

Five-year land supply

A new housing trajectory and a reassessment of the housing land supply has just been published which shows the anticipated delivery of new homes across Greater Cambridge up to 2041. The report shows that we have 6.5 years of housing land supply for the 2024-2029 period. This means that there will be no repeat of the loss of planning control as happened several years ago and which led to the approval, on appeal, of several developments that were outside of some of the SCDC agreed village framework.

Planning Awards 2024

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service has been shortlisted for the Planning Awards 2024 in the category "Local authority planning team of the year". Our planning service is of the largest and most active in the country, processing around 6,000 applications annually. The Planning Awards Ceremony takes place on Thursday 13 June.

Shared Prosperity Fund – Green space improvement projects

SCDC has secured funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to help improve up to six green spaces in South Cambridgeshire. The grants can cover things like tree/hedge planting, seating, wildlife habitat improvements, wildflower planting, repairs to existing structures, footpaths and the installation of bird and bet boxes.

The project launch is mid-May and Town/Parish Councils are being given the opportunity to bid for funding if they have green spaces that are owned by them or in their control and which they consider would benefit from such improvements for their community.

Low-income Family Tracker (LIFT)

As part of its support for the cost-of-living crisis, SCDC is to employ a new database platform called the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT). This will allow the council to identify low-income families, so that they can be contacted and encouraged to claim the benefits to which they are entitled. It works by managing multiple council datasets and a number of external datasets and applies modelling to provide insights down to a household level. The software is used by over 70 Local Authorities in England, including Cambridge City Council and once in operation it will not only help the council to assist more low-income families but, in the longer term, allow the council to make internal efficiency savings.

An improved Homes for Ukraine Landlord Incentive Scheme

SCDC's Landlord Incentive Scheme offers a financial incentive to landlords who are willing to let their properties in South Cambridgeshire to Homes for Ukraine refugees. It is for an initial minimum 6-month tenancy and the amount offered varies according to whether the rent is set at the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate or at market rate and how many bedrooms their property has. The scheme has recently been enhanced to make it more attractive to landlords after a disappointing take up of an earlier version. The scheme is fully funded from government funding provided to support Ukrainian guests.

Further details can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/4s5vw7jz>

Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme 2024

May I remind you that SCDC's popular Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme is currently open for applications and closes on 2nd June. Grants of up to £15,000 are available to parish councils and community groups for projects that reduce carbon emissions or achieve wider community engagement around climate change. See SCDC's grants webpage <https://tinyurl.com/5fv42f8j> for more information or email the Climate team - zcc@scambs.gov.uk

Empty Houses

SCDC is encouraging people to bring empty properties back into use. There are many reasons why a property could be empty and SCDC works with Auction Houses, Genealogy and Probate companies to trace owners or agents and the Cambs Homes Improvement Agency (HIA) can arrange small-scale building works on a private, paid-for basis. They have surveyors, approved builders and contractors available to them and can help with a range of technical services.

If someone wishes to take on an empty property to improve it and make it their home - and the property has been empty for two years or more - the Council's Empty Homes Officer can provide a letter, free of charge, so that you will pay only 5% VAT on renovation work instead of the usual 20% if you employ a registered builder. Further help and advice is available from Anna Nightingale, Empty Homes Officer: nightingale@scambs.gov.uk

COUNCILS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND KEY GOVERNMENT FUNDED ORGANISATIONS

If you have a problem or concern do not worry too much about who can solve it just ask the question and we will endeavour to signpost to the right person. The organisational structure of Cambridgeshire is complex, but it is important to identify where responsibility lies.

County Council

Responsibilities: Education, Transport, Highways, Heritage, Social care, Libraries, Trading standards, - Waste management, Maintaining their estate.

Some of these services are shared between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council but any concerns should be directed to the county council.

District Council

Responsibilities: Council tax payments and benefits, Household bin collections, Housing and housing benefits, Council leisure facilities, Environmental health, Residential planning.

Parish/ Town Council

Responsibilities: Looking after community buildings, Open spaces, Allotments, Play Areas, Bus shelters.

Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)

'The local delivery body for a City Deal with central Government worth up to £500 million over 15 years, to vital improvements in infrastructure (decarbonising transport), supporting and accelerating the creation of 44,000 new jobs, 33,500 new homes and 420 additional apprenticeships.'

Partnership between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, University of Cambridge.

The Combined Authority, Cambridge and Peterborough, our elected Mayor

'A combined authority (CA) is a legal body set up using national legislation that enables a group of two or more councils to collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries.'

What our mayor does – Business support, skills, housing, transport, environment, international, digital connectivity, resilience, research, and strategy. New homes.

Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridge and Peterborough

To support and challenge the Chief Constable to provide effective and efficient policing services for the area.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

The Fire Authority is the governing body responsible for delivering a fire and rescue service to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is made up of Cambridgeshire County Councillors and Peterborough City Councillors.

CONTACT DETAILS

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the above, or any other matters.

CLLr Natalie Warren-Green for Longstanton Ward including Longstanton, Northstowe, and Oakington & Westwick

Email: cllr.warrengreen@scambs.gov.uk

For those on social media we have a highly active Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/> - Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe