

Councillor Peter McDonald Duxford Division & Ward:
District Councillor for Parishes of Duxford, Hinxton, Ickleton, Babraham, Pampisford.
County Councillor also for Foxton, Fowlmere, Shepreth, Thriplow, Heathfield, Heydon, Chishills, Whittlesford

Report for Parish Councils – December 2023.

South Cambs District Council

Council Finances

The latest 2023/2024 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring report covers the second quarter of the current financial year, up until the end of September, and was discussed by Cabinet members [at their meeting today](#) (Tuesday 5 December).

So far this financial year, almost every single Council area has spent within its allocated budgets for staff salaries. The Council uses a ‘red, amber, green’ rating to rank the amount being spent on salaries. Every service area is currently rated as green – the best rating. The amount being spent on salaries within Greater Cambridge Shared Planning is around £47,000, or 1%, more than budgeted for. However, it is a major improvement compared to this time last year when the service was overspent by £237,000, mainly because of using agency workers to cover vacancies.

The report also outlines how additional income has been generated by the commercial arm of Greater Cambridge Shared Waste, interest on investments, and fees paid to the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service, which is shared with Cambridge City Council.

The amount being spent on fuel for bin lorries is slightly less than anticipated because of diesel prices starting to fall since the year’s budget was set. Council finance bosses have said that a prudent approach to spending has been key in helping ensure finances remain robust. Income received from Business Rates has contributed to the Council’s financial position – especially considering the strength of the Greater Cambridge economy. The number of new homes continuing to be built locally has also led to income from the Government’s New Homes Bonus scheme. Since 2017, around 11,000 new homes have been built across Greater Cambridge.

The Council is aiming to identify a total of at least £2 million in savings by April 2026

Before announcing a four-day week trial, the Council was spending about £2 million a year on 23 agency staff who were covering vacancies - often in specialist roles where the private sector pays more. This bill could be halved if all the agency posts were filled permanently.

A report discussed at [last month’s Employment and Staffing Committee](#) outlines how the Council has now filled 14 of these posts - mainly in the planning service - that are notoriously ‘hard to fill’ due to the national shortage of planners. Filling these posts means the Council expects to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds less than it otherwise would do on agency cover this year.

Analysis of the Council’s performance across key areas continues to paint a promising picture overall, with most services continuing to meet targets, as shown in a report to [last month’s Scrutiny and Overview Committee](#).

Planning Delegations

Latest planning delegation meetings:

<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/planning-applications/step-by-step-guide-to-permissions/delegated-planning-decisions/#A2>

Cambridgeshire County Council

Civil Parking Enforcement

Earlier this year an application was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) to enable Council Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) to issue Penalty Charge Notices for the majority of on-street offences such as parking on double or single yellow lines. Previously only the Police could do

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this. Highways officers have worked closely with South Cambridgeshire District Council on the development of the scheme.

Following the decision by Government, the CPE scheme in South Cambridgeshire will officially come into effect on 19 December. To give people notice and a chance to find a more suitable parking place, information has now begun to be placed on vehicles that are parked in some areas where parking is in the greatest demand, such as commuting and shopping areas.

A Warning Notice will be issued to people who continue to park where there are restrictions throughout January – this looks like a parking ticket but there is no fine attached. Penalty Charge Notices will be issued from 1 February which will mean a fine of between £50 and £70, depending on the severity of the offence.

Under CPE powers, CEOs cannot enforce all restrictions. Restrictions such as dangerous parking, obstruction of the footway and moving traffic offences will continue to be enforced by the Police. The initial set-up costs to get CPE underway in South Cambridgeshire will be covered by the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

Visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/cpe for more information.

Household Re cycling Centres

Cambridgeshire residents will need to apply for a digital permit to use Royston Household Recycling Centre from Friday 1 December. The change comes following the announcement earlier in the year that Hertfordshire County Council would be adopting a policy restricting access to non-residents at Hertfordshire's network of 16 Recycling Centres.

However, the county council has reached an agreement with Hertfordshire County Council that enables continued cross-border access to Royston Household Recycling Centre for Cambridgeshire residents living close to the county boundary, whilst allowing Hertfordshire residents access to Thriplow Household Recycling Centre.

To register for a free permit to access the Royston centre, Cambridgeshire residents will need to visit <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/recyclingcentrepermits>. Permits can be applied for from Thursday 30 November, and for eligible applicants the process only takes minutes.

Similarly, Hertfordshire residents will have to apply for a permit to use the Thriplow centre at <https://selfservice-cambridgeshire.servicebuilder.co.uk/permit>.

Resident only policies are becoming increasingly common across the region and country, with many neighbouring counties having had this policy in place for some time.

For further information on Hertfordshire's and Cambridgeshire's Recycling Centres

visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/recyclingcentres

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/waste-and-recycling/household-recycling-centres>

Highways Active Travel Schemes

At the December Highways Committee we considered a whole range of active travel schemes. The largest local one is a shared cycle/walking path in Whittlesford.

https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccs_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2108/Committee/62/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx

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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to you All

Peter McDonald

Dec 9th 2023

