

Local Government Reorganisation

Local Government Reorganisation is the biggest change to local government in a generation. It's really important we get this right because it'll determine how our area will be run for decades to come.

I remain disappointed that the Lib-Dem administration declared its position to become a unitary council with Cambridge City before the public consultation closed. I believe it is crucial that we listen to our residents on a matter of this importance.

My concerns are that a Greater Cambridge unitary of just Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire may simply be an urban extension of Cambridge City – drowning out the concerns in our villages and across the district. There is a lot to consider and a lot at stake, but I will be looking at all the business cases and the consultation responses before settling on a preferred option. I believe it is essential to see all the information and the views of residents in order to decide which case is best for residents ahead of the Full Council meeting in November.

South Cambridgeshire District Council has launched a further survey asking for residents' views on South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City becoming a unitary council: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/future-councils>. The survey is live until Sunday 12th October 2025.

Cambourne to Cambridge Busway

The public inquiry continues to be held at the Belfry Hotel in Cambourne. I was very disappointed that it was revealed in the first week of the public inquiry that the County Council failed to follow the right processes to put up the correct notices where they should have been. It was ruled that the public inquiry will continue despite the council failing to adhere to Rule 13 (6)(b).

This controversial busway could see the 100-year-old Coton Orchard destroyed. I am extremely frustrated that such a basic but fundamental error was made, as this is not what you expect from local authorities funded by the taxpayer. If it had been postponed that would have cost more money coming out of our taxes.

The public inquiry is set to continue until the end of October 2025.

Another new website at SCDC

I am raising concerns of the costs being spent on numerous websites of the council. SCDC has its main website for residents to use for information, contacting the council and applying for grants and help where needed - which I fully support because our residents need that platform. However, the council also owns and pays for three further websites - all paid for by the taxpayer.

The Council has four websites in total:

- The main South Cambridgeshire District Council website: [Home - South Cambs District Council](#). This had a cost of £60,000.
- The Visit South Cambs website: [Visit South Cambs - best days out and weekends away in Cambridgeshire](#). This had a cost of
- The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning website: [Home](#)
- The Shared Waste website: [Home - Greater Cambridge Shared Waste](#)

I am raising concerns and questions around costs to ensure that the council does not waste residents' money on things that might not be needed.

Update to council's accounts

It's my job as your elected district councillor to ensure taxpayer's money is being spent appropriately, and it's important that councillors can scrutinise accounts and audits to make sure this happens. While the external audit fee is necessary to provide reassurance of how our money is being spent, ultimately this money is not being used to benefit residents' lives. Therefore, extra money being paid due to overruns and delays is money being spent

unnecessarily and to little or no benefit to residents. In the past overruns have gone into hundreds and thousands of pounds, so this is not a few pence here or there. I find it very disappointing that despite central government essentially waiving full audits for the last few years in order for our councils to catch up and start afresh, South Cambs is facing the prospect of spending a significant amount of money to the external auditors due to overruns and delays.

This is not a new problem and its one that I feel should be very much resolved by now if the finance department was resourced properly and they had enough time in their working days to complete their work.

Greater Cambridge Local Plan

The next consultation for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan is due this winter. This has been an extremely long process with the very first consultation being almost 5 years ago.

The government sets the deadline and mandatory targets, and a change in government at the last general election meant that we were hit with changes and higher house building targets. The deadline is very tight with the Local Plan expected to be submitted by December 2026.

We have a tough job ahead of us to meet this deadline and ensure that we get it right. It is important that we have the services and infrastructure in place to support any new developments, and it's really important that these new development sites are in the right places. Residents must benefit from the Plan and have their views heard. I will work to make sure their views are heard by the administration.

Planning update

I have written to Steve Reed MP, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government asking for the process of planning applications to be sped up when they go to the Planning Inspectorate.

Currently, an application can take around two years for a decision to be reached. Where this is an appeal, an additional two years on top of the time from when the application process

was started is an unnecessary long time for residents to hear decisions – and at times, can be very distressing to residents and the wider community.

An application in The Mordens ward is currently now in this process with the Planning Inspectorate, and I believe it is unfair that the local residents and community who are affected by the issue will have a further delay for a decision. I will continue to do what I can for the benefit of the community.

Grants for community groups and parish councils

If you are from a local community group or parish council, I am encouraging you to make the most of the council's available grant schemes. The [GrantGrabber service](#) helps you search for available grants – all in one place.

This month, the council launched the Service Support Grants with up to £300,000 per year for eligible local organisations. It's focused on six key areas:

- Mental health and wellbeing - £50,000 a year
- Advice services
- Independent living
- Support for the voluntary and community sector
- Cost-of-living support
- PLACE-based Initiatives

For further information on this grant or information on other grants available for a community project from the council, please visit [Grants and Funding - South Cambs District Council](#).

Tenant community grant

Local organisers can apply for up to £1000 for a project that benefits the community. You can apply for the funding for projects such as:

- Gardening equipment
- Community gardens or benches
- Updating communal rooms

- Organising local events
- Equipment for regular clubs

Local organisers can apply here: [Tenant Community Grants - South Cambs District Council](#)

Thank you for reading our report. If I can be of any assistance, please do get in touch.

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