

# South Cambridgeshire District Council – Caldecote Ward

(comprises the Parishes of Caldecote, Childerley, Kingston, Bourn, Longstowe & Little Gransden)

## Councillor's Monthly Report – October 2023

This report of previous month events is for all the Ward, so please be aware that some of the content may not be relevant to your particular Parish.

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### General

Please contact me with comments, questions, problems, reports, suggestions or complaints to do with SCDC services. These are housing need, housing repairs for council tenants, planning, benefits, council tax, bin collection, environmental health issues etc. Don't fight on your own. I am available to help you to get the best outcome possible for your situation.

Check out articles on my facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/itsCouncillorTumi> and my blog <http://www.TumiHawkins.org.uk>. What I post on there is my view and not LibDem or South Cambs official policy unless I state that it is.

### Planning Updates

#### Statement of Community Involvement – Consultation 18 October – 29 November 2023

As we know, Town & Country Planning functions in Local Authorities is of significant interest and importance. It determines what development is needed and where. The planning system is “plan-led”, meaning what is built and where is set out in “Local Plans”. The plans, prepared by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) sets out the vision and framework for the future development and land use in the area. South Cambs has a current adopted Local Plan of 2018 which runs through till 2031 as seen at <https://www.scams.gov.uk/media/17793/south-cambridgeshire-adopted-local-plan-2018.pdf>. There are also neighbourhood plans, 8 adopted and 14 other areas designated and plans being prepared <https://www.scams.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-and-neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-plans/>. There are also Village Design Guides, with Caldecote being one of 9 villages that has one <https://www.scams.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-and-neighbourhood-planning/village-design-guides>.

South Cambs and Cambridge City are currently working on a new joint Greater Cambridge Local Plan <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/emerging-plans-and-guidance/greater-cambridge-local-plan/>. This is the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service website <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/get-involved-with-planning/>

The Council wants everyone in our communities to understand and get involved in how our area is developed. The way in which that engagement can be done is set out in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) of 2019 <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/about-us/statement-of-community-involvement/>. The SCI has been reviewed and updated. The Council is keen to find out from communities if all the types of engagements reasonably possible have been captured, and is carrying out a consultation on the updated SCI from 18 October to 29 November <https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/about-us/news/tell-us-how-you-want-to-be-involved-in-the-planning-process-across-greater-cambridge/>. You can talk to officers at the public event taking place on Sunday 22 October from 9.30am to 12.30pm at Northstowe Market, The Community Centre, 1 The Green, Pathfinder Way, Northstowe CB24 1FD.

Alternatively, Friday 27 October from 11am to 2pm at The Meadows Community Centre, 299 Arbury Road, Cambridge CB4 2JL.

I encourage everyone to read the updated SCI and give your feedback. Feel free to contact me and ask questions or clarifications.

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## Governance/HR

### 4-Day Week (4DW) Trial

There has been a lot of media and central government misinformation and misrepresentation about the 4DW trial. I have in past monthly reports explained the reasoning from the outset – to improve staff wellbeing, provide additional incentive to fill long-standing staffing gaps (e.g planning and waste collection service) with the ultimate aim to improve the service to residents of South Cambs in a cost-effective way.

Last year South Cambs spent £2 million on agency staff, mainly in the planning service where there is a huge national shortage of planners. This time last year the bill for this had already reached £249,000. This year thanks to the 4DW trial attracting permanent staff, this bill is down to £24,000. Even the Waste Service found it difficult to recruit drivers and loaders with agency staff covering some of those posts at additional cost to the taxpayer. The performance across the Council has either stayed the same or improved in some areas. This is in contrast to the misreading of data by the Minister Lee Rowley who requested the trial be stopped without even the simple courtesy of accepting the invitation by the Council Leader for a direct meeting with him to explain the facts. So he is going by hearsay from the [Taxpayers Alliance](#) (a Conservative funded pressure group), even till today as is Michael Gove who has turned it into a political game. So much for evidence-based decision making, as Ministers acting in a bullying manner toward local government councils. The trials continue whilst the Council waits for Ministers to set the date to meet and get the real facts. One of the attack points is on collection of council tax – interestingly SCDC was in July named joint top shire council out of about 320 in collecting council tax at 99.2% by March 2023. See this <https://www.scams.gov.uk/council-thanks-residents-for-supporting-vital-local-services/>

This is a **trial project** that has not involved change of terms & conditions or required budget change, so no consultation required. It is a matter for cabinet until after the trial and if results are positive enough to be considered for implementation. Then it goes to consultation and full council.

