

District Councillor report to Parish Council June 2025

Increased Funding to Help More Residents Live Independently at Home

Disabled residents and people with long-term health conditions across South Cambridgeshire, Cambridge City, and Huntingdonshire will now benefit from significantly increased support to make essential adaptations and repairs to their homes, following updates to the Cambs Home Improvement Agency (Cambs HIA) policy approved by the District Council.

Key changes include:

- **Doubling of top-up grant or loan funding** from £15,000 to £30,000. Combined with the national Disabled Facilities Grant of up to £30,000, this brings the total maximum support for individuals with complex needs to **£60,000**.
- **Increased funding for home repairs:** Low-income homeowners can now access **up to £15,000** (up from £10,000) to improve energy efficiency and tackle major disrepair. In cases where a home fails the housing, health and safety rating system, support will rise to **£25,000**.
- **Support for self-funding residents:** For the first time, residents who do not qualify for grants due to income or tenure will receive comparable guidance and support, recognising that home adaptation needs exist across all housing situations.

These updates have been made possible thanks to additional government funding, bringing the total available for home adaptations in the coming year to **over £1.02 million**.

About Cambs Home Improvement Agency (Cambs HIA):

Cambs HIA is a strategic partnership between South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge City Council, and Huntingdonshire District Council. For over thirteen years, the agency has worked collaboratively with occupational therapists to design and deliver home adaptations that enable people with long-term health conditions to live safely and as independently as possible in their own homes.

Unclaimed Benefits Unlocked for South Cambridgeshire Residents

South Cambridgeshire District Council has helped residents on low incomes secure up to **£3.6 million** in benefits they were entitled to but not claiming, thanks to its proactive use of **Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT)** software.

LIFT analyses data the Council already holds to identify households likely to be missing out on support.

Residents are then contacted directly—by letter, text, or call—and offered help to apply.

A report to the **Scrutiny and Overview Committee** highlights that **at least 246 residents** have already increased their income through this support.

Key Outcomes:

- **110+ households** are now claiming **Pension Credit**.
- Many also became eligible for the **Winter Fuel Payment**, adding around **£229,000** in extra support this past winter.
- Nearly **250 households** received a **£110 Household Support Fund payment**, totalling **£26,400**.
- **70 households** who narrowly missed out on Pension Credit were offered **electric blankets** and financial advice.
- South Cambridgeshire saw the **biggest increase in NHS Healthy Start claims in the country**, unlocking nearly **£60,000** in support for families.

LIFT is also being used to support residents at risk of homelessness, help disabled people into work, and tackle loneliness.

Thank You to the Save Honey Hill Campaign and Local Parish Councils

This week, the Save Honey Hill Campaign shared the following update:

“Earlier this week, we received the Secretary of State’s formal response to our Pre-Action Letter. After reviewing it carefully with our legal team, we have concluded—on their advice—that pursuing a Judicial Review is unlikely to achieve a meaningful outcome and would not justify the associated costs.

Our King’s Counsel noted that the strength and precision of the Secretary of State’s response suggest his legal team had anticipated the grounds on which we might challenge the decision. It appears the Development Consent Order decision letter was deliberately structured to minimise the risk of a successful JR—possibly explaining the two delays to the decision earlier this year.

The detailed and prompt response to our Pre-Action Letter has reinforced this assessment, and so we have made the difficult decision not to proceed further with legal action.”

I want to thank the **Save Honey Hill Campaign team** for their tireless dedication, professionalism, and passion throughout this long and challenging process. Their efforts to protect our local environment and ensure the voices of residents were heard have been remarkable.

I also extend our sincere thanks to the **local parish councils**, who have consistently supported the campaign and represented their communities with clarity and determination.

While the outcome may not be what many had hoped for, the campaign has united residents, raised awareness of vital environmental concerns, and shown the strength of local democracy in action. I have worked with a number of residents to bring questions to full council over the last few years and will now turn my attention to making sure plans are followed and resident questions and concerns are addressed as we move forward.

Update on the Fens Reservoir

Paul Bristow (Mayor) said: *“The Government’s decision to designate the Fens Reservoir as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) is a vital step forward for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and a clear recognition that our region needs new water infrastructure.*

I have been calling for the Fens Reservoir to be sped up for months, and I’ve promised to get it delivered. I’m glad the Government is now listening. As one of the fastest growing regions in the UK, water is a pressing issue, impacting communities, agriculture and our natural environment including rare chalk streams. This designation will fast-track the planning process, but the Government must now fast-track delivery to end the 33-year drought of new reservoirs.

But this project can deliver more than just much needed water security. When delivered, the Fens Reservoir should serve as a true community asset offering facilities for tourism, leisure and more. It has potential to become a destination in its own right, helping our region to be healthier, wealthier and happier. We should be ambitious, Discover Rutland estimates visitors to Rutland Water contribute £150 million to the local economy. We can achieve similar benefits here.

Only last week, the Combined Authority brought together Anglian Water and a wide range of stakeholders to promote to broader benefits of the Fens reservoir to a national audience at UKREiiF. This event allowed us to highlight the opportunity to invest in the reservoir as a tourism and leisure destination. The new Fens Reservoir could also serve as a catalyst for developing additional infrastructure such as a light rail system to connect Wisbech and Chatteris with the rail network at March.

The designation of the Reservoir as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project is a vote of confidence in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough’s ability to play our part in achieving the ambitions for the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor. Delivery of the reservoir will ensure the benefits of growth are felt by all.

I want to thank all involved in getting the project to this stage, especially Anglian Water, the Environment Agency and Water Resources East. I will continue to work with partners to ensure our region has secure water supply

long into the future.

Now we need to continue the momentum to get the Reservoir delivered. We cannot wait until 2036.”

Work to make safety improvements for people walking, cycling and driving at Addenbrooke’s roundabout started on Monday 12 May 2025.

Work to enhance safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers at Addenbrooke’s roundabout started on Monday 12 May 2025.

In the first phase, the central island of the roundabout will be reduced in size to make room for a wider carriageway. This will allow for the expansion of footpaths and crossings, making the area safer and more accessible for everyone.

To reduce disruption, construction will take place overnight, between 8pm and 6am, Monday to Friday, and is expected to last for eight weeks.

There are many people in the Fen Ditton and Fulbourn Ward that work on site at Addenbrookes including myself so the following provides you with update:

James Hostler, GCP project manager: “A huge number of people use this key roundabout in to and out of the city every day. Our aim is to make improvements to help make sure all road users can use the Addenbrooke’s roundabout safely. To reassure anyone travelling the route, the outer ring will remain open throughout and the inner ring will be reopened each morning. Access to all homes, Addenbrooke’s hospital and Cambridge Biomedical Campus will be maintained at all times including for emergency vehicles and buses.”

“The works to improve the roundabout are taking place overnight to reduce disruption to everyone using the road and living nearby. We will do all we can to minimise noise and light pollution to local residents as we are very aware of the patience they have shown when works have been carried out in the past. For example, we will use low-noise equipment wherever possible, ensure any high impact noise is limited to early evening and we will monitor noise levels throughout the work. Our priority is to deliver a scheme which helps to make the roundabout safer for everyone who uses it, so we hope everyone understands the need for the work.”

The second stage of work will include the outer ring of the roundabout and the crossing on the Fendon Road arm and this is due to take place later in the summer. Details of these works will be available after phase one is completed.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) is improving the roundabout following approval from its board in 2024.

*Thank you for taking the time to read my report; if you have any questions or want to discuss any of the issues raised email me on graham.cone@councillor.online or ring 07595 361 285 (please leave a voicemail if I am unavailable) **Councillor Graham Cone***