

Joint Cambs County Council (CCC) & South Cambs District Council (SCDC) Report

Whaddon – March 2026

County Council Budget

The nearly £1.3 billion Business and Budget Plan approved last month included the following headline figures:

- £20m for highway maintenance, on top of Government funding, for a total of £73m to be invested directly by county into managing and maintaining our highways.
- £14.7m to support older people, adults with disabilities and families, who rely on care every day, the council is allocating £14.7m of additional funding for adult social care providers.
- This will help them to 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.
- £1m to continue holiday meal vouchers for the children most in need, through to the end of summer 2026. Government is withdrawing over £2m for this scheme and significantly extending the eligibility without providing clarity about the finances.
- The Household Support Fund, will be replaced by its new £5m 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, including at Alconbury Weald and North-West Cambridge.
- £780,000 a year to run a children's residential home in South Cambridgeshire, as well as continued funding for the Families First programme, an early-intervention project that helps keep more families together and is supported by the £6.7 million Children's, Families and Youth Grant.
- More than £1.2 million invested in libraries and archives over the next two years.
- Last year the council fined utility companies and developers £480,000 for over-running and non-compliant roadworks and will be extending this approach next financial year.

Rising pressures especially in children's and adults' care meant it was a budget process of finding savings after savings. Growth in the economy is sorely needed for public services to improve. We approved a council tax rise of 4.99 percent. Several press releases on committee decisions to feed into the budget process are available on the council website.

Highway condition and potholes

Please continue to report issues. As the weather improves, the potholes that opened up due to the cold and wet winter, should be filled more quickly. While the County Council continues to invest in our highways (see above), as recognised by the Government, significant long-term funding is required to deal with the estimated £800m repair bill across the county.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/roadworks-and-faults>

Local Government Reorganisation - consultation reminder

Until Thursday 26 March, the government is consulting on four different options for Local Government Reorganisation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, which have been developed by different councils across the region. We cannot overstate how important this issue is and encourage you to have your say either via the [government's consultation portal online](#) or SCDC's own [website](#).

In our area, two main options are in play for a future unitary authority. Very likely, South Cambridgeshire District will either merge with Cambridge City Council to form a “Greater Cambridge” unitary authority (known as Option B put forward by South Cambs and City), or merge with Cambridge City and East Cambridgeshire to form a “South-East Cambridgeshire” unitary authority (known as Option A put forward by the County Council). While most other parts of Cambridgeshire would prefer to merge with the City of Cambridge, our area will very likely do so whatever happens.

Some arguments in favour of Option A:

- The size of the two future authorities will more balanced meaning more balanced votes at the Combined Authority, the strategic authority which makes significant funding decisions for the entire area. Expect the City plus South Cambs area favoured by Option B to lose out if it is half the size of its northern counterpart.
- Compared to Option B this would spread out some of the growth pressure our area is under (see item below).

Cambridge City, East Cambs and South Cambs District Councils are all in favour of option B.

The Government will make a final decision on which local government structures are put into place this summer with the new unitary councils operating in a shadow capacity from May 2027 and full implementation expected in April 2028. There are many reasons to support option B, especially since there are already a number of service areas that SCDC shares with Cambridge City Council, such as waste and planning, which will ensure that the changes brought about by the LGR are as seamless as they can possibly be.

Greater Cambridge Local Plan update

The recent consultation on the [Greater Cambridge Local Plan](#) generated more than 4,500 comments. The Local Plan is 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. A huge amount of effort has already gone into the Local Plan which incorporates most, if not all, of the government’s ambitions for growth. It will take some time to digest the comments received from the consultation, but this marks another important step in the life of the next Local Plan. Please bear all this in mind when you read the next item.

Do we need a DevCo?

Yet another consultation and another very important one. As part of its plans for growth and development in Greater Cambridgeshire, the government is proposing a development corporation (DevCo), establishing a centrally led urban development corporation in Greater Cambridge which is likely to be operating for 25 years or more. The website and consultation link can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yfsuu3z9>. We hope you will look at the website and have your say. In our opinion and that of most of our councillor colleagues, a DevCo should concentrate on fixing the strategic infrastructure problems (e.g. water supply, waste-water treatment, transport networks) that we have in our area. No doubt the DevCo will be tasked with doing this but, as you will see on the website, the government also lists “powers related to planning” as part of the remit. It is therefore very possible that the responsibility for planning in Greater Cambridge will be removed from the local authority, its elected members and an award-winning planning authority and vested with the (unelected) DevCo and its government masters. It could mean local people lose control over the scale and pace of development and its consequences. We urge you to read the government’s plans and engage with the consultation.

South Cambs District Council

Full Council meeting: budgets and business plans

SCDC's full council met on 24th February and approved its business plan and budget for the coming financial year. SCDC is one of the best run councils in the country and is often held up as an exemplar. It 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, just over 10p a week, 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)!

We will cover the council's business plan in our annual report to the parish.

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.

Civil Parking Enforcement survey 2026

Parish Clerks should have received an invitation to take part in a survey on Civil parking Enforcement. This will give you the opportunity to say if you feel the introduction of this operation two years ago has improved the situation locally. We encourage you to respond because it's likely replies (or a lack of them) will be referenced in any future requests for enforcement action

Battery Disposal

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP) is urging residents to safely recycle batteries and battery-powered electricals, 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 13 bin lorry fires across Cambridgeshire in the last 12 months.

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 found inside small electrical items.

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

South Cambridgeshire District Council accepts batteries if put in clear plastic bags on top of bin lids (more information about this on their website).

Over 1.1 billion lithium-ion batteries are thrown away each year 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.

Zoom cuppa

We hold regular "Zoom cuppa" sessions. Please feel free to drop us a line if you have any questions or concerns.

Adam, Jose & Sally Ann