

Joint District and County Councillor Report Whaddon Parish Council, November 2025

Meldreth Road level crossing, Shepreth

We attended a meeting about Network Rail's proposed replacement of the single barriers at Meldreth Road level crossing with double barriers as part of the C3R Cambridge re-signalling project. This was part of a public consultation a few years ago.

Network Rail is now proposing to go ahead with the replacement because single barriers are being phased out. It will, very regrettably, mean longer down times when the barriers are closed. We are liaising with parish and county councillors to determine what can be done to influence the outcome.

When the work goes ahead, there will be a period of closure of the level crossing, as well as a period without train services. The road will be closed from 13 December and the train line will be closed from 25 December, both reopening 5 January. The diversion will be via Malton Lane, Meldreth.

County Council invites residents to help shape future spending

Cambridgeshire County Council has launched a public engagement survey to gather residents' views on where the council should prioritise spending and savings in the years ahead. This new survey, which will close on Monday 24 November, asks residents for their views on how the council should approach budget priorities. Respondents will be asked to consider questions such as whether the council should be looking to increase its income or decrease its spending on some of our services.

[County Council invites residents to help shape future spending | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Flood resilience campaign

The council has launched a new flood resilience campaign to improve flood preparedness and communications about flooding. As part of the campaign, practical advice and resources will be shared through the council's website and social media channels. This includes how to sign up for flood alerts, report flooding to the appropriate authority, and access support to form or join a community flood group. For more information and to get involved, visit <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/flood-prepare>, or follow the campaign on social media, using #CambsFloodResilience.

Local Highways Improvement (LHI) scheme

In October, the Highways and Transport Committee heard that this year the LHI programme has been boosted by an additional £850,000, bringing the total investment for the 2025/26 round to £1.67 million, the highest level of funding to date, in addition to the significant contributions by applicants themselves. In South Cambridgeshire, 10 complex projects and 23 non-complex projects were funded, and the overall success rate was 75%. We are sharing this since the odds of success in the LHI scheme should be much improved for parishes next year.

County Council reports on additional highways funding

Following feedback from residents, the Highways and Transport Committee also heard about changes the council has made to improve highways maintenance. Since 2023/24, the amount of capital funding spent on highway maintenance has increased by £35 million, from £24m to £59m, and in 2025/26 the council has allocated more than £73 million for highways maintenance inclusive of revenue funding.

The council is also introducing new initiatives and innovative ways of working to improve the efficiency of highways maintenance. The results of national and local surveys and data such as the numbers of pothole repairs and safety inspections are now being used to identify areas where highways maintenance can improve. In addition, public rights of way ranked at the top of the new county-wide Public Rights of Way hierarchy will have annual inspections from next year, which will see an additional 160km covered across the county and routes near schools prioritised. All of this should be seen in the context of a large historical backlog of highways repair, estimated at more than £16 billion nationally by one industry group.

More information about council initiatives and innovations to improve highways maintenance is available at: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/highways-transparency>

Highway faults – Report It

Please continue to report issues.

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

Local Government Reorganisation

The Full Council meeting on Tuesday 21 October resolved by a majority to submit Option A to Government for its consideration.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/full-council-sends-forward-option-a-proposal-for-local-government-reorganisation>

For further information about the results of engagement and consultation, please see:

[Positive support for Local Government Reorganisation “Option A” proposal from across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

[Council leaders thank communities for helping shape the future of local government | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

[South Cambs District Council: Majority of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire residents surveyed support new Greater Cambridge unitary council](#)

Stay safe, warm and well this winter with #BeWinterWise

Following two successful years, that have seen thousands of residents supported, Cambridgeshire County Council has today (Monday, 27 October) relaunched its #BeWinterWise campaign, featuring Olly the Owl, for winter 2025–26.

The campaign aims to help Cambridgeshire residents stay safe, warm, and healthy throughout the colder months by sharing practical advice, highlighting local support, and encouraging communities to look out for one another.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/stay-safe-warm-and-well-this-winter-with-bewinterwise>

Statement from Cllr Peter McDonald, Chair of Cambridgeshire County Council

[Statement from council's chair following Huntingdon incident | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

Draft Local Plan – “The most important document you’ve never heard of”

The draft Local Plan and supporting evidence has just been published ahead of a public consultation which will run between 1 Dec 2025 – 30 Jan 2026. Cambridge City Council and SCDC are working together to create this joint Local Plan for the Greater Cambridge area. The plan sets out the future land use and planning policies for the area for the period 2024-2045.

The Local Plan identifies the need for new homes and jobs, the services and infrastructure to support them, and guides where this development should happen. It has been informed by several stages of public engagement and working with stakeholders. There is a useful little video to help people understand what the Local Plan is and its importance: [What is a Local Plan for Greater Cambridge?](#)

At the time of writing the draft Local Plan exists only in reports to relevant committees at both SCDC and the City Council. These are public meetings and if you wish to get ahead of the game you can pick through the meeting papers here: <https://tinyurl.com/ynwxkk5a> Alternatively, you can wait until a more user-friendly version becomes available in readiness for the consultation.

