

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

Parish Council Report April 2024

South Cambs District Council

Zero Carbon Grants

Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme launches for 2024

Community groups are being empowered to take action on climate change through a grant scheme encouraging local sustainability initiatives.

The popular Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme by South Cambridgeshire District Council is into its sixth year and opens for applications on Tuesday 2 April.

Last year, the total given through the grant since the scheme began topped more than half a million pounds.

The scheme underscores the Council's commitment to being green to the core and encourages residents, community groups and parish councils to find ways to reduce carbon emissions and raise awareness to meet the climate challenge.

Projects are invited under two themes:

- Reducing carbon emissions or locking up carbon.
- Community engagement around climate change.

Grants of between £2,000 and £15,000 are available to parish councils and community groups in the District, with a total pot of £125,000 available.

Whether it's promoting sustainable active travel, implementing renewable energy solutions, hosting educational workshops or planting community gardens, the Council encourages creative and impactful ideas that promote environmental stewardship.

Previous projects have included community building retrofits, food waste and climate-friendly cooking education, as well as e-bike rental schemes. Examples include:

- In 2023, Cambridge Carbon Footprint received £15,000 to expand their network of repair cafes in the district, diverting items from landfill and educating residents on sustainability and repair culture in a sociable setting.
- Duxford Community Centre, Landbeach Village Hall and Wysing Arts Centre each received £15,000 to install solar panels and reduce their buildings' grid electricity consumption.
- Hope Against Poverty CIC, who operate a mobile foodbank, received £15,000 to replace their current diesel van with an electric vehicle.

Anyone interested in applying is encouraged to attend an online application support workshop on Wednesday 24 April from 7 to 8:30pm. Sign up via Eventbrite. Tickets available from April 2. <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/zero-carbon-communities-grant-application-workshop-tickets-853545175597?aff=oddtcreator>

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All applicants should consult the updated application guidance and criteria when making an application. Applications can be made via the eform on the South Cambridgeshire District Council website. The form goes live from April 2. <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/climate-emergency-and-nature/zero-carbon-communities/zero-carbon-communities-grant-guidance-notes-and-criteria/>

For questions or support, please email zcc@scambs.gov.uk

Statement of Community Involvement

South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City Councils have formally adopted a new key planning document – which sets out how they will help residents have their say on a wide range of planning matters during the next five years.

This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service. Councillors have said that increasing participation in planning will always be good for communities and this SCI sets out how the Councils will achieve this.

A draft version of the SCI was open for public consultation from 18 October to 29 November 2023, inviting residents of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire to share their perspectives on how they could actively participate in planning decisions. During this period, two in-person consultation events were held, providing opportunities for face-to-face discussions, while an online webinar facilitated a virtual question-and-answer session with council representatives.

The feedback gathered from the public during the consultation period played a crucial role in shaping the final version of the SCI. The councils carefully considered the comments and suggestions received, ensuring that the document accurately reflects the people of Greater Cambridge. The Councils aspire, through the aims of the SCI, to:

- Ensure that engagement is managed efficiently by consulting at the earliest possible stages of the planning process, providing clear information about the proposals and by conducting early engagement with Councillors, stakeholders, community groups, applicants, and individuals in a meaningful way.
- Set clear and concise objectives of consultations in order to be transparent by keeping people informed, being clear on what the councils are asking for responses on, publishing outcomes, and setting realistic timelines for consultations and being open and clear about decision making.
- Be proportionate and cost effective in resource and promote best practice by exploring new and evolving methods of consultation and communications including digital to engage more easily with local communities.

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- Ensure consultation is inclusive, fair, equitable and supports local communities in feeling heard through consultation methods that are consistent to all, including those people without access or find it difficult using digital communication.
- Be accountable in the decision-making process, by explaining how the responses to consultations will be considered, how people will be informed of outcomes or decisions, and ensure that the planning stages are robust, justified, and consistent.
- The new SCI marks a significant milestone in Greater Cambridge Shared Planning's efforts to strengthen community engagement in planning matters. Through extensive consultation and collaboration, the shared service between South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City Councils has crafted a framework that empowers residents to play an active role in shaping the future of Greater Cambridge.

<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/about-us/statement-of-community-involvement/>

County Council Report

An agreement has been reached whereby Cambridgeshire County Council will host the High Intensity Users (HIU) team on behalf of the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

High intensity users, in this context, are people who frequently present themselves at hospital Accident and Emergency departments. These individuals often have complex - but not necessarily exclusively medical - needs, which cannot be met by the emergency departments.

Last year, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care Board spent an estimated £28m of NHS funding on emergency care for the 4,500 people attending emergency departments 5-10 times per year - an average of £6,200 per person.

Early identification of high intensity users of services has shown to reduce avoidable Accident and Emergency attendances and non-elective admissions by at least 40% within the NHS.

By hosting the HIU Operational Team, the county council will help to ensure that people receive a more targeted and personalised approach to their care and support.

In October 2023, the council's Communities service submitted an expression of interest to host the HIU Operational Team. The application highlighted how hosting the team would complement the work already taking place locally alongside the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, and support the Council's approach to decentralisation, bringing support closer to communities.

The council was subsequently chosen to host the team. During the 18-month pilot, the team will contribute to an external evaluation process that will help to determine the future of the work.

However, to enable recruitment of the team to take place and the work to begin, the council needs to agree to receive funding from the ICB.

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The council's Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee has therefore agreed to authorise the request to receive funding of £900,000 to host the team for a period of 18 months.

Household Financial Hardship

Proposals to fund support for Cambridgeshire residents experiencing financial hardship were discussed by the Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee (CoSMIC) Thursday (21 March).

The committee discussed plans to provide Cambridge Housing Society with an additional £150,000 and issue the Citizens Advice Bureau with a grant of £400,000.

This initial spend follows the council's budget setting last month when Full Council approved £2.2m to fund anti-poverty work across the county and support the council's ambition of helping people out of poverty.

Since October 2021, the council has been receiving money from the national Household Support Fund (HSF). The current round of HSF runs until 31 March 2024; in the spring budget earlier this month, a six-month extension was announced to run from April to September 2024. This funding extension will be considered at a future meeting of the Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee.

The HSF scheme has been complemented by work delivered by the Citizens Advice Bureau in the form of income maximisation and the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme, delivered by Cambridge Housing Society.

Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme works with Cambridge and District Citizens Advice Bureau, Citizens Advice Rural Cambridgeshire, Cambridge Re-Use, The Ferry Project and Cambridgeshire Community Reuse and Recycling Network. They help to identify and reach people and families in crisis and not wait for them to turn up.

The Citizens Advice Bureau's income maximisation work provides income advice, including support with budgeting, as well as helping with some of the practicalities like budget checks and advice on increasing income or reducing spend.

Peter McDonald April 9th 2024