Sadly, there have also been several negative stories in the tabloids claiming that SCDC's CEO Liz Watts 'tampered' with a document produced by the Bennett Institute reporting on the first three months of the 4-day week trial. These reports are personal in nature, malicious and untrue, and represent the worst kind of tabloid journalism. The report that the CEO asked to be amended was one that recorded focus group meetings conducted by the Bennett Institute researcher with members and officers. As I've seen, the changes made were merely to improve the clarity of the focus group notes and to remove names of members who had not given consent for them to appear in the report. This was not the report that analysed the key performance indicators during the initial three-month trial period of the 4-day week trial on which Cabinet based their decision to extend the trial for 12 months. These attacks are mendacious, based on complete misrepresentation, and on council officers who have no right of public reply, cannot defend themselves publicly which makes the personal attacks egregious to say the least.

Full details of our 4DW trial are on our website along with an FAQ which is regularly updated. Answers to some of the government's attacks are at <https://www.scams.gov.uk/four-day-week-trial-at-council-continuing-and-residents-reminded-of-bin-collection-changes/>

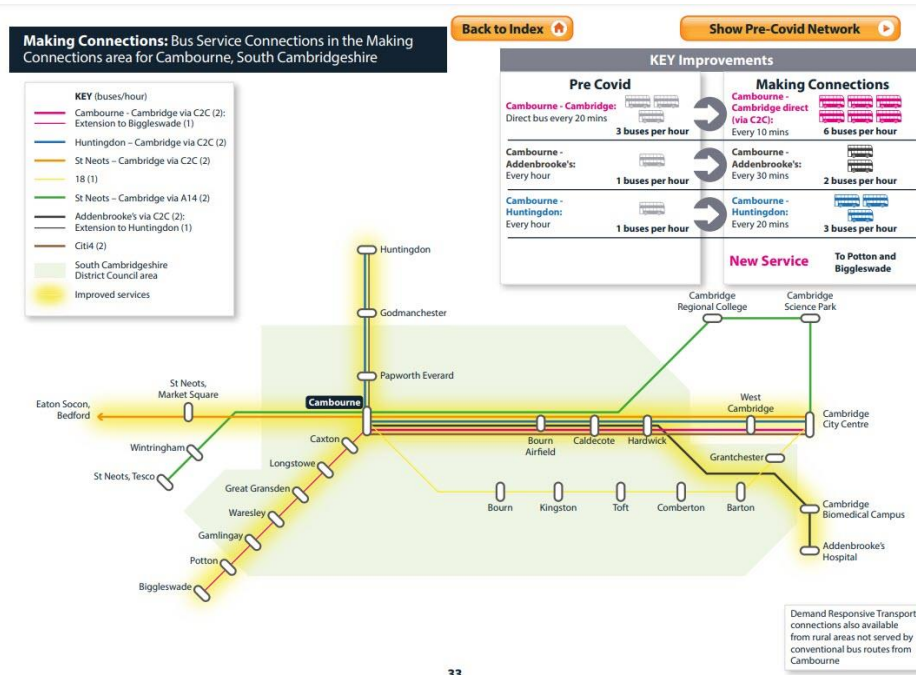
The [Scottish Government recently announced it will start a 4DW pilot](#) by the end of the year (see page 15 of its equality-opportunity-community-programme-government.pdf document).

## Transport

### GCP – Making Connections

The Making Connection project is now going through a difficult time following publication of the results of the consultation which I outlined in my September monthly report. The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) has decided not to proceed to the next stage. Collectively it was decided that while the aims of Making Connections to make travelling in and around Cambridge simpler and faster by saving time and money and easing congestion offering better, fairer, and greener travel choices were important the lack of political consensus meant there was no choice. This means the Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ) the third stage of the Making Connections proposals which includes the congestion charge element is dead. There is no Plan B.

The implications for Caldecote Ward is that this proposal (see my blog) is now in question <https://tumiawkins.org.uk/making-connections-proposed-transport-network-improvements/>



Also largescale developments such as at Bourn Airfield which need to demonstrate the future residents will have access to high quality public transport before any further planning consents could be made problematic. This in turn puts the housing targets of the Local Plan in doubt the implications for which are that we could conceivably see an inability to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply (5YHLS), which means policies designed to restrict growth especially in villages fall away. Caldecote already has the Linden and Balfour Beatty developments, growing by 40% as a result of that pre-2018 situation when the council lacked 5YHLS.

Officers will now focus on other areas of the City Access programme looking at issues such as resident parking, road hierarchy and freight consolidation. This is in addition to the other infrastructure projects which include 150km of Greenways, innovative busway schemes from Waterbeach to Cambridge and Cambourne to Cambridge as well as the significant improvements to Milton Road and Newmarket Road.

## Housing

### Incentive Scheme for Landlords

South Cambridgeshire has seen one of the highest number of Homes for Ukraine arrivals for a

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lower tier authority with over 850 Ukrainian guests coming to the district since the scheme began in April 2022. The first phase of the project has been a tremendous success and is now considered ‘business as usual’ for officers working on it. In the last few months, the focus has been helping guests to move on to independent accommodation. Getting into the private rental sector is expensive and has proved challenging for guests. In mitigation, SCDC is launching a Landlords’ Incentive scheme in an effort to provide more affordable & sustainable housing options for our Ukrainian guests.

The scheme will offer up-front payments to landlords, depending on circumstances such as property size and whether they offer a tenancy at the local housing allowance rate or at market rent. Larger incentive payments will be available to landlords who offer a tenancy at the local housing rate to encourage more affordable and sustainable options for Homes for Ukraine guests. The money for this scheme will come from the government’s Homes for Ukraine fund.

### **House Exchange**

South Cambs is making it simpler and easier for council house tenants to arrange exchanges with other council house tenants. Full details are on the website but if you are experiencing difficulties please do come and talk to us. <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/housing/council-tenants/about-your-tenancy/mutual-exchange>

### **Environmental Services**

#### **Luton Airport Flight Path and Airspace Deployment (AD6) change – Post Implementation Review end**

Thank you to everyone who submitted a report by the end of the Post Implementation Review period on 22 September. I also submitted in my role as the Elected Member on behalf of the residents of Caldecote Ward. I will update when there’s something to report. In the meantime, I have noticed an increase in the number of flights since the closing date of the PIR.

#### **Bin Collections**

The new bin collection rota started on 18 September 2023 and has gone reasonably well so far, as only a few roads missed across the District which were collected first thing the following day. The number of calls into the call centre was below the estimated number, as was the number of reports of missed bins.

As stated in my September report, for Caldecote, Kingston, Longstowe and Little Gransden the bin dates move from Wednesdays to Thursdays. For Bourn, it remains on Thursdays. The frequency of collection is not changing, as outlined on the website at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/binchanges>

To re-iterate the message, bin collection routes are reviewed every 3-5 years, due to new developments, houses and businesses in this growing region. The review is to make the collection rounds more efficient. Bins are now being collected Tuesdays to Fridays only to avoid confusions and timetable changes that occurs due to bank holiday Mondays. A number of other councils (who are not carrying out a 4-day week trial) have already made this change. Those who had their collections on Mondays now have them on a different day of the week and just as regularly, black bins every other week, blue/green bins alternate weeks to the black, just as before.

If your bin is missed for any reason, please report at 3.30pm on the website at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/recycling-and-bins/report-a-missed-household-collection/> and leave it out as arrangements will be made to return to collect as soon as possible.

The waste teams will be carry on their other duties on a Monday including commercial waste collections and litter bins and street cleaning.

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## Community and Wellbeing

### Action for Happiness

The Action for Happiness theme for October at <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/calendar> is **Optimistic October**. This month's focus is "*Direction: Have goals to look forward to*". It uses the Ten Keys to Happier Living at <https://actionforhappiness.org/10-keys>. Have a look at the daily calendar which has some really good ideas for action – so far so good.

### Black History Month

October is the traditional month in the UK for celebrating Black History Month. This year, the theme is "Saluting our Sisters", as you will find on the main BHM website <https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/>

South Cambs as part of its Equality Diversity & Inclusion program is also celebrating and supporting events in the local area as shown in the time table on the website at <https://www.scams.gov.uk/your-council-and-democracy/equality-and-diversity/black-history-month>. Have a look and put those dates in your diary.

