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Councillors are reminded of the Planning training for Parish Councillors on 21st July on Teams.

Greater Cambridgeshire Local Plan

Through July the Council's Scrutiny and Cabinet will be considering the next phase of the Greater Cambridge Joint Local Plan. Ahead of publication of the next (final) draft of the local plan for the relevant SCDC Committees, councillors received an update regarding the public responses to the documents circulated

Development Corporation & Local Planning News

We are still awaiting greater clarity over the nature and remit of the development corporation, (often shortened to DevCo) and what this ultimately means for our local planning authority. With the change in premiership looming, it may be some time before this becomes clearer, but we will keep you abreast of updates as and when we have them.

This development corporation would likely seek to increase the amount of growth in our area, covering the whole of South Cambs and Cambridge City area. As it stands, this may remove the authority of our award winning local planning service over significant sites and is being opposed by the current administration at SCDC.

All planning applications for more than 250 homes would go directly to the corporation, bypassing local planning authorities. The panel will be likely to have only 4 elected members, and a group of so-called experts. This represents a large democratic deficit for our area, and undermines the process of devolved authority.

Leader of the council Bridget Smith has been speaking with ministers to see if a middle-ground can be reached that is mutually beneficial. As a minimum, that would mean increasing the threshold for housing by a significant amount, and getting assurance that the Devco will concentrate its resources on sorting out the infrastructure gap that is slowing the growth of our area: including the shortage of water, electricity, health, education and transport. At this stage, it poses more questions than answers.

The Government has ruled out backing the proposed 400,000-home "Forest City 1" development east of Cambridge, saying it does not meet deliverability requirements, though developers could still pursue it locally. However, Developers of Forest City have said plans will "absolutely" go ahead. (BBC News).

CPCA Bus Service Consultation

The CPCA has opened a consultation to review local bus services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The questionnaire is now open for public responses at:

<https://cpca-yourvoice.co.uk/bus-network-review-engagement/>

Local Government Reorganisation

We are still awaiting further clarity on the timelines and details of local government reorganisation. Ministers have said that local government reorganisation is on track, despite Kier Starmer's resignation. An announcement is expected this summer 2026. If this is confirmed, a Structural Changes Order would follow in late 2026, with legislation needing to pass through parliament. This will formally establish the new unitary authority, setting out names, boundaries, electoral arrangements, and the vesting day for new councils. It will also specify the date for the abolition of existing councils (i.e. SCDC), which would cut the current councillors' terms short by 2 years. Elections to a "shadow" authority are expected in May 2027. The expected vesting day would be 1st April 2028 based on current information available.

Northstowe Faith Land

The cabinet at SCDC confirmed the allocation of the first parcel of faith land in Northstowe to the joint church/mosque bid. There were representations from the public including from local Hindus who challenged the recommendation. It should be noted this is not the only faith land that will be on offer – the council is aware of the wider strategic need for sites to serve different faith groups, but in this instance the officers assessed the bid against a clear set of criteria that ensures equality between bidders.

It should be noted that, for each of these parcels of land, the council will be providing a 999-year lease to the groups selected. It is therefore important to ensure best value for the community.

Cambridge South Station

This month we had the official opening of the Cambridge South station, a key interface with Addenbrookes and the new Biomedical Campus. There have been some objections to the level of parking & waiting provision at the station, but the intention has always been for this to be a destination station, and so extensive parking was never part of the design for the site.

Shepreth wildlife charity awarded £45,000 grant to support Hedgehog Conservation

[A new Conservation Hub to support the work of the Shepreth Wildlife Conservation Charity \(SWCC\) Hedgehog Hospital has been set up to boost the wildlife charity's impact.](#)

The Hub will coexist with the SWCC Hedgehog Hospital, at Shepreth Wildlife Park, which plays a vital role in rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing injured and orphaned hedgehogs back into the wild.

The £50,000 project is being funded thanks to a £45,000 grant from the national Rural England Protection Fund. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is the lead authority for the fund while South Cambridgeshire District Council is responsible for local grant delivery.

Council had conversations to support safe and lawful use of Smithy Farm caravan site

[SCDC visited a Gypsy and Traveller site in Smithy Fen, Cottenham, to help ensure it is complying with regulations.](#)

The Council visited approximately 70 caravans and spoke to some residents to establish who is living there as part of the District Council's wider action to ensure Gypsy and Traveller sites are safe, lawful, and used for their intended purpose. A condition of the planning permission for individual plots includes the need for Gypsies and Travellers to live in the caravans.

If any breaches are identified, for example in planning, licensing or Council Tax, the Council will follow lawful and proportionate processes to address them

GroundWork Grants

They act as an intermediary funder distributing grassroots grants to other charities and community organisations and have been asked by the Postcode Lottery to help them distribute small grants (up to £2k) to small organisations (annual income less than £25k), so companies on the Dry Drayton Industry Park may be interested.

The funding is for a broad range of community-based activities that cover at least one of the areas below:

- Providing support to mental health
- Improving green spaces and increasing access to the outdoors
- Enabling participation in the arts
- Preventing or reducing the impact of poverty
- Supporting marginalised groups and tackling inequality

Applications are open until September

The application form can be found here - <https://www.groundwork.org.uk/grassroots-grants/>