

District Councillors' Report to Dry Drayton Parish Council, January 2026

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This month we would like to highlight the Local Plan consultation that continues until 31st January 2026. There is a reminder also about the start of waste food collections later this year.

South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Local Plan

The consultation on the new local plan is now open. We believe this is the greenest local plan in the country, putting the environment and nature at the fore-front of all decisions about where new housing and employment should go.

By limiting new housing to in and around Cambridge and the big new towns, including Cambourne and Northstowe, and those few villages with main line stations we are reducing the need for more car journeys which cause congestion and air pollution. This plan also protects our villages, including Dry Drayton from over-development which leads to greater strain on our doctors' surgeries and village schools.

There are two competitions that will run concurrently with the consultation: a drawing competition for older residents and a Lego competition for those up to 18 years old.

How to Take Part

- Visit the website: www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/local-plan
- Paper copies available at council offices and libraries.
- A programme of in-person and online events will run during the consultation. **One of these will be in Girton Pavilion on Monday 19th January 2026 from 4.15pm to 5.30pm**

A special commendation in the LEADER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Cllr Bridget Smith has been leader of South Cambridgeshire for eight years. She was delighted to be shortlisted for the LGiU Leader of the Year Awards and received a special commendation for her strong leadership on the environment and in defending local democracy.

Planning Authority wins prestigious Award

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service won the Planning Authority of the Year award. Check the news release at: <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/news/greater-cambridge-shared-planning-service-named-national-planning-authority-of-the-year>

Fly Tippers are always prosecuted

A North London resident has been ordered to pay more than £9,000 and has a criminal record - after his waste was found illegally dumped in South Cambridgeshire.

The District Council is advising residents that you can report fly tipping on its website where you can also book a District Council bulky waste, white goods or hazardous electrical goods collection.

Eighty more children to receive free school meals in South Cambs

More than 80 extra children in South Cambridgeshire are now receiving free school meals, thanks to a pioneering initiative which uses smart technology and innovative data-sharing between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council to identify families eligible for support - but not currently claiming it.

The additional free school meals are expected to be worth more than £314,000 to the 66 families over the lifetime of their claims – if they claim from now until their children reach the end of year 11. Additionally, it is expected to be worth more than £1 million to local schools in government funding

in the process.

For each of the 81 extra children now claiming free school meals, South Cambridgeshire schools will also receive extra funding called pupil premium, aimed at improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The additional funding schools will receive is worth £116,555 in its first year alone and is expected to be worth more than £1 million (£1,020,560) should families claim from now until each child reaches year 11.

Crime never pays

A man who fraudulently claimed to be homeless to secure Council housing – while renting his privately owned property for financial gain has been found guilty of fraud after an investigation was launched to recover financial losses to South Cambridgeshire District Council. He was sentenced to nine months in jail suspended for two years. He has to pay a total of £29,877.58.

A new project is bridging the digital divide

A project for pupils allocates £21,000 to ensure young people have access to the technology they need to thrive in education and beyond. A further £5,000 has been dedicated to supporting older residents in sheltered housing, helping them to get online and build essential digital skills.

The initiative is part of a commitment to ensure no one is left behind in the digital revolution, giving everyone the opportunity to stay connected.

The project is being delivered thanks to the District Council partnering with [Cambridge Online](https://tinyurl.com/mptfax46) , <https://tinyurl.com/mptfax46>, a local charity dedicated to reducing digital inequality.

Under the scheme, Cambridge Online will deliver laptops to young people and run training sessions throughout the remainder of the school year, helping them make the best use of the devices.

The project aims to reach up to 25 students across different schools

For the older residents' project, the charity will visit sheltered housing schemes across the district to deliver training sessions helping residents to use their devices to access and navigate the internet safely.

A £449,000 package of support will tackle cost-of-living challenges for the next two years

A budget of £449,000 has been approved to help South Cambridgeshire residents through the next two years of cost-of-living financial pressures.

The 2026-2028 cost of living plan was agreed by the District Council at its latest [Cabinet](#) meeting.

The plan focuses on supporting vulnerable households by expanding access to emergency food and energy support, building financial resilience by delivering workshops on budgeting and debt advice and continuing community partnerships to provide coordinated support.

Each year the key measures will include:

- £28,000 for laptops and digital training for young people and older residents to reduce digital exclusion.
- £50,000 for [Community Hubs](#) - warm places run by trained volunteers that serve the local community's needs.
- £18,000 to continue to provide emergency food parcels to those in need to the door.
- £30,000 for an essential white good and furniture scheme for vulnerable people moving into homes to address furniture poverty.
- £50,000 for to continue the mobile food hub providing affordable healthy food in rural communities – with the potential to expand reach.
- £20,000 for dehumidifier and /or air drier provision to help relieve damp and mould for low income and vulnerable households

- £5,000 for grants to set up village pantries to increase access to affordable food in rural communities.

Weekly Food Waste Collection

This starts to be rolled out in January. When it is our turn we will get a letter about the scheme first about which foods need to go into the caddy. The caddy will come with 100 bags.

South Cambridgeshire residents to get £3.9m in support with 1,000 successful benefits claims and counting

South Cambridgeshire District Council has supported residents with 1,000 successful benefit claims – under a scheme to ensure people claim what they’re entitled to.

Each of the 1,000 successful benefit claims secured in just 12 months represents support for someone who was struggling when they shouldn't have been.

Once a household has been identified as eligible through LIFT, Council officers then reach out directly to offer tailored support, helping residents navigate the application process.

Amongst the successes that LIFT has helped the Council to achieve are:

- Pension Credit: 113 successful claims, worth £300,169 in the first year and £3.2 million over the lifetime of the claims.
- Free School Meals: 81 successful claims, securing £12,844 in year one and £314,184 over the lifetime of the claims.
- Healthy Start vouchers: 65 successful claims, providing £21,429 in year one to help families afford nutritious food.

South Cambridgeshire's success sets a gold standard for councils across the country, and we are proud that LIFT has played a part in making it happen, delivering support worth over £514,000 to residents in the first year alone, and nearly £4 million over the lifetime of these awards. This money will help people keep warm, stay independent and feel more secure this winter.

“Local authorities are uniquely placed to reach people through targeted outreach, and this earlier intervention is helping residents receive support they may never have known about.”

The Council will continue to expand its work in 2026, with a focus on using its data to identify residents who could be eligible for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and contacting them to support them to apply. This will ensure even more residents receive the financial support they need.

The milestone of 1,000 successful benefit claims being supported comes just after the District Council confirmed a budget of £449,000 was approved to help South Cambridgeshire residents through the next two years of cost-of-living financial pressures.

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

The Housing Team will be providing Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) accommodation from now until Saturday 10 January 2026 for anyone rough sleeping within the SCDC area.

Please be aware that this is only for verified rough sleepers or for those in the judgement of the assessor are likely to rough sleep if no accommodation is provided.

Anyone in South Cambridgeshire who needs to access this service should contact us by one of the following methods to speak with our Housing Advice and Homelessness Team:

- Email: housingadvice@scambs.gov.uk
- Contact Centre telephone (office hours): 01954 713000
- Emergency out of hours telephone for homeless emergencies: 01253 501117

- Visit our website for more detailed information on our SWEP: www.scams.gov.uk/housing/homelessness-advice

*Corinne Garvie
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6th January 2026*