If you have any questions about the Draft Local Plan, please contact the Planning Policy Team: localplan@greatercambridgeplanning.org

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Six Free Trees

The council's annual Six Free Trees scheme for Parish Councils is open again, running until 30 November. [South Cambs District Council: Parish councils invited to claim six free trees – with more than 750 already planted and counting](#)

Planning Application queries

The Greater Cambridge Planning authority processes well over 3000 planning applications every year. Most of these applications run smoothly, and the average time to determine applications has fallen significantly over the past two years. However, occasionally there are problems with the handling of planning applications. Concerns about the planning application process should initially be referred to the application case officer, whose name is listed on the application and whose contact details can be found here [Development management area teams](#)

(We are in Area Team West). Any concerns that have not been dealt with satisfactorily by the case officer should be referred to the Area Team Leader (Michael Hammond). If there is still a problem at this stage then please contact either Cllr Hawkins (the Cabinet Member for Planning) or Jose and Sally Ann and we will do our best to investigate. In the event of any problems it is much better to follow this process while the application is still being considered. Once an application has been decided, the mechanisms available to revisit the decision are very limited.

Cabinet and Town / Parish Council Liaison Meeting 11 Nov.

A reminder to elected members that we are holding the above meeting for all parish and town councils in the South Cambs District Council Chamber at 6.30 8.30pm on Tuesday 11th November 2025. Please take advantage of this opportunity to hear about the Emerging Local Plan, Local Government Reorganisation and New Climate & Nature Strategy 2026-30.

4-Day Week in the news

South Cambridgeshire District Council seems to be back in the press over its move to a 4-day working week, since a minister in the 'new' government decided to write to Bridget. Just to be clear, the council is open 5 days a week and many services are available 24/7. The contact centre is actually open longer hours than before the change. The Minister focused on council housing performance but had not looked at the data in any detail which shows that the council is in the top 25% of councils

nationally for performance on reletting vacant council houses, for doing repairs (despite that being outsourced to a company working 5 days a week) and for council rent collection. 100% of emergency repairs are carried out in 24 hours. On top of this we are saving just under £400,000 per year as a direct result of the 4-day week due to significant improvements in staff recruitment and less reliance on agency staff; planning applications are approved on average 3 weeks quicker and people's benefit claims are sorted 3 days earlier. There is a lot more positive information available on our website.

Mental health support for the community

There is a new partnership between the council and Cambridge-based charity Cogwheel Counselling to offer free counselling support sessions to council tenants. Cogwheel Counselling also offers support more broadly within the community, including free counselling sessions for people on very low income. There is a broader need for counselling and mental health support in our area. Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council have worked together on a web site called KeepYourHead which provides comprehensive information on the support services available.

Consultation on SCDC's Corporate Plan

Last month the SCDC [launched a six-week public consultation](#), inviting residents to share their views on the [Council's Corporate Plan 2025-2030](#), which sets out a long-term vision for a fairer, kinder, and greener South Cambridgeshire under five key priorities:

- Healthy and supported communities
- Sustainable homes and vibrant places
- Being green to our core
- Helping businesses to thrive
- Financially secure and fit for the future

SCDC is asking for comments on how these priorities should be delivered in the year ahead, through its *annual* Corporate Action Plan for 2026/27. The consultation will run until the end of the day on Sunday 16 November. To find out more and take part, visit www.scambs.gov.uk/consultations

Anglian Water (AW) Fen Reservoir Consultation.

The third phase of AW's non-statutory consultation for the Fens Reservoir DCO Project commenced on 15 October and will run for 8 weeks until 10 December 2025. It can be accessed here: <https://fensreservoir.co.uk/documents/>

In summary:

The pipeline runs south of Bluntisham, via Swavesey, to the proposed service reservoir site at Madingley. The pipeline corridor (the area within which the pipeline could be located) is up to 500 metres wide. The proposed site for the new service reservoir is to the south of Madingley (on the existing Cambridge Water site). It will have an approximate capacity of 30 megalitres (Ml) on a land area of approximately 13 hectares. The key changes since the last consultation are:

- AW have realigned the pipeline corridor between Holywell and Swavesey to avoid existing environmental habitats.
- The pipeline route south of Swavesey has been revised to align with another Anglian Water and Cambridge Water project – the Grafham to Cambridge pipeline. This revised route avoids heritage sites and provides improved access during construction.
- AW have extended the area identified for the service reservoir to include additional land that may be needed for an outfall pipeline connecting the reservoir to the Bin Brook stream.

'How are we doing?' survey

SCDC has recently launched a new 'How Are We Doing' Survey to give residents, businesses and other stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback on the Council's services – both positive and negative – to ensure that we are delivering the best services possible. The feedback received will be reported to the Leadership Team and the appropriate teams. If you wish to comment, please use the QR code below or follow this link: www.scams.gov.uk/leave-feedback Official complaints or service requests should still go through the usual channels.



As ever, please don't hesitate to get in touch if needed.

Sally Ann, Adam & Jose