

## **District Council Report for December 2025 & January 2026**

Councillor James Hobro

District Councillor for the parishes of Foxton, Fowlmere, Heydon, Great Chishill & Little Chishill.

I am always happy to hear from residents with any questions about these or other issues relating to the District Council. Please contact me by telephone on 07768 706670 or by email at [cllr.hobro@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.hobro@scambs.gov.uk).

### **Planning and Local Plan update**

The draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan for the 2030s, in development since 2020, [has been released for public consultation](#). I encourage Parish Councils and residents to read the consultation material and submit their views. The consultation closes on 30 January.

I'm also delighted to report that the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service [has been crowned Planning Authority of the Year](#) at the prestigious Royal Town Planning Institute Awards for Planning Excellence.

### **Local Government Reorganisation**

Last year the government declared its intention to reform all two-tier local authorities into unitary authorities during the present parliament. The local authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough were asked to present proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for implementation on a timescale of approximately two years. The business cases for four different LGR options were sent to the government in November. The government has confirmed that a consultation will start in early February, lasting for seven weeks. We are expecting a decision from them on which option will be implemented by the summer.

In December, the government wrote to local authorities inviting them to apply to defer the 2026 local elections in areas affected by reorganisation if they did not have the capacity to handle the elections. Since South Cambridgeshire District Council has the capacity to run elections in 2026 it has not requested that they be deferred, so elections will be going ahead as expected in May.

### **Allotment and Community Chest grants**

Congratulations to Foxton Gardens Association on their successful bid for £10k from the council to improve the village allotment facilities and enhance their biodiversity. This was a very well-written proposal and I was delighted to support it.

Congratulations also to Foxton Preschool for its success in receiving a Community Chest grant of £2000 towards establishing a Forest School programme, which I was also very pleased to support. I encourage all community groups to consider applying for funds from the Community Chest fund. These are available for a wide range of projects that help to improve our facilities and life for residents. More information on how to apply can be found [on the website](#).

## **COVID commemoration trees**

A national COVID-19 day of commemoration will take place on Sunday 8 March. The council is offering parish councils a tree and plaque to mark the incredible work by thousands of volunteers who supported vulnerable people in their communities during the pandemic and commemorate those who sadly lost their lives. To obtain these please complete [the request form](#) by 31 January.

## **Housebuilding around well-connected stations**

The government [announced in November](#) that housebuilding near well-connected railway stations will receive approval by default if they meet certain rules. They also announced proposals to streamline the statutory consultee process. These and other planning reforms are included in a new version of the National Planning Policy Framework, which the government [has just released for consultation](#). The deadline for responses is 10 March.

I have asked the Director of Planning and Cabinet Member for Planning for clarification on how this is expected to affect planning policy in this ward and other areas close to stations with no allocations in the Local Plan. I will give an update once I have received a full response.

## **Cost of living and community support grants**

A budget of £449k [has been approved](#) to help South Cambridgeshire residents through the next two years of cost-of-living financial pressures. Vulnerable households will be supported with emergency food and energy support, advice on budgeting and debt, and continuing community partnerships. The package includes £50k for Community Hubs.

The latest round of grant funding for local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations, totalling £900k over three years, [has been announced](#). It includes £7k per year for Royston and District Community Transport to maintain accessible transport for those who need it most, support for Home-Start to help families in need, for CamSight to help those with visual impairment, and many other local organisations.

## **Scrutiny of Cambridge Growth Company**

The [Cambridge Growth Company](#) (CGC) was established by the government in 2024 to foster additional economic growth in the Cambridge area by delivering housing, transport, water, and wider infrastructure. The council has invited the CGC Chair, Peter Freeman, to attend a Scrutiny & Overview Committee meeting on 29 January to allow councillors to ask key questions about the company's objectives, progress and its proposed relationship with local councils. Officers are also trying to arrange a liaison meeting with CGC for Parish Councils in February.

## **Feedback on council services**

A reminder that the District Council has a new mechanism to allow general feedback on the council's services from residents, businesses, Parish Councils, or any other clients. Please use the link [www.scambs.gov.uk/leave-feedback](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/leave-feedback).