a shadow authority are anticipated for 6th May 2027, with the shadow authority meeting and appointing its executive and interim statutory officers by 20th May 2027. The expected vesting day, when the new authority becomes fully operational and South Cambridgeshire District Council is wound up, is 1st April 2028. In the intervening period, Joint Committees will play a crucial role in overseeing the transition, with political membership drawn from both county and district councils. MHCLG has committed to consulting closely on the content of the SCO, particularly around transitional and electoral arrangements, though it is acknowledged that further "mop up" legislation may be needed further down the line. Residents can expect more updates as the process develops.

### **High Court Injunction: West of Moor Drove, Histon/Cottenham**

We are aware of concerns relating to potential unauthorised sites locally in recent weeks. It may therefore be of interest to residents that South Cambridgeshire District Council has been granted a High Court injunction under Section 187B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against persons unknown in relation to land west of Moor Drove, Histon/Cottenham. The temporary injunction was granted on 24th May 2026 by The Honourable Mr Justice Mansfield and prevents any further unauthorised works or development continuing on the site.

The matter came to light over the bank holiday weekend when significant works were identified on the land, with the apparent intention of establishing a large traveller site in the green belt. Officers and legal advisors acted swiftly, submitting an emergency injunction application on the Sunday, with the judge granting the order the same evening. The Council subsequently worked with the police to serve notice on the site and secure drone footage as a record of its condition at the point of service. The matter returned to court on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June to extend the injunction. The Council sought to secure a full, longer-term injunction. The Judge granted a yearlong injunction to prevent any further development, other works or caravans being brought onto the land and the removal of all caravans brought on after the interim injunction was served, meaning the additional 12 caravans will need to be removed.

## **Government announcement regarding an urban development corporation for Greater Cambridge, Wednesday 3 June 2026**

South Cambridgeshire District Council has reiterated its serious concern after the government confirmed plans to create a Greater Cambridge urban development corporation – which would hand planning powers from local councils to the new body.

Councillors have restated their opposition, arguing the shift from locally elected authorities to a central government body is wholly unnecessary.

As outlined at the [Full Council meeting in March this year](#), councillors said that while government funding is needed to support Greater Cambridge's significant infrastructure challenges, this should not come at the cost of local democratic accountability—particularly in an area ranked among the top 10 nationally for delivering new homes and growth.

Although details remain unclear, [the government decision](#), announced on Tuesday 2 June, is expected to see remove many developments - currently shaped through local plans and community engagement - from local decision-making, creating the largest corporation of its type. The centrally led body, following MHCLG consultation earlier this year, would be governed mainly by government-appointed board members rather than local representatives.

**Cllr Bridget Smith, Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council**, said: “We’re already one of the top areas in the country when it comes to how fast new homes are being completed. Planning permission for a total of 37,000 new homes has already been granted across Greater Cambridge. There’s existing permission for the equivalent of almost 60 football pitches worth of lab and commercial space. The Royal Town Planning Institute say we’ve got the best Planning Service in the country. Removing planning decisions from locally accountable councils risks undermining the very things that make growth successful – local knowledge, community involvement, and democratic decision-making.

“In fact, we think this change risks slowing growth down. The real barriers to delivery are not the planning decisions made locally, but delays in key supporting facilities such as water, transport, and utilities and this is where any development corporation should focus its energy and influence. The government needs to work in partnership with local councils; not create uncertainty amongst communities and developers about the future of the area. Last night’s announcement pledges working in partnership with local leaders and communities – none of which has happened since the government’s consultation. We are in the dark as to any details about how the development corporation will operate and frankly, we have more questions than answers.”

When you also consider the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, there are already proposals for up to 77,000 new homes and over 100,000 jobs across South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge. These proposals have been shaped by extensive public consultation and robust evidence.

It is anticipated that the corporation would also replace the councils’ role in preparing Local Plans after the conclusion of the current emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

This would mean that, for the next 25 years, decisions about where new homes and jobs come forward across Greater Cambridge would be made by the urban development corporation, rather than by local communities through the councils.

Bridget Smith is in contact with the relevant ministers and also our local MPs: we anticipate more information will be available shortly.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions or concerns. We have new email addresses as follows: [Cllr.Hart@Scambs.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Hart@Scambs.gov.uk) and [Cllr.Hales@Scambs.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.Hales@Scambs.gov.uk)