### SEND Information Hub

Support for parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) in Cambridgeshire is available through the SEND Information Hub which contains guidance and resources for children of all ages, featuring topics like early years, education, and preparing for adulthood. There are also specific sections on health, finding the right support, and social care - giving families unlimited access to information that can help them feel empowered and educated on what is available locally. <https://send.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/>

### Help for residents through the cost-of-living crisis – Electric Blankets

SCDC's latest initiative to help certain residents through the cost-of-living crisis is the offer of a free electric blanket / electric throw, which cost a fraction to run than central heating. Qualifying residents are those who (as of 1 July 2023) claim Council Tax Support plus Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) mobility element enhanced rate or the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) mobility component at the higher rate. These groups of people are being targeted because it is known that people with mobility issues are more susceptible to cold weather pressures and the cost-of-living crisis is especially impacts them. Data from Citizens Advice shows that in 2023 they made 637 referrals to foodbanks for people with disabilities or long-term health conditions compared to 359 referrals for those without these problems. Qualifying residents will receive a letter in the coming weeks explaining how to claim their free blanket. Only those with a letter qualify.

### Carbon Literate certification for Council

South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) has been certified as a Carbon Literate Organisation by the national charity, The Carbon Literacy Trust. SCDC has achieved the bronze certificate as part of continuing efforts to tackle the climate emergency in South Cambridgeshire. The certification is a signal that the Council is now even better placed to consider climate impacts in how it delivers services and supports residents. Our Zero Carbon Grant scheme is a good example of some of the support the Council has given to communities.

The Trust say that Carbon Literacy is a term used to describe an awareness of climate change, and the climate impacts of mankind's everyday actions. The term has had occasional use in scientific literature and casual usage but now is exclusively associated with The Carbon Literacy Project. Read more details at <https://www.scams.gov.uk/carbon-literate-certification-for-council/>

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## Parish Profiles – Cambridgeshire Insight:

The County Council hosts this extraordinary website containing demographic detail about our communities from parish to parish. Data is drawn from the Census and helps to inform local authority decisions particularly in relation to the wider determinants of health. Very interesting information and I recommend checking it out at <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/>

## Casework

Please do feel free to contact me with comments, questions, problems, reports, suggestions or complaints to do with SCDC services. I will help as best I can

You will find the current and past reports on my blog at <https://tumihawkins.org.uk/caldecote-ward/reports/monthly-reports/2022-23-monthly-reports/>. Feel free to read, share and/or download.

*Tumi*

Tumi Hawkins  
2 October 2023

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# Struggling to pay your bills? There is help available

We are supporting working age residents with a more generous localised council tax support scheme from April 2023. Our calculator at <https://hbcalc.scambs.gov.uk/HBCalculatorPaged/launch> will give you some indication if you would qualify and the amount you may receive. Scan this QR code to access our calculator or call 01954 713000.

Below are some real-life examples of people who qualify for support towards their council tax.



## Family 1



A couple and two children, with one member of the couple being disabled.

The couple's earnings are £505 a week. They receive child benefit, and personal independence payments for living component and mobility.

Their total income is £650.66 per week.

Their council tax is a band D = £2167.89 a year.

**This family is entitled to a 70% discount on their council tax, saving them £1,517.52 a year.**

## Family 2



A working lone parent with two children.

The total earnings are £383.58 a week. They receive child benefit and universal credit.

Their total income is £456.29.

Their council tax is a band B = £1257.65 per year with a single person's discount.

**This family is entitled to a 25% discount on their council tax, saving them £314.41 a year.**

Don't miss out on getting the help you're entitled to - apply online today!

[www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk)

Email: [duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk)

Call: 01954 713000



South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

## If you are not eligible for localised council tax support, other help is available.

If you are struggling to pay your Council Tax, you may be able to get a reduction under the Council's discretionary council tax support scheme. For more information visit our webpage [www.scambs.gov.uk/council-tax/reductions-and-discounts/council-tax-discretionary-reduction-scheme](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/council-tax/reductions-and-discounts/council-tax-discretionary-reduction-scheme) or scan the following QR code or call 01954 713000.



We may be able to help with your energy bills. The **Household Support Fund** is available to help people experiencing immediate financial hardship to pay for food and/or household energy bills. This provides one-off financial support. You can apply by contacting [duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk). There may be further help available for people on prepayment meters. To access this support please email [duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk).

Foodbanks provide food to those struggling with rising costs during the cost-of-living crisis. A list of foodbanks in South Cambridgeshire can be found at [www.scambs.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/foodbanks-and-food-hubs/](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-safety-and-health/foodbanks-and-food-hubs/).

If a foodbank requires a voucher, please contact [duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk) and we will provide you with one. Additionally, if you cannot travel to your nearest foodbank, please include this in your email as we may be able to provide support with this.

[www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk)  
Email: [duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk)  
Call: 01954 713000

